AH1: COMMUNICATION AND POPULAR CULTURE



Dustin Dunaway
Pueblo Community College

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Communication and Popular Culture: AH1

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1.1.1: The Lost Cell Phone



Figure 1.1

A New York City woman lost her cell phone in the back of a taxi cab. Sasha Gomez, 16, of Queens, ended up with the phone. She decided to keep it and use it. She did not realize the consequences. She was humiliated, harassed, and arrested. And she became the subject of a public shaming ritual only possible by today's media in today's culture.

The phone was an expensive model, a T-Mobile Sidekick that sold for $350. Sasha began using the phone to take photographs and send instant messages to friends and family. The woman who lost the phone thought she would never see the phone again. She bought another Sidekick, logged onto her account and found that the old phone was being used. She saw photographs and messages by Sasha. The woman wanted her old phone back. She had a media-savvy friend, Evan Guttman. Evan was able to track down Sasha by her instant messages. He contacted Sasha and asked her to return the phone to his friend. "Basically, she told me to get lost," Evan later told *The New York Times*.Nicholas Confessore, "Tale of a Lost Cellphone, and Untold Static," *The New York Times*, June 21, 2006. Web. http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/21/nyregion/21sidekick.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=evan+guttman&st=nyt

Evan decided to fight for his friend's phone—through the media. He put up a web page that told the story of the lost cell phone. He put up the pictures of Sasha and her family. The story spread. Evan began getting dozens and then hundreds of sympathetic emails from other people who had lost phones and understood his frustration with Sasha. Two technology blogs, Diggs and Gizmodo, linked to the story and web page. Evan then got thousands of emails, some from as far off as Africa and Asia. Lawyers and police officers contacted Evan about property law and told him how to approach the police. Some people went further than writing supportive emails. They found Sasha's MySpace page. They sent Sasha and her friends messages demanding the return of the phone. Other people learned her home address in Queens, drove by her apartment building and shouted "thief."

Sasha and her family were outraged and alarmed. They contacted Evan. Sasha still refused to return the phone. Her brother too communicated with Evan. He said he was a military policeman, and he warned Evan to leave Sasha alone. Evan posted those comments online. He soon heard from others in the military. They told him that the brother's threats were a violation of military policy. They said they would report the threats to the brother's superiors.

Armed with all this information, Evan contacted Sasha one more time. He said he and his friend would next go the police. Evan said he was threatened again. He and his friend went to the police who then arrested Sasha. The charge was possession of stolen property. Sasha's mother came forward and said she had bought the phone for $50 on a subway platform and given it to Sasha. Police confiscated the phone for the original owner. And Evan became a minor cultural celebrity. The story appeared in *The New York Times* and the *International Herald Tribune* and was broadcast on MSNBC and other outlets. It was a modern morality tale caused by, and then made possible by, the intersection of media technology and culture.

I thought the story of the lost cell phone would be a great introduction for a text on understanding media and culture and used *The New York Times* story to write the previous paragraphs. Long after, when I showed the introduction to a colleague, he looked at me and said, "Are you kidding?" He showed me a then-recent book by media scholar Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*, a book on the power of organizing through new media. Shirky begins his book—with the same story of the lost cell phone. With some wry amusement over fate, I decided that I would keep my introduction as well. In some ways, the movement of the lost cell phone story from Evan's website through *The New York Times* through MSNBC through Clay Shirky's text through my book on understanding media and culture is symbolic, as we will see, of the multitude of flows between media and culture.

1.1.1.1 Understanding Media and Culture

This book's title tells its intent. It is written to help you understand media and culture. The media and culture are so much a part of our days that sometimes it is difficult to step back and appreciate and apprehend their great impact on our lives.

The book's title, and the book itself, begin with a focus squarely on media. Think of your typical day. If you are like many

people, you wake to a digital alarm clock or perhaps your cell phone. Soon after waking, you likely have a routine that involves some media. Some people immediately check the cell phone for text messages. Others will turn on the computer and check Facebook, email, or websites. Some people read the newspaper. Others listen to music on an iPod or CD. Some people will turn on the television and watch a weather channel, cable news, or Sports Center. Heading to work or class, you may chat on a cell phone or listen to music. Your classes likely employ various types of media from course management software to PowerPoint presentations to DVDs to YouTube. You may return home and relax with video games, television, movies, more Facebook, or music. You connect with friends on campus and beyond with text messages or Facebook. And your day may end as you fall asleep to digital music. Media for most of us are entwined with almost every aspect of life and work. Understanding media will not only help you appreciate the role of media in your life but also help you be a more informed citizen, a more savvy consumer, and a more successful worker. Media influence all those aspects of life as well.

The book's title also has links to a highly influential book in media studies, *Understanding Media*, by the social theorist and critic, Marshall McLuhan.Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964. In the midst of the 20th century and the rise of television as a mass medium, McLuhan foresaw how profoundly media would shape human lives. His work on media spanned four decades, from the 1950s to his death in 1980. In the 1960s and 1970s, during the height of television's popularity and the emergence of computers, he became an international celebrity. He appeared on magazine covers and television talk shows. He had a cameo appearance in the Woody Allen film, *Annie Hall*. *Wired* magazine listed him on its masthead as "patron saint." In universities, however, McLuhan was often dismissed, perhaps because of his celebrity, his outlandish style, and his broad and sweeping declarations. Yet as media continued to develop in ways anticipated by his writings, McLuhan again found an audience in media studies.

In *Understanding Media*, McLuhan offered some provocative thoughts. He said that the media themselves were far more important than any content they carried. Indeed, he said, each medium, such as print or broadcast, physically affects the human central nervous system in a certain way. Media influence the way the brain works and how it processes information. They create new patterns of thought and behavior. Looking back over time, McLuhan found that people and societies were shaped by the dominant media of their time. For example, McLuhan argued, people and societies of the printing press era were shaped by that medium. And, he said, people and societies were being shaped in new ways by electronic media. Summing up, in one of his well-known phrases, he said, "The medium is the message."

This book's title uses McLuhan's title—and adds culture. McLuhan well understood how media shape culture. However, one weakness in McLuhan's work, especially his early work, is that he did not fully account for how culture shapes media. Culture can be a vague and empty term. Sometimes culture is defined in a very narrow sense as "the arts" or some sort of fashionable refinement. Another definition of culture is much more expansive, however. In this broader sense, culture is a particular way of life and how that life is acted out each day in works, practices, and activities. Thus, we can talk about Italian culture, Javanese culture, or the culture of the ancient Greeks. Another communication theorist, James Carey, elegantly captures this expansive view of culture. In "A Cultural Approach to Communication," Carey wrote the following:

"We create, express, and convey our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality through the construction of a variety of symbol systems: art, science, journalism, religion, common sense, mythology. How do we do this? What are the differences between these forms? What are the historical and comparative variations in them? How do changes in communication technology influence what we can concretely create and apprehend? How do groups in society struggle over the definition of what is real?"James Carey, "A Cultural Approach to Communication," in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. 2nd ed. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 24.

That large sense of culture will be used in this book. The chapters to come will provide an in-depth look at the relationship of media and culture. We will look at many kinds of media and how those media shape and are shaped by culture. Media and culture shape each other around the globe, of course. The focus in this book primarily will be on the United States. This focus is not because U.S. media have such global reach but because understanding media and culture in one setting will allow you to think about media and culture in other settings. This intellectual journey should be interesting and fun. You live, study, work, and play with media in culture. By the book's end, you should have a much deeper appreciation and understanding of them.

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1.1.2: Intersection of American Media and Culture

Learning objectives

- Distinguish between mass communication and mass media.
- Define culture.
- Pose questions that will be explored in the rest of the text.

1.1.2.1 Mass Communication, Mass Media, and Culture

We use all kinds of terms to talk about media. It will be useful to clarify them. It will be especially important to distinguish between mass communication and mass media, and to attempt a working definition of culture. You likely are reading this book as part of a class dedicated to mass communication, so let's start with mass communication first. Note that adjective: *mass*. Here is a horrible definition of *mass* from an online dictionary: Of, relating to, characteristic of, directed at, or attended by a large number of people. But the definition gets the point across. Communication can take place just between two people, or among a few people, or maybe even within one person who is talking to himself. *Mass* communication is communication of, relating to, characteristic of, directed at, or attended by a large number of people. That's pretty ugly. Let's try the following: **Mass communication** refers to communication transmitted to large segments of the population.

How does that happen? The transmission of mass communication happens using one or more of many different kinds of **media** (people sometimes forget that media is the plural of the singular, *medium*). A medium is simply an instrument or means of transmission. It can be two tin cans connected by a string. It can be television. It can be the Internet. A mass medium is a means of transmission designed to reach a wide audience. It is not tin cans on a string, unless you have a lot of cans, but it can be television or the Internet. Media are more than one medium. So **mass media**refers to those means of transmission that are designed to reach a wide audience. Mass media are commonly considered to include radio, film, newspapers, magazines, books, and video games, as well as Internet blogs, podcasts, and video sharing.

Lastly, let's define culture a bit more. All this mass communication over mass media takes place among people in a particular time and place. Those people share ideas about reality and the world and themselves. They act out those ideas daily in their lives, work, and creative expressions, and they do so in ways that are different from other people in other places and other times. We can use *culture*to refer to the acting out of these shared ideas.

One of the great scholars of culture, anthropologist Clifford Geertz, offered this definition. He said, culture is "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life" (1973, 89). That's difficult language, but you can get the idea—culture is historically transmitted knowledge and attitudes toward life expressed in symbolic form. Or perhaps more simply, **culture** is the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a social group, organization, or institution. It is OK if that still seems broad and fluid. Scholars too wrestle with the term because it must capture so much. Culture should not be easy to define.

What this book will do is bring together media and culture in the context of the American experience. Throughout American history, evolving media technologies have changed the way we relate socially, economically, and politically. Here's one example from long ago that is still talked about today. In 1960, the first televised presidential debates changed American history forever. The young senator, John F. Kennedy, looked wonderful on television. He appeared energetic, crisp and at ease, while Vice President Richard Nixon looked nervous and uncomfortable. His makeup was caked on. He hunched and slouched. People who listened to the debate on the radio considered it a tie. But most people who watched the debate on television believed that Kennedy crushed Nixon. Kennedy upset Nixon and won the presidency. A few months later, the newly-elected president gave credit to technology for changing public perceptions and enabling his win. He claimed that "it was TV more than anything else that turned the tide."Louis Menand, "Masters of the Matrix," *The New Yorker*, January 5, 2004.Ever since Kennedy, American presidential hopefuls have had to be increasingly television-ready and media savvy. Indeed, evolving technology has helped change what the American public wants out of its leaders.



Figure 1.2

In today's wired world of smartphones and streaming satellite feeds, our expectations of our leaders, celebrities, teachers, and even ourselves are changing in drastic ways. This book aims to provide you with the context, tools, and theories to understand changes brought about by the commingling of media and culture. Rather than telling you what to think, this book hopes to provide you with a framework to consider some of the crucial issues affecting media and culture in today's world. The following are some questions to consider now and to keep in mind as you move forward in this book:

- The second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century saw a huge growth of media forms, including radio, cinema, television, the Internet, and cell phone. Understanding the evolution of media technology can help you understanding not only the media of today but also the media of tomorrow. What then are the roots of media in U.S. history? What were the dominant forms of media present in the United States during the Revolution? The Industrial Revolution? World Wars I and II? How did these forms of media differ from the ones we have today? How did they help shape the way people interacted with and understood the world they lived in?
- Contemporary Americans have more means of getting information and entertainment than ever before. What are the major media present in the United States today? How do these forms of media interact with one another? How do they overlap? How are they distinct?
- What is the role of media in American culture today? Some people argue that dramatic and controversial events help fuel the demand for 24-hour news access. In June 2011, people around the world spent hours glued to coverage of the Casey Anthony trial. More recently, in November of 2011, sports coverage moved from football scores to the Penn State football sex-abuse scandal. What are some other ways that culture affects media? Conversely, how do media affect culture? Do violent television shows and video games influence viewers to become more violent? Is the Internet making our culture more open and democratic, or more shallow and distracted?
- Though we may not (yet) have space-age technology, such as time travel, hover cars, and teleportation, today's electronic gadgets would probably stun Americans of a century ago. Will we be stunned by future media? How can today's media landscape help us understand what might await us in years to come? What will the future of American media and culture look like?

- Mass communication refers to a message transmitted to a large audience; the means of transmission is known as mass media. Many different kinds of mass media exist and have existed for centuries. Both have an effect on culture, which is a shared and expressed collection of behaviors, practices, beliefs, and values that are particular to a group, organization, or institution. Culture and media exert influence on each other in subtle, complex ways.
- The 1960 election is an example of how changes in media technology have had a major impact on culture. But the influence goes both ways, and culture shapes media in important ways, even how media evolve.

? Exercise 1.1.2.1

Reread the previous questions about media and culture. Write down some of your initial responses or reactions, based on your prior knowledge or intuition. Keep the piece of paper somewhere secure and return to it on the last day of the course. Were your responses on target? How has your understanding of media and culture changed? How might you answer questions differently now?

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1.1.3: How Did We Get Here? The Evolution of Culture

learning objectives

- Define cultural period, and give examples of recent cultural periods.
- Discuss particular characteristics of the modern era, and explain how it was shaped by the Industrial Revolution.
- Explain the ways that the postmodern era differs from the modern era.

We have spoken easily of *historical eras.* Can we speak of *cultural eras*? It can actually be a useful concept. There are many ways to divide time into cultural eras. But for our purposes, a cultural period is a time marked by a particular way of understanding the world through culture and technology. Changes in cultural periods are marked by fundamental changes in the way we perceive and understand the world. For example, you may have had readings about the "Middle Ages," a marker for European history from the 5th to 15th Century. In that era, technology and communication were in the hands of authorities like the king and church who could dictate what was "true." The Renaissance, the era that followed the Middle Ages, turned to the scientific method as a means of reaching truth through reason. This change in cultural period was galvanized by the printing press. (In 2008, *Wired* magazine's editor-in-chief proclaimed that the application of Internet technology through Google was about to render the scientific method obsolete.Chris Anderson, "The End of Theory: The Data Deluge Makes the Scientific Method Obsolete," *Wired*, June 23, 2008, (accessed July 15, 2010).) In each of these cultural eras, the nature of truth had not changed. What had changed was the way that humans used available technology to make sense of the world.

Using technology to make sense of the world? You likely can anticipate that for the purpose of studying culture and mass media, the modern and postmodern ages are some of the most exciting and relevant ones to explore, eras in which culture and technology have intersected like never before.

1.1.3.1 The Modern Age—Modernity

The Modern Age is the post-Medieval era, beginning roughly after the 14th century, a wide span of time marked in part by technological innovations, urbanization, scientific discoveries, and globalization. The Modern Age is generally split into two parts: the early and the late modern periods. Scholars often talk of the Modern Age as modernity.

The *early modern period* began with Gutenberg's invention of the movable type printing press in the late 15th century and ended in the late 18th century. Thanks to Gutenberg's press, the European population of the early modern period saw rising literacy rates, which led to educational reform. As noted earlier, Gutenberg's machine also greatly enabled the spread of knowledge, and in turn spurred the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. During the early modern period, transportation improved, politics became more secularized, capitalism spread, nation-states grew more powerful, and information became more widely accessible. Enlightenment ideals of reason, rationalism, and faith in scientific inquiry slowly began to replace the previously dominant authority of king and church.

Huge political, social, and economic changes marked the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the *late modern period*. The Industrial Revolution, which began in England around 1750, combined with the American Revolution in 1776 and the French Revolution in 1789, indicated that the world was undergoing massive changes. The Industrial Revolution had far-reaching consequences. It did not merely change the way goods were produced—it also fundamentally changed the economic, social, and cultural framework of its time.

The Industrial Revolution doesn't have clear start or end dates. However, during the 19th century, several crucial inventions—the internal combustion engine, steam-powered ships, and railways, among others—led to other innovations across various industries. Suddenly, steam power and machine tools meant that production increased dramatically. But some of the biggest changes coming out of the Industrial Revolution were social in character. An economy based on manufacturing instead of agriculture meant that more people moved to cities, where techniques of mass production led to an emphasis on efficiency both in and out of the factory. Newly urbanized factory laborers no longer had the skill or time to produce their own food, clothing, or supplies and instead turned to consumer goods. Increased production led to increases in wealth, though income inequalities between classes also started to grow as well. Increased wealth and nonrural lifestyles led to the development of entertainment industries. Life changed rapidly.

It is no coincidence that the French and American Revolutions happened in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. The huge social changes created changes in political systems and thinking. In both France and America, the revolutions were inspired by a rejection of a monarchy in favor of national sovereignty and representative democracy. Both revolutions also heralded the rise of secular society, as opposed to church-based authority systems. Democracy was well-suited to the so-called Age of Reason, with its ideals of individual rights and its belief in progress.

Media were central to these revolutions. As we have seen, the fusing of steam power and the printing press enabled the explosive expansion of books and newspapers. Literacy rates rose, as did support for public participation in politics. More and more people lived in the city, had an education, got their news from the newspaper, spent their wages on consumer goods, and identified themselves as citizens of an industrialized nation. Urbanization, mass literacy, and new forms of mass media contributed to a sense of mass culture that united people across regional, social, and cultural boundaries.

A last note on the terminology for the cultural era of the Modern Age or modernity: A similar term—modernism—also has come into use. However, modernism is a term for an artistic, cultural movement, rather than era. Modernism refers to the artistic movement of late-19th and early-20th centuries that arose out of the widespread changes that swept the world during that period. Most notably, modernism questioned the limitations of "traditional" forms of art and culture. Modernist art was in part a reaction against the Enlightenment's certainty of progress and rationality. It celebrated subjectivity through abstraction, experimentalism, surrealism, and sometimes pessimism or even nihilism. Prominent examples of modernist works include James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness novels, cubist paintings by Picasso, atonal compositions by Debussy, and absurdist plays by Pirandello. It's not too confusing—modernism was an artistic movement taking place during the modern age.

1.1.3.2 The Postmodern Age

If you go on to graduate study in almost any field in the humanities or social sciences, you will eventually encounter texts debating the *postmodern era*. While the exact definition and dates of the postmodern era are still debated by cultural theorists and philosophers, the general consensus is that the postmodern era began during the second half of the 20th century, and was marked by skepticism, self-consciousness, celebration of difference, and the reappraisal of modern conventions. Modernity—the Modern Age—took for granted scientific rationalism, the autonomous self, and the inevitability of progress. The postmodern age questioned or dismissed many of these assumptions. If the modern age valued order, reason, stability, and absolute truth, the postmodern age reveled in contingency, fragmentation, and instability. The aftermath of World War II, the Holocaust, the Cold War, the digitization of culture, the rise of the Internet, and numerous other factors fed into the skepticism and self-consciousness of the postmodern era.

Modernity's belief in objective truth is one of the major assumptions turned on its head in the postmodern era. Postmodernists instead took their cues from Schrödinger, the quantum physicist who famously devised a thought experiment in which a cat is placed inside a sealed box with a small amount of radiation that may or may not kill it. (Remember, this is a thought experiment, and is not real.) While the box remains sealed, Schrödinger proclaimed, the cat exists simultaneously in both states, dead *and* alive. Both potential states are equally true. Although the thought experiment was devised to explore issues in quantum physics, it appealed to postmodernists in its assertion of radical uncertainty. What is reality? Rather than being an absolute objective truth, accessible by rational procedures and experimentation, the status of reality was contingent, and depended on the observer.

"The postmodern" affected fields from philosophy to political science to literature. Novelists and poets, for example, embraced this new approach to reality. While Victorian novelists took pains to make their books seem more "real," postmodern narratives distrusted professions of "reality" and constantly reminded readers of the artificial nature of the story they were reading. The emphasis was not on the all-knowing author but instead on the reader. For the postmodernists, meaning was not injected into a work by its creator, but depended on the reader's subjective experience of the work.

Another way postmodernity differed from modernity was in its rejection of what philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard deemed "grand narratives." The Modern Age was marked by different large-scale theories that attempted to explain the totality of human experience, including theories of capitalism, Marxism, rationalism, Freudianism, Darwinism, fascism, and so on. But the postmodern era called into question the sorts of theories that claimed to explain everything at once. Such thinking, postmodernists warned, led to 20th-century totalitarian regimes, such as Hitler's Third Reich and the USSR under Stalin. The postmodern age, Lyotard theorized, was one of micro-narratives instead of grand narratives—that is, a multiplicity of small, localized understandings of the world, none of which can claim an ultimate or absolute truth. The diversity of human experience also was a marked feature of the postmodern world. As Lyotard noted, "eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture; one listens to reggae, watches a Western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and retro clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter for TV games."Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Postmodernists even mistrusted the idea of originality—the supposed arrogance of thinking one had a "new thought"—and freely borrowed across cultures and genres. William S. Burroughs gleefully proclaimed a sort of call-to-arms for his postmodern generation of writers in 1985: "Out of the closets

and into the museums, libraries, architectural monuments, concert halls, bookstores, recording studios and film studios of the world. Everything belongs to the inspired and dedicated thief.…Words, colors, light, sounds, stone, wood, bronze belong to the living artist. They belong to anyone who can use them. Loot the Louvre! *A bas l'originalité* (down with originality), the sterile and assertive ego that imprisons us as it creates. *Vive le sol* (long live the sun)-pure, shameless, total. We are not responsible. Steal anything in sight." Burroughs's words embodied the mixed skepticism and glee that marked the postmodern era. As the new millennium began, Bob Dylan's album, "Love and Theft," carried on Burroughs's tradition. Its title and many of its lyrics are taken from numerous sources across cultures, eras and fields.

Key takeaways

- A cultural period is a time marked by a particular way of understanding the world through culture and technology. Changes in cultural periods are marked by fundamental changes in the way we perceive and understand the world. The modern era began after the Middle Ages and lasted through the early decades of the 20th century, when the postmodern era began.
- The modern era was marked by Enlightenment philosophy, which focused on the individual and placed a high value on rational decision making. This period saw the wide expansion of capitalism, colonialism, democracy, and science-based rationalism. The Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, the American and French Revolutions, and World War I are all significant events that took place during the modern era. One of the most significant, however, was the Industrial Revolution; its emphasis on routinization and efficiency helped society restructure itself along those terms as well.
- Postmodernity differed from modernity in its questioning of reason, rejection of grand narratives, and emphasis on subcultures. Rather than searching for one ultimate truth that could explain all of history, the postmodernists focused on contingency, context, and diversity.

Exercise 1.1.3.1

Draw a Venn diagram of the two cultural periods discussed at length in this chapter. Make a list of the features, values, and events that mark each period. Is there any overlap? How do they differ?

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1.1.4: How Did We Get Here? The Evolution of Media

Learning Objectives

- Discuss events that impacted the adaptation of mass media.
- Explain how different technological transitions have shaped media industries.
- Identify four roles the media perform in our society.

"Well, how did I get here?" a baffled David Byrne sings in the Talking Heads song, "Once in a Lifetime." The contemporary media landscape is so rich, deep, and multifaceted that it's easy to imagine American media consumers asking themselves the same question. In 2010, Americans could turn on their television and find 24-hour news channels, as well as music videos, nature documentaries, and reality shows about everything from hoarders to fashion models. That's not to mention movies available on-demand from cable providers, or television and video available online for streaming or downloading. Half of American households receive a daily newspaper, and the average person holds 1.9 magazine subscriptions.Journalism.org, *The State of the News Media 2004*, http://www.stateofthemedia.org/2004/ (accessed July 15, 2010); Jim Bilton, "The Loyalty Challenge: How Magazine Subscriptions Work," *In Circulation*, January/February 2007. A University of California San Diego study claimed that U.S. households consumed around 3.6 zettabytes of information in 2008, the digital equivalent of a 7-foot high stack of books covering the entire United States, including Alaska—a 350 percent increase since 1980.Doug Ramsey, "UC San Diego Experts Calculate How Much Information Americans Consume." University of San Diego News Center, December 9, 2009. Americans are exposed to media in taxicabs and busses, in classrooms and doctors' offices, on highways and in airplanes.

Later chapters will offer in-depth explorations of how particular media developed in different eras. But we can begin to orient ourselves here by briefly examining a history of media in culture, looking at the ways technological innovations have helped to bring us to where we are today, and finally considering the varied roles the media fill in our culture today.

1.1.4.1 A Brief History of Mass Media and Culture

Until Johannes Gutenberg's 15th-century invention of the movable type printing press, books were painstakingly handwritten, and no two copies were exactly the same. The printing press made the mass production of print media possible. Not only was it much cheaper to produce written material, but new transportation technologies also made it easier for texts to reach a wide audience. It's hard to overstate the importance of Gutenberg's invention, which helped usher in massive cultural movements like the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. In 1810, another German printer, Friedrich Koenig, pushed media production even further when he essentially hooked the steam engine up to a printing press, enabling the industrialization of printed media. In 1800, a hand-operated printing press could produce about 480 pages per hour; Koenig's machine more than doubled this rate. (By the 1930s, many printing presses had an output of 3000 pages an hour.) This increased efficiency helped lead to the rise of the daily newspaper.

As the first Europeans settled the land that would come to be called the United States of America, the newspaper was an essential medium. At first, newspapers helped the Europeans stay connected with events back home. But as the people developed their own way of life—their own *culture*—newspapers helped give expression to that culture. Political scientist Benedict Anderson has argued that newspapers also helped forge a sense of national identity by treating readers across the country as part of one unified group with common goals and values. Newspapers, he said, helped create an "imagined community."

The United States continued to develop, and the newspaper was the perfect medium for the increasingly urbanized Americans of the 19th century, who could no longer get their local news merely through gossip and word of mouth. These Americans were living in an unfamiliar world, and newspapers and other publications helped them negotiate the rapidly changing world. The Industrial Revolution meant that people had more leisure time and more money, and media helped them figure out how to spend both.

In the 1830s, the major daily newspapers faced a new threat with the rise of the penny press—newspapers that were low-priced broadsheets. These papers served as a cheaper, more sensational daily news source and privileged news of murder and adventure over the dry political news of the day. While earlier newspapers catered to a wealthier, more educated audience, the penny press attempted to reach a wide swath of readers through cheap prices and entertaining (often scandalous) stories. The penny press can be seen as the forerunner to today's gossip-hungry tabloids.



Figure 1.3. *The penny press appealed to readers' desires for lurid tales of murder and scandal.*

In the early decades of the 20th century, the first major non-print forms of mass media—film and radio—exploded in popularity. Radios, which were less expensive than telephones and widely available by the 1920s, especially had the unprecedented ability of allowing huge numbers of people to listen to the same event at the same time. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge's preelection speech reached more than 20 million people. Radio was a boon for advertisers, who now had access to a large and captive audience. An early advertising consultant claimed that the early days of radio were "a glorious opportunity for the advertising man to spread his sales propaganda" thanks to "a countless audience, sympathetic, pleasure seeking, enthusiastic, curious, interested, approachable in the privacy of their homes."Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

The reach of radio also further helped forge an American culture. The medium was able to downplay regional differences and encourage a unified sense of the American lifestyle—a lifestyle that was increasingly driven and defined by consumer purchases. "Americans in the 1920s were the first to wear ready-made, exact-size clothing…to play electric phonographs, to use electric vacuum cleaners, to listen to commercial radio broadcasts, and to drink fresh orange juice year round."Digital History, "The Formation of Modern American Mass Culture," *The Jazz Age: The American 1920s*, 2007, www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/dat...y.cfm?hhid=454(accessed July 15, 2010). This boom in consumerism put its stamp on the 1920s, and, ironically, helped contribute to the Great Depression of the 1930s.Library of Congress, "Radio: A Consumer Product and a Producer of Consumption," http://lcweb2.loc.gov:8081/ammem/amrlhtml/inradio.html (accessed July 15, 2010).

The post-World War II era in the United States was marked by prosperity, and by the introduction of a seductive new form of mass communication: television. In 1946, there were about 17,000 televisions in the entire United States. Within seven years, two-thirds of American households owned at least one set. As the United States' gross national product (GNP) doubled in the 1950s, and again in the 1960s, the American home became firmly ensconced as a consumer unit. Along with a television, the typical U.S. family owned a car and a house in the suburbs, all of which contributed to the nation's thriving consumer-based economy.

Broadcast television was the dominant form of mass media. There were just three major networks, and they controlled over 90 percent of the news programs, live events, and sitcoms viewed by Americans. On some nights, close to half the nation watched the same show! Some social critics argued that television was fostering a homogenous, conformist culture by reinforcing ideas about what "normal" American life looked like. But television also contributed to the counterculture of the 1960s. The Vietnam War was the nation's first televised military conflict, and nightly images of war footage and war protestors helped intensify the nation's internal conflicts.

Broadcast technology, including radio and television, had such a hold of the American imagination that newspapers and other print media found themselves having to adapt to the new media landscape. Print media was more durable and easily archived, and allowed users more flexibility in terms of time—once a person had purchased a magazine, he could read it whenever and wherever he'd like. Broadcast media, in contrast, usually aired programs on a fixed schedule, which allowed it to both provide a sense of immediacy but also impermanence—until the advent of digital video recorders in the 21st century, it was impossible to pause and rewind a television broadcast.

The media world faced drastic changes once again in the 1980s and 1990s with the spread of cable television. During the early decades of television, viewers had a limited number of channels from which to choose. In 1975, the three major networks accounted for 93 percent of all television viewing. By 2004, however, this share had dropped to 28.4 percent of total viewing, thanks to the spread of cable television. Cable providers allowed viewers a wide menu of choices, including

channels specifically tailored to people who wanted to watch only golf, weather, classic films, sermons, or videos of sharks. Still, until the mid-1990s, television was dominated by the three large networks. The Telecommunications Act of 1996, an attempt to foster competition by deregulating the industry, actually resulted in many mergers and buyouts of small companies by large companies. The broadcast spectrum in many places was in the hands of a few large corporations. In 2003, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) loosened regulation even further, allowing a single company to own 45 percent of a single market (up from 25 percent in 1982).

1.1.4.2 Technological Transitions Shape Media Industries

New media technologies both spring from and cause cultural change. For this reason, it can be difficult to neatly sort the evolution of media into clear causes and effects. Did radio fuel the consumerist boom of the 1920s, or did the radio become wildly popular because it appealed to a society that was already exploring consumerist tendencies? Probably a little bit of both. Technological innovations such as the steam engine, electricity, wireless communication, and the Internet have all had lasting and significant effects on American culture. As media historians Asa Briggs and Peter Burke note, every crucial invention came with "a change in historical perspectives."Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Electricity altered the way people thought about time, since work and play were no longer dependent on the daily rhythms of sunrise and sunset. Wireless communication collapsed distance. The Internet revolutionized the way we store and retrieve information.

The contemporary media age can trace its origins back to the electrical telegraph, patented in the United States by Samuel Morse in 1837. Thanks to the telegraph, communication was no longer linked to the physical transportation of messages. Suddenly, it didn't matter whether a message needed to travel five or five hundred miles. Suddenly, information from distant places was nearly as accessible as local news. When the first transatlantic cable was laid in 1858, allowing near-instantaneous communication from the United States to Europe, *The London Times* described it as "the greatest discovery since that of Columbus, a vast enlargement…given to the sphere of human activity."Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*(Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Celebrations broke out in New York as people marveled at the new media. Telegraph lines began to stretch across the globe, making their own kind of world wide web.

Not long after the telegraph, wireless communication (which eventually led to the development of radio, television, and other broadcast media) emerged as an extension of telegraph technology. Although many 19th-century inventors, including Nikola Tesla, had a hand in early wireless experiments, it was Italian-born Guglielmo Marconi who is recognized as the developer of the first practical wireless radio system. This mysterious invention, where sounds seemed to magically travel through the air, captured the world's imagination. Early radio was used for military communication, but soon the technology entered the home. The radio mania that swept the country inspired hundreds of applications for broadcasting licenses, some from newspapers and other news outlets, while other radio station operators included retail stores, schools, and even cities. In the 1920s, large media networks—including the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS)—were launched, and they soon began to dominate the airwaves. In 1926, they owned 6.4 percent of U.S. broadcasting stations; by 1931, that number had risen to 30 percent.Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005).

The 19th-century development of photographic technologies would lead to the later innovations of cinema and television. As with wireless technology, several inventors independently came up with photography at the same time, among them the French inventors Joseph Niepce and Louis Daguerre, and British scientist William Henry Fox Talbot. In the United States, George Eastman developed the Kodak camera in 1888, banking on the hope that Americans would welcome an inexpensive, easy-to-use camera into their homes, as they had with the radio and telephone. Moving pictures were first seen around the turn of the century, with the first U.S. projection hall opening in Pittsburgh in 1905. By the 1920s, Hollywood had already created its first stars, most notably Charlie Chaplin. By the end of the 1930s, Americans were watching color films with full sound, including *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*.

Television, which consists of an image being converted to electrical impulses, transmitted through wires or radio waves, and then reconverted into images, existed before World War II but really began to take off in the 1950s. In 1947, there were 178,000 television sets made in the United States; five years later, there were 15 million. Radio, cinema, and live theater all saw a decline in the face of this new medium that allowed viewers to be entertained with sound and moving pictures without having to leave their homes.

How was this powerful new medium going to be operated? After much debate, the United States opted for the market. Competing commercial stations (including the radio powerhouses of CBS and NBC) owned stations and sold advertising and commercial-driven programming dominated.

Britain took another track with its government-managed British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Funding was driven by licensing fees instead of advertisements. In contrast to the American system, the BBC strictly regulated the length and character of commercials that could be aired. U.S. television, propelled by prosperity, advertising and increasingly powerful networks, flourished. By the beginning of 1955, there were 36 million television sets in the United States, and 4.8 million in all of Europe.Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005). Important national events, broadcast live for the first time, were an impetus for consumers to buy sets and participate in the spectacle—both England and Japan saw a boom in sales before important royal weddings in the 1950s.



Figure 1.4. *In the 1960s, the concept of a useful portable computer was still a dream; huge mainframes were required to run a basic operating system.*

For the last stage in this fast history of media technology, how's this for a prediction? In 1969, management consultant Peter Drucker predicted that the next major technological innovation after television would be an "electronic appliance" that would be "capable of being plugged in wherever there is electricity and giving immediate access to all the information needed for school work from first grade through college." He said it would be the equivalent of Edison's light bulb in its ability to revolutionize how we live. He had, in effect, predicted the computer. He was prescient about the effect that computers and the Internet would have on education, social relationships, and the culture at large. The inventions of random access memory (RAM) chips and microprocessors in the 1970s were important steps along the way to the Internet age. As Briggs and Burke note, these advances meant that "hundreds of thousands of components could be carried on a microprocessor." The reduction of many different kinds of content to digitally stored information meant that "print, film, recording, radio and television and all forms of telecommunications [were] now being thought of increasingly as part of one complex." This process, also known as convergence, will be discussed in later chapters and is a force that's shaping the face of media today.

1.1.4.3 Why Media? What Do Media Do for Us?

Even a brief history of media can leave one breathless. The speed, reach, and power of the technology are humbling. The evolution can seem almost natural and inevitable, but it is important to stop and ask a basic question: Why? Why do media seem to play such an important role in our lives and our culture? With reflection, we can see that media fulfill several basic roles.

One obvious role is *entertainment*. Media can act as a springboard for our imaginations, a source of fantasy, and an outlet for escapism. In the 19th century, Victorian readers, disillusioned by the grimness of the Industrial Revolution, found themselves drawn into books that offered fantastic worlds of fairies and other unreal beings. In the first decade of the 21st century, American television viewers could relax at the end of a day by watching singers, both wonderful and terrible, compete to be idols or watch two football teams do battle. Media entertain and distract us in the midst of busy and hard lives.

Media can also provide *information* and *education*. Information can come in many forms, and often blurs the line with entertainment. Today, newspapers and news-oriented television and radio programs make available stories from across the globe, allowing readers or viewers in London to have access to voices and videos from Baghdad, Tokyo, or Buenos Aires. Books and magazines provide a more in-depth look at a wide range of subjects. Online encyclopedias have articles on topics from presidential nicknames to child prodigies to tongue-twisters in various languages. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has posted free lecture notes, exams, and audio and video recordings of classes on its OpenCourseWare website, allowing anyone with an Internet connection access to world-class professors.

Another useful aspect of media is its ability to act as a **public forum** for the discussion of important issues. In newspapers or other periodicals, letters to the editor allow readers to respond to journalists, or voice their opinions on the issues of the day. These letters have been an important part of U.S. newspapers even when the nation was a British colony, and they have served as a means of public discourse ever since. Blogs, discussion boards, and online comments are modern forums. Indeed, the Internet can be seen as a fundamentally democratic medium that allows people who can get online the ability to put their voices out there—though whether anyone will hear is another question.

Media can also serve to *monitor government, business, and other institutions*. Upton Sinclair's 1906 novel *The Jungle* exposed the miserable conditions in the turn-of-the-century meatpacking industry. In the early 1970s, *Washington Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncovered evidence of the Watergate break-in and subsequent cover-up, which eventually led to the resignation of then-president Richard Nixon. Online journalists today try to uphold the "watchdog" role of the media.

Thinking more deeply, we can recognize that certain media are better at certain roles. Media have characteristics that influence how we use them. While some forms of mass media are better suited to entertainment, others make more sense as a venue for spreading information. For example, in terms of print media, books are durable and able to contain lots of information, but are relatively slow and expensive to produce. In contrast, newspapers are comparatively cheaper and quicker to create, making them a better medium for the quick turnover of daily news. Television provides vastly more visual information than radio, and is more dynamic than a static printed page; it can also be used to broadcast live events to a nationwide audience, as in the annual State of the Union addresses given by the U.S. president. However, it is also a one-way medium—that is, it allows for very little direct person-to-person communication. In contrast, the Internet encourages public discussion of issues and allows nearly everyone who wants a voice to have one. However, the Internet is also largely unmoderated and uncurated. Users may have to wade through thousands of inane comments or misinformed amateur opinions in order to find quality information.

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the 1960s media theorist Marshall McLuhan took these ideas one step further, with the phrase **"the medium is the message."** McLuhan emphasized that each medium delivers information in a different way and that content is fundamentally shaped by that medium. For example, although television news has the advantage of offering video and live coverage, making a story come vividly alive, it is also a faster-paced medium. That means stories get reported in different ways than print. A story told on television will often be more visual, have less information, and be able to offer less history and context than the same story covered in a monthly magazine. This feature of media technology leads to interesting arguments. For example, some people claim that television presents "dumbed down" information. Others disagree. In an essay about television's effects on contemporary fiction, writer David Foster Wallace scoffed at the "reactionaries who regard TV as some malignancy visited on an innocent populace, sapping IQs and compromising SAT scores while we all sit there on ever fatter bottoms with little mesmerized spirals revolving in our eyes…Treating television as evil is just as reductive and silly as treating it like a toaster with pictures."David Foster Wallace, *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* (New York: Little Brown, 1997).

We do not have to cast value judgments but can affirm: People who get the majority of their news from a particular medium will have a particular view of the world shaped not just by the *content* of what they watch but also by its *medium*. Or, as computer scientist Alan Kay put it, "Each medium has a special way of representing ideas that emphasize particular ways of thinking and de-emphasize others."Alan Kay, "The Infobahn is Not the Answer," *Wired*, May 1994. The Internet has made this discussion even richer because it seems to hold all other media within it—print, radio, film, television and more. If indeed the medium is the message, the Internet provides us with an extremely interesting message to consider.

- Gutenberg's invention of the printing press enabled the mass production of media, which was then industrialized by Friedrich Koenig in the early 1800s. These innovations enabled the daily newspaper, which united the urbanized, industrialized populations of the 19th century.
- In the 20th century, radio allowed advertisers to reach a mass audience and helped spur the consumerism of the 1920s—and the Great Depression of the 1930s. After World War II, television boomed in the United States and abroad, though its concentration in the hands of three major networks led to accusations of conformity. The spread of cable and subsequent deregulation in the 1980s and 1990s led to more channels, but not necessarily more diverse ownership.
- Technological transitions have also had great effect on the media industry, although it is difficult to say whether technology caused a cultural shift or rather resulted from it. The ability to make technology small and affordable enough to fit into the home is an important aspect of the popularization of new technologies.
- Media fulfill several roles in culture, including the following:
    - Entertaining and providing an outlet for the imagination
    - Educating and informing
    - Serving as a public forum for the discussion of important issues
    - Acting as a watchdog for government, business, and other institutions

? Exercise 1.1.4.1

Choose two different types of mass communication—radio shows, television broadcasts, Internet sites, newspaper advertisements, and so on from two different kinds of media. Make a list of what role(s) each one fills, keeping in mind that much of what we see, hear, or read in the mass media has more than one aspect. Consider the following questions: Does the type of media suit the social role? Why did the creators of this particular message present it in the particular way, and in this particular medium?

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1.1.5: Media Mix - Convergence

Learning Objectives

- Define convergence and discuss examples of it in contemporary life.
- Name the five types of convergence identified by Henry Jenkins.
- Examine how convergence is affecting culture and society.

Each cultural era is marked by changes in technology. What happens to the "old" technology? When radio was invented, people predicted the end of newspapers. When television was invented, people predicted the end of radio and film. It's important to keep in mind that the implementation of new technologies does not mean that the old ones simply vanish into dusty museums. Today's media consumers still read newspapers, listen to radio, watch television, and get immersed in movies. The difference is that it's now possible to do all those things and do all those things through one device—be it a personal computer or a smartphone—and through the medium of the Internet. Such actions are enabled by media convergence, the process by which previously distinct technologies come to share content, tasks and resources. A cell phone that also takes pictures and video is an example of the convergence of digital photography, digital video, and cellular telephone technologies. A news story that originally appeared in a newspaper and now is published on a website or pushed on a mobile phone is another example of convergence.

1.1.5.1 Kinds of Convergence

Convergence isn't just limited to technology. Media theorist Henry Jenkins has devoted a lot of time to thinking about convergence. He argues that convergence isn't an end result but instead *a process* that changes how media is both consumed and produced. Jenkins breaks convergence down into five categories:

1. *Economic convergence* is the horizontal and vertical integration of the entertainment industry, in which a single company has interests across and within many kinds of media. For example, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation owns numerous newspapers (*The New York Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*) but is also involved in book publishing (HarperCollins), sports (the Colorado Rockies), broadcast television (Fox), cable television (FX, National Geographic Channel), film (20th Century Fox), Internet (Facebook), and many others.
2. *Organic convergence* is what happens when someone is watching television while chatting online and also listening to music—such multitasking seems like a natural outcome in a diverse media world.
3. *Cultural convergence* has several different aspects. One important component is stories flowing across several kinds of media platforms—for example, novels that become television series (*Dexter* or *Friday Night Lights*); radio dramas that become comic strips (*The Shadow*); even amusement park rides that become film franchises (*Pirates of the Caribbean*). The character Harry Potter exists in books, films, toys, amusement park rides, and candy bars. Another aspect of cultural convergence is participatory culture—that is, the way media consumers are able to annotate, comment on, remix, and otherwise talk back to culture in unprecedented ways.



Figure 1.5. Nigeria's Nollywood produces more films annually than any other country besides India.

4. *Global convergence* is the process of geographically distant cultures influencing one another despite the oceans and mountains that may physically separate them. Nigeria's "Nollywood" cinema takes its cues from India's Bollywood, which of course stemmed from Hollywood; old *Tom and Jerry* cartoons and newer Oprah shows are popular on Arab satellite television channels; successful American horror movies like *The Ring* and *The Grudge* are remakes of Japanese hits; the hit television show, "American Idol" was a remake of a British show. The advantage of global convergence is worldwide access to a wealth of cultural influence. Its downside, some critics posit, is the threat of cultural imperialism, defined by Herbert Schiller as the way that developing countries are "attracted, pressured, forced, and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to

correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system." That is, less powerful nations lose their cultural traditions as more powerful nations spread their culture through their media and other forms. Cultural imperialism can be a formal policy or can happen more subtly, as with the spread of outside influence through television, movies, and other cultural projects.

5. *Technological convergence* is the merging of technologies. When more and more different kinds of media are transformed into digital content, as Jenkins notes, "we expand the potential relationships between them and enable them to flow across platforms."Henry Jenkins, "Convergence? I Diverge," *Technology Review*, June 2001, p. 93.

1.1.5.2 Effects of Convergence

Jenkins' concept of "organic convergence"—particularly, multitasking—is perhaps most evident in your own lives. To many who grew up in a world dominated by so-called old media, there is nothing organic about today's mediated world. As a *New York Times* editorial sniffed, "Few objects on the planet are farther removed from nature—less, say, like a rock or an insect—than a glass and stainless steel smartphone."Editorial, "The Half-Life of Phones," *The New York Times*, Week in Review section, June 18, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/opinion/20sun4.html?_r=1 (accessed July 15, 2010). But modern American culture is plugged in as never before, and many students today have never known a world where the Internet didn't exist. Such a cultural sea change causes a significant generation gap between those who grew up with new media and those who didn't.

A 2010 study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that Americans aged 8 to 18 spend more than 7.5 hours with electronic devices each day—and, thanks to multitasking, they're able to pack an average of 11 hours of media content into that 7.5 hours.Tamar Lewin, "If Your Kids Are Awake, They're Probably Online," *The New York Times*, Education section, January 20, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/education/20wired.html (accessed July 15, 2010). These statistics highlight some of the aspects of the new digital model of media consumption: participation and multitasking. Today's teenagers aren't passively sitting in front of screens, quietly absorbing information. Instead, they are sending text messages to friends, linking news articles on Facebook, commenting on YouTube videos, writing reviews of television episodes to post online, and generally engaging with the culture they consume. Convergence has also made multitasking much easier, as many devices allow users to surf the Internet, listen to music, watch videos, play games, and reply to emails and texts on the same machine.

However, this multitasking is still quite new and we do not know how media convergence and immersion are shaping culture, people, and individual brains. In his 2005 book *Everything Bad Is Good for You*, Steven Johnson argues that today's television and video games are mentally stimulating, in that they pose a cognitive challenge and invite active engagement and problem-solving. Poking fun at alarmists who see every new technology as making children more stupid, Johnson jokingly cautions readers against the dangers of book reading: it "chronically understimulates the senses" and is "tragically isolating." Even worse, books "follow a fixed linear path. You can't control their narratives in any fashion—you simply sit back and have the story dictated to you.…This risks instilling a general passivity in our children, making them feel as though they're powerless to change their circumstances. Reading is not an active, participatory process; it's a submissive one."Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad Is Good for You* (Riverhead, NY: Riverhead Books, 2005).

A 2010 book by Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* is more pessimistic. Carr worries that the vast array of interlinked information available through the Internet is eroding attention spans and making contemporary minds distracted and less capable of deep, thoughtful engagement with complex ideas and arguments. He mourns the change in his own reading habits. "Once I was a scuba diver in a sea of words," Carr reflects ruefully. "Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski." Carr cites neuroscience studies showing that when people try to do two things at once, they give less attention to each and perform the tasks less carefully. In other words, multitasking makes us do a greater number of things poorly. Whatever the ultimate cognitive, social, or technological results, though, convergence is changing the way we relate to media today.

Video Killed the Radio Star: Convergence Kills Off Obsolete Technology—Or Does It?

When was the last time you used a rotary phone? How about a payphone on a street? Or a library's card catalog? When you need brief, factual information, when was the last time you reached for a handy volume of *Encyclopedia Britannica*? Odds are, it's been a while. Maybe never. All of these habits, formerly common parts of daily life, have been rendered essentially obsolete through the progression of convergence.

But convergence hasn't erased old technologies; instead, it may have just altered the way we use them. Take cassette tapes and Polaroid film, for example. The underground

music tastemaker Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth recently claimed that he only listens to music on cassette. Polaroid Corporation, creators of the once-popular instant film cameras, was driven out of business by digital photography in 2008, only to be revived two years later—with pop star Lady Gaga as the brand's creative director. Several iPhone apps promise to apply effects to photos to make them look more like Polaroids.

Cassettes, Polaroids, and other seemingly obsolete technologies have been able to thrive—albeit in niche markets—both despite and because of Internet culture. Instead of being slick and digitized, cassette tapes and Polaroid photos are physical objects that are made more accessible and more human, according to enthusiasts, *because of* their flaws. "I think there's a group of people—fans and artists alike—out there to whom music is more than just a file on your computer, more than just a folder of mp3s," says Brad Rose, founder of a Tulsa-based cassette label. The distinctive Polaroid look—caused by uneven color saturation, under- or over-development, or just daily atmospheric effects on the developing photograph—is emphatically analog. In an age of high resolution, portable printers, and camera phones, the Polaroid's appeal has something to do with ideas of nostalgia and authenticity. Convergence has transformed who uses these media and for what purposes, but it hasn't run them out of town yet.

1.1.5.3 Key Takeaways

- Twenty-first century media culture is increasingly marked by convergence, or the coming together of previously distinct technologies, as in a cell phone that also allows users to take video and check email.
- Media theorist Henry Jenkins identifies the five kinds of convergence as the following:
    1. Economic convergence, when a single company has interests across many kinds of media.
    2. Organic convergence is multimedia multitasking, or the "natural" outcome of a diverse media world.
    3. Cultural convergence, when stories flow across several kinds of media platforms, and when readers or viewers can comment on, alter, or otherwise talk back to culture.
    4. Global convergence, when geographically distant cultures are able to influence one another.
    5. Technological convergence, in which different kinds of technology merge. The most extreme example of technological convergence would be the as-yet hypothetical "black box," one machine that controlled every media function.
- The jury is still out on how these different types of convergence will affect people on an individual and cultural level. Some theorists believe that convergence and new media technologies make people smarter by requiring them to make decisions and interact with the media they're consuming; others fear that the digital age is giving us access to more information but leaving us shallower.

? Exercise 1.1.5.1

Which argument do you find more compelling, Johnson's or Carr's? Make a list of points, examples, and facts that back up the theory that you think best explains the effects of convergence. Alternatively, come up with your own theory of how convergence is changing individual and society as a whole. Stage a mock debate with a member of the class who holds a view different from your own.

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1.1.6: Cultural Values Shape Media; Media Shape Cultural Values

Learning Objectives

- Name and discuss two limitations on free speech that are based on cultural values.
- Identify examples of propaganda in mass media.
- Define gatekeeper, and explain the role of the gatekeeper in mass media.

In a 1995 *Wired* magazine article, Jon Katz suggested that the Revolutionary War patriot Thomas Paine should be held up as "the moral father of the Internet." The Internet, Katz wrote, "offers what Paine and his revolutionary colleagues hoped for—a vast, diverse, passionate, global means of transmitting ideas and opening minds." In fact, according to Katz, the emerging Internet era is closer in spirit to the 18th-century media world than the 20th-century's so-called old media (radio, television, print). "The ferociously spirited press of the late 1700s…was dominated by individuals expressing their opinions. The idea that ordinary citizens with no special resources, expertise, or political power—like Paine himself—could sound off, reach wide audiences, even spark revolutions, was brand-new to the world."Jon Katz, "The Age of Paine," *Wired*, May 1995, http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/3.05/paine.html (accessed July 15, 2010).

As we continue our introduction to understanding media and culture, Katz's impassioned defense of Paine's plucky independence reminds us of how cultural values shape media. Paine's values led to his books and pamphlets that helped lead to a new nation. In all eras, cultural values shape the way media are created, used, and controlled. Keeping Katz's words in mind, we can ask ourselves further questions about the role of cultural values in our media today. How do cultural values shape our media and mass communication? And how, in turn, do media and mass communication shape our values? We'll start with a key American cultural value: free speech.

1.1.6.1 Free Speech as Cultural Value

The value of free speech is central to American mass communication, and has been since the nation's revolutionary founding. The U.S. Constitution's very first amendment guarantees the freedom of speech and of the press. Thanks to the First Amendment and subsequent statutes, the United States has some of the broadest protections on speech of any industrialized nation. We can see the value that American culture places on free speech. However, speech and the press are not always free—cultural values have placed limits and those limits, like values, have shifted over time.

Obscenity, for example, has not often been tolerated. Indeed, the very definition of obscenity has shifted over time with the nation's changing social attitudes. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, ranked by the Modern Library as the best English-language novel of the 20th century, was illegal to publish in the United States between 1922 and 1934. The 1954 Supreme Court case, *Roth v. The United States*, tried to lessen restrictions and defined obscenity more narrowly. It allowed for differences depending on "community standards." Obscenity became even more of an issue during the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Cultural changes of that era made it even more difficult to pin down just what was obscene and what was meant by "community standards." Today, obscenity continues its tug-of-war with cultural values. Sexually explicit magazines, such as *Playboy*, are available in nearly every U.S. airport, but pornography on the Internet is still a subject of concern.



Figure 1.6 Artist Shepard Fairey, creator of the iconic Obama HOPE image, was sued by the Associated Press for copyright infringement; Fairey argued that his work was protected by the fair use exception.

Copyright law also puts limits on free speech. Here we see a conflict between cultural values of free speech and the right to protect your creative rights. Intellectual property law was originally intended to protect just that—the proprietary rights, both economic and intellectual, of the originator of a creative work. Works under copyright can't be reproduced without the authorization of the creator, nor can anyone else use them to

make a profit. Inventions, novels, musical tunes, and even phrases can all be covered by copyright law. The first copyright statute in the United States set 14 years as the maximum term for copyright protection. This number has risen exponentially in the 20th century; some works are now copyright protected for up to 120 years. In recent years, an Internet culture that enables file sharing, mixing, mash-ups, and YouTube parodies has raised questions about copyright. Can you refer to a copyrighted work? What is *fair use* of a copyrighted work? The exact line between what expressions are protected or prohibited by law are still being set by courts; and as the changing values of the U.S. public evolve, copyright law—like obscenity law—will continue to change as well.

1.1.6.2 Persuasion and Cultural Values

Cultural values also shape mass media messages when producers of media content have vested interests in particular social goals. The producers offer media content that promotes or refutes particular viewpoints. Governments, corporations, nonprofits, colleges, indeed most organizations, all try to shape media content to promote themselves and their values. In its most heavy-handed form, at the level of government, this type of media influence can become propaganda, communication that intentionally attempts to persuade its audience for ideological, political, or commercial purposes. Propaganda often (but not always) distorts the truth, selectively presents facts, or uses emotional appeals. In war time, propaganda often includes caricatures of the enemy.

During World War I, for example, the U.S. government created the Creel Commission to act as a sort of public relations agency for the American entry into the war. The commission used radio, movies, posters, and in-person speakers to present a positive slant on the American war effort and demonize the opposing Germans. George Creel, chairman of the commission, acknowledged the committee's attempt at influencing the public, but he shied away from calling its work propaganda:

In no degree was the committee an agency of censorship, a machinery of concealment or repression.…In all things, from first to last, without halt or change, it was a plain publicity proposition, a vast enterprise in salesmanship, the world's greatest adventures in advertising…We did not call it propaganda, for that word, in German hands, had come to be associated with deceit and corruption. Our effort was educational and informative throughout, for we had such confidence in our case as to feel that no other argument was needed than the simple, straightforward presentation of the facts.George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920).



Figure 1.7 World War I propaganda posters were sometimes styled to resemble movie posters in an attempt to glamorize the war effort.

Of course, the line between the selective (but "straightforward") presentation of the truth and the manipulation of propaganda is not an obvious or distinct one. (Another of the commission's members was later deemed "the father of public relations" and authored a book titled *Propaganda*.) Advertisers craft messages so viewers want to buy their products. Some news sources, such as cable news channels or political blogs, have an explicit political slant. For our purposes, we simply want to keep in mind how cultural values shape much media content.

1.1.6.3 The Cultural Value of Gatekeepers

In 1960, journalist A. J. Liebling wryly observed that "freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." Although he may not have put it in those terms, Liebling was talking about the role of gatekeepers in the media industry, another way in which cultural values influence mass communication. Gatekeepers are the people who help determine which stories make it to the public, including reporters who decide what sources to use, and editors who pick what gets published and which stories make it to the front page. Media gatekeepers are part of culture and thus have their own cultural values, whether consciously or unconsciously. In deciding what counts as newsworthy, entertaining, or relevant, gatekeepers use their own values to create and shape what gets presented to the wider public. Conversely, gatekeepers may decide that some

events are unimportant or uninteresting to consumers. Those events may never reach the eyes or ears of a larger public.

In one striking example of how cultural values shape gatekeeping, journalist Allan Thompson points to the news media's sluggishness in covering the Rwandan genocide in 1994. Almost one million people were killed in ferocious attacks in just 100 days. Yet, as Thompson notes, few foreign correspondents were in Africa, and the world was slow to learn of the atrocities in Rwanda. Instead, the nightly news was preoccupied by the O. J. Simpson murder trial, Tonya Harding's attack on a fellow figure skater, or the less-bloody conflict in Bosnia (a European country, where more reporters were stationed). Thompson argues that the lack of international media attention allowed politicians to remain complacent. With little media coverage, there was little outrage about the Rwandan atrocities, which contributed to a lack of political will to invest time and troops in a faraway conflict. Richard Dowden, Africa Editor for the British newspaper *The Independent* during the Rwandan genocide, bluntly explained the news media's larger reluctance to focus on African issues: "Africa was simply not important. It didn't sell newspapers. Newspapers have to make profits. So it wasn't important. Cultural values by gatekeepers on the individual and institutional level downplayed the genocide at a time of great crisis, and potentially contributed to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people."POLISMedia, "The Media and the Rwanda Genocide," Lecture Delivered at The Crisis States Research Centre and POLIS at the London School of Economics, January 17, 2007, http://www.polismedia.org/rwandatranscript.aspx (accessed July 15, 2010).

Gatekeepers had an especially strong influence in old media, in which space and time were limited. A news broadcast could only last for its allotted half hour, 22 minutes with commercials, while a newspaper had a set number of pages to print. The Internet, in contrast, has room for infinite news reports. The interactive nature of the medium also minimizes the gatekeeper function of the media by allowing media consumers to have a voice as well. News aggregators like Digg.com allow readers to decide what makes it on to the front page. That is not to say that the wisdom or cultural values of the crowd is always wise—recent top stories on Digg have featured headlines like "Top 5 Hot Girls Playing Video Games" and "The girl who must eat every 15 minutes to stay alive." Media expert Mark Glaser noted that the digital age hasn't eliminated gatekeepers; it's just shifted who they are: "the editors who pick featured artists and apps at the Apple iTunes store, who choose videos to spotlight on YouTube, and who highlight Suggested Users on Twitter," among others. And unlike traditional media, these new gatekeepers rarely have public bylines, making it difficult to figure out who makes such decisions and on what basis.Mark Glaser, "New Gatekeepers Twitter, Apple, YouTube Need Transparent Editorial Picks," *PBS Mediashift*, March 26 2009.

Observing how distinct cultures and subcultures present the same story can be indicative of those cultures' various cultural values. Another way to look critically at today's media messages is to examine how the media has functioned in the world and in the United States during different cultural periods.

- American culture puts a high value on free speech; however, other cultural values sometimes take precedence. Shifting ideas about what constitutes obscenity, a kind of speech that is not legally protected by the First Amendment, is a good example of how cultural values impact mass communication—and of how those values change over time. Copyright law, another restriction put on free speech, has had a similar evolution over the nation's history.
- Propaganda is a message that attempts to persuade its audience for ideological, political, or social purposes. Some propaganda is obvious, explicit, and manipulative; however, advertising and public relations also are persuasive strategies that try to influence audiences.
- Gatekeepers influence culture by deciding what stories are considered newsworthy. Gatekeepers can promote cultural values either consciously or unconsciously. The digital age has lessened the power of gatekeepers somewhat, as the Internet allows for nearly unlimited space to cover any number of events and stories.

? Exercise 1.1.6.1

1. Find an advertisement—either in print, broadcast, or online—that you have recently found to be memorable. Now find a non-advertisement media message. Compare and contrast the ways that the ad and the non-ad express cultural values. Are the cultural values the same for each of them? Is the influence overt or covert? Why did the message's creators choose to present their message in this way?
2. Go to a popular website that uses user-uploaded content (YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Metafilter, etc.). Look at the content on the site's homepage. Can you tell how this particular content was selected to be featured? Does the website list a policy for featured content? What factors do you think go into the selection process?

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1.1.7: Mass Media and Popular Culture

Learning Objectives

- Define tastemakers, and give examples of their influence in traditional media.
- Examine the ways the digital age is undermining the traditional role of tastemakers.
- Analyze how Internet culture now allows creators to bypass gatekeepers, and discuss the potential effects of this.

In 1850, an epidemic swept America—but instead of leaving victims sick with fever or flu, this was a rabid craze for the music of Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. American showman P. T. Barnum (who would later go on to found the circus we now know as Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus), a shrewd marketer and self-made millionaire, is credited with spreading "Lindomania" through a series of astute show-business moves. Barnum promised Lind an unprecedented thousand-dollar-a-night fee (the equivalent of close to $30,000 in today's dollars) for her entire 93-performance tour of the United States. Ever the savvy self-promoter, Barnum turned this huge investment to his advantage, using it to drum up publicity—and it paid off. When the Swedish soprano's ship docked on U.S. shores, she was greeted by 40,000 ardent fans; another 20,000 swarmed her hotel. Congress was adjourned during Lind's visit to Washington, DC, where the National Theater had to be enlarged in order to accommodate her audiences. A town in California and an island in Canada were named in her honor. Enthusiasts could purchase Jenny Lind hats, chairs, boots, opera glasses, and even pianos.



Figure 1.8 Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

A little more than a century later, a new craze transformed American teenagers into screaming, fainting Beatle-maniacs. When the British foursome touched down at Kennedy Airport in 1964, they were met by more than 3,000 frenzied fans. Their performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* was seen by 73 million people, or 40 percent of the U.S. population. The crime rate that night dropped to its lowest level in 50 years. Beatlemania was at such a fever pitch that *Life* magazine cautioned that "A Beatle who ventures out unguarded into the streets runs the very real peril of being dismembered or crushed to death by his fans."Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess, and Gloria Jacobs, "Beatlemania: Girls Just Want to Have Fun," In *The Adoring Audience: Fan Culture and Popular Media*, ed. Lisa A. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1992). The BBC helpfully pointed out that there was plenty of paraphrenalia for true fans to spend their money on: "T-shirts, sweat shirts, turtle-neck sweaters, tight-legged trousers, night shirts, scarves, and jewellery inspired by the Beatles" were all available, as were Beatles-style moptop wigs.

In the 21st century, rabid fans could actually help decide the next pop stars through the reality television program *American Idol*. Derived from a British show, *American Idol* hit the airwaves in 2002 and became the only television program ever to earn the top spot in the Neilsen ratings for six seasons in a row, often averaging more than 30 million nightly viewers. Rival television networks quaked in fear, deeming the pop behemoth "the ultimate schoolyard bully," "the Death Star," or even "the most impactful show in the history of television."Bill Carter, "For Fox's Rivals, 'American Idol' Remains a 'Schoolyard Bully,'" *The New York Times*, February 20, 2007, Arts Section. Newspapers put developments on the show on their front pages. New cell phone technologies allowed viewers to have a direct role in the program's star-making enterprise through casting votes. Fans also could sign up for text alerts or play trivia games on their phones. In 2009, AT&T estimated that *Idol*-related text traffic amounted to 178 million messages.

An important consideration in any discussion of media and culture is the concept of *popular culture*. If culture is the expressed and shared values, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of a social group, organization, or institution, then what is popular culture? Popular culture is the media, products, and attitudes considered to be part of the mainstream of a given culture and the everyday life of common people. It is often distinct from more formal conceptions of culture that take into account moral, social, religious beliefs and values, such as our earlier definition of culture. It is also distinct from what some consider elite or high culture. For some people, *American Idol* is pop culture and opera is culture.

Pop culture and American media are inextricably linked—it's no coincidence that Jenny Lind, the Beatles, and *American Idol* were each promoted using a then-new technology—photography for Lind; television for the Beatles; the Internet and text messaging for *American Idol*. For as long as mass media have existed in the United States, they have helped to create and fuel mass crazes, skyrocketing celebrities, and pop culture manias of all kinds. Whether through newspaper advertisements, live television broadcasts, or integrated Internet marketing, media industry "tastemakers" help to shape what we care about. Even in our era of seemingly limitless entertainment options, mass hits like *American Idol* still have the ability to dominate the public's attention.

1.1.7.1 "The Tastemakers"

Historically, popular culture has been closely associated with mass media that introduce and encourage the adoption of certain trends. We can see these media as "tastemakers"—people or institutions that shape the way others think, eat, listen, drink, dress and more. Similar in some ways to the media gatekeepers discussed above, tastemakers can have huge influence. For example, *The New York Times'* restaurant and theater reviews used to be able to make or break a restaurant or show with their opinions. Another example is Ed Sullivan's variety show, which ran from 1948 to 1971, and is most famous for hosting the first U.S. appearance of the Beatles—a television event that was at the time the most-watched television program ever. Sullivan hosted musical acts, comedians, actors, and dancers, and had the reputation of being able to turn an unknown performer into a full-fledged star. Comedian Jackie Mason compared being on *The Ed Sullivan Show* to "an opera singer being at the Met. Or if a guy is an architect that makes the Empire State Building.… This was the biggest."John Leonard, "The Ed Sullivan Age," *American Heritage*, May/June, 1997. Sullivan was a classic example of an influential tastemaker of his time. *American Idol*'s Simon Cowell had similar influence as his show helped turn unknown local performers into international stars. Television hosts and comics Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert can be understood as tastemakers of progressive national politics.



Figure 1.9 Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert at Comedy Central's "Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear".

Source: Photo by Jeff Snyder/PictureGroup via AP Images

Along with encouraging a mass audience to keep an eye out for (or skip) certain movies, television shows, video games, books, or fashion trends, tastemaking is also used to create demand for new products. Companies often turn to advertising firms to help create a public hunger for an object that may have not even existed six months previously. In the 1880s, when George Eastman developed the Kodak camera for personal use, photography was the realm of professionals. Ordinary people simply did not think about taking photographs. "Though the Kodak was relatively cheap and easy to use, most Americans didn't see the need for a camera; they had no sense that there was any value in visually documenting their lives," noted *New Yorker* writer James Surowiecki.James Surowiecki, "The Tastemakers," *The New Yorker*, January 13, 2003. George Eastman's advertising introduced the very idea of photography to everyday Americans. Kodak became a wildly successful company not because Eastman was good at selling cameras, but because he understood that what he really had to sell was photography.

Tastemakers can help keep culture vital by introducing the public to new ideas, music, programs, or products. But the ability to sway or influence the tastes of consumers can be worth millions of dollars. In the traditional media model, media companies set aside large advertising budgets to promote their most promising projects. Tastemakers are encouraged to buzz about "the next big thing." In untraditional models, bribery and backroom deals also have helped promote performers or projects. For example, the Payola Scandal of the 1950s involved record companies paying the disc jockeys of radio stations to play certain records so those records would become hits. *Payola* is a combination of the words "pay" and "Victrola," a record

player. Companies today sometimes pay bloggers to promote their products.

1.1.7.2 A Changing System for the Internet Age

In retrospect, the 20th century was a tastemaker's dream. Media choices were limited. Many cities and towns had just three television channels, one or two newspapers, and one or two dominant radio stations. Advertisers, critics, and other cultural influencers had access to huge audiences through a small number of mass communication platforms. However, by the end of the century, the rise of cable television and the Internet had begun to make tastemaking a much more complicated enterprise. While *The Ed Sullivan Show* regularly reached 50 million people in the 1960s, the most popular television series of 2009—*American Idol*—averaged around 25.5 million viewers per night, despite the fact that the 21st century United States could claim more people and more television sets than ever before. The proliferation of television channels and other, competing forms of entertainment meant that no one program or channel could dominate the attention of the American public as in Sullivan's day.

Table 1.1 Viewings of Popular Television Broadcasts

Show/Episode	Number of Viewers	Percentage of Households	Year
The Ed Sullivan Show, Beatles' first appearance	73 million	45.1	1964
The Ed Sullivan Show, Elvis's first appearance	60 million	82.6	1956
I Love Lucy, "Lucy Goes to the Hospital"	44 million	71.7	1953
*M*A*S*H* series finale	106 million	60.2	1983
Seinfeld series finale	76 million	41.3	1998
American Idol season five finale	36 million	17	2006

The very concept of a "tastemaker" is undergoing a transformation. While the *American Idol* season five finale was reaching 36 million viewers, a low-tech home recording of a little boy acting loopy after a visit to the dentist ("David After Dentist") garnered more than 37 million YouTube viewings in 2009 alone. The Internet appears to be eroding some of the tastemaking power of the traditional media outlets. No longer are the traditional mass media the only dominant forces in creating and promoting trends. Instead, information can spread across the globe without any involvement of traditional media. Websites made by nonprofessionals can reach more people daily than a major newspaper. Music review sites such as Pitchfork.com keep their eyes out for the next big thing, whereas review aggregators like RottenTomatoes.com allow readers to read hundreds of reviews by amateurs and professionals alike. Mobile applications like Yelp allow consumers to get individual reviews of a restaurant while they are standing outside it. Blogs make it possible for anyone with Internet access to potentially reach an audience of millions. Some popular bloggers transitioned from the traditional media world to the digital world, but others became well known without formal institutional support. The celebrity gossip chronicler Perez Hilton had no formal training in journalism when he started his blog, PerezHilton.com, in 2005; within a few years, he was reaching millions of readers a month.

Email and text messages allow for the near-instant transmission of messages across vast geographic expanses. Although personal communications continue to dominate, email and text messages are increasingly used to directly transmit information about important news events. When Barack Obama wanted to announce his selection of Joe Biden as his vice-presidential running mate in the 2008 election, he bypassed the traditional televised press conference and instead sent the news to his supporters directly via text message—2.9 million text messages, to be exact.Nic Covey, "Flying Fingers," Nielsen, en-us.nielsen.com/main/insigh...flying_fingers (accessed July 15, 2010). Social networking sites, such as Facebook, and microblogging services, such as Twitter, are another source of late-breaking information. When Michael Jackson died of cardiac arrest in 2009, "RIP Michael Jackson" was a top trending topic on Twitter *before* mainstream media first reported the news.

Thanks to these and other digital-age media, the Internet has become a pop culture force, both a source of amateur talent and a source of amateur promotion. However, traditional media outlets still maintain a large amount of control and influence over U.S. pop culture. One key indicator is the fact that many singers or writers who first make their mark on the Internet quickly transition to more traditional media—YouTube star

Justin Bieber was snapped up by a mainstream record company, and blogger Perez Hilton is regularly featured on MTV and VH1. New media stars are quickly absorbed into the old media landscape.

1.1.7.3 Getting Around the Gatekeepers

Not only does the Internet allow little known individuals to potentially reach a huge audience with their art or opinions, but it also allows content-creators to reach fans directly. Projects that may have not succeeded as part of the established pop culture/mass media machine may get a chance in the digital world. For example, the media establishment has been surprised by the success of some self-published books: First-time author Daniel Suarez had his novel manuscript rejected by dozens of literary agents before he decided to self-publish in 2006. Through savvy self-promotion via influential bloggers, Suarez garnered enough attention to land a contract with a major publishing house.



Figure 1.10 E-readers offer authors a way to get around the traditional publishing industry, but their thousands of options can make choosing hard on readers.

Suarez's story, though certainly exceptional, points to some of the questions facing creators and consumers of pop culture in the Internet age. Without the influence of an agent, editor, or public relations firm, self-published content may be able to remain closer to the creator's intention. However, how then does the content reach the public? Does every artist have to have the public relations and marketing skills of Suarez? And with so many self-published, self-promoted works uploaded to the Internet every day, how will any work—even great work—get noticed?

It's not impossible. Critic Laura Miller spells out some of the ways in which writers in particular are able to take control of their own publishing: Writers can upload their works to services run by Amazon, Apple, and Barnes & Noble, she notes, "transforming them into e-books that are instantly available in high-profile online stores. Or they can post them on services like Urbis.com, Quillp.com, or CompletelyNovel.com and coax reviews from other hopeful users." Miller also points out that many of these companies can produce hard copies of books as well. While such a system may be a boon for writers who haven't had success with the traditional media establishment, Miller notes that it may not be the best option for readers, who "rarely complain that there isn't enough of a selection on Amazon or in their local superstore; they're more likely to ask for help in narrowing down their choices."Laura Miller, "When Anyone Can Be a Published Author," Salon, June 22, 2010, www.salon.com/books/laura_mil...10/06/22/slush (accessed July 15, 2010).

The commingling of the Internet and popular culture poses many intriguing questions for our future: Will the Internet era be marked by a huge and diffuse pop culture, where the power of traditional mass media declines and, along with it, the power of the universalizing blockbuster hit? Or will the Internet create a new set of tastemakers—influential bloggers or Tweeters? Or will the Internet serve as a platform for the old tastemakers to take on new forms? Or will the tastemakers become everyone?

1.1.7.3.1 More Reviewers=More Accurate Reviews… Right?

In 1993, *The New York Times* restaurant critic Ruth Reichl visited one of Manhattan's snootiest restaurants, Le Cirque, first as herself, a fashionable New Yorker, and then, one week later, in the guise of a frumpy Midwesterner. In her shocking review, the critic lambasted the restaurant's rude treatment of "Midwestern Molly"—an early battle in the fight for democratic reviews. Part of the point of Reichl's experiment was to find out how ordinary people were treated in restaurants. Now ordinary people can tell their own tales. The Internet, which has turned everyone with the time and interest into a potential reviewer, allows those ordinary people to have their voices heard. In the mid-2000s, websites such as Yelp and TripAdvisor boasted hundreds of reviews of restaurants, hotels, and salons provided by users. Amazon allowed users to review any product it sells, from textbooks to fertilizer to bathing suits. The era of the

democratized review was upon us, and tastemaking was now everyone's job.

More Reviewers=More Accurate Reviews… Right?

By crowd-sourcing the review process, the idea was, these sites would arrive at a more accurate description of the service in choice. One powerful reviewer would no longer be able to wield disproportionate power. Instead, the wisdom of the crowd would make or break restaurants, movies, and everything else. Anyone who felt treated badly or scammed now had recourse to tell the world about it. By 2008, Yelp boasted four million reviews.

However, mass tastemaking isn't as perfect as some people had promised. One determined reviewer can overly influence a product's overall rating by contributing multiple votes. One study found that a handful of Amazon users were casting hundreds of votes, while most rarely wrote reviews at all. Online reviews also tend to skew to extremes—more reviews are written by the ecstatic and the furious, while the moderately pleased aren't riled up enough to post online about their experiences. And while traditional critics are supposed to uphold ethics, there's no such standard for online reviews. Savvy authors or restaurant owners have been known to slyly insert positive reviews of themselves, or have attempted to skew ratings systems. In order to get an accurate picture, potential buyers may find themselves wading through 20 or 30 online reviews, most of them from non-professionals. Consider these Amazon user reviews of William Shakespeare's "Hamlet": "There is really no point and it's really long," "I really didn't enjoy reading this book and I wish that our English teacher wouldn't force my class to read this play," and "don't know what Willy Shakespeare was thinking when he wrote this one play tragedy, but I thought this sure was boring! Hamlet does too much talking and not enough stuff."

Such unhelpful reviews have begun to remind people of the point of having reviews in the first place—that it's an advantage to have certain places, products, or ideas examined and critiqued by a trusted source. In an article about Yelp, *The New York Times* noted that one of the site's elite reviewers had racked up more than 300 reviews in 3 years, then snidely pointed out that "By contrast, a *The New York Times* restaurant critic might take six years to amass 300 reviews. The critic visits a restaurant several times, strives for anonymity and tries to sample every dish on the menu."Donald G. McNeil, "Eat and Tell," *The New York Times*, Dining & Wine section, November 4, 2008. Whatever your vantage point, it's clear that old-style tastemaking is still around and still valuable—but the democratic review is here to stay.

- Traditionally, pop culture hits were often initiated or driven by the active support of media tastemakers. When mass media are limited in number, people with access to platforms for mass communication wield quite a bit of power in what becomes well-known, popular, or even infamous. Ed Sullivan's wildly popular variety show in the 1950s and 1960s served as a star-making vehicle and a tastemaker extraordinaire of that period.
- The digital age, with its proliferation of accessible media, has undermined the traditional role of the tastemaker. In contrast to the traditional media, Internet-based mass media is not limited by time or space and allows bloggers, critics, or wannabe stars to potentially reach millions without the backing of the traditional media industry.
- However, this democratization has its downsides as well. An abundance of mass communication without some form of selection can lead to information overload. Additionally, online reviews can be altered or biased.

Exercise 1.1.7.1

Find a popular newspaper or magazine that discusses popular culture. Look through it to determine what pop culture movements, programs, or people it seems to be covering. What is its overall tone? What messages does it seem to be promoting, either implicitly or explicitly? Next, find a website that also deals with popular culture and ask yourself the same questions. Are there differences between the traditional media's and the new media's approach to popular culture? Do they focus on the same subjects? Do they take similar attitudes? Why or why not?

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1.1.8: Media Literacy

Learning Objectives

- Define media literacy, and explain why it is relevant to today's world.
- Discuss the role of individual responsibility and accountability when responding to pop culture.
- List the five key questions that can be asked about any media message.

In Gutenberg's age and the subsequent modern era, literacy—the ability to read and write—was a concern not only of educators but also of politicians, social reformers, and philosophers. A literate population, many reasoned, would be able to seek out information, stay informed about the news of the day, communicate with others, and make informed decisions in many spheres of life. Because of this, the reasoning went, literate people made better citizens, parents, and workers. In the 20th century, as literacy rates grew around the globe, there was a new sense that merely being able to read and write was not enough. In a world dominated by media, individuals needed to be able to understand, sort through and analyze the information they were bombarded with every day. In the second half of the 20th century, a name was finally put to this skill of being able to decode and process the messages and symbols transmitted via media: media literacy. According to the nonprofit National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), a person who is media literate is able to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information. Put another way by John Culkin, a pioneering advocate for media literacy education, "the new mass media—film, radio, TV—are new languages, their grammar as yet unknown."Kate Moody, "John Culkin, SJ: The Man Who Invented Media Literacy: 1928–1993," Center for Media Literacy, www.medialit.org/reading_room/article408.html (accessed July 15, 2010). Media literacy seeks to give media consumers the ability to understand this new language.

1.1.8.1 Why Be Media Literate?

Culkin called the pervasiveness of media "the unnoticed fact of our present," noting that media information was as omnipresent and easy to overlook as the air we breathe (and, he noted, "some would add that it is just as polluted"). Our exposure to media starts early—a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 68 percent of children aged two and younger spend an average of two hours in front of a screen (either computer or television) each day, while children under six spend as much time in front of a screen as they do playing outside. As previously noted, U.S. teenagers are spending an average of 7.5 hours with media daily, nearly as long as they spend in school. Media literacy isn't merely a skill for young people, however. Today, Americans of all ages get much of their information from various media sources. One crucial role of media literacy education is to enable all of us to skeptically examine the often-conflicting media messages we receive every day.

1.1.8.2 Advertising

Many of the hours people spend with media are with commercial-sponsored content. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) estimated that children aged 2 to 11 saw, on average, 25,629 television commercials a year, or more than 10,700 minutes of ads. Adults saw 52,469 ads, or about 15.5 days worth of television advertising.Debra Holt, Pauline Ippolito, Debra Desrochers, and Christopher Kelley, "Children's Exposure to TV Advertising in 1977 and 2004," Federal Trade Commission Bureau of Economics Staff Report, June 1, 2007. Children (and adults) are bombarded with contradictory messages—newspaper articles about the obesity epidemic are side by side with ads touting soda, candy, and fast food. The American Academy of Pediatrics maintains that advertising directed at children under eight is "inherently deceptive" and exploitative because young children cannot tell the difference between programs and commercials.Donald Shifrin, "Perspectives on Marketing, Self-Regulation and Childhood Obesity," Remarks given at Federal Trade Commission Workshop July 14–15, 2005, Washington, DC.

Advertising raises other issues as well. It often uses techniques of psychological pressure to influence decision making. Ads might appeal to vanity, insecurity, prejudice, fear, or the desire for adventure. This is not always a negative thing—antismoking public service announcements may rely on disgusting images of blackened lungs to shock viewers. Nonetheless, media literacy attempts to teach people to be informed and guarded consumers, and to evaluate claims with a critical eye. Do "four out of five doctors" really endorse the product?

1.1.8.3 Bias, Spin, and Misinformation

Advertisements may have the explicit goal of selling a product or idea, but they're not the only kind of media message with an agenda. A politician may hope to persuade potential voters that she has their best interests at heart. An ostensibly objective journalist may allow his or her own political leanings to subtly slant articles. Magazine writers might avoid criticizing companies that advertise heavily in their pages. Broadcast news reporters may sensationalize stories in order to boost ratings—and advertising rates.

An important part of media literacy is remembering that mass communication messages are created by individuals, each with a set of values, assumptions, and priorities. Accepting media messages at face value could lead to head-spinning confusion, thanks to all the contradictory information that's out there. For example, in 2010, a highly contested governor's race in New Mexico led to conflicting ads from both candidates, Diane Denish and Susana Martinez. Each claimed that the other agreed to policies that benefited sex offenders. According to the media watchdog site Factcheck.org, the Denish team's ad "shows a pre-teen girl—seemingly about 9 years old—going down a playground slide in slow-motion, while ominous music plays in the background and an announcer discusses two sex crime cases. It ends with an empty swing, as the announcer says: 'Today we don't know where these sex offenders are lurking, because Susana Martinez didn't do her job.'" The opposing ad proclaims that "a department in Denish's cabinet gave sanctuary to criminal illegals [*sic*], like child molester Juan Gonzalez." Both claims are highly inflammatory, play on fear, and distort the reality behind each situation. Media literacy attempts to give people the skills to look critically at these and other media messages—to sift through various claims, and to make sense of the often-conflicting information we face every day.

The Center for Media Literacy's Five Core Concepts

1. All media messages are constructed.
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.http://www.medialit.org

1.1.8.4 New Skills for a New World

In the past, one goal of education was to provide students with the information deemed necessary to successfully engage with the world. Students memorized multiplication tables, state capitals, famous poems, and notable dates. In today's world, however, vast amounts of information are available at the click of a mouse. Even before the advent of the Internet, noted communications scholar David Berlo foresaw the consequences of expanding information technology: "Most of what we have called formal education has been intended to imprint on the human mind all of the information that we might need for a lifetime." Changes in technology necessitate changes in how we learn, Berlo noted, and these days "education needs to be geared toward the handling of data rather than the accumulation of data."David Shaw, "A Plea for Media Literacy in our Nation's Schools," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 2003.

Online technology surely has changed how we learn. For example, Wikipedia, a hugely popular Internet encyclopedia, is at the center of a debate on the proper use of online sources. In 2007, Middlebury College banned the use of Wikipedia as a source in history papers and exams. One of the school's librarians noted that the online encyclopedia "symbolizes the best and worst of the Internet. It's the best because everyone gets his/her say and can state their views. It's the worst because people who use it uncritically take for truth what is only opinion."Meredith Byers, "Controversy over use of Wikipedia in academic papers arrives at Smith," *Smith College Sophian*, News section, March 8, 2007. Or as comedian and satirist Stephen Colbert put it, "any user can change any entry, and if enough other users agree with them, it becomes true." In 2007, CIA computers were used to make edits on the site's article about the President of Iran. The Vatican allegedly doctored the entry for Irish activist and Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams. A computer registered to the U.S. Democratic Party changed the site's page for Rush Limbaugh to proclaim that he was "racist" and a "bigot."Jonathan Fildes, "Wikipedia 'shows CIA page edits.'" *BBC News*, Science and Technology section, August 15, 2007. Media literacy teaches today's students how to sort through the Internet's cloud of data, ferret out reliable sources, and be aware of bias and unreliable sources.

1.1.8.5 Individual Accountability and Popular Culture

Ultimately, media literacy teaches that messages and images are constructed with various aims in mind and that each individual has the responsibility to evaluate and interpret these media messages. Mass communication may be created and disseminated by individuals, businesses, governments, or organizations, but they are always received by an individual, even if that individual is sitting in a crowded theater. Education, life experience, and a host of other factors allow each person to interpret constructed media in different ways; there is no "right answer," or one way to read the media. But media literacy skills help us to function better in our media-rich environment, enabling us to be better democratic citizens, smarter shoppers, and more skeptical media consumers. As a means to this end, NAMLE has come up with a list of five questions to ask when analyzing media messages:

1. Who created this message?
2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message differently?

4. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
5. Why is this message being sent?Center for Media Literacy, MediaLitKit, www.medialit.org/pdf/mlk/14A_CCKQposter.pdf (accessed July 15, 2010).

With these questions as a starting point, we can ensure that we're staying informed about where our information comes from, and why—important steps in any media literacy education.

- Media literacy, or the ability to decode and process media messages, is especially key in today's media-saturated society. Media surrounds contemporary Americans to an unprecedented degree, and from an early age. Because media messages are constructed with particular aims in mind, a media literate individual will interpret them with a critical eye. Advertisements, bias, spin, and misinformation are all things to look out for.
- Individual responsibility is crucial for media literacy because, while media messages may be produced by individuals, companies, governments, or organizations, they are always received and decoded by individuals.
- The following are NAMLE's five questions that can be asked about any media message:
    1. Who created this message?
    2. What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?
    3. How might different people understand this message differently?
    4. What values, lifestyles, and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
    5. Why is this message being sent?

? Exercise 1.1.8.1

Find a media message of any kind and apply NAMLE's five questions to it. Did your impression change? How does this piece of mass communication attempt to get its message across? Do you think it's successful? Why or why not?

? End-of-Chapter Assessment

Review Questions

1. Questions for Section 1.1
    1. What is the difference between mass communication and mass media?
    2. What are some ways that culture affects media?
    3. What are some ways that media affect culture?
2. Questions for Section 1.2
    1. List four roles that media plays in society.
    2. Identify historical events that shaped the adoption of various mass communication platforms.
    3. How have technological shifts impacted the media industry over time?
3. Questions for Section 1.3
    1. What is a cultural period?
    2. How did events, technological advances, political changes, and philosophies help shape the modern era?
    3. What are some of the major differences between the modern and postmodern eras?
4. Questions for Section 1.4
    1. What is convergence, and what are some examples of it in daily life?
    2. What were the five types of convergence identified by Jenkins?
    3. How are different kinds of convergence shaping the digital age, on both an individual and a social level?
5. Questions for Section 1.5
    1. How does the value of free speech influence American culture and media?
    2. What are some of the limits placed on free speech, and how do they reflect social values?
    3. What is propaganda, and how does it reflect or influence social values?
    4. Who are gatekeepers, and how do they influence the media landscape?
6. Questions for Section 1.6
    1. What is popular culture and how does it differ from traditional notions of culture?
    2. Who are tastemakers and what are some key examples?
    3. How have tastemakers changed with changes in technology?
7. Questions for Section 1.7
    1. What is media literacy, and why is it relevant in today's world?
    2. What is the role of the individual in interpreting media messages?
    3. What are the five questions that NAMLE suggests should be asked of any media message?

? Critical Thinking Questions

1. What does the history of media technologies have to teach us about present-day America? How might current and emerging technologies change our cultural landscape in the near future?
2. Are gatekeepers and tastemakers necessary for mass media? How is the Internet helping us to re-imagine these roles?
3. The idea of cultural periods presumes that changes in society and technology lead to dramatic shifts in the way people see the world. How has the Internet and digital technology changed how people interact with their environment, and with each other? Are we changing to a new cultural period, or is contemporary life still a continuation of the postmodern era?
4. U.S. law regulates free speech through laws on obscenity, copyright infringement, and other things. Why are some forms of expression protected and others aren't? How do you think cultural values will change U.S. media law in the near future?
5. Does media literacy education belong in American schools? Why or why not? What might a media literacy curriculum look like?

Career Connection

In a heavily mediated world, almost every organization, from a university to a multinational corporation, employs media specialists. Many organizations also use consultants to help analyze and manage the interaction between their organizations and the media. Independent consultants develop projects, keep abreast of media trends, and provide advice based on industry reports. Or, as writer, speaker, and media consultant Merlin Mann puts it, the "primary job is to stay curious about everything, identify the points where two forces might clash, then enthusiastically share what that might mean, as well as why you might care."

Read the blog post "So what do consultants do?" at http://www.consulting-business.com/so-what-do-consultants-do.html.

Now explore the site of Merlin Mann at http://www.merlinmann.com. Make sure to take a look at the "Bio" and "FAQs" sections. These two pages will help you answer the following questions:

1. Merlin Mann provides some work for free and charges a significant amount for other projects. What are some of the indications he gives in his biography about what he values? How do you think his values influence his fees?
2. Check out Merlin's "Projects." What are some of the projects that Merlin is or has been involved with? Now look at the "Speaking" page. Can you see a link between his projects and his role as a prominent writer, speaker, and consultant?
3. Check out Merlin's FAQ section. What is his attitude about social networking sites? What about public relations? Why do you think he holds these opinions?
4. Think about niches in the Internet industry where a consultant might be helpful. Do you have expertise, theories, or reasonable advice that might make you a useful asset for a business or organization? Find an example of an organization or group with some media presence. If you were this group's consultant, how would you recommend that they better reach their goals?

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.2: Media Effects

1.2.1: Mass Media and Their Messages

1.2.2: Media Effects Theories

1.2.3: Methods of Researching Media Effects

1.2.4: Media Studies Controversies

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1.2.1: Mass Media and Their Messages

Learning Objectives

- Explain the different ways mass media affects culture.
- Analyze cultural messages that the media send.
- Explain the ways new media have affected culture.

When media consumers think of media messages, they may think of televised public service announcements or political advertisements. These obvious examples provide a venue for the transfer of a message through a medium, whether that message is a plea for fire safety or the statement of a political position. But what about more abstract political advertisements that simply show the logo of a candidate and a few simple words? Media messages can range from overt statements to vague expressions of cultural values.

Disagreements over the content of media messages certainly exist. Consider the common allegations of political bias against various news organizations. Accusations of hidden messages or agenda-driven content have always been an issue in the media, but as the presence of media grows, the debate concerning media messages increases. This dialogue is an important one; after all, mass media have long been used to persuade. Many modern persuasive techniques stem from the use of media as a propaganda tool. The role of propaganda and persuasion in the mass media is a good place to start when considering various types of media effects.

1.2.1.1 Propaganda and Persuasion

Encyclopedia Britannica defines propaganda simply as the "manipulation of information to influence public opinion."*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Propaganda." This definition works well for this discussion because the study and use of propaganda has had an enormous influence on the role of persuasion in modern mass media. In his book *The Creation of the Media*, Paul Starr argues that the United States, as a liberal democracy, has favored employing an independent press as a public guardian, thus putting the media in an inherently political position.Paul Starr, *Creation of the Media* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 394–395. The United States—in contrast to other nations where media are held in check—has encouraged an independent commercial press and thus given the powers of propaganda and persuasion to the public.Paul Starr, *Creation of the Media* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 394–395.

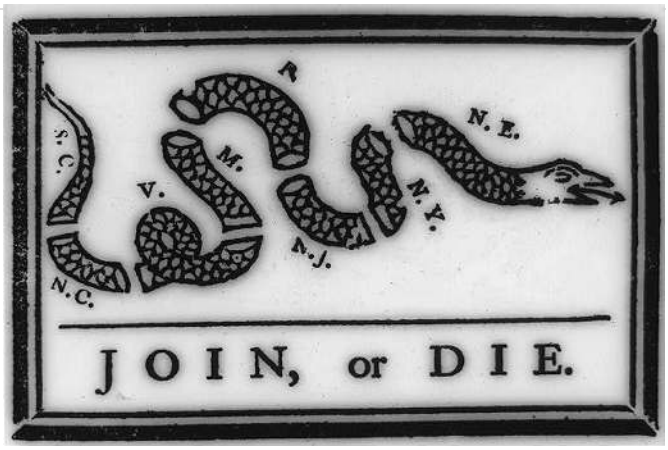


Figure 2.2 Benjamin Franklin used a powerful image of a severed snake to emphasize the importance of the colonies joining together during the American Revolution.

Like any type of communication, propaganda is not inherently good or bad. Whether propaganda has a positive or negative effect on society and culture depends on the motivations of those who use it and the understandings of those who receive it. People promoting movements as wide-ranging as Christianity, the American Revolution, and the communist revolutions of the 20th century have all used propaganda to disseminate their messages.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 60–61. Newspapers and pamphlets that glorified the sacrifices at Lexington and Concord and trumpeted the victories of George Washington's army greatly aided the American Revolution. For example, Benjamin Franklin's famous illustration of a severed snake with the caption "Join, or Die" serves as an early testament to the power and use of print propaganda.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 80–81.

As you will learn in Chapter 4, the penny press made newspapers accessible to a mass audience and became a force for social cohesion during the 1830s.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 95–96. Magazines adopted a similar format later in the 19th century, and print media's political and social power rose. In an infamous example of the new power of print media, some newspapers encouraged the Spanish-American War of 1898 by fabricating stories of Spanish atrocities and sabotage.Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 103–104. For example, after the USS *Maine* sunk off the coast of Havana, Cuba, some newspapers blamed the Spanish—even though there was no evidence—fueling the public's desire for war with Spain.

The present-day, pejorative connotation of propaganda recalls the utilization of mass media by World War I–era governments to motivate the citizenry of many countries to go to war. Some media outlets characterized that war as a global fight between Anglo civilization and Prussian barbarianism. Although some of those fighting the war had little understanding of the political motivations behind it, wartime propaganda convinced them to enlist.Mark Crispin Miller, introduction to *Propaganda*, by Edward Bernays (Brooklyn, NY: IG Publishing, 2005), 11. As you will read in Chapter 12, World War I legitimized the advertising profession in the minds of government and corporate leaders because its techniques were useful in patriotic propaganda campaigns. Corporations quickly adapted to this development and created an advertising boom in the 1920s by using World War I propaganda techniques to sell products.Mark Crispin Miller, introduction to *Propaganda*, by Edward Bernays (Brooklyn, NY: IG Publishing, 2005), 12.

In modern society, the persuasive power of the mass media is well known. In the years after 9/11, there were multiple reports of the death of Osama bin Laden; people desperately wanted to believe he was killed. In reality, he was killed in 2011. Governments, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and political campaigns rely on both new and old media to create messages and to send them to the general public. During and since the 2008 Presidential election, there has been constant scrutiny over Barack Obama's birthplace and citizenship; the reports are discredited, but the questions resurface. The comparatively unregulated nature of U.S. media has made, for better or worse, a society in which the tools of public persuasion are available to everyone.

1.2.1.2 Media Effects and Behavior

Although the mass media send messages created specifically for public consumption, they also convey messages that are not properly defined as propaganda or persuasion. Some argue that these messages influence behavior, especially the behavior of young people.Alexandra Beatty, "Studying Media Effects on Children and Youth: Improving Methods and Measures, Workshop Summary," March 2–3, 2006, The National Academies Press, http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=11706; "Media Influence on Youth," Crisis Connection, www.crisisconnectioninc.org/t...e_on_youth.htm. Violent, sexual, and compulsive behaviors have been linked to media consumption and thus raise important questions about the effects of media on culture.

1.2.1.3 Violence and the Media

On April 20, 1999, students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold entered their Denver-area high school, Columbine High School, armed with semiautomatic weapons and explosives. Over the next few hours, the pair killed 12 classmates and one faculty member before committing suicide.Gina Lamb, "Columbine High School," Times Topics, *New York Times*, April 17, 2008, http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html. The tragedy and its aftermath captured national attention, and in the weeks following the Columbine High School shootings, politicians and pundits worked to assign blame. Their targets ranged from the makers of the first-person shooter video game *Doom* to the Hollywood studios responsible for *The Matrix*.Tom Brook, "Is Hollywood to Blame?" *BBC News*, April 23, 1999, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1999/03/99/tom_brook/326529.stm.

However, in the years since the massacre, research has revealed that the perpetrators were actually attempting a terrorist bombing rather than a first-person shooter style rampage.Greg Toppo, "10 Years Later, the Real Story Behind Columbine," *USA Today*, April 13, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-04-13-columbine-myths_N.htm. But did violent video games so desensitize the two teenagers to violence that they could contemplate such a plan? Did movies that glorify violent solutions create a culture that would encourage people to consider such methods? Because modern culture is so immersed in media, the issue becomes a particularly complex one, and it can be difficult to understand the types of effects that violent media produce.

A number of studies have verified certain connections between violent video games and violent behavior in young people. For example, studies have found that some young people who play violent video games reported angry thoughts and aggressive feelings immediately after playing. Other studies, such as one conducted by Dr. Chris A. Anderson and colleagues, point to correlations between the amount of time spent playing violent video games and increased incidence of aggression.Craig A. Anderson and others, "The Influence of Media Violence on Youth," *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 4, no. 3 (2003): 81–110. However, these studies do not prove that video games cause violence. Video game defenders argue that violent people can be drawn to violent games, and they point to lower overall incidence of youth violence in recent years compared to past decades.Jill U. Adams, "Effects of Violent Video Games," *Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 2010, http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/03/health/la-he-closer-20100503. Other researchers admit that individuals prone to violent acts are indeed drawn to violent media; however, they claim that by keeping these individuals in a movie theater or at home, violent media have actually contributed to a reduction in violent social acts.Peter Goodman, "Violent Films May Cut

Real Crime, Study Finds," *New York Times*, January 7, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/07/technology/07iht-violence.4.9058958.html.



Figure 2.3 The 1999 Columbine High School shooting led to greater debate and criticism over violent video games. Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

Whether violent media actually cause violence remains unknown, but unquestionably these forms of media send an emotional message to which individuals respond. Media messages are not limited to overt statements; they can also use emotions, such as fear, love, happiness, and depression. These emotional reactions partially account for the intense power of media in our culture.

1.2.1.4 Sex and the Media

In many types of media, sexual content—and its strong emotional message—can be prolific. A recent study by researchers at the University of North Carolina titled "Sexy Media Matter: Exposure to Sexual Content in Music, Movies, Television, and Magazines Predicts Black and White Adolescents' Sexual Behavior" found that young people with heavy exposure to sexually themed media ranging from music to movies are twice as likely to engage in early sexual behavior as young people with light exposure. Although the study does not prove a conclusive link between sexual behavior and sexually oriented media, researchers concluded that media acted as an influential source of information about sex for these youth groups.Kathleen Doheny, "Mass Media May Prompt Kids to Try Sex: Study," *Health Scout*, April 3, 2006, www.healthscout.com/news/1/531862/main.html. Researcher Jane Brown thinks part of the reason children watch sexual content is related to puberty and their desire to learn about sex. While many parents are hesitant to discuss sex with their children, the media can act like a "super peer," providing information in movies, television, music, and magazines.Kathleen Doheny, "Mass Media May Prompt Kids to Try Sex: Study," *Health Scout*, April 3, 2006, www.healthscout.com/news/1/531862/main.html. Reality series, such as *Teen Mom* and *16 and Pregnant*, are prevalent on the popular MTV station. We will explore in greater detail the impact of sexual content in the media in Chapter 14.

1.2.1.5 Cultural Messages and the Media

The media sends messages that reinforce cultural values. These values are perhaps most visible in celebrities and the roles that they adopt. Actors such as Jake Gyllenhaal and Scarlett Johansson have come to represent aspects of masculinity and femininity that have been adopted into mainstream culture in the last 10 years. In recent years, baseball player Derek Jeter appeared in television, film, magazines, and advertising campaigns as a model of athleticism and willpower. Singers such as Bono of U2 have represented a sense of freedom and rebellion against mainstream culture.

Although many consider celebrity culture superficial and a poor reflection of a country's values, not all celebrities are simply entertainers. Civil rights leaders, social reformers, and other famous public figures have come to represent important cultural accomplishments and advancements through their representations in the media. When images of Abraham Lincoln or Lady Gaga appear in the media, they resonate with cultural and historical themes greatly separated from mere fame.

Celebrities can also reinforce cultural stereotypes that marginalize certain groups. Television and magazines from the mid-20th century often portrayed women in a submissive, domestic role, both reflecting and reinforcing the cultural limitations imposed on women at the time. Advertising icons developed during the early 20th century, such as Aunt Jemima and the Cream of Wheat chef, similarly reflected and reinforced a submissive, domestic servant role for African Americans. Other famous stereotypes—such as the Lone Ranger's Native American sidekick, Tonto, or Mickey Rooney's Mr. Yunioshi role in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*—also reinforced American preconceptions about ethnic predispositions and capabilities.



Figure 2.4 Tonto from *The Lone Ranger* reinforced cultural stereotypes about Native Americans. Do you think this type of characterization would be acceptable in modern television? Source: Used with permission from Getty Images.

Whether actual or fictional, celebrities and their assumed roles send a number of different messages about cultural values. They can promote courageous truth telling, hide and prolong social problems, or provide a concrete example of an abstract cultural value.

1.2.1.6 New Media and Society

New media—the Internet and other digital forms of communication—have had large effects on society. This communication and information revolution has created a great deal of anguish about digital literacy and other issues that inevitably accompany such a social change. In his book on technology and communication, *A Better Pencil*, Dennis Baron discusses this issue:

For Plato, only speech, not writing, can produce the kind of back-and-forth—the dialogue—that's needed to get at the truth … the text, orphaned by its author once it's on the page, cannot defend itself against misreading…. These are strong arguments, but even in Plato's day they had been rendered moot by the success of the written word. Although the literacy rate in classical Greece was well below 10 percent, writing had become an important feature of the culture. People had learned to trust and use certain kinds of writing—legal texts, public inscriptions, business documents, personal letters, and even literature—and as they did so, they realized that writing, on closer examination, turned out to be neither more nor less reliable or ambiguous than the spoken word, and it was just as real.Dennis Baron, *A Better Pencil: Readers, Writers, and the Digital Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5.

Baron makes the point that all communication revolutions have created upheavals and have changed the standards of literacy and communication. This historical perspective gives a positive interpretation to some otherwise ominous developments in communication and culture.

1.2.1.7 Information

The Internet has made an incredible amount of new information available to the general public. Both this wealth of information and the ways people process it are having an enormous effect on culture. New perceptions of information have emerged as access to it grows. Older-media consumption habits required in-depth processing of information through a particular form of media. For example, consumers read, watched, or viewed a news report in its entirety, typically within the context of a news publication or program. Fiction appeared in book or magazine form.

Today, information is easier to access, thus more likely to traverse several forms of media. An individual may read an article on a news website and then forward part of it to a friend. That person in turn describes it to a coworker without having seen the original context. The ready availability of information through search engines may explain how a clearly satirical *Onion* article on the Harry Potter phenomenon came to be taken as fact. Increasingly, media outlets cater to this habit of searching for specific bits of information devoid of context. Information that will attract the most attention is often featured at the expense of more important stories. At one point on March 11, 2010, for example, *The Washington Post* website's most popular story was "Maintaining a Sex Life."Michiko Kakutani, "Texts Without Context," *New York Times*, March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/books/21mash.html.

Another important development in the media's approach to information is its increasing subjectivity. Some analysts have used the term cyberbalkanization to describe the way media consumers filter information. Balkanization is an allusion to the political fragmentation of Eastern Europe's Balkan states following World War I, when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated into a number of ethnic and political fragments. Customized news feeds allow individuals to receive only the kinds of news and information they want and thus block out sources that report unwanted stories or perspectives. Many cultural critics have pointed to this kind of information filtering as the source of

increasing political division and resulting loss of civic discourse. When media consumers hear only the information they want to, the common ground of public discourse that stems from general agreement on certain principles inevitably grows smaller.Michiko Kakutani, “Texts Without Context,” *New York Times*, March 17, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/21/books/21mash.html.

1.2.1.8 Literacy

On one hand, the growth of the Internet as the primary information source exposes the public to increased levels of text, thereby increasing overall literacy. Indeed, written text is essential to the Internet: Web content is overwhelmingly text-based, and successful participation in Internet culture through the use of blogs, forums, or a personal website requires a degree of textual literacy that is not necessary for engagement in television, music, or movies.

Critics of Internet literacy, however, describe the majority of forum and blog posts as subliterate and argue that the Internet has replaced the printed newspapers and books that actually raised the standards of literacy. One nuanced look at the Internet’s effect on the way a culture processes and perceives information states that literacy will not simply increase or decrease but will change qualitatively.Suzanne Choney, “Internet Making Our Brains Different, Not Dumb,” *MSNBC*, Feb. 19, 2010, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35464896/ns/technology_and_science-tech_and_gadgets/. Perhaps the standards for literacy will shift to an emphasis on simplicity and directness, for example, rather than on elaborate uses of language.

1.2.1.9 News



Figure 2.5 President Barack Obama fired General Stanley McChrystal after a controversial *Rolling Stone* story in which McChrystal spoke poorly of the Obama administration was leaked on the Internet.

Certainly, the Internet has affected the way that cultures consume news. The public expects to receive information quickly, and news outlets respond rapidly to breaking stories. On Monday, June 21, 2010, for example, a spokesperson for *Rolling Stone* magazine first released quotes from a story featuring General Stanley McChrystal publicly criticizing members of the Obama administration on matters of foreign policy. By that evening, the story had become national news despite the fact *Rolling Stone* didn’t even post it to its website until Tuesday morning—some time after several news outlets had already posted the entire story on their own sites. Later that same day, McChrystal issued a public apology, and on Wednesday flew to Washington where President Barack Obama fired him. The printed *Rolling Stone* issue featuring the article hit newsstands Friday, two days after McChrystal had been replaced.Jim Timpane, “New Media Too Speedy to Outflank,” *Philly.com*, June 24, 2010, http://www.philly.com/philly/entertainment/20100624_New_media_too_speedy_to_outflank.html.

1.2.1.10 Convergence Culture

As we have seen, the term *convergence* can hold several different meanings. In *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Henry Jenkins offers a useful definition of convergence as it applies to new media:

"By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want."Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 2.

A self-produced video on the YouTube website that gains enormous popularity and thus receives the attention of a news outlet is a good example of this migration of both content and audiences. Consider this flow: The video appears and gains notoriety, so a news outlet broadcasts a story about the video, which in turn increases its popularity on YouTube. This migration works in a number of ways. Humorous or poignant excerpts from television or radio broadcasts are often posted on social media sites and blogs, where they gain popularity and are seen by more people than had seen the original broadcast.

Thanks to new media, consumers now view all types of media as participatory. For example, the massively popular talent show *American Idol* combines an older-media format—television—with modern media consumption patterns by allowing the home audience to vote for a favorite contestant. However, *American Idol* segments regularly appear on YouTube and other websites, where people who may never have seen the show comment on and dissect them. Phone companies report a regular increase in phone traffic following the show, presumably caused by viewers calling in to cast their votes or simply to discuss the program with friends and family. As a result, more people are exposed to the themes, principles, and culture of *American Idol* than the number of people who actually watch the show.Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 83.

New media have encouraged greater personal participation in media as a whole. Although the long-term cultural consequences of this shift cannot yet be assessed, the development is undeniably a novel one. As audiences become more adept at navigating media, this trend will undoubtedly increase.

Bert Is Evil



Figure 2.6

In 2001, high school student Dino Ignacio created a collage of *Sesame Street* character Bert with terrorist Osama bin Laden as part of a series for his website. Called "Bert Is Evil," the series featured the puppet engaged in a variety of illicit activities. A Bangladesh-based publisher looking for images of bin Laden found the collage on the Internet and used it in an anti-American protest poster, presumably without knowledge of who Bert was. This ended up in a CNN report on anti-American protests, and public outrage over the use of Bert made Ignacio's original site a much-imitated cult phenomenon.

The voyage of this collage from a high school student's website to an anti-American protest poster in the Middle East to a cable television news network and finally back to the Internet provides a good illustration of the ways in which content migrates across media platforms in the modern era. As the collage crossed geographic and cultural boundaries, it grew on both corporate and grassroots media. While this is not the norm for media content, the fact that such a phenomenon is possible illustrates the new directions in which media is headed.Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 1–2.

1.2.1.11 Key Takeaways

- Propaganda and persuasion have long been a part of the interactions between media and culture.
- Most studies on media and behavior do not establish direct links between the two but do reveal important correlations among media, violence, and sexual behavior.
- Through the media, celebrities have come to signify important cultural values and tendencies, and they transmit specific cultural messages.
- New digital forms of media have revolutionized the way people access and consume media content. Rather than simply replacing old media, however, new forms of media encourage participatory media consumption and content migration.

? Exercise 1.2.1.1

1. Celebrities can represent cultural values and principles when they are portrayed in the media. The same celebrity can represent very different things depending on the form of media and its portrayal of that person. Find a celebrity magazine, such as *People* or *Us Weekly*, either online or in print, and choose one of the celebrities mentioned. Then, answer the following questions:
    - How is this celebrity portrayed in the magazine?
    - What kind of roles does the celebrity take in other forms of media, such as television or film?
    - How do these portrayals associate with specific cultural values?
2. Explain how the media has affected culture. Be sure to discuss the following topics and to provide examples of each.
    - Propaganda and persuasion
    - Behavior
    - Cultural messages
3. How has new media affected literacy and information consumption? How is this different from older forms of media?

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1.2.2: Media Effects Theories

Learning Objectives

- Identify the basic theories of media effects.
- Explain the uses of various media effects theories.

Early media studies focused on the use of mass media in propaganda and persuasion. However, journalists and researchers soon looked to behavioral sciences to help figure out the possible effect of mass media and communications on society. Scholars have developed many different approaches and theories to figure this out. Other scholars challenge whether research can ever untangle the relationship of media and effects. You can refer to these theories as you consider for yourself the media's effect on individuals and culture.

In one of the earliest formulations of media effects, widespread fear that mass-media messages could outweigh other stabilizing cultural influences, such as family and community, led to what is known as the direct effects model of media studies. This model, prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s, assumed that audiences passively accepted media messages and would exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages. For example, following the radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds* in 1938 (which was a fictional news report of an alien invasion), some people panicked and believed the story to be true.

1.2.2.1 Challenges to the Direct Effects Theory

The results of the *People's Choice Study* challenged this model. Conducted in 1940, the study attempted to gauge the effects of political campaigns on voter choice. Researchers found that voters who consumed the most media had generally already decided for which candidate to vote, while undecided voters generally turned to family and community members to help them decide. The study thus discredited the direct effects model and influenced a host of other media theories.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 80–81. These theories do not necessarily give an all-encompassing picture of media effects but rather work to illuminate a particular aspect of media influence.

Marshall McLuhan's Influence on Media Studies

As noted in Chapter 1, during the early 1960s, English professor Marshall McLuhan wrote two books that had an enormous effect on the history of media studies. Published in 1962 and 1964, respectively, the *Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* both traced the history of media technology and illustrated the ways these innovations had changed both individual behavior and the wider culture. *Understanding Media* introduced the phrase that McLuhan has become known for: "The medium is the message." This notion represented a novel take on attitudes toward media—that the media themselves are instrumental in shaping human and cultural experience.

His bold statements about media gained McLuhan a great deal of attention as both his supporters and critics responded to his utopian views about the ways media could transform 20th-century life. McLuhan spoke of a media-inspired "global village" at a time when Cold War paranoia was at its peak and the Vietnam War was a hotly debated subject. Although 1960s-era utopians received these statements positively, social realists found them cause for scorn. Despite—or perhaps because of—these controversies, McLuhan became a pop culture icon, mentioned frequently in the television sketch-comedy program *Laugh-In* and appearing as himself in Woody Allen's film *Annie Hall*.

The Internet and its accompanying cultural revolution have made McLuhan's bold utopian visions seem like prophecies. Indeed, his work has received a great deal of attention in recent years. Analysis of McLuhan's work has, interestingly, not changed very much since his works were published. His supporters point to the hopes and achievements of digital technology and the utopian state that such innovations promise. The current critique of McLuhan, however, is a bit more revealing of the state of modern media studies. Media scholars are much more numerous now than they were during the 1960s, and many of these scholars criticize McLuhan's lack of methodology and theoretical framework.

Despite his lack of scholarly diligence, McLuhan had a great deal of influence on media studies. Professors at Fordham University have formed an association of McLuhan-influenced scholars. McLuhan's other great achievement is the popularization of the concept of media studies. His work, perhaps ironically, brought the idea of media effects into the public arena and created a new way for the public to consider the influence of media on culture.Alexander Stille, "Marshall McLuhan Is Back From the Dustbin of History; With the Internet, His Ideas Again Seem Ahead of Their Time," *New York Times*, October 14, 2000, http://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/14/arts/marshall-mcluhan-back-dustbin-history-with-internet-his-ideas-again-seem-ahead.html.

1.2.2.2 Agenda-Setting Theory

In contrast to the extreme views of the direct effects model, the agenda-setting theory of media stated that mass media determine the issues that concern the public rather than the public's views. Under this theory, the issues that receive the most attention from media become the issues that the public discusses, debates, and demands action on. This means that the media are determining what issues and stories the public thinks about. Therefore, when the media fail to address a particular issue, it becomes marginalized in the minds of the public.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 92.

When critics claim that a particular media outlet has an agenda, they are drawing on this theory. Agendas can range from a perceived liberal bias in the news media to the propagation of cutthroat capitalist ethics in films. For example, the agenda-setting theory explains such phenomena as the rise of public opinion against smoking. Before the mass media began taking an antismoking stance, smoking was considered a personal health issue. By promoting antismoking sentiments through advertisements, public relations campaigns, and a variety of media outlets, the mass media moved smoking into the public arena, making it a public health issue rather than a personal health issue.James Dearing and Everett Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 4. More recently, coverage of natural disasters has been prominent in the news. However, as news coverage wanes, so does the general public's interest.



Figure 2.7 Through a variety of antismoking campaigns, the health risks of smoking became a public agenda.

Media scholars who specialize in agenda-setting research study the salience, or relative importance, of an issue and then attempt to understand what causes it to be important. The relative salience of an issue determines its place within the public agenda, which in turn influences public policy creation. Agenda-setting research traces public policy from its roots as an agenda through its promotion in the mass media and finally to its final form as a law or policy.James Dearing and Everett Rogers, *Agenda-Setting* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 8.

1.2.2.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Practitioners of the uses and gratifications theory study the ways the public consumes media. This theory states that consumers use the media to satisfy specific needs or desires. For example, you may enjoy watching a show like *Dancing With the Stars* while simultaneously tweeting about it on Twitter with your friends. Many people use the Internet to seek out entertainment, to find information, to communicate with like-minded individuals, or to pursue self-expression. Each of these uses gratifies a particular need, and the needs determine the way in which media are used. By examining factors of different groups' media choices, researchers can determine the motivations behind media use.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 137.

A typical uses and gratifications study explores the motives for media consumption and the consequences associated with use of that media. By studying how and why people watch *Dancing With the Stars* while using Twitter, scholars suggest people are using the Internet as way to be entertained and to connect with friends. Researchers have identified a number of common motives for media consumption. These include relaxation, social interaction, entertainment, arousal, escape, and a host of interpersonal and social needs. By examining the motives behind the consumption of a particular form of media, researchers can better understand both the reasons for that medium's popularity and the roles that the medium fills in society. A study of the motives behind a given user's interaction with Facebook, for example, could explain the role Facebook takes in society and the reasons for its appeal.

Uses and gratifications theories of media are often applied to contemporary media issues. The analysis of the relationship between media and violence that you read about in preceding sections exemplifies this. Researchers employed the uses and gratifications theory in this case to reveal a nuanced set of circumstances surrounding violent media consumption, as individuals with aggressive tendencies were drawn to violent media.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 140–143.

1.2.2.4 Symbolic Interactionism

Another commonly used media theory, symbolic interactionism, states that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction. This means the way you act toward someone or something is based on the meaning you have for a person or thing. To effectively communicate, people use symbols with shared cultural meanings. Symbols can be constructed from just about anything, including material goods, education, or even the way people talk. Consequentially, these symbols are instrumental in the development of the self.

This theory helps media researchers better understand the field because of the important role the media plays in creating and propagating shared symbols. Because of the media's power, it can construct symbols on its own. By using symbolic interactionist theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual.Cathrine Jansson-Boyd, *Consumer Psychology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 59–62.

One of the ways the media creates and uses cultural symbols to affect an individual's sense of self is advertising. Advertisers work to give certain products a shared cultural meaning to make them desirable. For example, when you see someone driving a BMW, what do you think about that person? You may assume the person is successful or powerful because of the car he or she is driving. Ownership of luxury automobiles signifies membership in a certain socioeconomic class. Equally, technology company Apple has used advertising and public relations to attempt to become a symbol of innovation and nonconformity. Use of an Apple product, therefore, may have a symbolic meaning and may send a particular message about the product's owner.

Media also propagate other noncommercial symbols. National and state flags, religious images, and celebrities gain shared symbolic meanings through their representation in the media.

1.2.2.5 Spiral of Silence

The spiral of silence theory, which states that those who hold a minority opinion silence themselves to prevent social isolation, explains the role of mass media in the formation and maintenance of dominant opinions. As minority opinions are silenced, the illusion of consensus grows, and so does social pressure to adopt the dominant position. This creates a self-propagating loop in which minority voices are reduced to a minimum and perceived popular opinion sides wholly with the majority opinion. For example, prior to and during World War II, many Germans opposed Adolf Hitler and his policies; however, they kept their opposition silent out of fear of isolation and stigma.

Because the media is one of the most important gauges of public opinion, this theory is often used to explain the interaction between media and public opinion. According to the spiral of silence theory, if the media propagate a particular opinion, then that opinion will effectively silence opposing opinions through an illusion of consensus. This theory relates especially to public polling and its use in the media.Zizi Papacharissi, "Uses and Gratifications," in *An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research*, ed. Don Stacks and Michael Salwen (New York: Routledge, 2009), 153–154.

1.2.2.6 Media Logic

The media logic theory states that common media formats and styles serve as a means of perceiving the world. Today, the deep rooting of media in the cultural conciousness means that media consumers need engage for only a few moments with a particular television program to understand that it is a news show, a comedy, or a reality show. The pervasiveness of these formats means that our culture uses the style and content of these shows as ways to interpret reality. For example, think about a TV news program that frequently shows heated debates between opposing sides on public policy issues. This style of debate has become a template for handling disagreement to those who consistently watch this type of program.

Media logic affects institutions as well as individuals. The modern televangelist has evolved from the adoption of television-style promotion by religious figures, while the utilization of television in political campaigns has led candidates to consider their physical image as an important part of a campaign.David Altheide and Robert Snow, *Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 9–11.

1.2.2.7 Cultivation Analysis

The cultivation analysis theory states that heavy exposure to media causes individuals to develop—or cultivate—an illusory perception of reality based on the most repetitive and consistent messages of a particular medium. This theory most commonly applies to analyses of television because of that medium's uniquely pervasive nature. Under this theory, someone who watches a great deal of television may form a picture of reality that does not correspond to actual life. Televised violent acts, whether those reported on news programs or portrayed on television dramas, for example, greatly outnumber violent acts that most people encounter in their daily lives. Thus, an individual who watches a great deal of television may come to view the world as more violent and dangerous than it actually is.

Cultivation analysis projects involve a number of different areas for research, such as the differences in perception between

heavy and light users of media. To apply this theory, the media content that an individual normally watches must be analyzed for various types of messages. Then, researchers must consider the given media consumer's cultural background of individuals to correctly determine other factors that are involved in his or her perception of reality. For example, the socially stabilizing influences of family and peer groups influence children's television viewing and the way they process media messages. If an individual's family or social life plays a major part in her life, the social messages that she receives from these groups may compete with the messages she receives from television.

1.2.2.8 Key Takeaways

- The now largely discredited direct effects model of media studies assumes that media audiences passively accept media messages and exhibit predictable reactions in response to those messages.
- Credible media theories generally do not give as much power to the media, such as the agenda-setting theory, or give a more active role to the media consumer, such as the uses and gratifications theory.
- Other theories focus on specific aspects of media influence, such as the spiral of silence theory's focus on the power of the majority opinion or the symbolic interactionism theory's exploration of shared cultural symbolism.
- Media logic and cultivation analysis theories deal with how media consumers' perceptions of reality can be influenced by media messages.

? Exercise 1.2.2.1

1. Media theories have a variety of uses and applications. Research one of the following topics and its effect on culture. Examine the topic using at least two of the approaches discussed in this section. Then, write a one-page essay about the topic you've selected.
    - Media bias
    - Internet habits
    - Television's effect on attention span
    - Advertising and self-image
    - Racial stereotyping in film
2. Many of the theories discussed in this section were developed decades ago. Identify how each of these theories can be used today. Do you think these theories are still relevant for modern mass media? Why?

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1.2.3: Methods of Researching Media Effects

Learning Objectives

- Identify the prominent media research methods.
- Explain the uses of media research methods in a research project.

Media theories provide the framework for approaching questions about media effects ranging from as simple as how 10-year-old boys react to cereal advertisements to as broad as how Internet use affects literacy. Once researchers visualize a project and determine a theoretical framework, they must choose actual research methods. Contemporary research methods are greatly varied and can range from analyzing old newspapers to performing controlled experiments.

1.2.3.1 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique that involves analyzing the content of various forms of media. Through content analysis, researchers hope to understand both the people who created the content and the people who consumed it. A typical content analysis project does not require elaborate experiments. Instead, it simply requires access to the appropriate media to analyze, making this type of research an easier and inexpensive alternative to other forms of research involving complex surveys or human subjects.

Content analysis studies require researchers to define what types of media to study. For example, researchers studying violence in the media would need to decide which types of media to analyze, such as television, and the types of formats to examine, such as children's cartoons. The researchers would then need to define the terms used in the study; media violence can be classified according to the characters involved in the violence (strangers, family members, or racial groups), the type of violence (self-inflicted, slapstick, or against others), or the context of the violence (revenge, random, or duty-related). These are just a few of the ways that media violence could be studied with content-analysis techniques.Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Research Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 23–24.

1.2.3.2 Archival Research

Any study that analyzes older media must employ archival research, which is a type of research that focuses on reviewing historical documents such as old newspapers and past publications. Old local newspapers are often available on microfilm at local libraries or at the newspaper offices. University libraries generally provide access to archives of national publications such as *The New York Times* or *Time*; publications can also increasingly be found in online databases or on websites.

Older radio programs are available for free or by paid download through a number of online sources. Many television programs and films have also been made available for free download, or for rent or sale through online distributors. Performing an online search for a particular title will reveal the options available.

Resources such as the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) work to archive a number of media sources. One important role of the Internet Archive is website archiving. Internet archives are invaluable for a study of online media because they store websites that have been deleted or changed. These archives have made it possible for Internet content analyses that would have otherwise been impossible.

1.2.3.3 Surveys

Surveys are ubiquitous in modern life. Questionaires record data on anything from political preferences to personal hygiene habits. Media surveys generally take one of the following two forms.

A descriptive survey aims to find the current state of things, such as public opinion or consumer preferences. In media, descriptive surveys establish television and radio ratings by finding the number of people who watch or listen to particular programs. An analytical survey, however, does more than simply document a current situation. Instead, it attempts to find out why a particular situation exists. Researchers pose questions or hypotheses about media and then conduct analytical surveys to answer these questions. Analytical surveys can determine the relationship between different forms of media consumption and the lifestyles and habits of media consumers.

Surveys can employ either open-ended or closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions require the participant to generate answers in their own words, while closed-ended questions force the participant to select an answer from a list. Although open-ended questions allow for a greater variety of answers, the results of closed-ended questions are easier to tabulate. Although surveys are useful in media studies, effective use requires keeping their limitations in mind.

1.2.3.4 Social Role Analysis

As part of child rearing, parents teach their children about social roles. When parents prepare children to attend school for example, they explain the basics of school rules and what is expected of a student to help the youngsters understand the role

of students. Like the role of a character in a play, this role carries specific expectations that differentiate school from home. Adults often play a number of different roles as they navigate between their responsibilities as parents, employees, friends, and citizens. Any individual may play a number of roles depending on his or her specific life choices.

Social role analysis of the media involves examining various individuals in the media and analyzing the type of role that each plays. Role analysis research can consider the roles of men, women, children, members of a racial minority, or members any other social group in specific types of media. For example, if the role children play in cartoons is consistently different from the role they play in sitcoms, then certain conclusions might be drawn about both of these formats. Analyzing roles used in media allows researchers to gain a better understanding of the messages that the mass media sends.Arthur Asa Berger, *Media Research Techniques* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 45–48.

1.2.3.5 Depth Interviews

The depth interview is an anthropological research tool that is also useful in media studies. Depth interviews take surveys one step further by allowing researchers to directly ask a study participant specific questions to gain a fuller understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences. Depth interviews have been used in research projects that follow newspaper reporters to find out their reasons for reporting certain stories and in projects that attempt to understand the motivations for reading romance novels. Depth interviews can provide a deeper understanding of the media consumption habits of particular groups of people.Susanna Hornig Priest, *Doing Media Research: An Introduction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 16–22.

1.2.3.6 Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis involves examining the "styles" used in media and attempting to understand the kinds of messages those styles convey. Media styles refer to form, presentation, composition, use of metaphors, and reasoning structure. Rhetorical analysis reveals the messages not apparent in a strict reading of content. Studies involving rhetorical analysis have focused on media such as advertising to better understand the roles of style and rhetorical devices in media messages.Barrie Gunter, *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 89.

1.2.3.7 Focus Groups

Like depth interviews, focus groups allow researchers to better understand public responses to media. Unlike a depth interview, however, a focus group allows the participants to establish a group dynamic that more closely resembles that of normal media consumption. In media studies, researchers can employ focus groups to judge the reactions of a group to specific media styles and to content. This can be a valuable means of understanding the reasons for consuming specific types of media.



Figure 2.8. Focus groups are effective ways to obtain a group opinion on media.

1.2.3.8 Experiments

Media research studies also sometimes use controlled experiments that expose a test group to an experience involving media and measure the effects of that experience. Researchers then compare these measurements to those of a control group that had key elements of the experience removed. For example, reseachers may show one group of children a program with three incidents of cartoon violence and another control group of similar children the same program without the violent incidents. Researchers then ask the children from both groups the same sets of questions, and the results are compared.

1.2.3.9 Participant Observation

In participant observation, researchers try to become part of the group they are studying. Although this technique is typically associated with anthropological studies in which a researcher lives with members of a particular culture to gain a deeper understanding of their values and lives, it is also used in media research.

Media consumption often takes place in groups. Families or friends gather to watch favorite programs, children may watch Saturday morning cartoons with a group of their peers, and adults may host viewing parties for televised sporting events or awards shows. These groups reveal insights into the role of media in the lives of the public. A researcher might join a group that watches football together and stay with the group for an entire season. By becoming a part of the group, the researcher becomes part of the experiment and can reveal important

influences of media on culture.Susanna Hornig Priest, *Doing Media Research: An Introduction* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010), 96–98.

Researchers have studied online role-playing games, such as *World of Warcraft*, in this manner. These games reveal an interesting aspect of group dynamics: Although participants are not in physical proximity, they function as a group within the game. Researchers are able to study these games by playing them. In the book *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader*, a group of researchers discussed the results of their participant observation studies. The studies reveal the surprising depth of culture and unwritten rules that exist in the World of Warcraft universe and give important interpretations of why players pursue the game with such dedication.Hilde Corneliussen and Jill Walker Rettberg, "Introduction: 'Orc ProfessorLFG,' or Researching in Azeroth," in *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader*, ed. Hilde Corneliussen and Jill Walker Rettberg (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008), 6–7.

- Media research methods are the practical procedures for carrying out a research project. These methods include content analysis, surveys, focus groups, experiments, and participant observation.
- Research methods generally involve either test subjects or analysis of media. Methods involving test subjects include surveys, depth interviews, focus groups, and experiments. Analysis of media can include content, style, format, social roles, and archival analysis.

? Exercise 1.2.3.1

Media research methods offer a variety of procedures for performing a media study. Each of these methods varies in cost; thus, a project with a lower budget would be prohibited from using some of the more costly methods. Consider a project on teen violence and video game use. Then answer the following short-response questions. Each response should be a minimum of one paragraph.

1. Which methods would a research organization with a low budget favor for this project? Why?
2. How might the results of the project differ from those of one with a higher budget?

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1.2.4: Media Studies Controversies

Learning Objectives

- Explain some of the major objections to specific media theories.
- Identify ways media studies are used to support political opinions.
- Differentiate between proper and improper use of media studies.

Important debates over media theory have questioned the foundations and hence the results of media research. Within academia, theories and research can represent an individual's lifework and livelihood. As a result, issues of tenure and position, rather than issues of truth and objectivity, can sometimes fuel discussion over theories and research.

1.2.4.1 Problems with Methodology and Theory

Although the use of advanced methodologies can resolve many of the questions raised about various theories, the fact remains that the use of these theories in public debate generally follows a broader understanding. For example, if a hypothetical study found that convicted violent offenders had aggressive feelings after playing the video game *Mortal Kombat*, many would take this as proof that video games cause violent acts without considering other possible explanations. Often, the nuances of these studies are lost when they enter the public arena.

1.2.4.2 Active versus Passive Audience

A significant division among media studies theorists is the belief that audiences are passive or active. A passive audience, in the most extreme statement of this position, passively accepts the messages that media send it. An active audience, on the other hand, is fully aware of media messages and makes informed decisions about how to process and interact with media. Newer trends in media studies have attempted to develop a more complex view of media audiences than the active versus passive debate affords, but in the public sphere, this opposition frames many of the debates about media influence.Robert Heath and Jennings Bryant, *Human Communication Theory and Research: Concepts, Contexts, and Challenges* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 385–386.

1.2.4.3 Arguments against Agenda-Setting Theory

A number of criticisms have dogged agenda-setting theory. Chief among these is that agenda-setting studies are unable to prove cause and effect; essentially, no one has truly shown that the media agenda sets the public agenda and not the other way around. An agenda-setting study could connect the prevalence of a topic in the media with later changes in public policy and may conclude that the media set this agenda. However, policy makers and lobbyists often conduct public relations efforts to encourage the creation of certain policies. In addition, public concern over issues generates media coverage as well, making it difficult to tell if the media are responding to public desire for coverage of an issue or if they are pushing an issue on their own agenda.Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo, "Prospects for Agenda-Setting Research in the 21st Century," in *Topical Issues in Communications and Media Research*, ed. Kwamena Kwansah-Aidoo (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2005), 40–41.

1.2.4.4 Arguments against Uses and Gratifications Theory

The general presuppositions of the uses and gratifications theory have drawn criticism. By assuming that media fulfill a functional purpose in an individual's life, the uses and gratifications theory implicitly justifies and reaffirms the functional place of media in the public sphere; critics say that people do not always use media to fulfill a function. They ask whether unconscious motivations or social rituals might be at play. Furthermore, because it focuses on personal, psychological aspects of media, the theory cannot question whether media are artificially imposed on an indivdual. Studies involving the uses and gratifications theory are often sound methodologically, but the overall assumptions of the studies are left unquestioned.Lawrence Grossberg and others, *Mediamaking: Mass Media in a Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 266–267.

1.2.4.5 Arguments against Spiral of Silence Theory

Although many regard the spiral of silence theory as useful when applying its broadest principles, it is weak when dealing with specifics. For example, the phenomenon of the spiral of silence is most visible in individuals who are fearful of social isolation. Those who are less fearful are less likely to be silent if public opinion turns against them. Nonconformists contradict the claims of the spiral of silence theory.

Critics have also pointed out that the spiral of silence theory relies heavily on the values of various cultural groups. A public opinion trend in favor of gun control may not silence the consensus within National Rifle Association meetings. Every individual is a part of a larger social group with specific values. Although these values may differ from widespread public opinion, individuals need not fear social isolation within their

particular social group.John Gastil, *Political Communication and Deliberation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 61–62.

1.2.4.6 Arguments against Cultivation Analysis Theory

Critics have faulted cultivation analysis theory for relying too heavily on a broad definition of violence. Detractors argue that because violence means different things to different subgroups and individuals, any claim that a clear message of violence could be understood in the same way by an entire culture is false. This critique would necessarily extend to other studies involving cultivation analysis. Different people understand media messages in varying ways, so broad claims can be problematic. Cultivation analysis is still an important part of media studies, but critics have questioned its unqualified validity as a theory.James Shanahan and Michael Morgan, *Television and its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 59–60.

1.2.4.7 Politics and Media Studies

Media theories and studies afford a variety of perspectives. When proponents of a particular view employ those theories and studies, however, they are often oversimplified and can result in contradictory claims. In fact, when politicians and others employ media studies to validate a political perspective, this is a common result.

1.2.4.8 Media Bias

A good example of the ways that media can bolster political opinion is through coverage, which leads to the debate over media bias. One 1985 study found that journalists were more likely to hold liberal views than were members of the public. Over the years, many have cited this study to support the opinion that the media holds a liberal bias. However, another study found that between the years of 1948 and 1990, 78 percent of newspaper presidential endorsements were for Republicans.Ralph Hanson, *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009), 101–102.

Media favoritism again became a source of contention during the 2008 presidential race. A random sampling of campaign coverage in the run-up to the election found that 82 percent of stories featured Barack Obama, while only 52 percent discussed John McCain.Chuck Raasch, “Media Bias Aside, Obama’s Trip an Important Test,” *USA Today*, July 24, 2008, http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/raasch/2008-07-24-newpolitics_N.htm. Allegations that the media favored Obama seemed to bolster the idea of a liberal bias. But other studies belied this belief. Research conducted during the election showed that favorable media coverage of Obama occurred only after his poll numbers rose, hinting that the media were reacting to public opinion rather than attempting to influence it.Reuters, “Despite Republican Complaints, Media Bias Largely Missing From US Campaign: Study,” *Canada.com*, November 6, 2008, http://www.canada.com/vancouversun/n...5-57a0e0c3a38f.



Figure 2.9 Allegations of media bias are a recurring theme in political debates.

1.2.4.9 Media Decency

Decency standards in media have long been an issue, and they continue to change in ways that are not necessarily predictable. Once banned in the United States for obscenity, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is now considered a classic of modern literature, while many schools have banned children’s classic *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* for its use of ethnic slurs. Because of the regulatory powers that government possesses over the media, decency is also an inherently political issue. As media studies have progressed, they have increasingly appeared in the debates over decency standards. Although media studies cannot prove a word or image is indecent, they can help discern the impact of that word or image and, thus, greatly influence the debate.

Organizations or figures with stated goals often use media studies to support those aims. For example, the Parents Television Council reported on a study that compared the ratio of comments about nonmarital sex to comments about marital

sex during the hours of 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. The study employed content analysis to come up with specific figures; however, the Parents Television Council then used those findings to make broad statements, such as “the institution of marriage is regularly mocked and denigrated.”Melissa Rayworth, “TV Decency Standards Challenge Parents,” *Cape Cod Times*, August 10, 2008, www.capecodonline.com/apps/pb...LIFE/808100317. Because content analysis does not analyze the effect on audiences or analyze how material is presented, it does not offer a scientific way to judge whether a comment is mocking and denigrating marriage, so such interpretations are arguably unsupported by the research. For example, researchers performing a content analysis by documenting the amount of sex or violence on television are not analyzing how this content is interpreted by the audience. They are simply noting the number of instances. Equally, partisan groups can use a number of different linguistic turns to make media studies fit their agenda.

Media studies involving violence, pornography, and profanity are inherently politically charged, and politicians have also conducted their own media studies. In 2001, for example, a Senate bill aimed at Internet decency that had little support in Congress came to the floor. One of the sponsoring senators attempted to increase interest by bringing to the Senate floor a file full of some of the most egregious pornographic images he could find on the Internet. The bill passed 84 to 16.Philip Elmer-Dewitt, “On a Screen Near You,” *Time*, June 24, 2001, www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1101950703-134361,00.html.

Jack Thompson versus Violent Video Games

One of the most outspoken critics of violent video games is the now-disbarred lawyer Jack Thompson. Despite questionable use of media research, Thompson has made many claims referencing research. In an interview with *CBS News*, Thompson stated that “hundreds of studies” existed that proved the link between violent video games and real violence. Later in the interview, he listed increasing school murder statistics as proof of the effects of violent video games.William Vitka, “Gamespeak: Jack Thompson,” GameCore, *CBS News*, February 25, 2005, www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/02/24/tech/gamecore/main676446.shtml. In light of the media effects theories elucidated in this chapter, Thompson was obviously not being honest about the findings of video game–violence research and was making claims that no media effects scholar could confidently make.

Thompson initiated several lawsuits against *Grand Theft Auto* video game developer Take 2 Interactive, claiming that the company should be held liable for encouraging violent actions by minors. His lawsuits were thrown out of court, and he eventually came to a settlement with Take 2 Interactive—who had countersued—to drop all litigation.K. C. Jones, “Grand Theft Auto Company Settles With Jack Thompson,” *InformationWeek*, April 20, 2007, www.informationweek.com/news/global-cio/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=199200271. Thompson’s frivolous use of the legal system caused the state of Alabama to revoke his license to practice law in 2005, and, in 2008, the Florida Supreme Court disbarred him for life.Mark Hefflinger, “Controversial Game Lawsuit Attorney Jack Thompson Disbarred,” *Digital Media Wire*, September 26, 2008, www.dmwmedia.com/news/2008/09...pson-disbarred.

Jack Thompson’s actions may seem extreme, but he represents a common pattern of media study misrepresentation. Pundits, social reformers, and politicians frequently use the results of media studies to support their agenda without regard for accuracy. The use of media research to lend credence to a political opinion is widespread even as the public struggles to understand the effects of new media on culture.

1.2.4.10 Media Consolidation

Although media consolidation will be discussed in more depth in later chapters, the topic’s intersection with media studies results deserves a place here. Media consolidation occurs when large media companies buy up smaller media outlets to create giant conglomerates. Some scholars predict that a handful of companies will soon control most of the world’s media. Although government regulation has historically stymied this trend in the United States by prohibiting ownership of a large number of media outlets, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has loosened many of the restrictions on large media companies in recent years.

Media studies often prove vital to decisions regarding media consolidation. These studies measure the impact that consolidation has had on the media’s public role and on the content of local media outlets to compare it with that of conglomerate-owned outlets. The findings often vary depending on the group conducting the test. Sometimes tests are ignored entirely.

In 2003, the FCC loosened restrictions on owning multiple media outlets in the same city, citing studies that the agency had developed to weigh the influence of particular media outlets such as newspapers and television stations.Frank Ahrens, “FCC Eases Media Ownership Rules,” *Washington Post*, June 3, 2003,

www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A5555-2003Jun2. In 2006, however, reports surfaced that a key study had been discarded during the 2003 decision. The study showed an increase in time allocated for news when TV stations were owned locally, thus raising questions about whether media consolidation was a good thing for local news.Associated Press, "Powell Denies Seeing Media Ownership Study," *MSNBC*, September 15, 2006, http://msnbc.msn.com/id/14850729/.

- Audience interpretation is vital to media studies. Media theories generally fall between the active and passive audience interpretations. Agenda-setting theory favors the passive audience interpretation, and consequently must prove that the public is affected by media agendas. The uses and gratifications theory favors the active audience, and consequently justifies the place of media in the public sphere.
- In politics, media studies are often used to support various opinions. Among the more prominent media studies employed are those that deal with media bias, violence in the media, and indecency.
- The use of media studies in public debate has led to subjective studies that have a predetermined outcome. Many studies conducted by special interest groups use definitions that favor their perspectives. Politicians often copy the style, rather than the substance, of a media study in an attempt to give authority to their points of view.

Exercise 1.2.4.1

Media studies are often used to support specific opinions, regardless of whether their results justify such a use. Studies are also conducted with predetermined outcomes that support a specific view. With this in mind, answer the following short-response questions. Each response should be a minimum of one paragraph.

1. How are media studies used to support political opinions? Give two examples.
2. What kind of guidelines should be used to ensure clear and objective use of media studies?
3. Identify weaknesses of popular media theories discussed in this section.

End-of-Chapter Assessments

Review Questions

1. Questions for Section 2.1
    1. List three historical events that have relied on propaganda.
    2. Provide three examples of cultural messages that the media send.
    3. How have new media affected older forms of media?
2. Questions for Section 2.2
    1. How does agenda-setting theory differ from direct effects theory?
    2. Use the spiral of silence to explain an actual lapse in media coverage.
    3. Why would uses and gratifications theory be an appropriate theory for a study of Internet purchasing habits?
3. Questions for Section 2.3
    1. Name the different types of media analysis techniques and explain their uses.
    2. Explain the differences among a survey, a depth interview, and a focus group.
    3. What resources would be important for a project analyzing the historical representation of women in advertising?
4. Questions for Section 2.4
    1. Explain the opposition between theories of passive and active media audiences.
    2. How are media studies commonly misused to support political opinions?
    3. How might media studies be used in a study on indecency?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. The media have become an ever-increasing part of modern life. How do you think the media and their messages have affected you personally?
2. Media studies attempt to understand the role that the media play in culture and in individual lives. Given the criticisms of particular media theories, what do you think the limitations of media studies are? Consider the media theories discussed in this chapter. Which ones do you find the most convincing and why? Which ones do you find least convincing?
3. Among the methods used to analyze audiences, which do you think would guarantee the most accurate results? How does this affect your opinion of studies that use other results?

Career Connection

Media studies are used in a variety of professions and capacities. These range from university researchers to small-time music groups that want to assess their online presence. A number of online research tools exist that can help organizations and individuals learn more about the effect of media on important issues and topics.

List two or three prospective careers and think of one way that media studies could be beneficial in each. Search for online media research tools that would assist you in a media research project involving your chosen careers. Answer the following questions:

- What kind of project would be beneficial to you in this field?
- How would you set up the project to ensure usable and accurate results?
- How would you present the results of your studies to clients, employees, and investors?

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1.3: Forms of Media

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1.3.1: Literature (including fiction, drama, poetry, and prose)



1. How is literature like life?
2. What is literature supposed to do?
3. What influences a writer to create?
4. How does literature reveal the values of a given culture or time period?
5. How does the study of fiction and nonfiction texts help individuals construct their understanding of reality?
6. In what ways are all narratives influenced by bias and perspective?
7. Where does the meaning of a text reside? Within the text, within the reader, or in the transaction that occurs between them?
8. What can a reader know about an author's intentions based only on a reading of the text?
9. What are enduring questions and conflicts that writers (and their cultures) grappled with hundreds of years ago and are still relevant today?
10. How do we gauge the optimism or pessimism of a particular time period or particular group of writers?
11. Why are there universal themes in literature–that is, themes that are of interest or concern to all cultures and societies?
12. What are the characteristics or elements that cause a piece of literature to endure?
13. What is the purpose of: science fiction? satire? historical novels, etc.?
14. How do novels, short stories, poetry, etc. relate to the larger questions of philosophy and humanity?
15. How we can use literature to explain or clarify our own ideas about the world?
16. How does what we know about the world shape the stories we tell?
17. How do the stories we tell about the world shape the way we view ourselves?
18. How do our personal experiences shape our view of others?
19. What does it mean to be an insider or an outsider?
20. Are there universal themes in literature that are of interest or concern to all cultures and societies?
21. What are the characteristics or elements that cause a piece of literature to endure?
22. What is creativity and what is its importance for the individual / the culture?
23. What are the limits, if any, of freedom of speech?

Defining Literature

Literature, in its broadest sense, is any written work. Etymologically, the term derives from Latin *litaritura/litteratura* "writing formed with letters," although some definitions include spoken or sung texts. More restrictively, it is writing that possesses literary merit. Literature can be classified according to whether it is fiction or non-fiction and whether it is poetry or prose. It can be further distinguished according to major forms such as the novel, short story or drama, and works are often categorized according to historical periods or their adherence to certain aesthetic features or expectations (genre).

Taken to mean only written works, literature was first produced by some of the world's earliest civilizations—those of Ancient Egypt and Sumeria—as early as the 4th millennium BC; taken to include spoken or sung texts, it originated even earlier, and some of the first written works may have been based on a pre-existing oral tradition. As urban cultures and societies developed, there was a proliferation in the forms of literature. Developments in print technology allowed for literature to be distributed and experienced on an unprecedented scale, which has culminated in the twenty-first century in electronic literature.

Definition

Definitions of literature have varied over time. In Western Europe prior to the eighteenth century, literature as a term indicated all books and writing.[1] A more restricted sense of the term emerged during the Romantic period, in which it began to demarcate

"imaginative" literature.[2] Contemporary debates over what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to the older, more inclusive notion of what constitutes literature. Cultural studies, for instance, takes as its subject of analysis both popular and minority genres, in addition to canonical works.[3]

Major Forms

Poetry



A calligram by Guillaume Apollinaire. These are a type of poem in which the written words are arranged in such a way to produce a visual image.

Poetry is a form of literary art that uses aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, prosaic ostensible meaning (ordinary intended meaning). Poetry has traditionally been distinguished from prose by its being set in verse;[4] prose is cast in sentences, poetry in lines; the syntax of prose is dictated by meaning, whereas that of poetry is held across metre or the visual aspects of the poem.[5]

Prior to the nineteenth century, poetry was commonly understood to be something set in metrical lines; accordingly, in 1658 a definition of poetry is "any kind of subject consisting of Rhythm or Verses".[6] Possibly as a result of Aristotle's influence (his Poetics), "poetry" before the nineteenth century was usually less a technical designation for verse than a normative category of fictive or rhetorical art.[7] As a form it may pre-date literacy, with the earliest works being composed within and sustained by an oral tradition;[8] hence it constitutes the earliest example of literature.

Prose

Prose is a form of language that possesses ordinary syntax and natural speech rather than rhythmic structure; in which regard, along with its measurement in sentences rather than lines, it differs from poetry.[9] On the historical development of prose, Richard Graff notes that "

Novel: a long fictional prose narrative.

Novella: The novella exists between the novel and short story; the publisher Melville House classifies it as "too short to be a novel, too long to be a short story."[10]

Short story: a dilemma in defining the "short story" as a literary form is how to, or whether one should, distinguish it from any short narrative. Apart from its distinct size, various theorists have suggested that the short story has a characteristic subject matter or structure; [11] these discussions often position the form in some relation to the novel.[12]

Drama

Drama is literature intended for performance.[13]

Leitch *et al.*, *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 28 ↵

Ross, "The Emergence of "Literature": Making and Reading the English Canon in the Eighteenth Century," 406 & Eagleton, *Literary theory: an introduction*, 16 ↵

Leitch et al., *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 28 ↵

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Poetry

Listen to this Discussion of the poetry of **Harris Khalique**. You might want to take a look at the transcript as you listen.

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/podcasts/77182/harris-khalique-international-poets-in-conversation

The first half of a 2008 reading featuring four Latino poets, as part of the American Perspectives series at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Listen to poetry **Francisco Aragón and Brenda Cárdenas**

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Listen to this conversation with *Allison Hedge Coke, Linda Hogan and Sherwin Bitsui*. You might want to look at the transcript as you listen. In this program, we hear a conversation among three Native American poets: Allison Hedge Coke, Linda Hogan and Sherwin Bitsui. Allison Hedge Coke grew up listening to her Father's traditional stories as she moved from Texas to North Carolina to Canada and the Great Plains. She is the author of several collections of poetry and the memoir, Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer. She has worked as a mentor with Native Americans and at-risk youth, and is currently a Professor of Poetry and Writing at the University of Nebraska, Kearney. Linda Hogan is a prolific poet, novelist and essayist. Her work is imbued with an indigenous sense of history and place, while it explores environmental, feminist and spiritual themes. A former professor at the University of Colorado, she is currently the Chickasaw Nation's Writer in Residence. She lives in Oklahoma, where she researches and writes about Chickasaw history, mythology and ways of life. Sherwin Bitsui grew up on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. He speaks Dine, the Navajo language and participates in ceremonial activities. His poetry has a sense of the surreal, combining images of the contemporary urban culture, with Native ritual and myth.

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/podcasts/76172/three-native-american-poets

Remember to return to the essential questions. Can expand on any of your answers to these questions? You might want to research these poets.

Chris Abani: Stories from Africa

In this deeply personal talk, Nigerian writer Chris Abani says that "what we know about how to be who we are" comes from stories. He searches for the heart of Africa through its poems and narrative, including his own.



The Tale of Hong Gil-Dong (A Korean Novel)

Heo Gyun (1569-1618 C.E.) License: Public Domain 9 The Tale of Hong Gil-Dong

First published in 1612 C.E. Korea

The Tale of Hong Gil-Dong (also spelled “Hong Kil Tong” and pronounced as such), one of the earliest novels in Korean, was written by Heo Gyun (also spelled “Hŏ Kyun” or “Huh Kyun”) during the Joseon Dyansty (1392-1897). Although the novel, first published in 1612, is set during the reign of King Sejong (1418- 1450), it is inspired by an actual robber named Hong Gil-Dong during the reign of King Yeonsangun (1494-1506) and is also seen as partially inspired by The Water Margin, a Chinese classic generally attributed to Shi Nai’an (ca. 1296–1372). Heo Gyun was an unorthodox thinker. Despite the Confucian state ideology of the Joseon Dynasty, he developed interests in Buddhism, Taoism, and possibly even Catholicism. He criticized social and governmental corruption and contradiction, and he argued for equal employment opportunities that would not discriminate against the children of concubines. This novel is noted for its social criticism.

Medical missionary and diplomat Horace Newton Allen’s (1858-1932 C.E.) translation of this story, published in 1889 by the Knickerbocker Press, has some typos and errors, but is historically significant in that it is the first Korean novel (not a “folktale,” although the translator seemed to consider it one) to be translated in English though the eyes of one of the earliest Westerners to reside in Korea.

Written by Kyounghye Kwon

What themes do you read about in this novel from Korea?

Hong Gil-Dong or The Adventures of an Abused Boy Heo Gyun,

Translated by H. N. Allen

Part 1

During the reign of the third king in Korea there lived a noble of high rank and noted family, by name Hong. His title was Ye Cho Pansa. He had two sons by his wife and one by one of his concubines. The latter son was very remarkable from his birth to his death, and he it is who forms the subject of this history.

When Hong Pansa was the father of but two sons, he dreamed by night on one occasion that he heard the noise of thunder, and looking up he saw a huge dragon entering his apartment, which seemed too small to contain the whole of his enormous body. The dream was so startling as to awaken the sleeper, who at once saw that it was a good omen, and a token to him of a blessing about to be conferred. He hoped the blessing might prove to be another son, and went to impart the good news to his wife. She would not see him, however, as she was offended by his taking a concubine from the class of “dancing girls.” The great man was sad, and

went away. Within the year, however, a son of marvelous beauty was born to one concubine, much to the annoyance of his wife and to himself, for he would have been glad to have the beautiful boy a full son, and eligible to office. The child was named Gil-Dong, or Hong Gil-Dong. He grew fast, and became more and more beautiful. He learned rapidly, and surprised every one by his remarkable ability. As he grew up he rebelled at being placed with the slaves, and at not being allowed to call his parent, father. The other children laughed and jeered at him, and made life very miserable. He refused longer to study of the duties of children to their parents. He upset his table in school, and declared he was going to be a soldier. One bright moonlight night Hong Pansa saw his son in the courtyard practicing the arts of the soldier, and he asked him what it meant. Gil-Dong answered that he was fitting himself to become a man that people should respect and fear. He said he knew that heaven had made all things for the use of men, if they found themselves capable of using them, and that the laws of men were only made to assist a few that could not otherwise do as they would; but that he was not inclined to submit to any such tyranny, but would become a great man in spite of his evil surroundings. “This is a most remarkable boy,” mused Hong Pansa.

“What a pity that he is not my proper and legitimate son, that he might be an honor to my name. As it is, I fear he will cause me serious trouble.” He urged the boy to go to bed and sleep, but Gil-Dong said it was useless, that if he went to bed he would think of his troubles till the tears washed sleep away from his eyes, and caused him to get up.

The wife of Hong Pansa and his other concubine (the dancing girl), seeing how much their lord and master thought of Gil-Dong, grew to hate the latter intensely, and began to lay plans for ridding themselves of him. They called some mootang, or sorceresses, and explained to them that their happiness was disturbed by this son of a rival, and that peace could only be restored to their hearts by the death of this youth. The witches laughed and said: “Never mind. There is an old woman who lives by the east gate, tell her to come and prejudice the father. She can do it, and be will then look after his son.”

The old hag came as requested. Hong Pansa was then in the women’s apartments, telling them of the wonderful boy, much to their annoyance. A visitor was announced, and the old woman made a low7 bow outside. Hong Pansa asked her what her business was, and she stated that she had heard of his wonderful son, and came to see him, to foretell what his future was to be.

Gil-Dong came as called, and on seeing him the hag bowed and said: “Send out all of the people.” She then stated: “This will be a very great man; if not a king, he will be greater than the king, and will avenge his early wrongs by killing all his family.” At this the father called to her to stop, and enjoined strict secrecy upon her. He sent Gil-Dong at once to a strong room, and had him locked in for safe keeping.

The boy was very sad at this new state of affairs, but as his father let him have books, he got down to hard study, and learned the Chinese works on astronomy. He could not see his mother, and his unnatural father was too afraid to come near him. He made up his mind, however, that as soon as he could get out he would go to some far-off country, where he was not known, and make his true power felt.

Meanwhile, the unnatural father was kept in a state of continual excitement by his wicked concubine, who was bent on the destruction of the son of her rival, and kept constantly before her master the great dangers that would come to him from being the parent of such a man as Gil-Dong was destined to be, if allowed to live. She showed him that such power as the boy was destined to possess, would eventually result in his overthrow, and with him his father’s house would be in disgrace, and, doubtless, would be abolished. While if this did not happen, the son was sure to kill his family, so that, in either ease, it was the father’s clear duty to prevent any further trouble by putting the boy out of the way. Hong Pansa was finally persuaded that his concubine was right, and sent for the assassins to come and kill his son. But a spirit filled the father with disease, and he told the men to stay their work. Medicines failed to cure the disease, and the mootang women were called in by the concubine. They beat their drums and danced about the room, conjuring the spirit to leave, but it would not obey. At last they said, at the suggestion of the concubine, that Gil-Dong was the cause of the disorder, and that with his death the spirit would cease troubling the father.

Again, the assassins were sent for, and came with their swords, accompanied by the old hag from the east gate. While they were meditating on the death of Gil-Dong, he was musing on the unjust laws of men who allowed sons to be born of concubines, but denied them rights that were enjoyed by other men.

Part 2

While thus musing in the darkness of the night, he heard a crow caw three times and fly away. “This means something ill to me,” thought he; and Just then his window was thrown open, and in stepped the assassins. They made at the boy, but he was not there. In

their rage they wounded each other, and killed the old woman who was their guide. To their amazement the room had disappeared, and they were surrounded by high mountains. A mighty storm arose, and rocks flew through the air. They could not escape, and, in their terror, were about to give up, when music was heard, and a boy came riding by on a donkey, playing a flute. He took away their weapons, and showed himself to be Gil-Dong. He promised not to kill them, as they begged for their lives, but only on condition that they should never try to kill another man. He told them that he would know if the promise was broken, and, in that event, he would instantly kill them.

Gil-Dong went by night to see his father, who thought him a spirit, and was very much afraid. He gave his father medicine, which instantly cured him; and sending for his mother, bade her good-by, and started for an unknown country.

His father was very glad that the boy had escaped, and lost his affection for his wicked concubine. But the latter, with her mistress, was very angry, and tried in vain to devise some means to accomplish their evil purposes.

Gil-Dong, free at last journeyed to the south. and began to ascend the lonely mountains. Tigers were abundant, but he feared them not, and they seemed to avoid molesting him. After many days, he found himself high up on a barren peat enveloped by the clouds and enjoyed the remoteness of the place, and the absence of men and obnoxious laws. He now felt himself a free man, and the equal of any, while he knew that heaven was smiling upon him and giving him powers not accorded to other men.

Through the clouds at some distance he thought he espied a huge stone door in the bare wall of rock. Going up to it, he found it to be indeed a movable door, and, opening it, he stepped inside, when, to his amazement, he found himself in an open plain, surrounded by high and inaccessible mountains. He saw before him over two hundred good houses, and many men, who, when they had somewhat recovered from their own surprise, came rushing upon him, apparently with evil intent. Laying hold upon him they asked him who he was, and why he came trespassing upon their ground. He said: “I am surprised to find myself in the presence of men. I am but the son of a concubine, and men, with their laws, are obnoxious to me. Therefore, I thought to get away from man entirely, and, for that reason, I wandered alone into these wild regions. But who are you, and why do you live in this lone spot? Perhaps we may have a kindred feeling.”

“We are called thieves,” was answered; “but we only despoil the hated official class of some of their ill-gotten gains. We are willing to help the poor unbeknown, but no man can enter our stronghold and depart alive, unless he has become one of us. To do so, however, he must prove himself to be strong in body and mind. If you can pass the examination and wish to join our party, well and good; otherwise you die.”

This suited Gil-Dong immensely, and he consented to the conditions. They gave him various trials of strength, but he chose his own. Going up to a huge rock on which several men were seated, he laid hold of it and hurled it to some distance, to the dismay of the men, who fell from their seat, and to the surprised delight of all. He was at once installed a member, and a feast was ordered. The contract was sealed by mingling blood from the lips of all the members with blood similarly supplied by Gil-Dong. He was then given a prominent seat and served to wine and food.

Gil-Dong soon became desirous of giving to his comrades some manifestation of his courage. An opportunity presently offered. He heard the men bemoaning their inability to despoil a large and strong Buddhist temple not far distant As was the rule, this temple in the mountains was well patronized by officials, who made it a place of retirement for pleasure and debauch, and in return the lazy, licentious priests were allowed to collect tribute from the poor people about, till they had become rich and powerful. The several attempts made by the robber band had proved unsuccessful, by virtue of the number and vigilance of the priests, together with the strength of their enclosure. Gil-Dong agreed to assist them to accomplish their design or perish in the attempt, and such was their faith in him that they readily agreed to his plans.

On a given day Gil-Dong, dressed in the red gown of a youth, just betrothed, covered himself with the dust of travel, and mounted on a donkey, with one robber disguised as a servant, made his way to the temple. He asked on arrival to be shown to the head priest, to whom he stated that he was the son of Hong Pansa, that his noble father having heard of the greatness of this temple, and the wisdom of its many priests, had decided to send him with a letter, which he produced, to be educated among their numbers. He also stated that a train of one hundred ponies loaded with rice had been sent as a present from his father to the priest, and he expected they would arrive before dark, as they did not wish to stop alone in the mountains, even though every pony was attended by a groom, who was armed for defense. The priests were delighted, and having read the letter, they never for a moment suspected that all was not right. A great feast was ordered in honor of their noble scholar, and all sat down before the tables, which were filled so high that one could hardly see his neighbor on the opposite side. They had scarcely seated themselves and indulged in the

generous wine, when it was announced that the train of ponies laden with rice had arrived. Servants were sent to look after the tribute, and the eating and drinking went on. Suddenly Gil-Dong clapped his hand, over his cheek with a cry of pain, which drew the attention of all. When, to the great mortification of the priests, he produced from his month a pebble, previously introduced on the sly, and exclaimed: “Is it to feed on stones that my father sent me to this place? What do yon mean by setting such rice before a gentleman?”

Part 3

The priests were filled with mortification and dismay, and bowed their shaven heads to the floor in humiliation. When at a sign from Gil-Dong, a portion of the robbers, who had entered the court as grooms to the ponies, seized the bending priests and bound them as they were. The latter shouted for help, but the other robbers, who had been concealed in the bags, which were supposed to contain rice, seized the servants, while others were loading the ponies with jewels, rice, cash and whatever of value they could lay hands upon.

An old priest who was attending to the fires, seeing the uproar, made off quietly to the yamen near by and called for soldiers. The soldiers were sent after some delay, and Gil-Dong, disguised as a priest, called to them to follow him down a by-path after the robbers. While he conveyed the soldiers over this rough path, the robbers made good their escape by the main road, and were soon joined in their stronghold by their youthful leader, who had left the soldiers groping helplessly in the dark among the rocks and trees in a direction opposite that taken by the robbers.

The priests soon found out that they had lost almost all their riches, and were at no loss in determining how the skilful affair had been planned and carried out. Gil-Dong’s name was noised abroad, and it was soon known that he was heading a band of robbers, who, through his assistance, were able to do many marvelous things. The robber band was delighted at the success of his first undertaking, and made him their chief, with the consent of all. After sufficient time had elapsed for the full enjoyment of their last and greatest success, Gil-Dong planned a new raid.

The Governor of a neighboring province was noted for his overbearing ways and the heavy burdens that he laid upon his subjects. He was very rich, but universally hated, and Gil-Dong decided to avenge the people and humiliate the Governor, knowing that his work would be appreciated by the people, as were indeed his acts at the temple. He instructed his band to proceed singly to the Governor’s city—the local capital—at the time of a fair, when their coming would not cause comment. At a given time a portion of them were to set fire to a lot of straw-thatched huts outside the city gates, while the others repaired in a body to the Governor’s yamen. They did so. The Governor was borne in his chair to a place where he could witness the conflagration, which also drew away the most of the inhabitants. The robbers bound the remaining servants, and while some were securing money, jewels, and weapons, Gil-Dong wrote on the walls: “The wicked Governor that robs the people is relieved of his ill-gotten gains by GilDong—the people’s avenger.”

Again the thieves made good their escape, and Gil-Dong’s name became known everywhere.

The Governor offered a great reward for his capture, but no one seemed desirous of encountering a robber of such boldness. At last the King offered a reward after consulting with his officers. When one of them said he would capture the thief alone, the King was astonished at his boldness and courage, and bade him be off and make the attempt. The officer was called the Pochang; he had charge of the prisons, and was a man of great courage.

The Pochang started on his search, disguised as a traveler. He took a donkey and servant, and after traveling many days he put up at a little inn, at the same time that another man on a donkey rode up. The latter was Gil-Dong in disguise, and he soon entered into conversation with the man, whose mission was known to him.

“I goo” said Gil-Dong, as he sat down to eat, “this is a dangerous country. I have just been chased by the robber Gil-Dong till the life is about gone out of me.”

“Gil-Dong, did yon say?” remarked Pochang. “I wish he would chase me. I am anxious to see the man of whom we hear so much.”

“Well, if you see him once you will be satisfied,” replied Gil-Dong.

“Why?” asked the Pochang. “Is he such a fearful-looking man as to frighten one by his aspect alone?”

“No; on the contrary he looks much as do ordinary mortals. But we know he is different, you see.”

“Exactly,” said the Pochang. “That is just the trouble. You are afraid of him before you see him. Just let me get a glimpse of him, and matters will be different, I think.”

“Well,” said Gil-Dong, “you can be easily pleased, if that is all, for I dare say if you go back into the mountains here you will see him, and get acquainted with him too.”

“That is good. Will you show me the place?” “Not I. I have seen enough of him to please me. I can tell you where to go, however, if you persist in your curiosity,” said the robber.

“Agreed!” exclaimed the officer. “Let us be off at once lest he escapes. And if you succeed in showing him to me, I will reward you for your work and protect you from the thief.”

After some objection by Gil-Dong, who appeared to be reluctant to go, and insisted on at least finishing his dinner, they started off, with their servants, into the mountains. Night overtook them, much to the apparent dismay Image 10.4: Hong Gil-Dong Jeon | The first pages of a Korean Hong Gil-Dong novel. Author: Heo Gyun Source: Wikimedia Commons License: Public Domain Compact Anthology of World Literature 12 of the guide, who pretended to be very anxious to give up the quest. At length, however, they came to the stone door, which was open. Having entered the robber’s stronghold, the door closed behind them, and the guide disappeared, leaving the dismayed officer surrounded by the thieves. His courage had now left him, and he regretted his rashness. The robbers bound him securely and led him past their miniature city into an enclosure surrounded by houses which, by their bright colors, seemed to be the abode of royalty. He was conveyed into a large audience-chamber occupying the most extensive building of the collection, and there, on a sort of throne, in royal style, sat his guide. The Pochang saw his mistake, and fell on his face, begging for mercy. Gil-Dong upbraided him for his impudence and arrogance and promised to let him off this time, Wine was brought, and all partook of it. That given to the officer was drugged, and he fell into a stupor soon after drinking it. While in this condition he was put into a bag and conveyed in a marvelous manner to a high mountain overlooking the capital. Here he found himself upon recovering from the effects of his potion; and not daring to face his sovereign with such a fabulous tale, he cast himself down from the high mountain, and was picked up dead, by passers-by, in the morning. Almost at the same time that His Majesty received word of the death of his officer, and was marveling at the audacity of the murderer in bringing the body almost to the palace doors, came simultaneous reports of great depredations in each of the eight provinces. The trouble was in each case attributed to Gil-Dong, and the fact that he was reported as being in eight far removed places at the same time caused great consternation.

Part 4

Official orders were issued to each of the eight governors to catch and bring to the city, at once, the robber Gil-Dong. These orders were so well obeyed that upon a certain day soon after, a guard came from each province bringing Gil-Dong, and there in a line stood eight men alike in every respect.

The King on inquiry found that Gil-Dong was the son of Hong Pansa, and the father was ordered into the royal presence. He came with his legitimate son, and bowed his head in shame to the ground. When asked what he meant by having a son who would cause such general misery and distress, he swooned away, and would have died had not one of the Gil-Dongs produced some medicine which cured him. The son, however, acted as spokesman, and informed the King that Gil-Dong was but the son of his father’s slave, that he was utterly incorrigible, and had fled from home when a mere boy. When asked to decide as to which was his true son, the father stated that his son had a scar on the left thigh. Instantly each of the eight men pulled up the baggy trousers and displayed a soar. The guard was commanded to remove the men and kill all of them: but when they attempted to do so the life had disappeared, and the men were found to be only figures in straw and wax.

Soon after this a letter was seen posted on the Palace gate, announcing that if the government would confer upon Gil-Dong the rank of Pansa, as held by his father, and thus remove from him the stigma attaching; to him as the son of a slave, he would stop his depredations. This proposition could not be entertained at first, but one of the counsel suggested that it might offer a solution of the vexed question, and they could yet be spared the disgrace of having an officer with such a record. For, as he proposed, men could be so stationed that when the newly-appointed officer came to make his bow before His Majesty, they could fall upon him and kill him before he arose. This plan was greeted with applause, and a decree was issued conferring the desired rank; proclamations to that effect being posted in public places, so that the news would reach Gil-Dong. It did reach him, and he soon appeared at the city gate. A great crowd attended him as he rode to the Palace gates; but knowing the plans laid for him, as he passed through the gates

and came near enough to be seen of the King, he was caught up in a cloud and borne away amid strange music; wholly discomfiting his enemies.

Some time after this occurrence the King was walking with a few eunuchs and attendants in the royal gardens. It was evening time, but the full moon furnished ample light. The atmosphere was tempered just to suit; it was neither cold nor warm, while it lacked nothing of the bracing character of a Korean autumn. The leaves were blood-red on the maples; the heavy cloak of climbing vines that enshrouded the great wall near by was also beautifully colored. These effects could even be seen by the bright moonlight, and seated on a hill-side the royal party were enjoying the tranquility of the scene, when all were astonished by the sound of a flute played by some one up above them. Looking up among the tree-tops a man was seen descending toward them, seated upon the back of a gracefully moving stork. The King imagined it must be some heavenly being, and ordered the chief eunuch to make some proper salutation. But before this could be done, a voice was heard saying: “Fear not, O King. I am simply Hong Pansa (Gil-Dong’s new title). I have come to make my obeisance before your august presence and be confirmed in my rank.”

This he did, and no one attempted to molest him; seeing which, the King, feeling that it was useless longer to attempt to destroy a man who could read the unspoken thoughts of men, said: “Why do you persist in troubling the country ? I have removed from you now the stigma attached to your birth. What more will you have?”

“I wish,” said Gil-Dong, with due humility, “to go to a distant laud, and settle down to the pursuit of peace and happiness. If I may be granted three thousand bags of rice I will gladly go and trouble you no longer.”

“But how will you transport such an enormous quantity of rice?” asked the King.

“That can be arranged,” said Gil-Dong. “If I may be but granted the order, I will remove the rice at daybreak.”

The order was given. Gil-Dong went away as he came, and in the early morning a fleet of junks appeared off the royal granaries, took on the rice, and made away before the people were well aware of their presence.

Gil-Dong now sailed for an island off the west coast. He found one uninhabited, and with his few followers he stored his riches, and brought many articles of value from his former hiding-places. His people be taught to till the soil, and all went well on the little island till the master made a trip to a neighboring island, which was famous for its deadly mineral poison—a thing much prized for tipping the arrows with. Gil-Dong wanted to get some of this poison, and made a visit to the island. While passing through the settled districts he casually noticed that many copies of a proclamation were posted up, offering a large reward to any one who would succeed In restoring to her father a young lady who had been stolen by a band of savage people who lived in the mountains.

Gil-Dong journeyed on all day, and at night he found himself high up in the wild mountain regions, where the poison was abundant. Gazing about in making some preparations for passing the night in this place, he saw a light, and following it, he came to a house built below him on a ledge of rocks, and in an almost inaccessible position. He could see the interior of a large hall, where were gathered many hairy, shaggy-looking men, eating, drinking, and smoking. One old fellow, who seemed to be chief, was tormenting a young lady by trying to tear away her veil and expose her to the gaze of the barbarians assembled. Gil-Dong could not stand this sight, and, taking a poisoned arrow, he sent it direct for the heart of the villain, but the distance was so great that he missed his mark sufficiently to only wound the arm. All one of them threw aside her veil and implored for mercy. Then it was that Gil-Dong recognized the maiden whom he had rescued the previous evening. She was marvelously beautiful, and already he was deeply smitten with her maidenly charms. Her voice seemed like that of an angel of peace sent to quiet the hearts of rough men. As she modestly begged for her life, she told the story of her capture by the robbers, and how she had been dragged away to their den, and was only saved from insult by the interposition of some heavenly being, who had in pity smote the arm of her tormentor.

Great was Gil-Dong’s joy at being able to explain his own part in the matter, and the maiden heart, already won by the manly beauty of her rescuer, now overflowed with gratitude and love. Remembering herself, however, she quickly veiled her face, but the mischief had been done; each had seen the other, and they could henceforth know no peace, except in each other’s presence.

The proclamations had made but little impression upon Gil-Dong, and it was not till the lady had told her story that he remembered reading them. He at once took steps to remove the beautiful girl and her companion in distress, and not knowing but that other of the savages might return, he did not dare to make search for a chair and bearers, but mounting donkeys the little party set out for the home of the distressed parents, which they reached safely in due time. The father’s delight knew no bounds. He was a subject of Korea’s King, yet he possessed this island and ruled its people in his own right. And calling his subjects, he explained to them publicly the wonderful works of the stranger, to whom he betrothed his daughter, and to whom he gave his official position.

The people indulged in all manner of gay festivities in honor of the return of the lost daughter of their chief; in respect to the bravery of Gil-Dong; and to celebrate his advent as their ruler.

In due season the marriage ceremonies were celebrated, and the impatient lovers were given to each other's embrace. Their lives were full of happiness and prosperity. Other outlying islands were united under Gil-Dong's rule, and no desire or ambition remained ungratified. Yet there came a time when the husband grew sad, and tears swelled the heart of the young wife as she tried in vain to comfort him. He explained at last that he had a presentiment that his father was either dead or dying, and that it was his duty to go and mourn at the grave. With anguish at the thought of parting, the wife urged him to go. Taking a junk laden with handsome marble slabs for the grave and statuary to surround it, and followed by junks bearing three thousand bags of rice, he set out for the capital. Arriving, be cut off his hair, and repaired to his old Louie, where a servant admitted him on the supposition that he was a priest. He found his father was no more; but the body yet remained, because a suitable place could not be found for the burial. Thinking him to be a priest, Gil-Dong was allowed to select the spot, and the burial took place with due ceremony. Then it was that the son revealed himself, and took his place with the mourners. The stone images and monuments were erected upon the nicely sodded grounds. Gil-Dong sent the rice he had brought, to the government granaries in return for the King's loan to him, and regretted that mourning would prevent his paying his respects to his King; he set out for his home with his true mother and his father's legal wife. The latter did not survive long after the death of her husband, but the poor slave-mother of the bright boy was spared many years to enjoy the peace and quiet of her son's bright home, and to be ministered to by her dutiful, loving children and their numerous offspring.

https://ung.edu/university-press/_uploads/files/World-Lit-Part-3.pdf?t=1598052182677

Listen to Isabel Allende's Ted Talk

As a novelist and memoirist, Isabel Allende writes of passionate lives, including her own. Born into a Chilean family with political ties, she went into exile in the United States in the 1970s—an event that, she believes, created her as a writer. Her voice blends sweeping narrative with touches of magical realism; her stories are romantic, in the very best sense of the word. Her novels include The House of the Spirits, Eva Luna and The Stories of Eva Luna, and her latest, Maya's Notebook and Ripper. And don't forget her adventure trilogy for young readers— City of the Beasts, Kingdom of the Golden Dragon and Forest of the Pygmies.

As a memoirist, she has written about her vision of her lost Chile, in My Invented Country, and movingly tells the story of her life to her own daughter, in Paula. Her book Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses memorably linked two sections of the bookstore that don't see much crossover: Erotica and Cookbooks. Just as vital is her community work: The Isabel Allende Foundation works with nonprofits in the San Francisco Bay Area and Chile to empower and protect women and girls—understanding that empowering women is the only true route to social and economic justice.



You can read excerpts of her books online here: https://www.isabelallende.com/en/books

Read her musings. Why does she write? https://www.isabelallende.com/en/musings

You might choose to read one of her novels.

Listen to Novelist **Chimamanda Adichie**. She speaks about how our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. She tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.



One Hundred Years of Solitutude

Gabriel García Márquez's novel "One Hundred Years of Solitude" brought Latin American literature to the forefront of the global imagination and earned García Márquez the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature. What makes the novel so remarkable? Francisco Díez-Buzo investigates.



Answer these questions as you listen:

How many generations of the Buendía family are in One Hundred Years of Solitude?

A 5

B 6

C 7

D 8

In what year did Gabriel García Marquez start writing One Hundred Years of Solitude?

A 1967

B 1965

C 1982

D 1928

Who inspired the style of One Hundred Years of Solitude?

A Colonel Aureliano Buendía

B Gabriel García Márquez

C Nicolás Ricardo Márquez

D Doña Tranquilina Iguarán Cotes

Which real-life event is almost directly represented in the novel?

A The Banana Massacre of 1928

B The Venezuelan coup d'état of 1958

C The Thousand Days' War

D The bogotazo

What is the name of the town where the novel is set?

A Aracataca

B Bogotá

C Macondo

D Colombia

Please explain how One Hundred Years of Solitude exemplifies the genre of magical realism.

What were the key influences in García Márquez's life that helped inspire One Hundred Years of Solitude?

The narrative moves in a particular shape. What is that shape? How is that shape created?

Gabriel García Márquez was a writer and journalist who recorded the haphazard political history of Latin American life through his fiction. He was a part of a literary movement called the Latin American "boom," which included writers like Peru's Mario Vargas Llosa, Argentina's Julio Cortázar, and Mexico's Carlos Fuentes. Almost all of these writers incorporated aspects of magical realism in their work. Later authors, such as Isabel Allende and Salman Rushdie, would carry on and adapt the genre to the cultural and historical experiences of other countries and continents.

García Máruqez hadn't always planned on being a writer, but a pivotal moment in Colombia's—and Latin America's—history changed all that. In 1948, when García Márquez was a law student in Bogotá, Jorge Eliécer Gaítan, a prominent radical populist leader of Colombia's Liberal Party, was assassinated. This happened while the U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall brought together leaders from across the Americas to create the Organization of American States (OAS) and to build a hemisphere-wide effort against communism. In the days after the assassination, massive riots, now called the *bogotazo*, occurred. The worst Colombian civil war to date, known as La Violencia, also broke out. Another law student, visiting from Cuba, was deeply affected by Eliécer Gaítan's death. This student's name was Fidel Castro. Interestingly, García Márquez and Castro—both socialists—would become close friends later on in life, despite not meeting during these tumultuous events.

One Hundred Years of Solitude's success almost didn't happen, but this article from *Vanity Fair* helps explain how a long-simmering idea became an international sensation.

When Gabriel García Márquez won the Nobel Prize in 1982, he gave a lecture that helped illuminate the plights that many Latin Americans faced on a daily basis. Since then, that lecture has also helped explain the political and social critiques deeply embedded in his novels. It was famous for being an indigenous overview of how political violence became entrenched in Latin America during the Cold War. In an interview with the *New Left Review*, he discussed a lot of the inspirations for his work, as well as his political beliefs.

Don Quixote

Mounting his skinny steed, Don Quixote charges an army of giants. It is his duty to vanquish these behemoths in the name of his beloved lady, Dulcinea. There's only one problem: the giants are merely windmills. What is it about this tale of the clumsy yet valiant knight that makes it so beloved? Ilan Stavans investigates.



Answer these questions as you listen:

Why do Don Quixote and Sancho Panza work well together?

A They eat at strange times of the day

B They are impatient

C They like to dance together

D Their characters complement each other

Why does Don Quixote want to fix the world?

A He is a knight who believes in social justice

B He reads many books

C He doesn't have any friends

D He loves toys

Why is Don Quixote's love for Dulcinea described as "platonic"?

A Plato is their matchmaker

B They love Greek philosophy

C They want material fortune

D It's purely spiritual

Why is Cervantes's book described as "the first modern novel"?

A It was originally adapted to television

B The characters evolve throughout the story

C Cervantes only wrote poetry before

D It refers to technological advances

What does the term "quixotic" mean?

A A reader

B A person without money

C An old man

D A dreamer

In what ways do Don Quixote and Sancho Panza change as the plot progresses?

Is it possible to count the total number of days that pass during their journey?

In what ways does their journey reveal the changes that 17th-century Spain is also undergoing?

Interested in exploring the world of *Don Quixote*? Check out this translation of the thrill-seeking classic.

To learn more about *Don Quixote*'s rich cultural history, click here. In this interview, the educator shares his inspiration behind his book *Quixote: The Novel and the World*.

The travails of *Don Quixote*'s protagonist were heavily shaped by real-world events in 17th-century Spain. This article provides detailed research on what, exactly, happened during that time.

Midnight's Children

It begins with a countdown. A woman goes into labor as the clock ticks towards midnight. Across India, people wait for the declaration of independence after nearly 200 years of British rule. At the stroke of midnight, an infant and two new nations are born in perfect synchronicity. These events form the foundation of "Midnight's Children." Iseult Gillespie explores Salman Rushdie's dazzling novel.



Answer these questions as you listen:

Saleem Sinai's birth coincides with:

A The invasion of India by the British

B The end of British occupation and the creation of two new nations, India and Pakistan

C The death of his mother

D His discovery of magic powers

Midnight's Children is set over the course of:

A About thirty years of Saleem's life

B A single day in Saleem's life

C The duration of British occupation

D About thirty years of Saleem's life, as well as flashbacks to before he was born

Saleem is the only person in the book with magic powers

A True

B False

Saleem has powers of

A Telepathy

B Shape shifting

C Predicting the future

D Flight

Midnight's Children is full of cultural references, including

A 1001 Nights

B Food

C Religion

D Mythology

E All of the above

List some of the historical events that are part of the plot of Midnight's Children

Why is Midnight's Children a work of postcolonial literature? Describe some of the features of postcolonial literature.

In addition to being a work of postcolonial literature, Midnight's Children is considered a key work of magical realism. Why do you think this is? What are some of the features of the book that could classify as magical realism?

Midnight's Children filters epic and complex histories through one man's life. What are the benefits of fictionalizing history in this way? What do you think he is trying to tell us about the way we process our past? Can history be as much of a narrative construct as fiction?

At the stroke of midnight, the first gasp of a newborn syncs with the birth of two new nations. These simultaneous events are at the center of Midnight's Children, a dazzling novel about the state of modern India by the British-Indian author Salman Rushdie. You can listen to an interview with Rushdie discussing the novel here.

The chosen baby is Saleem Sinai, who narrates the novel from a pickle factory in 1977. As this article argues, much of the beauty of the narrative lies in Rushdie's ability to weave the personal into the political in surprising ways. Saleem's narrative leaps back in time, to trace his family history from 1915 on. The family tree is blossoming with bizarre scenes, including clandestine courtships, babies swapped at birth, and cryptic prophecies. For a detailed interactive timeline of the historical and personal events threaded through the novel, click here. However, there's one trait that can't be explained by genes alone - Saleem has magic powers, and they're somehow related to the time of his birth. For an overview of the use of magical realism and astonishing powers in Mignight's Children, click here.

Saleem recounts a new nation, flourishing and founding after almost a century of British rule. For more information on the dark history of British occupation of India, visit this page.

The vast historical frame is one reason why Midnight's Children is considered one of the most illuminating works of postcolonial literature ever written. This genre typically addresses life in formerly colonized countries, and explores the fallout through themes like revolution, migration, and identity.

Postcolonial literature also deals with the search for agency and authenticity in the wake of imposed foreign rule. Midnight's Children reflects these concerns with its explosive combination of Eastern and Western references. On the one hand, it's been

compared to the sprawling novels of Charles Dickens or George Elliot, which also offer a panoramic vision of society paired with tales of personal development. But Rushdie radically disrupts this formula by adding Indian cultural references, magic and myth.

Saleem writes the story by night, and narrates it back to his love interest, Padma. This echoes the frame for 1001 Nights, a collection of Middle Eastern folktales told by Scheherazade every night to her lover - and as Saleem reminds us, 1001 is "the number of night, of magic, of alternative realities."

Saleem spends a lot of the novel attempting to account for the unexpected. But he often gets thoroughly distracted and goes on astonishing tangents, telling dirty jokes or mocking his enemies. With his own powers of telepathy, Saleem forges connections between other children of midnight; including a boy who can step through time and mirrors, and a child who changes their gender when immersed in water. There's other flashes of magic throughout, from a mother who can see into dreams to witchdoctors, shapeshifters, and many more. For an overview of the dazzling reference points of the novel, visit this page. Sometimes, all this is like reading a rollercoaster: Saleem sometimes narrates separate events all at once, refers to himself in the first and third person in the space of a single sentence, or uses different names for one person. And Padma is always interrupting, urging him to get to the point or exclaiming at his story's twists and turns.

This mind-bending approach has garnered continuing fascination and praise. Not only did Midnight's Children win the prestigious Man Booker prize in its year of publication, but it was named the best of all the winners in 2008. For an interview about Rushdie's outlook and processed, click here.

All this gives the narrative a breathless quality, and brings to life an entire society surging through political upheaval without losing sight of the marvels of individual lives. But even as he depicts the cosmological consequences of a single life, Rushdie questions the idea that we can ever condense history into a single narrative.

Heroes and "She-roes"

1. Do the attributes of a hero remain the same over time?
2. When does a positive personality trait become a tragic flaw?
3. What is the role of a hero or "she-roe" (coined by Maya Angelou) in a culture?
4. How do various cultures reward / recognize their heroes and "she-roes"?
5. Why is it important for people and cultures to construct narratives about their experience?

Read through the events that occur on a hero's journey here: Campbell's 'Hero's Journey' Monomyth

http://changingminds.org/disciplines/storytelling/plots/hero_journey/hero_journey.htm

You'll want to take notes on these events. Next, read through at least two of the stories in 100 READING UNITS found on this site. Can you find any of the events from a hero's journey?

http://mythfolklore.blogspot.com/

Tom Elemas: The Inspiring Truth in Fiction

What do we lose by choosing non-fiction over fiction? For Tomas Elemans, there's an important side effect of reading fiction: empathy -- a possible antidote to a desensitized world filled with tragic news and headlines.

What is empathy? How does story-telling create empathy? What stories trigger empathy in you? What is narrative immersion? Are we experiencing an age of narcissism? What might be some examples of narcissism? What connection does Tom Elemans make to individualism?



Ann Morgan: My year reading a book from every country in the world

Ann Morgan considered herself well read -- until she discovered the "massive blindspot" on her bookshelf. Amid a multitude of English and American authors, there were very few books from beyond the English-speaking world. So she set an ambitious goal: to read one book from every country in the world over the course of a year. Now she's urging other Anglophiles to read translated works so that publishers will work harder to bring foreign literary gems back to their shores. Explore interactive maps of her reading journey here: go.ted.com/readtheworld



Her blog: Check out my blog (http://ayearofreadingtheworld.com/), where you can find a complete list of the books I read, and what I learned along the way.

Jacqueline Woodson: What reading slowly taught me about writing

Reading slowly -- with her finger running beneath the words, even when she was taught not to -- has led Jacqueline Woodson to a life of writing books to be savored. In a lyrical talk, she invites us to slow down and appreciate stories that take us places we never thought we'd go and introduce us to people we never thought we'd meet. "Isn't that what this is all about -- finding a way, at the end of the day, to not feel alone in this world, and a way to feel like we've changed it before we leave?" she asks.



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1.3.2: Performing Arts



The true power of the performing arts - Ben Cameron

Arts administrator and live-theater fan Ben Cameron looks at the state of the live arts -- asking: How can the magic of live theater, live music, live dance compete with the always-on Internet? In his talk, he offers a bold look forward. (Filmed at TEDxYYC.)

https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-true-power-of-the-performing-arts-ben-cameron

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1.3.2.1: Music



So, we move from language and literature to another similar communication, music. Before we begin, what is your favorite song or piece of music? Take 5 minutes and listen to it.

Here's mine. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Sxv-sUYtM

Let's begin with these questions. We won't know the answers right away, but as we work through this unit, maybe we can add to our understanding of what makes us human.

1. What do we mean when we refer to music as the universal language?
2. What is music? How is this different from sound?
3. Why do people listen to music?
4. How is music structured?
5. What is a rhythm and melody?
6. How is rhythm different from a beat?
7. What is a timbre, and how are instruments different from each other?
8. Why do some things sound harmonious and others don't?
9. How and why is music central to a culture and community?
10. How are music and arts related?
11. How has music influenced history? And how has history influenced music?
12. Why is music so important to humans?
13. What is the purpose (or purposes) of music?
14. How does music transcend language?
15. Why is music split into notes and measures?
16. Why is the human voice particularly powerful in music?

In this next Ted lecture, Victor Wooten talks about music as a powerful communication tool. He says that it causes us to laugh, cry, think, and question. He is a Bassist and five=time Grammy winner. Take some time to read through the questions before you begin listening to the video.

Music as a language - Victor Wooten



https://ed.ted.com/lessons/victor-wooten-music-as-a-language

Music is a powerful communication tool--it causes us to laugh, cry, think and question. Bassist and five-time Grammy winner, Victor Wooten, asks us to approach music the same way we learn verbal language-- by embracing mistakes and playing as often as possible.

Questions to answer:

Both music and verbal languages serve what purpose, according to Wooten?

A They are both ways to get smarter.

B They are both forms of expression.

C They are both ways to help you understand mathematics.

D They are both much harder than texting.

How did you learn the first language you spoke? Were you allowed to make mistakes? How do you think those mistakes helped you learn the language? How do you think that relates to learning to play a musical instrument?

In some instances, music works better than the spoken word. Why?

A Speaking takes too much time.

B Music is much prettier than speaking.

C There's historical proof that music is much older than spoken language.

D Music doesn't have to be understood to be effective.

Should beginning musicians play with accomplished musicians? Why? How often should it happen?

Who are some of your musical idols? Do you think they improve when they play with other musicians?

According to Wooten, when we are learning to speak, what best describes the majority of people we speak to?

A Most language learners are only allowed to speak to other beginners until they are proficient speakers.

B Most people that language learners speak to are already proficient speakers.

C They are too smart for you to ever understand.

D Language learners only learn to speak by reading.

Wooten says that beginning musicians should play more than they practice. Do you agree? Why or why not?

When you are first learning music, you should embrace mistakes instead of correcting them.

A True

B False

What does Wooten say about following a strict regiment under the tutelage of a skilled teacher?

A It's the best way to learn music.

B Nobody learns music this way.

C It's wrong.

D It takes a long time. Too long.

So, you may have learned about how to classify musical instruments in a music theory class. Typically, in western music classes we talk about wind instruments, woodwind instruments, brass instruments, stringed instruments, and percussion instruments. Can you name one of each of these?

n this course, we’re going to use a common classification system used in ethnomusicology, the study of music in world cultures. In this system, there are only four kinds:

Aerophones (wind instruments)

Chordophones (stringed instruments)

Membranophones (instruments with a membrane, such as a drum)

Idiophones (self sounding instruments).

In this way of studying music, it is the way a sound is produced that determines the kind of instrument.

What would a guitar be classified as?



What would a flute be classified as?



What about a voice?



What about a conga drum?



So, let's take a look at one fascinating aerophone, the didgeridoo from Australia.



Click on this link to read about the didgeridoo. Remember to look back at our questions as you read.

https://newt.phys.unsw.edu.au/jw/didjeridu.html

Take a look at this film. Is this ‘sound’ or ‘music”? Is it ‘poetry’, ‘language’, or something else?

El Silbo by Angello Faccini

https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/films/el-silbo

Let’s watch a film about a Colombian flamenco guitarist living in Seville, Spain. As you watch this film, consider the following:

https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/films/solea

1. What draws you to a type of music?
2. What is the most important to you, the lyrics, the rhythm, the experience or feeling?
3. As you watch, pay attention to the elements of this music, the singing, the guitar, the dance, and the handclaps.
4. What kind of story does flamenco tell? Why are these stories important?
5. How can doing what you love ‘feed’ you? What are some examples from your own life where art, language, dance, music or sport ‘feed’ you?

The Man is the Music by Maris Curran

Length: 19 min. Place: Atlanta, GA

https://www.globalonenessproject.org/library/films/man-music

The Man is the Music draws us into Atlanta-based artist and musician Lonnie Holley's imaginative and captivating world. Prolific artist, musician and lover of Mother Earth, Holley treasures the discarded. Nurturing the neglected, he finds healing in the transformative power of art. This short documentary is not so much a portrait of the prolific artist and musician, as an experiential reflection on art as a way of life. Holley’s work is a product of the environment in which he was raised —Jim Crow Alabama—and reflects the impact of being socially discarded. Holley compulsively creates and his work is a means to deal with loss. It’s through his unique perspective and the process of creating beauty that Lonnie draws us into an imaginative and captivating world.

Create a piece of art from garbage. What lyrics might accompany your art?

Celebrating Indigenous Language Through Song

With a partner and using this guide, https://earth.google.com/web/@15.16355347,-44.18799068,-16650.99999158a,31916368d,35y,0h,0.00000095t,0r/data=CjISMBIgYTY1Y2U1NTk3MzE4MTFlOTkzN2RjN2JkNTNhNDc1ZGIiDHNwbGFzaHNjcmVlbg, listen again to the Celebrating Indigenous Languages for common lullabies. https://earth.google.com/web/@15.16355347,-44.18799068,-16650.99999158a,31916368d,35y,0h,0.00000095t,0r/data=CjISMBIgYTY1Y2U1NTk3MzE4MTFlOTkzN2RjN2JkNTNhNDc1ZGIiDHNwbGFzaHNjcmVlbg

Vincent Moon and Nana Vasconcelos: Hidden Music Rituals Around the World



Vincent Moon travels the world with a backpack and a camera, filming astonishing music and ritual the world rarely sees -- from a powerful Sufi ritual in Chechnya to an ayahuasca journey in Peru. He hopes his films can help people see their own cultures in a new way, to make young people say: "Whoa, my grandfather is as cool as Beyoncé." Followed by a mesmerizing performance by jazz icon Naná Vasconcelos.

Take a look at his website and his films. You can start with the map.

Describe the ‘soundscape’ of several of his films.

A soundscape is the acoustic environment as perceived by humans, in context. The term was originally coined by Michael Southworth[1], and popularised by R. Murray Schafer.[2] There is a varied history of the use of soundscape depending on discipline, ranging from urban design to wildlife ecology to computer science.[3] An important distinction is to separate soundscape from the broader acoustic environment. The acoustic environment is the combination of all the acoustic resources, natural and artificial, within a given area as modified by the environment. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standardized these definitions in 2014.(ISO 12913-1:2014)

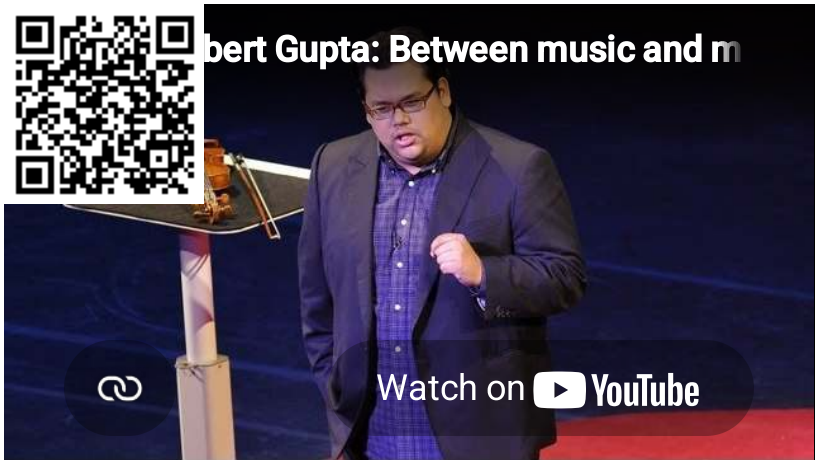
A soundscape is a sound or combination of sounds that forms or arises from an immersive environment. The study of soundscape is the subject of acoustic ecology or soundscape ecology. The idea of soundscape refers to both the natural acoustic environment, consisting of natural sounds, including animal vocalizations, the collective habitat expression of which is now referred to as the biophony, and, for instance, the sounds of weather and other natural elements, now referred to as the geophony; and environmental sounds created by humans, the anthropophony through a sub-set called controlled sound, such as musical composition, sound design, and language, work, and sounds of mechanical origin resulting from use of industrial technology. Crucially, the term soundscape also includes the listener's perception of sounds heard as an environment: "how that environment is understood by those living within it"[4] and therefore mediates their relations. The disruption of these acoustic environments results in noise pollution.[5] https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Soundscape

https://www.vincentmoon.com/map.php

Let’s go back to the essential questions from the beginning of this unit.

Here are several Ted Talks from a playlist that may answer some of those questions

Robert Gupta: Between music and medicine.



When Robert Gupta was caught between a career as a doctor and as a violinist, he realized his place was in the middle, with a bow in his hand and a sense of social justice in his heart. He tells a moving story of society's marginalized and the power of music therapy, which can succeed where conventional medicine fails.

Tod Machover and Dan Ellsey: Inventing instruments that unlock new music

Tod Machover of MIT's Media Lab is devoted to extending musical expression to everyone, from virtuosos to amateurs, and in the most diverse forms, from opera to video games. He and composer Dan Ellsey shed light on what's next.



Ji-Hae Park: The violin, and my dark night of the soul

In her quest to become a world-famous violinist, Ji-Hae Park fell into a severe depression. Only music was able to lift her out again -- showing her that her goal needn't be to play lofty concert halls, but instead to bring the wonder of the instrument to as many people as possible.



Benjamin Zander: The transformative power of classical music

Benjamin Zander has two infectious passions: classical music, and helping us all realize our untapped love for it -- and by extension, our untapped love for all new possibilities, new experiences, new connections.



Evelyn Glennie: How to truly listen

In this soaring demonstration, deaf percussionist Evelyn Glennie illustrates how listening to music involves much more than simply letting sound waves hit your eardrums.



Michael Tilson Thomas: Music and emotion through time.

In this epic overview, Michael Tilson Thomas traces the development of classical music through the development of written notation, the record, and the re-mix.



Then…elements of music

Ethnomusicology is the study of music from the cultural and social aspects of the people who make it. It encompasses distinct theoretical and methodical approaches that emphasize cultural, social, material, cognitive, biological, and other dimensions or contexts of musical behavior, in addition to the sound component.

The suppressed Spanish Jesuit Antonio Eximeno (1729-1809) is considered the theoretical founder of the field. Folklorists, who began preserving and studying folklore music in Europe and the US in the 19th century, are also considered precursors of the field prior to the Second World War. The term ethnomusicology is said to have been first coined by Jaap Kunst from the Greek words ἔθνος (ethnos, "nation") and μουσική (mousike, "music"), It is often defined as the anthropology or ethnography of music, or as musical anthropology.[1] During its early development from comparative musicology in the 1950s, ethnomusicology was primarily oriented toward non-Western music, but for several decades it has included the study of all and any musics of the world (including Western art music and popular music) from anthropological, sociological and intercultural perspectives. Bruno Nettl once characterized ethnomusicology as a product of Western thinking, proclaiming that "ethnomusicology as western culture knows it is actually a western phenomenon";[2] in 1992, Jeff Todd Titon described it as the study of "people making music".[3] https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnomusicology

When we listen or perform music, how do we critique or categorize or study music?

Let’s go back again to our essential questions. As you listen to these videos of music from around the world, which questions can you answer?

https://www.ted.com/playlists/396/music_around_the_world

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1.3.2.2: Dance



Dance is a performing art form consisting of purposefully selected sequences of human movement. This movement has aesthetic and symbolic value, and is acknowledged as dance by performers and observers within a particular culture. Dance can be categorized and described by its choreography, by its repertoire of movements, or by its historical period or place of origin.

An important distinction is to be drawn between the contexts of theatrical and participatory dance, although these two categories are not always completely separate; both may have special functions, whether social, ceremonial, competitive, erotic, martial, or sacred/liturgical. Other forms of human movement are sometimes said to have a dance-like quality, including martial arts, gymnastics, cheerleading, figure skating, synchronized swimming, marching bands, and many other forms of athletics. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance

Read the following three articles. Can you answer this question? What do you think? Why do humans dance?

Why Do Humans Dance? By Denise Chow - Assistant Managing Editor March 22, 2010

https://www.livescience.com/8132-humans-dance.html#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20study%2C%20dancing,have%20had%20an%20evolutionary%20advantage.&text=Dancers%20are%20more%20symmetrical%2C%20research%20has%20s hown.

Why Do Humans Dance? Kimerer L LaMothe Ph.D.

Reflections on a quintessential human experience

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-body-knows/201503/why-do-humans-dance

Why do we like to dance--And move to the beat?

Columbia University neurologist John Krakauer busts a move and rolls out an answer to this query: September 26, 2008

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/experts-dance/

Humans may be good at dancing, but that does not mean the skill is unique to us

By Melissa Hogenboom: 9 January 2017

http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170106-where-did-the-ability-to-dance-come-from

There are various reasons people dance. Dance has three purposes:

- Ceremonial
- Recreational
- Artistic

Dance is created and performed with a specific purpose.

As we take a look at various dance performances on the Ted Playlist, we can answer the following questions.

1. Why do people dance?
2. What are the characteristics of a ceremonial dance?

3. What are the characteristics of a recreational dance?
4. What are the characteristics of a dance created for the purpose of artistic expression?
5. Can a dance or style have more than one purpose? To what extent does kinesthetic communication differ from other disciplines?
6. When does dance heal and when does it hurt?
7. How is dance present in everyday life?
8. How is dance used to solve problems?
9. What can best be communicated through dance?
10. Are there limits to dance as a medium of expression?
11. To what extent is dance creative and to what extent is it deliberately ritualized?

Ted Dance Playlist

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1.3.2.3: Theater



As we take a look at theater can we find the answer to these questions?

1. How did theater develop?
2. How do people connect through theater?
3. How does theater reflect and influence society? How does an audience communicate with actors?
4. What life skills can we learn from theater?
5. How does culture affect drama through history?
6. How does drama bridge cultural diversity?
7. How have the events in history molded drama

Pasty Rodenburg: Why I do theater

Patsy Rodenburg says the world needs actors more than ever. In this talk at Michael Howard Studios, she tells the story of a profound encounter that reveals the deeper role theater can play in people's lives.



Theatre or theater[a] is a collaborative form of performing art that uses live performers, typically actors or actresses, to present the experience of a real or imagined event before a live audience in a specific place, often a stage. The performers may communicate this experience to the audience through combinations of gesture, speech, song, music, and dance. Elements of art, such as painted scenery and stagecraft such as lighting are used to enhance the physicality, presence and immediacy of the experience. The specific place of the performance is also named by the word "theatre" as derived from the Ancient Greek θέατρον (théatron, "a place for viewing"), itself from θεάομαι (theáomai, "to see", "to watch", "to observe").

Modern Western theatre comes, in large measure, from the theatre of ancient Greece, from which it borrows technical terminology, classification into genres, and many of its themes, stock characters, and plot elements. Theatre artist Patrice Pavis defines theatricality, theatrical language, stage writing and the specificity of theatre as synonymous expressions that differentiate theatre from the other performing arts, literature and the arts in general.

Modern theatre includes performances of plays and musical theatre. The art forms of ballet and opera are also theatre and use many conventions such as acting, costumes and staging. They were influential to the development of musical theatre; see those articles for more information.

https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre

Kabuki: The people's dramatic art - Amanda Mattes

The Japanese dance and theater art of kabuki, derived from the word kabuku, meaning "out of the ordinary," can be traced back to the streets of seventeenth-century Kyoto. Kabuki became a dramatic art for the common people, with its use of makeup and facial expressions rather than masks, as well as a playful take on current events. Amanda Mattes tracks the evolution of kabuki and its place in Japan’s rich cultural heritage.



Answer these questions as you listen:

One way Kabuki differs from the _____ theater is that it relies on heavy makeup, rather than masks.

A Bunraku

B Kunqu

C Noh

D Commedia

The dry Kamo riverbed, where Izumo no Okuni first danced, was located in which city?

A Tokyo

B Kyoto

C Osaka

D Edo

The Onnagata were introduced into which form of Kabuki?

A Yaro Kabuki

B Mega Kabuki

C Wakashu Kabuki

D Onna Kabuki

Due to the influence of the Tokugawa Military and Bunraku, Kabuki soon evolved into a structured _____ play.

A Comedy

B One-act

C Musical

D Five-act

When Japan re-opened it's borders to the rest of the world, many artists, such as Claude Monet and Vincent Van Gogh, as well as composer _____, began to use Kabuki styles to influence their work.

A Scott Joplin

B Claude Debussy

C Igor Stravinsky

D Johann Sebastian Bach

Two Eastern philosophies shaped the early development of Kabuki. The first, Buddhism, was used by Izumo no Okuni to create unique dances, which were originally used for prayers. What was the second, and in what ways did Kabuki change due to its implementation?

Name three sanctions the Bakufu placed against Kabuki theatres during the Tokugawa Era.

What are the major differences between the dance form Izumo no Okuni established and Onna-Kabuki, Wakashu-Kabuki, and Yaro-Kabuki?

When the Tokugawa Shogunate fell, what Emperor rose to power, and thus, opened Japan's ports to the rest of the world?

What type of stories did Kabuki originally focus on, which set it apart from Noh dramas?

Oskar Eustis: Why theater is essential to democracy (What do you think?)

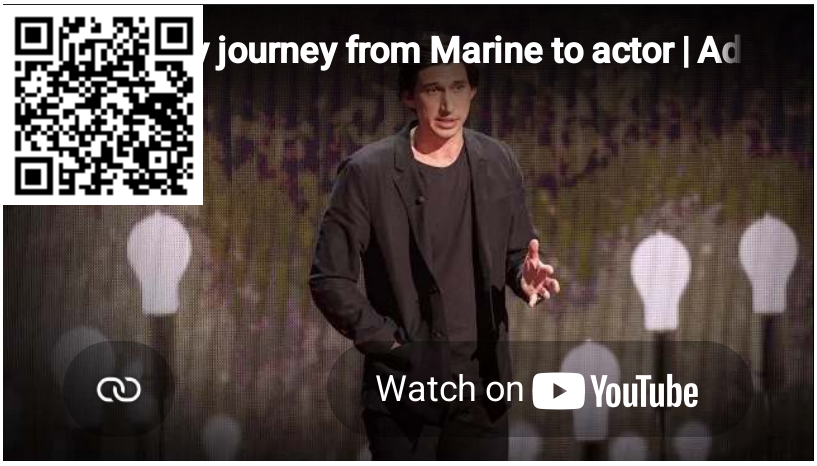
Truth comes from the collision of different ideas, and theater plays an essential role in showing us that truth, says legendary artistic director Oskar Eustis. In this powerful talk, Eustis outlines his plan to reach (and listen to) people in places across the US where the theater, like many other institutions, has turned its back -- like the deindustrialized Rust Belt. "Our job is to try to hold up a vision to America that shows not only who all of us are individually, but that welds us back into the commonality that we need to be," Eustis says. "That's what the theater is supposed to do."



Adam Driver: My journey from Marine to actor

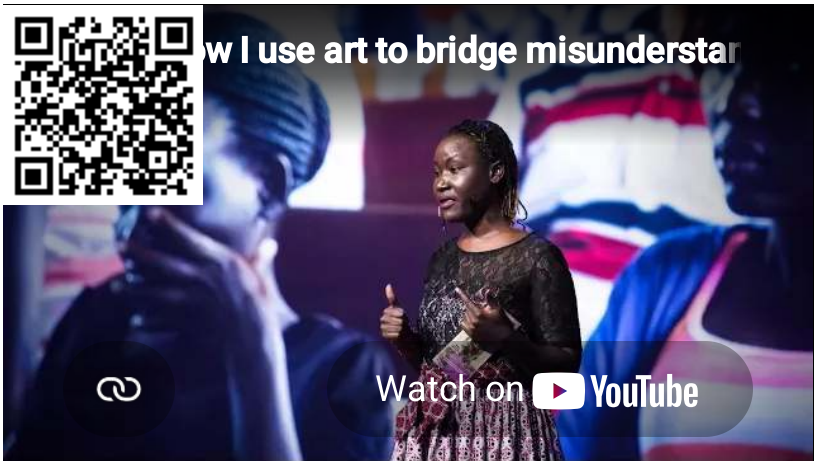
Before he fought in the galactic battles of Star Wars, Adam Driver was a United States Marine with 1/1 Weapons Company. He tells the story of how and why he became a Marine, the complex transition from soldier to civilian -- and Arts in the Armed Forces, his nonprofit that brings theater to the military. Because, as he says: "Self-expression is just as valuable a tool as a rifle on your

shoulder." Followed by a spirited performance of Marco Ramirez's "I am not Batman" by Jesse J. Perez and Matt Johnson. (Adult language)



Adong Judith: How I use art to bridge misunderstanding

Director and playwright Adong Judith creates provocative art that sparks dialogue on issues from LGBTQ rights to war crimes. In this quick but powerful talk, the TED Fellow details her work -- including the play "Silent Voices," which brought victims of the Northern Ugandan war against Joseph Kony's rebel group together with political, religious and cultural leaders for transformative talks. "Listening to one another will not magically solve all problems," Judith says. "But it will give a chance to create avenues to start to work together to solve many of humanity's problems."



(Other videos on Theater)

https://www.ted.com/search?cat=videos&q=theater

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1.3.2.4: Film



Films have been widely regarded as a magical experience for many people. Although films have undergone significant transformations over the last one hundred plus years and will continue to do so as society progresses and technology becomes more advanced, one thing remains certain. That certainty is that films will go down in history as one of the most cherished and sought out forms of entertainment.

Read the wikibook for an introduction to mass media and film.

https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Mass_Media/Film

1. How does film reflect the beliefs and values of society?
2. How do films make us think?
3. What is the relationship between the viewer and the film?

Choose two films to compare and answer the essential questions.

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1.3.3: Visual Arts



1. What conditions, attitudes, & behaviors support creativity & innovative thinking?
2. What factors prevent or encourage people to take creative risks?
3. How does collaboration expand the creative process?
4. How does knowing the contexts, histories, & traditions of art forms help us create works of art & design?
5. Why do artists follow or break from established traditions?
6. How do artists determine what resources & criteria are needed to formulate artistic investigations?
7. How do artists work?
8. How do artists & designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective?
9. How do artists & designers learn from trial & error?
10. How do artists & designers care for & maintain materials, tools, & equipment?
11. Why is it important for safety & health to understand the follow correct procedures in handling materials, tools, & equipment?
12. What responsibilities come with the freedom to create?
13. How do objects, places, & design shape lives & communities?
14. How do artists & designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems?
15. How do artists & designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?
16. What role does persistence play in revising, refining, & developing work?
17. How do artists grow & become accomplished in art forms?
18. How does collaboratively reflecting on a work help us experience it more completely?
19. How are artworks cared for & by whom?
20. What criteria, methods, & processes are used to select work for preservation or presentation?
21. Why do people value objects, artifacts, & artworks, & select them for presentation?
22. What methods & processes are considered when preparing artwork for presentation or preservation?
23. How does refining artwork affect its meaning to the viewer?
24. What criteria are considered when selecting work for presentation, a portfolio, or a collection?
25. What is an art museum?
26. How does the presenting & sharing of objects, artifacts, & artworks influence & shape ideas, beliefs, & experiences?
27. How do objects, artifacts, & artworks collected, preserved, or presented, cultivate appreciation & understanding?
28. How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art?
29. How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world?
30. What can we learn from our responses to art?
31. What is an image?
32. Where & how do we encounter images in our world?
33. How do images influence our views of the world?
34. What is the value of engaging in the process of art criticism?
35. How can the viewer “read” a work of art as text?
36. How does knowing and using visual art vocabularies help us understand and interpret works of art?
37. How does one determine criteria to evaluate a work of art?

38. How and why might criteria vary?
39. How is a personal preference different from an evaluation?
40. How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives?
41. How does making art attune people to their surroundings?
42. How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through art-making?
43. How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures?
44. How is art used to impact the views of a society?
45. How does art preserve aspects of life?

The visual arts are art forms such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, photography, video, filmmaking, design, crafts, and architecture. Many artistic disciplines such as performing arts, conceptual art, textile arts also involve aspects of visual arts as well as arts of other types. Also included within the visual arts are the applied arts such as industrial design, graphic design, fashion design, interior design and decorative art.

Current usage of the term "visual arts" includes fine art as well as the applied or decorative arts and crafts, but this was not always the case. Before the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain and elsewhere at the turn of the 20th century, the term 'artist' had for some centuries often been restricted to a person working in the fine arts (such as painting, sculpture, or printmaking) and not the decorative arts, craft, or applied Visual arts media. The distinction was emphasized by artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement, who valued vernacular art forms as much as high forms.[4] Art schools made a distinction between the fine arts and the crafts, maintaining that a craftsperson could not be considered a practitioner of the arts.

The increasing tendency to privilege painting, and to a lesser degree sculpture, above other arts has been a feature of Western art as well as East Asian art. In both regions painting has been seen as relying to the highest degree on the imagination of the artist, and the furthest removed from manual labour – in Chinese painting the most highly valued styles were those of "scholar-painting", at least in theory practiced by gentleman amateurs. The Western hierarchy of genres reflected similar attitudes. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_arts#:~:text=The%20visual%20arts%20are%20art,as%20arts%20 of%20other%20types.

https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=art-appreciation-oer

This course explores the world's visual arts, focusing on the development of visual awareness, assessment, and appreciation by examining a variety of styles from various periods and cultures while emphasizing the development of a common visual language. The materials are meant to foster a broader understanding of the role of visual art in human culture and experience from the prehistoric through the contemporary. The course materials consist of 24 presentations examining art across the globe from prehistory though the contemporary art world. These introduce key vocabulary, explore the way that culture and art are linked, describe the varying methods and techniques of the featured artists, and encourage classroom discourse.

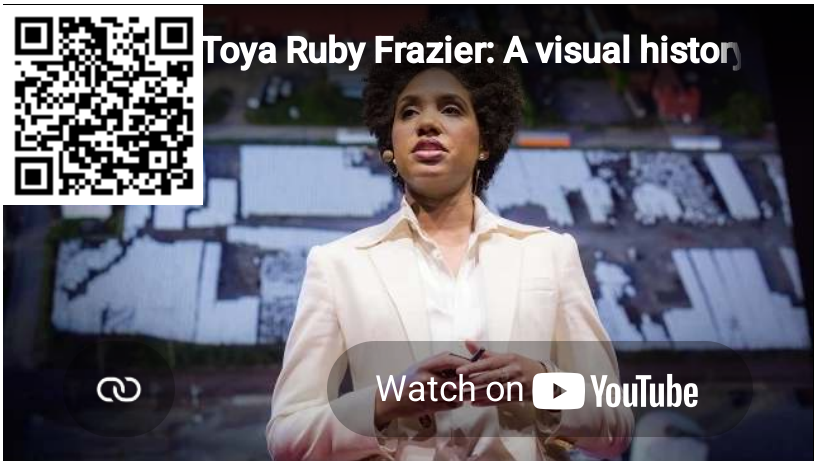
Titus Kaphar: Can art amend history?

Artist Titus Kaphar makes paintings and sculptures that wrestle with the struggles of the past while speaking to the diversity and advances of the present. In an unforgettable live workshop, Kaphar takes a brush full of white paint to a replica of a 17th-century Frans Hals painting, obscuring parts of the composition and bringing its hidden story into view. There's a narrative coded in art like this, Kaphar says. What happens when we shift our focus and confront unspoken truths?



LaToya Ruby Frazier: A visual history of inequality in industrial America

For the last 12 years, LaToya Ruby Frazier has photographed friends, neighbors and family in Braddock, Pennsylvania. But though the steel town has lately been hailed as a posterchild of "rustbelt revitalization," Frazier's pictures tell a different story, of the real impact of inequality and environmental toxicity. In this short, powerful talk, the TED Fellow shares a deeply personal glimpse of an often-unseen world.



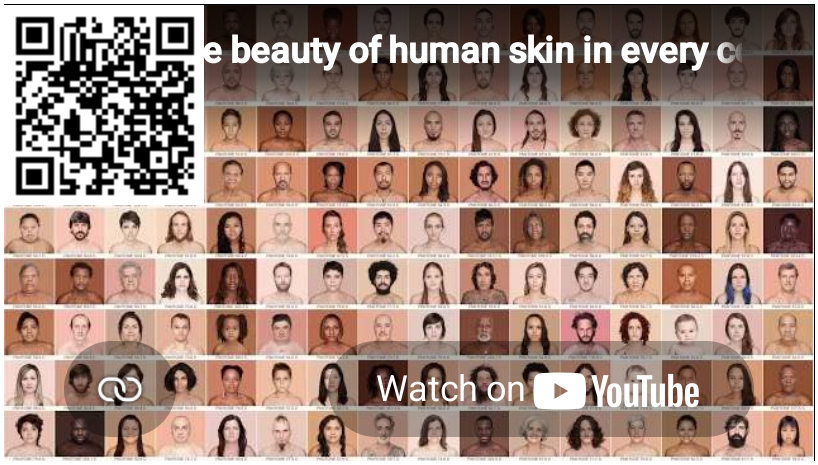
Sanford Biggers: An Artist's unflinching look at racial violence

Conceptual artist and TED Fellow Sanford Biggers uses painting, sculpture, video and performance to spark challenging conversations about the history and trauma of black America. Join him as he details two compelling works and shares the motivation behind his art. "Only through more thoughtful dialogue about history and race can we evolve as individuals and society," Biggers says.



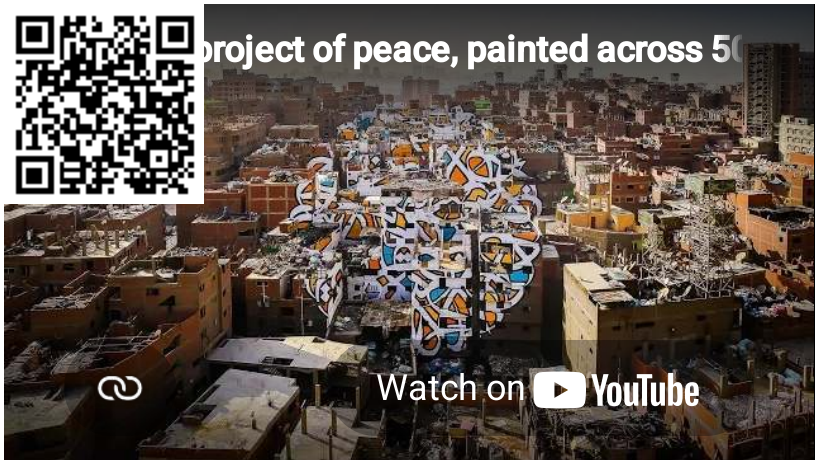
Angelica Dass: The beauty of human skin in every color

Angélica Dass's photography challenges how we think about skin color and ethnic identity. In this personal talk, hear about the inspiration behind her portrait project, Humanæ, and her pursuit to document humanity's true colors rather than the untrue white, red, black and yellow associated with race.



eL Seed: A project of peace, painted across 50 buildings

eL Seed fuses Arabic calligraphy with graffiti to paint colorful, swirling messages of hope and peace on buildings from Tunisia to Paris. The artist and TED Fellow shares the story of his most ambitious project yet: a mural painted across 50 buildings in Manshiyat Naser, a district of Cairo, Egypt, that can only be fully seen from a nearby mountain.



Sethembile Msezane: Living sculptures that stand for history's truths

In the century-old statues that occupy Cape Town, Sethembile Mzesane didn't see anything that looked like her own reality. So she became a living sculpture herself, standing for hours on end in public spaces dressed in symbolic costumes, to reclaim the city and its public spaces for her community. In this powerful, tour-de-force talk, she shares the stories and motivation behind her mesmerizing performance art.



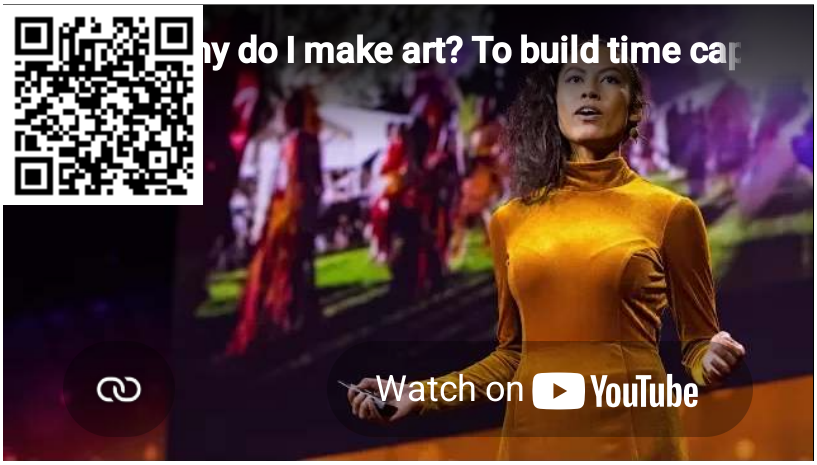
Dustin Yellin: A journey through the mind of an artist

Dustin Yellin makes mesmerizing artwork that tells complex, myth-inspired stories. How did he develop his style? In this disarming talk, he shares the journey of an artist -- starting from age 8 -- and his idiosyncratic way of thinking and seeing. Follow the path that leads him up to his latest major work (or two).



Kayla Briet: Why do I make art? To build time capsules for my heritage

Kayla Briët creates art that explores identity and self-discovery -- and the fear that her culture may someday be forgotten. She shares how she found her creative voice and reclaimed the stories of her Dutch-Indonesian, Chinese and Native American heritage by infusing them into film and music time capsules.



Christoph Niemann: You are fluent in this language (and don’t even know it)

Without realizing it, we're fluent in the language of pictures, says illustrator Christoph Niemann. In a charming talk packed with witty, whimsical drawings, Niemann takes us on a hilarious visual tour that shows how artists tap into our emotions and minds -- all without words.



Wanuri Kahiu: Fun, Fierce and fantastical African art

We're so used to narratives out of Africa being about war, poverty and devastation, says TED Fellow Wanuri Kahiu. Where's the fun? Introducing "AfroBubbleGum" -- African art that's vibrant, lighthearted and without a political agenda. Rethink the value of all that is unserious as Kahiu explains why we need art that captures the full range of human experiences to tell the stories of Africa.



Frida Kahlo: The woman behind the legend



Answer these questions as you listen:

Before she decided to pursue art, Frida Kahlo was planning to be:

A A writer

B A doctor

C A chemist

D A politician

Over time Frida Kahlo's self portraits became:

A More symbolic and experimental

B More structured and traditional

Kahlo's recurring imagery includes:

A Flowers and animals

B Death and pain

C Herself

D All of the above

Frida Kahlo has been associated with which artistic movements:

A Impressionism

B Abstract expressionism

C Surrealism

D Dadaism

Along with her husband Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo supported Mexican political and cultural nationalism.

A True

B False

What are some of the most common symbols that appear in Kahlo's paintings?

How did Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera meet?

What is the role of disability as a theme and experience in Kahlo's work?

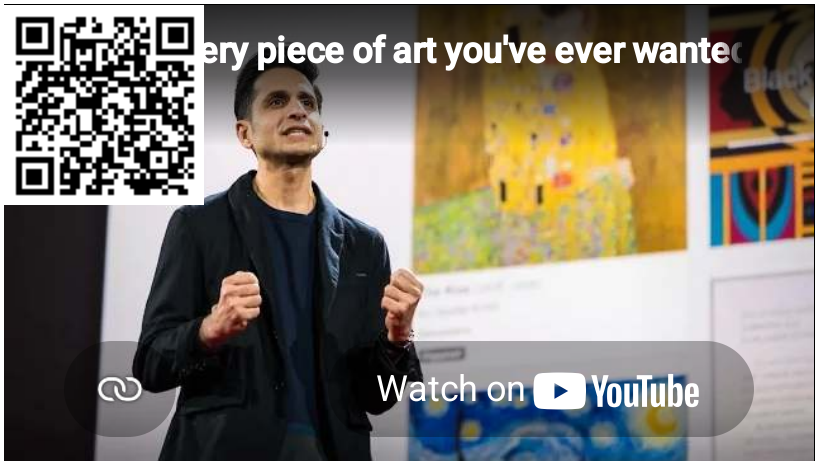
eL Seed: Street art with a message of hope and peace

What does this gorgeous street art say? It's Arabic poetry, inspired by bold graffiti and placed where a message of hope and peace can do the most good. In this quietly passionate talk, artist and TED Fellow eL Seed describes his ambition: to create art so beautiful it needs no translation.



Amit Sood: Every piece of art you've every wanted to see – up close and searchable

What does a cultural Big Bang look like? For Amit Sood, director of Google's Cultural Institute and Art Project, it's an online platform where anyone can explore the world's greatest collections of art and artifacts in vivid, lifelike detail. Join Sood and Google artist in residence Cyril Diagne in a mind-bending demo of experiments from the Cultural Institute and glimpse the exciting future of accessibility to arts and culture.



On this website, we're going to explore art from a variety of places around the world.

https://artsandculture.google.com/project/street-view

What do you see? There are so many questions at the beginning of this unit. Can you answer any of them by exploring these museums?

To your Instructor:

The following are the best resources I found so far on Visual Arts. There are a variety of resources from the Smithsonian. I've chosen just a few. I've also included links to several open resources on Art Appreciation. You might take a look at choose one or two to expand on the Visual Arts.

Smithsonian Educator Resources (so many open resources here, I've chosen just a few)

China's Calligraphic Arts

https://asia.si.edu/learn/chinas-calligraphic-arts/

Discovering Babur's Gardens

The Elizabeth Moynihan Collection in the Freer and Sackler Archives

Travel back to sixteenth-century Central Asia with architectural historian Elizabeth Moynihan. Follow in the footsteps of Babur, the first Mughal emperor, as he carves lush and fragrant gardens into the landscape of India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

https://asia.si.edu/learn/discovering-baburs-gardens/

How to Look at a Quran

https://asia.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/how-to-look-at-a-quran.pdf

How to Identify a Buddha

https://education.asianart.org/resources/how-to-identify-a-buddha/

An open resource for Art Appreciation.

https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=art-appreciation-oer

Another good art appreciation resource to pull from

https://www.oercommons.org/courses/art-appreciation-and-techniques-3/view

Ted Ed on Visual Art

https://ed.ted.com/search?qs=visual+art

Architecture

Explore this Chinese House: http://yinyutang.pem.org/index.html

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1.3.4: Culinary Arts



Culinary arts, in which culinary means "related to cooking", are the cuisine arts of food preparation, cooking, and presentation of food, usually in the form of meals. People working in this field – especially in establishments such as restaurants – are commonly called "chefs" or "cooks", although, at its most general, the terms "culinary artist" and "culinarian" are also used. Table manners ("the table arts") are sometimes referred to as a culinary art.

Expert chefs are required to have knowledge of food science, nutrition and diet and are responsible for preparing meals that are as pleasing to the eye as they are to the palate. After restaurants, their primary places of work include delicatessens and relatively large institutions such as hotels and hospitals. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Culinary_arts

So, why include culinary arts in an Introduction to Humanities course? If we look back at our essential questions, maybe we can find an answer. Who are we? What makes us human? Can we find culinary arts in this? I decided that we could. The food we eat makes us human. It is a important to our culture.

Let's take a look at Food around the World

http://www.foodbycountry.com/

Choose one that you would never have tried and try it. Follow the recipe and make a new kind of food!

Taste the Nation

The trailer for this amazing show: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzN76UMkT_w

Padma Lakshmi's New Food Show Is a Trojan Horse: Taste the Nation is breezy in tone, but it exposes the betrayals at the heart of "American" cuisine.

This is a show on Hulu, so it isn't available to everyone. However, if there is a way to use this, it is a wonderful introduction to the culinary arts of America.

https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2020/07/padma-lakshmi-hulu-taste-nation-american-cuisine/613915/

Listen to 'Taste The Nation': Padma Lakshmi Explores The American Palate on NPR

https://www.npr.org/2020/07/09/889351610/taste-the-nation-padma-lakshmi-explores-the-american-palate

Special Issue "Food, Culture, and Heritage. Identity Formation through Eating Customs"

Dr. Francesca Muccini

https://www.mdpi.com/journal/humanities/special_issues/eatingcustoms

How Food Shaped Humanity

By Lisa Bramen SMITHSONIANMAG.COM MARCH 26, 2010

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/how-food-shaped-humanity-83840262/

19 Amazing Culinary Traditions Around the World

https://wander-lush.org/food-culture-unesco/

The Role of Food in Human Culture

https://globalgastros.com/food-culture/role-of-food-in-human-culture

5 times food has changed the course of history

https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/5-times-food-has-changed-the-course-of-history/#:~:text=More%20than%20just%20snacks%2C%20food,stories%20than%20you%20might%20think!&text=The%20history%20of%20food%20is,transform%20the%20way%20we%20live.

How food helped shape history

https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/03/how-food-helped-shape-history/

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/joy-of-food/

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/foodfeatures/communal-table/

Culinary Arts of Asia

Chang, K. C. "Food in Chinese Culture." Asia Society Blog.

Cooper, E. "Chinese Table Manners: You Are How You Eat." (PDF) *Human Organization* 45, no. 2 (1986): 179–84.

Ohnuki-Tierney, Emiko. "Rice As Self: Japanese Identities through Time." *Education about Asia* 9, no. 3 (2004): 4–9.

Kushner, Barak. "Food History & National Myths."*Japan Society*, January 14, 2008. [On Ramen in Japan]

Chung, Haekyung. "Introduction." In *Korean Cuisine: A Cultural Journey*. Translated by Yoojin Lee. 2009.

Watson, James. "Prosperity Versus Pathology: A Social History of Obesity in China." (PDF) *Harvard Asia Pacific Review*, 2000.

北海道グルメ動画【GouTube北海道】. "Edo Sushi Video." August 19, 2013. YouTube.

The Culinary Institute of America. "Medicinal Food in Hong Kong." Feburary 20, 2013. YouTube.

Arirang. "Globalizing Korean Food." Feburary 7, 2014. YouTube.

Arirang Culture. "Tales of Hansik – Kimchee." September 26, 2013. YouTube.

The Fishy Channel. "Tsukiji Fish Market." November 4, 2014. YouTube.

A History of Kimchi https://zenkimchi.com/top-posts/kimchi-1-short-history

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1.4: Reading Media Texts

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1.4.1: Analysing Texts- Media and Theory

Communication and media permeate our society. At its most basic level, we can think of communication as the exchange of information or meaning – but what does that mean? When are you not exchanging information or meaning? To try and help make sense of the wealth of encounters in which communication might be said to be occurring, we try and categorize communication into different types. Some of these types include:

- interpersonal communication, or one-on-one talking and rhetoric, where we analyse things like tone, body language, and speech
- mass communication, which includes one-to-many and many-to-many communication acts, with a particular interest in mediated communication, such as with the press.
- Organizational communication, where we look at how people organize their information exchanges to maintain and facilitate group behaviour
- Intercultural communication, which looks at the exchange of information and ideas across different cultural groups or subgroups.

But is communication purely a functional and pragmatic tool for the exchange of information, and serves no other function or plays no other role within society? Or is there more than one level to consider when studying the act and role of communication in a social context?

Building on work started by Robert T. Craig, we can generally talk about seven models or traditions of communication – we can look at any communication practice through the lens of one or more of these models to develop a more nuanced understanding of communication in everyday life.

The seven models (adapted from Miller) are:

1. **Rhetorical** – this model is concerned primarily with communication as a discourse, and tends to concern itself primarily with interpersonal, one-to-one or one-to-few communication acts, such as speech. Post the linguistic turn of the mid- to late-twentieth century, rhetoric has expanded its area of focus to include mass communication that attempts to persuade, such as political communication and advertising. A rhetorical approach to communication might look at who was speaking to whom, in what context, and to what end or purpose (i.e.: to persuade or to change an opinion or belief).
2. **Semiotic** – this model sees communication primarily as an exchange of signs within a meaning-making system. We will be going into much further depth into the idea of semiotics in a later module, but for now it is just worth noting that semiotics approaches communication in itself, seeing the communication as a sign within a sign system, which employs signs in culturally contextualized combinations to convey meaning.
3. **Phenomenological** – this model is primarily concerned with communication as an experience. A phenomenological approach would see communication as both a representation and a reinforcement of what the communicators see to be self-evident. A phenomenological approach can take on both interpersonal and mass communications, and may also take under its purvey objects or ideas as sites of meaning-making.
4. **Cybernetic** – this model views communication as a flow of information. This is not just the pragmatic A sends a message to B type of flow, but also tries to take into account factors which influence and constraint the flow of information, including social factors such as mores and etiquette, technological factors such as channel access and availability, and political factors such as regulation.
5. **Psychological or Socio-psychological** – this model, as the name suggests, is concerned with the impact of communication acts on the individual, particularly their sense of self in society. This model sees communication as representing certain individual choices made in order to maximize benefit to the individual or group. We'll come back to these ideas when we discuss symbolic interactionism in the next module.
6. **Sociocultural** – this model sees communication as a way of replicating and reinforcing (and challenging) the social order. This approach assumes that people in societies have models of how that society should operate; communication acts to build, reinforce, and propagate these models.
7. **Critical** – this model views communication as a set of assumptions that are open to challenge and negotiation; as you might have guessed, it has strong links to the socio-cultural tradition. Approaches such as Marxist critique are representative of this model.

We can look at any act of communication through any of these models, and uncover something different about the communication itself, the meaning it helps construct and reconstruct, and how that communication and the communicators involved fit within a socio-cultural context.

It's worth stepping back even further for a moment, and turning your attention to the wider role of communication in everyday life. To do this, it is worth starting with a question: can you imagine a world without communication?

What does it look like?

What might be some of the cultural roles of communication in everyday life? In no particular order, we can talk about the following:

1 Communication tells stories, and perhaps more importantly, they *retell* stories. Communication, particularly mass communication and the mass media, tends to fall into repetitive and recursive patterns of representation and ideology, ones that often reinforce the dominant hegemony of a culture or society. For example, the narratives around masculinity and sports such as rugby — think of the way stories about All Blacks are constructed and reconstructed in the media.

By using these narrative strategies in our communication patterns, we are engaging in a kind of *shorthand* that facilitates communication behaviours, signals a shared culture or values system, and indicates an expectation of communicative and ideological symmetry. However, such myths also propagate a particular set of ideas about what is valued within a culture, and what or who is marginalized.

Let's take a look at the New England Patriots for example – think of the language that is used to describe them, and the thoughts and feelings it evokes.

These sports stars and their games, which are a form of communication, reinforce particular, in this case modern and Western, views about masculinity, which then has an impact on how the readers of these texts understand the masculine in their culture.

We'll be coming back to sports stars and cultural mythology when we touch on gender in a later module. In the meantime see this link:

2 A second role that communication plays in everyday life is to help maintain social order by taking on a kind of surveillance operation, in that communication demonstrates to a society what behaviors are considered acceptable and unacceptable. This may be through object representation, or it may be through commentary on active behaviors. An example of the former might be soaps. Soaps like *Gossip Girl* play out, in a mass media, the narratives of types of private lives and decision processes of different groups of people in a palatable, easy to understand and follow manner. It is not by accident that reality TV and soap operas follow the same structural beats. Both are structured to play out long-form 'life' narratives, with different characters taking on the role of hero or villain. An example of commentary might be gossip, whether about a sports star, a pop singer, or your neighbors.

Facebook is a great example of this, in that it runs on social communication – on gossip and networking – and people very deliberately structure their behavior on these sites to present the best 'face' and thus receive the most desirable commentary and feedback from others. For example, think about how long you spent choosing and setting up your profile picture to use for your Facebook page? Along similar lines, new communication channels and technologies now allow us to extend our interpersonal surveillance, both across space and through time. Whereas once students who went off to college in a way escaped the surveillance of their parents, now their parents can (unless they've locked their account) follow their children's antics on Facebook. Those same antics may then form part of a person's online profile which is seen by potential employers as they use those same tools of surveillance to get a sense of who you are before they call you in for a job interview.

Either way, this role of communication serves to demonstrate correct social behavior, and the consequences of incorrect social behavior, and to allow social sanctions and feedbacks on our own behavior and decisions.

3 A third role that communication plays is to help us interpret and make sense of information. This has become a particularly important role in the modern communication landscape, as information overload has become an increasingly common part of our everyday lives. Again, new media and electronic communication channels have raised the profile of this role of communication in everyday life. We can see this most clearly in news media, and the idea of agenda setting, but even the use of particular language or even images can also frame a topic or give subtle hints and clues as to how we are 'meant' to interpret information according to our culture.

4 This act of interpreting, of governing behavior, and even of storytelling, is of course at its heart a representation of a particular set of values and ideologies that emerge from and are part of a culture. It is very important to remember that no act of communication is ideologically neutral! Ideologies are part of our lifeworlds, part of the assumptions we make and encode into and decode out of our communication practices and behaviors, and so if we are to study communication, we need to address these ideological underpinnings.

5 That's not to say that we always communicate thinking about these things – they are often covert, assumed and unchallenged parts of our everyday lives. But they exist, even when we think about communication on a basic uses and gratifications level. **Uses and Gratifications Theory** is a very simple theory you may already be familiar with at some level. It hypothesizes that audiences, and communicators in general, are active in why they seek out media and communicative exchanges. These four reasons are diversion, socialization, identity, and surveillance. We may have multiple simultaneous reasons, or we may just be bored and channel surfing. But even those decisions and

positions – to be bored, to seek our diversion through television rather than another way, or to settle on a particular channel or show – reflect ideologies and social, technological, and political pressures that are so every day that we don't even think about them anymore.

So, to recap. Communication is pervasive and an integral part of our everyday lives – we cannot imagine our world without communication. Communication serves a number of concurrent functions in society – pragmatic, normative, ideological and informational. We can approach an analysis of communication at a number of different levels – rhetorical, semiotic, phenomenological, cybernetic, socio-psychological, socio-cultural or critical. We can move between these different levels to uncover different aspects of communicative processes. But in general, it is important to remember that communication serves more than just a functional process of getting information from point A to point B. Communication also propagates what a society considers to be normal or normative behavior. It reinforces the dominant ideologies of a society, and may also create space for new ideologies to come in and challenge that dominant hegemony. We can see these ideological debates being played out as people challenge and critique existing stories and narratives that permeate and propagate through our communicative culture. We can break communication down to the level of the individual sign, or scale it up to see it play out over time across an entire culture, but communication is never ideologically neutral.

In the next section, we'll discuss how communication fits and is a part of cultural systems.

1.4.1.1 Discussion Questions

1. Can you identify a time or situation when you are not exchanging information or meaning, and in a wider context, discuss what a world without communication might be like?
2. Find examples of each of the seven models of communication. Give reasons for your choices.
3. In the media or elsewhere, identify examples of competing ideologies that challenge an existing hegemony. Describe their context – political, commercial, social and academic etc – and give a short outline of each, including the media role in communicating the information.

1.4.1.2 References

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Miller, K. *Communication Theories: Perspectives, Processes and Contexts*. 2nd Ed. McGaw Hill: New York, 2005. Pp 1-16

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1.4.2: Communication and Culture

What is communication, why do we communication, how do we communicate, and to what end, are all questions we ask in the study of communication. At its most basic, communication is the exchange of information and meaning. We are constantly communicating, in a wide range of different contexts, such as with each other (interpersonal communication), with different cultural groups or subgroups (intercultural communication), or to large audiences (mass communication), just to name a few. However, to understand communication, we need to understand the place of communication in culture.

Culture as a term is widely used in academic as well as in daily speech and discourse, referring to different concepts and understandings. While the term originally stems from ancient Greek and Roman cultures (Latin: *cultura*) it has various dimensions today built from the different needs and uses of each field, be it anthropology, sociology or communication studies. For communication studies, we might start by defining culture as a set of learned behaviours shared by a group of people through interaction.

Cultures are not fixed, monolithic entities, but are fluid, always changing and responding to pressures and influences, such as the changing experiences of its members, or interaction with other cultures. However, to its members, the artefacts and even the existence of cultural behaviours and schemas may seem invisible or unremarkable. A culture may even have within it certain subcultures which exist within the main cultural framework of a society, but share within it specific peculiarities or modalities that also set it apart from the mainstream. These subcultures may continue to exist for many years or only a short period of time. They may die out, or may become incorporated into the mainstream as part of this ongoing evolution of culture.

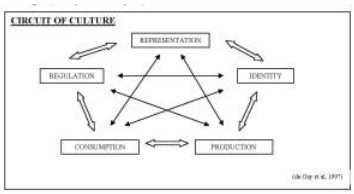
While there are specific differences to each culture, generally speaking, cultures share a number of traits, such as a shared language or linguistic marker, definition of proper and improper behaviour, a notion of kinship and social relationship (i.e.: mother, friend, etc), ornamentation and art, and a notion of leadership or decision making process.

Culture and society, though similar, are different things. Cultures are defined by these learned behaviours and schemas. Societies at their simplest can be defined as groups of interacting individuals. However, it is through this interaction that individuals develop and communicate the markers of culture, and so in human societies, it is very difficult to separate out 'culture' and 'society.'

And thus we come back to the role of communication within culture. The idea of culture as something that is shared means that it is vital to understand culture and communication in relation to one another. The relationship between culture and communication, in all its forms, is tightly interwoven and interlinked. We can see that communication enables the spread and reiteration of culture. Both communications and the media propagate the values and schemas of a culture through the *repeated* interaction and exchange enabled by the communications process.

Notice the emphasis on repeated there: it is not in single instances of communication that culture is made, but rather in the repeated exchange of information and the reinforcement of the ideals and values it embodies, all conveyed within a particular moment. One way we can think about this complex interplay is by looking at du Gay, et al (1997) notion of the circuit of culture.

The circuit of culture is a way of exploring a product of a culture as a complex object that is affected by and has an impact on a number of different aspects of that culture.



from du Gay et al 1997

Image (c) du Gay et al, 1997

It's worth briefly going through each of these five variables on the diagram now, and then applying it to a familiar form of communication in culture. This text will return in later sections to deal more deeply with many of the idea's that this diagram introduces.

Representation – how is the meaning conveyed to the audience, user, or co-communicator? What signs, modes and discourses help convey the meaning – not only the 'factual' or informational meaning, but also the social meaning. For example, what does the colour pink represent in your cultural context?

Identity – refers to how meaning is internalized by the receiver or audience. Our identity is shaped by our culture, which creates a range of viable and non-viable identity options that are presented, refined and renegotiated through our communication and exchange of cultural objects. By consuming and displaying certain communicative texts and strategies, we are both claiming certain identity positions, and simultaneously rejecting others.

Production — here refers to the production of meaning. Meaning can be produced and reproduced in a number of ways. An individual may produce meaning about themselves in the way they dress or wear their hat. Apple™ produces meaning about itself in the way they design and build the iPhone™. A terrorist organization may produce meaning about itself by making videos they put on Youtube. This act of meaning production may be unproblematic within mainstream culture, and help maintain the hegemony, the dominance of a particular set of schema or values. Alternatively, this production may challenge dominant beliefs or values in some. A pop culture example of this might have been early Lady Gaga, whose mode of dress was confrontational because it deviated from existing cultural schema about appropriate dress for someone of her class, race, gender and occupation.

Consumption – The flip side of production is consumption. Consumption of texts, whether they be an outfit, a conversation, or a pop-song, reflects cultural values and expectations – conforming to values and expectations leads to unproblematic consumption – it's what is expected, it fits our internalized schema. Texts that do not fit this schema are confronting, challenging, even shocking. To continue to use Lady Gaga as an example, when she released a nine-minute long music video centered around a narrative of female violence, it was shocking both in terms of its format (which wasn't standard MTV fare) and its narrative structure.

Regulation – finally, regulation refers to the forces which constrain the production, distribution, and consumption of texts. These forces may be explicit, such as the television broadcasters code of conduct, or they may be implicit, such as the blogger litmus test of 'would you say this in front of your mother?'

Finally, linking together these areas are these arrows – the arrows are very important, because as du Gay says, none of these variables can really be considered in isolation. It would be like looking only at the tyres to try and figure out why your car isn't running. So it is important, when considering communication within a cultural context, to remember that there are multiple factors influencing the production of text and meaning. These factors may support the text, reinforce a cultural position, or alternatively, they may challenge or confront a cultural schema.

du Gay's model is regularly applied to analysing the interplay between communication and culture within one cultural situation. However, with the globalisation of the media and communication landscape, it is becoming increasingly important to think about the specificities of intercultural communication.

1.4.2.1 Discussion

1. How would you explain what culture is in your own words?
2. Choose a form of communication or a media text, and see if you can apply the five variables du Gay suggests to understand that example.

1.4.2.2 References

du Gay et al. (1997) *Doing Cultural Studies: The story of the Sony Walkman* Milton Keynes: Open University; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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1.4.3: Intercultural Communication

As mentioned in the Communication and Culture section intercultural communication generally describes communication efforts between different cultural groups or subgroups. Differences between those groups, even if they speak the same language, can create problems and make understanding each other much harder. As globalization has brought the whole world closer together, business between different cultures happens on a daily basis. To make things run smoothly, intercultural communication skills are crucial.

Intercultural communication research mainly focuses on national comparisons and is hooked in the background of management and organizational theories. One pioneering model is the one Geert Hofstede derived in worldwide studies of different nations along certain characteristics.

Hofstede refers to culture as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2013). Comparing values, behaviors and organization for different nations Hofstede developed five dimensions to classify cultural principles. Each dimension builds up between two poles who describe the idealized extremes of it.

Hofstedes original dimensions included power distance (PDI), individualism vs. collectivism (IDV), masculinity vs. femininity (MAS) and Uncertainty avoidance (UAI) (Hofstede, 2001). A fifth definition, the one of long-term vs. short-term orientation or in other words pragmatic vs. normative, was added by Micheal Bonds research in 1991, followed by the definition of indulgence vs. restraint by Michael Minkov (Hofstede 2013). In each dimension the lowest possible score is 0 and the highest is 100.

The following questions give a better understanding of the six dimensions which have been researched to a broad extent in the last couple of years:

Power distance:

- How flat are hierarchies?
- How does a culture deal with inequalities?
- Is societal influence concentrated in the hands of a few or distributed throughout the population?
- How authoritarian is a country’s organization?
- Are communication efforts interactive?

United States Score: 40

This score indicates a culture with flat hierarchies and a very low power distance. "Both managers and employees expect to be consulted and information is shared frequently. At the same time, communication is informal, direct and participative to a degree." (Hofstede, 2021)

Individualistic vs. Collectivist culture:

- Does the interest of the group or the individual matter the most?
- Are people only looking after themselves and their immediate family?
- How well are individuals integrated and networked?

United States Score: 91

With the rather high score of 91 the United States can be described as a rather individualistic culture with people looking after themselves and their immediate families first.

Masculinity vs. Femininity:

- Which values are aimed for?
- How strong is a society following material values and success in comparison to the quality of life, interpersonal relationships and the concern for the weak?

United States Score: 62

A score of 62 signals masculinity rather then femininity. The score of the US on Masculinity is high at 62, and this can be seen in the typical American behavioral patterns. This can be explained by the the combination of a high Masculinity drive together with the most Individualist drive in the world. In other words, Americans, so to speak, all show their Masculine drive individually. (Hofstede, 2021)

Uncertainty avoidance vs. taking risks:

- Do members of a society feel threatened by unknown situations?
- Are there attempts to control the future or do people just let it happen?
- How high is the willingness to try something new or different?

United States Score: 46

With a score of 46, the United States can be described as a pragmatic society that deals with uncertainties in a relaxed and flexible fashion. There is a fair degree of acceptance for new ideas, innovative products and a willingness to try something new or different, whether it pertains to technology, business practices or food.

Long-term vs. short-term orientation (Pragmatic vs. normative):

- How are individuals subordinating themselves for longer term purposes?

- How are the tendencies towards short-term spending and long-term savings, perseverance and quick results?

United States Score: 26

The United States is shown to be a normative country with a normative way of thinking. Motivation to save for the future is rather low, therefore the focus on quick results is high.

Indulgence vs. Constraint:

- How freely are hedonist drives as gratification towards enjoying life and having fun tolerated and allowed?
- Is the gratification of needs restricted by strong social norms?

United States Score: 68

A rather high score of 68 pictures the United States's society indulgent. With it people tend to possess a positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism. Leisure time is regarded as important, also the ability to spend money as one likes and and to follow desires and needs to enjoy life and have fun.

As you can see in the questions above Hofstede's model is all about comparison. National cultures and their distinct attitudes, behaviors and norms can be seen as specific through boundaries and differences in comparison to others. Although Hofstede's model is widely accepted in organizational communication and management theory critics argue that most research is not integrated with findings from research that is not concentrating on purely economic and organizational values (Kirkman et al, 2006).

While values change with the developments of society globalization and convergence tendencies of new technologies and communication structures lead to a broader integrated international consumer culture and national values. General tendencies towards a culture of networked individualism are researched and referred to in literature (Castells 1996; Wellman 2002). Still Hofstede's dimensions seem to be quite stable and remain over time. Changes in technology affect a lot of countries at the same time or with only a small delay and therefore make their relative position amongst the other nations rather stable as every nation shifts in the same direction.

1.4.3.1 Discussion

1. What can you say about your nation's culture?
2. How would you classify it in terms of Hofstede's model?
3. How do you evaluate the United States's scores? Do you agree?
4. Have a look online to compare your estimation with your country's scores!
5. Compare with other countries you know.

1.4.3.2 Alternative links

Hofstede youtube channel "Hofstede insight": www.youtube.com/user/HOFSTEDE.../5/PVbkjobD8ao

Hofstede homepage and score results for the United States:

1.4.3.3 References

Castells, M. (1996). The rise of the network society. Malden: Blackwell.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.4.4: Critical Reading

When you are eager to start on the coursework in a major that will prepare you for your chosen career, getting excited about an introductory college writing course can be difficult. However, regardless of your field of study, honing your writing, reading, and critical-thinking skills will give you a more solid foundation for success, both academically and professionally. In this chapter, you will learn about the concept of critical reading and why it is an important skill to have—not just in college but in everyday life. The same skills used for reading a textbook chapter or academic journal article are the same ones used for successfully reading an expense report, project proposal, or other professional document you may encounter in the career world.

This chapter will also cover reading, note-taking, and writing strategies, which are necessary skills for college students who often use reading assignments or research sources as the springboard for writing a paper, completing discussion questions, or preparing for class discussion.

1.4.4.1: What Expectations Should You Have?

1.4.4.2: What is Critical Reading?

1.4.4.3: Why Do You Read Critically?

1.4.4.4: How Do You Read Critically?

1.4.4.5: Now What?

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1.4.4.1: What Expectations Should You Have?

In college, academic expectations change from what you may have experienced in high school. The quantity of work expected of you increases, and the quality of the work also changes. You must do more than just understand course material and summarize it on an exam. You will be expected to engage seriously with new ideas by reflecting on them, analyzing them, critiquing them, making connections, drawing conclusions, or finding new ways of thinking about them. Educationally, you are moving into deeper waters. Learning the basics of critical reading and writing will help you swim.

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Reading assignments are moderately long. Teachers may set aside some class time for reading and reviewing the material in depth.	Some reading assignments may be very long. You will be expected to come to class with a basic understanding of the material.
Teachers often provide study guides and other aids to help you prepare for exams.	Reviewing for exams is primarily your responsibility.
Your grade is determined by your performance on a wide variety of assessments, including minor and major assignments. Not all assessments are writing based.	Your grade may depend on just a few major assessments. Most assessments are writing based.
Writing assignments include personal writing and creative writing in addition to expository writing.	Outside of creative writing courses, most writing assignments are expository.
The structure and format of writing assignments is generally stable over a four-year period.	Depending on the course, you may be asked to master new forms of writing and follow standards within a particular professional field.
Teachers often go out of their way to identify and try to help students who are performing poorly on exams, missing classes, not turning in assignments, or just struggling with the course. Often teachers will give students many "second chances."	Although teachers want their students to succeed, they may not always realize when students are struggling. They also expect you to be proactive and take steps to help yourself. "Second chances" are less common.

Figure **1.4.4.1.1**"High School versus College Assignments" summarizes other major differences between high school and college assignments.

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1.4.4.2: What is Critical Reading?

Reading critically does not simply mean being moved, affected, informed, influenced, and persuaded by a piece of writing. It refers to analyzing and understanding the overall composition of the writing as well as how the writing has achieved its effect on the audience. This level of understanding begins with thinking critically about the texts you are reading. In this case, “critically” does not mean that you are looking for what is wrong with a work (although during your critical process, you may well do that). Instead, thinking critically means approaching a work as if you were a critic or commentator whose job it is to analyze a text beyond its surface.

Tip:

A text is simply a piece of writing, or as *Merriam-Webster* defines it, “the main body of printed or written matter on a page.” In English classes, the term “text” is often used interchangeably with the words “reading” or “work.”

This step is essential in analyzing a text, and it requires you to consider many different aspects of a writer’s work. Do not just consider what the text says; think about what effect the author intends to produce in a reader or what effect the text has had on *you* as the reader. For example, does the author want to persuade, inspire, provoke humor, or simply inform his audience? Look at the process through which the writer achieves (or does not achieve) the desired effect and which rhetorical strategies he uses. These rhetorical strategies are covered in thenext chapter. If you disagree with a text, what is the point of contention? If you agree with it, how do you think you can expand or build upon the argument put forth?

Consider this example: Which of the following tweets below are critical and which are uncritical?



Figure **1.4.4.2.2**

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1.4.4.3: Why Do You Read Critically?

Critical reading has many uses. If applied to a work of literature, for example, it can become the foundation for a detailed textual analysis. With scholarly articles, critical reading can help you evaluate their potential reliability as future sources. Finding an error in someone else's argument can be the point of destabilization you need to make a worthy argument of your own, illustrated in the final tweet from the previous image, for example. Critical reading can even help you hone your own argumentation skills because it requires you to think carefully about which strategies are effective for making arguments, and in this age of social media and instant publication, thinking carefully about what we say is a necessity.

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1.4.4.4: How Do You Read Critically?

How many times have you read a page in a book, or even just a paragraph, and by the end of it thought to yourself, “I have no idea what I just read; I can’t remember any of it”? Almost everyone has done it, and it’s particularly easy to do when you don’t care about the material, are not interested in the material, or if the material is full of difficult or new concepts. If you don’t feel engaged with a text, then you will passively read it, failing to pay attention to substance and structure. Passive reading results in zero gains; you will get nothing from what you have just read.

On the other hand, critical reading is based on active reading because you actively engage with the text, which means thinking about the text before you begin to read it, asking yourself questions as you read it as well as after you have read it, taking notes or annotating the text, summarizing what you have read, and, finally, evaluating the text. Completing these steps will help you to engage with a text, even if you don’t find it particularly interesting, which may be the case when it comes to assigned readings for some of your classes. In fact, active reading may even help you to develop an interest in the text even when you thought that you initially had none.

By taking an actively critical approach to reading, you will be able to do the following:

- Stay focused while you read the text
- Understand the main idea of the text
- Understand the overall structure or organization of the text
- Retain what you have read
- Pose informed and thoughtful questions about the text
- Evaluate the effectiveness of ideas in the text

Specific questions generated by the text can guide your critical reading process. Use them when reading a text, and if asked to, use them in writing a formal analysis. When reading critically, you should begin with broad questions and then work towards more specific questions; after all, the ultimate purpose of engaging in critical reading is to turn you into an analyzer who asks questions that work to develop the purpose of the text.

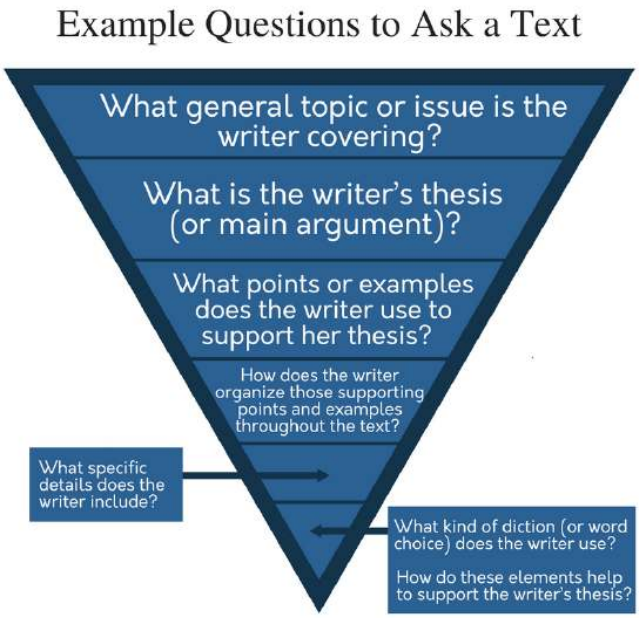


Figure **1.4.4.4.1**“Example Questions to Ask a Text”

Preparing for a Reading Assignment

You need to make a plan before you read. Planning ahead is a necessary and smart step in various situations, inside or outside of the classroom. You wouldn’t want to jump into dark water head first before knowing how deep the water is, how cold it is, or what

might be living below the surface. Instead, you would want to create a strategy, formulate a plan before you made that jump. The same goes for reading.

Planning Your Reading

Have you ever stayed up all night cramming just before an exam or found yourself skimming a detailed memo from your boss five minutes before a crucial meeting? The first step in successful college reading is planning. This involves both managing your time and setting a purpose for your reading.

Managing Your Reading Time

This step involves setting aside enough time for reading and breaking assignments into manageable chunks. If you are assigned a seventy-page chapter to read for next week's class, try not to wait until the night before it's due to get started. Give yourself at least a few days and tackle one section at a time.

The method for breaking up the assignment depends on the type of reading. If the text is dense and packed with unfamiliar terms and concepts, limit yourself to no more than five or ten pages in one sitting so that you can truly understand and process the information. With more user-friendly texts, you can handle longer sections—twenty to forty pages, for instance. Additionally, if you have a highly engaging reading assignment, such as a novel you cannot put down, you may be able to read lengthy passages in one sitting.

As the semester progresses, you will develop a better sense of how much time you need to allow for reading assignments in different subjects. Also consider previewing each assignment well in advance to assess its difficulty level and to determine how much reading time to set aside.

Establishing Your Purpose

Establishing *why* you read something helps you decide *how* to read it, which saves time and improves comprehension. This section lists some purposes for reading as well as different strategies to try at each stage of the reading process.

Purposes for Reading

In college and in your profession, you will read a variety of texts to gain and use information (e.g., scholarly articles, textbooks, reviews). Some purposes for reading might include the following:

- to scan for specific information
- to skim to get an overview of the text
- to relate new content to existing knowledge
- to write something (often depends on a prompt)
- to discuss in class
- to critique an argument
- to learn something
- for general comprehension

Tip:

To skim a text means to look over a text briefly in order to get the gist or overall idea of it. When skimming, pay attention to these key parts:

●Title

●Introductory paragraph, which often contains the writer's thesis or main idea

●Topic sentences of body paragraphs

●Conclusion paragraph

●Bold or italicized terms

Strategies differ from reader to reader. The same reader may use different strategies for different contexts because her purpose for reading changes. Ask yourself "why am I reading?" and "what am I reading?" when deciding which strategies work best.

Key Takeaways

- College-level reading and writing assignments differ from high school assignments not only in quantity but also in quality.
- Managing college reading assignments successfully requires you to plan and manage your time, set a purpose for reading, practice effective comprehension strategies, and use active reading strategies to deepen your understanding of the text.
- College writing assignments place greater emphasis on learning to think critically about a particular discipline and less emphasis on personal and creative writing.

Right Before You Read

Once you have established your purpose for reading, the next step is to **preview the text**. Previewing a text involves skimming over it and noticing what stands out so that you not only get an overall sense of the text, but you also learn the author's main ideas before reading for details. Thus, because previewing a text helps you better understand it, you will have better success analyzing it.

Questions to ask when previewing may include the following:

- What is the title of the text? Does it give a clear indication of the text's subject?
- Who is the author? Is the author familiar to you? Is any biographical information about the author included?
- If previewing a book, is there a summary on the back or inside the front of the book?
- What main idea emerges from the introductory paragraph? From the concluding paragraph?
- Are there any organizational elements that stand out, such as section headings, numbering, bullet points, or other types of lists?
- Are there any editorial elements that stand out, such as words in italics, bold print, or in a large font size?
- Are there any visual elements that give a sense of the subject, such as photos or illustrations?

Once you have formed a general idea about the text by previewing it, the next preparatory step for critical reading is to speculate about the author's purpose for writing.

- What do you think the author's aim might be in writing this text?
- What sort of questions do you think the author might raise?

((*https://tinyurl.com/y7ak9ygk)*

While You Read

Improving Your Comprehension

Thus far, you have blocked out time for your reading assignments, established a purpose for reading, and previewed the text. Now comes the challenge: making sure you actually understand all the information you are expected to process. Some of your reading assignments will be fairly straightforward. Others, however, will be longer and more complex, so you will need a plan for how to handle them.

For any expository writing—that is, nonfiction, informational writing—your first comprehension goal is to identify the main points and relate any details to those main points. Because college-level texts can be challenging, you should monitor your reading comprehension. That is, you should stop periodically to assess how well you understand what you have read. Finally, you can improve comprehension by taking time to determine which strategies work best for you and putting those strategies into practice.

Identifying the Main Points

In college, you will read a wide variety of materials, including the following:

- Textbooks. These usually include summaries, glossaries, comprehension questions, and other study aids.
- Nonfiction trade books, such as a biographical book. These are less likely to include the study features found in textbooks.
- Popular magazine, newspaper, or web articles. These are usually written for the general public.
- Scholarly books and journal articles. These are written for an audience of specialists in a given field.

Regardless of what type of expository text you are assigned to read, the primary comprehension goal is to identify the main point: the most important idea that the writer wants to communicate, often stated early on in the introduction and often re-emphasized in the conclusion. Finding the main point gives you a framework to organize the details presented in the reading and to relate the

reading to concepts you learned in class or through other reading assignments. After identifying the main point, find the supporting points: the details, facts, and explanations that develop and clarify the main point.

Tip:

Your instructor may use the term “main point” interchangeably with other terms, such as thesis, main argument, main focus, or core concept.

Some texts make the task of identifying the main point relatively easy. Textbooks, for instance, include the aforementioned features as well as headings and subheadings intended to make it easier for students to identify core concepts as well as the hierarchy of concepts (working from broad ideas to more focused ideas). Graphic features, such as sidebars, diagrams, and charts, help students understand complex information and distinguish between essential and inessential points. When assigned a textbook reading, be sure to use available comprehension aids to help you identify the main points.

Trade books and popular articles may not be written specifically for an educational purpose; nevertheless, they also include features that can help you identify the main ideas. These features include the following:

- At the far end of the reading difficulty scale are scholarly books and journal articles. Because these texts are written for a specialized, highly educated audience, the authors presume their readers are already familiar with the topic. The language and writing style are sophisticated and sometimes dense.

  When you read scholarly books and journal articles, you should apply the same strategies discussed earlier. The introduction usually presents the writer’s thesis, the idea or hypothesis the writer is trying to prove. Headings and subheadings can reveal how the writer has organized support for his or her thesis. If the text contains neither headings nor subheadings, however, then topic sentences of paragraphs can reveal the writer’s sense of organization. Additionally, academic journal articles often include a summary at the beginning, called an abstract, and electronic databases include summaries of articles, too.

  Annotating a text means that you actively engage with it by taking notes as you read, usually by marking the text in some way (underlining, highlighting, using symbols such as asterisks) as well as by writing down brief summaries, thoughts, or questions in the margins of the page. If you are working with a textbook and prefer not to write in it, annotations can be made on sticky notes or on a separate sheet of paper. Regardless of what method you choose, annotating not only directs your focus, but it also helps you retain that information. Furthermore, annotating helps you to recall where important points are in the text if you must return to it for a writing assignment or class discussion.

  Tip:

  Annotations should not consist of JUST symbols, highlighting, or underlining. Successful and thorough annotations should combine those visual elements with notes in the margin and written summaries; otherwise, you may not remember why you highlighted that word or sentence in the first place.

  How to Annotate:

  - Underline, highlight, or mark sections of the text that seem important, interesting, or confusing.
  - Be selective about which sections to mark; if you end up highlighting most of a page or even most of a paragraph, nothing will stand out, and you will have defeated the purpose of annotating.
  - Use symbols to represent your thoughts.
  - Asterisks or stars might go next to an important sentence or idea.
  - Question marks might indicate a point or section that you find confusing or questionable in some way.
  - Exclamation marks might go next to a point that you find surprising.
  - Abbreviations can represent your thoughts in the same way symbols can
  - For example, you may write “Def.” or “Bkgnd” in the margins to label a section that provides definition or background info for an idea or concept.
  - Think of typical terms that you would use to summarize or describe sections or ideas in a text, and come up with abbreviations that make sense to you.
  - Write down questions that you have as you read.
  - Identify transitional phrases or words that connect ideas or sections of the text.
  - Mark words that are unfamiliar to you or keep a running list of those words in your notebook.

- Mark key terms or main ideas in topic sentences.
- Identify key concepts pertaining to the course discipline (i.e.–look for literary devices, such as irony, climax, or metaphor, when reading a short story in an English class).
- Identify the thesis statement in the text (if it is explicitly stated).

Links to sample annotated texts – **Journal article** (https://tinyurl.com/ybfz7uke) · **Book chapter excerpt** (https://tinyurl.com/yd7pj379)

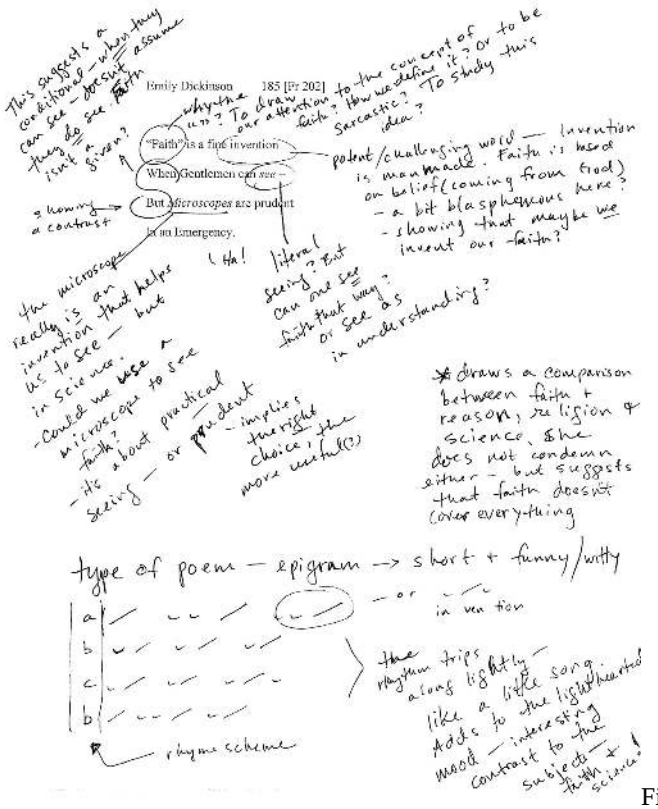


Figure **1.4.4.4.2** Sample Annotated Emily Dickinson Poem

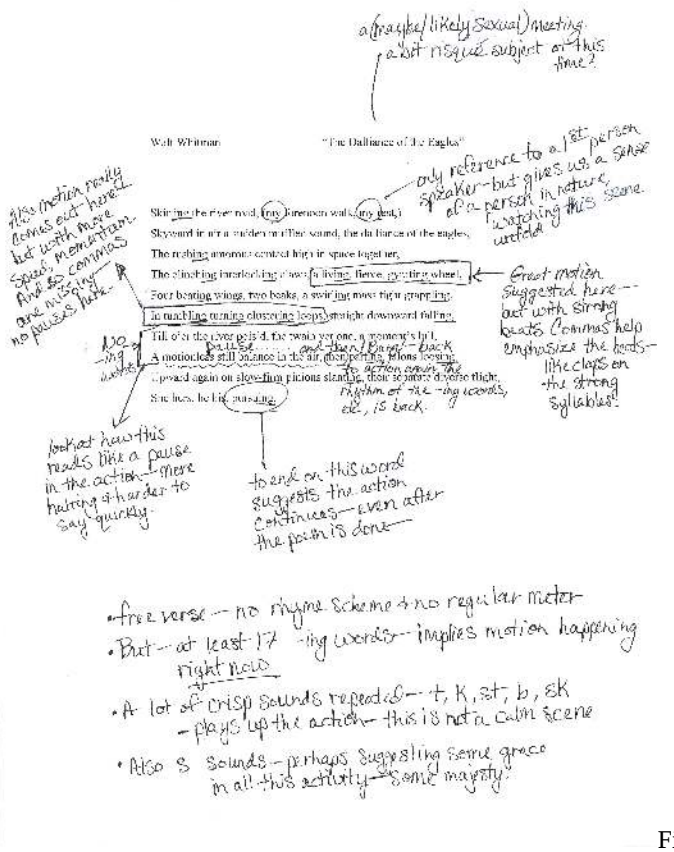


Figure **1.4.4.4.3** Sample Annotated Walt Whitman Poem "The Dalliance of the Eagles"

For three different but equally helpful videos on how to read actively and annotate a text, click on one of the links below:

" **How to Annotate** " (https://youtu.be/muZcJXlfCWs,transcripthere)

" **5 Active Reading Strategies** " (https://youtu.be/JL0pqJeE4_w, transcripthere **)**

" **10 Active Reading Strategies** " (https://youtu.be/5j8H3F8EMNI, transcripthere **)**

After You Read

Once you've finished reading, take time to review your initial reactions from your first preview of the text. Were any of your earlier questions answered within the text? Was the author's purpose similar to what you had speculated it would be?

The following steps will help you process what you have read so that you can move onto the next step of analyzing the text.

- Summarize the text in your own words (note your impressions, reactions, and what you learned) in an outline or in a short paragraph
- Talk to someone, like a classmate, about the author's ideas to check your comprehension
- Identify and reread difficult parts of the text
- Review your annotations
- Try to answer some of your own questions from your annotations that were raised while you were reading
- Define words on your vocabulary list and practice using them (to define words, try a learner's dictionary, such as *Merriam-Webster's*)

Critical Reading Practice Exercises

Choose any text that you have been assigned to read for one of your college courses. In your notes, complete the following tasks:

1. Follow the steps in the bulleted lists beginning under Section 3, "How do you read critically?" (For an in-class exercise, you may want to start with "Establishing Your Purpose.")

- Before you read: Establish your purpose; preview the text.
- While you read: Identify the main point of the text; annotate the text.
- After you read: Summarize the main points of the text in two to three sentences; review your annotations.

2. Write down two to three questions about the text that you can bring up during class discussion. (Reviewing your annotations and identifying what stood out to you in the text should help you figure out what questions you want to ask.)

Tip

Students are often reluctant to seek help. They believe that doing so marks them as slow, weak, or demanding. The truth is, every learner occasionally struggles. If you are sincerely trying to keep up with the course reading but feel like you are in over your head, seek out help. Speak up in class, schedule a meeting with your instructor, or visit your university learning center for assistance. Deal with the problem as early in the semester as you can. Instructors respect students who are proactive about their own learning. Most instructors will work hard to help students who make the effort to help themselves.

Tip

(https://tinyurl.com/yccryaky)

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1.4.4.5: Now What?

After you have taken the time to read a text critically, the next step, which is covered in the **next chapter** , is to analyze the text rhetorically to establish a clear idea of what the author wrote and how the author wrote it, as well as how *effectively* the author communicated the overall message of the text.

Key Takeaways

- Finding the main idea and paying attention to textual features as you read helps you figure out what you should know. Just as important, however, is being able to figure out what you do not know and developing a strategy to deal with it.

1. Textbooks often include comprehension questions in the margins or at the end of a section or chapter. As you read, stop occasionally to answer these questions on paper or in your head. Use them to identify sections you may need to reread, read more carefully, or ask your instructor about later.
2. Even when a text does not have built-in comprehension features, you can actively monitor your own comprehension. Try these strategies, adapting them as needed to suit different kinds of texts:
3. Summarize. At the end of each section, pause to summarize the main points in a few sentences. If you have trouble doing so, revisit that section.

- Ask and answer questions. When you begin reading a section, try to identify two to three questions you should be able to answer after you finish it. Write down your questions and use them to test yourself on the reading. If you cannot answer a question, try to determine why. Is the answer buried in that section of reading but just not coming across to you, or do you expect to find the answer in another part of the reading?
- Do not read in a vacuum. Simply put, don't rely solely on your own interpretation. Look for opportunities to discuss the reading with your classmates. Many instructors set up online discussion forums or blogs specifically for that purpose. Participating in these discussions can help you determine whether your understanding of the main points is the same as your peers'.
- Class discussions of the reading can serve as a reality check. If everyone in the class struggled with the reading, it may be exceptionally challenging. If it was easy for everyone but you, you may need to see your instructor for help.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

1.5: Communication Research

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Understand what we consider as Communication research.
- Explain how Communication research is done.
- Identify motivational factors that influence Communication research.
- Explain the three broad approaches to Communication research as well as specific research methodologies.

1.5.1: Communication Research Overview

1.5.2: Doing Communication Research

1.5.3: Motivational Factors for Research

1.5.4: Rhetorical Methodologies

1.5.5: Quantitative Methods

1.5.6: Qualitative Methods

1.5.7: Communication Research Summary

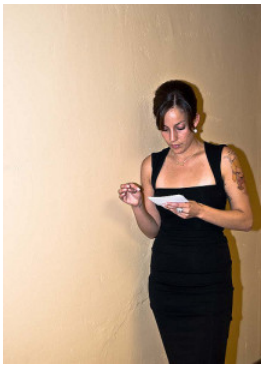
1.5.8: Communication Research References

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1.5.1: Communication Research Overview

One stereotype about college students is that they do not have a lot of extra money to spend. As a result, we have witnessed our students conduct communication research in order to increase their cashflow, and most of them didn't even know they were doing it. What do we mean by this? Many of our students are allotted a certain amount of money by their parents, financial aid, and jobs to pay for school, housing, and extracurricular activities. When money starts to become scarce, many of our students go to their parents to see if they will provide more money. What does this have to do with communication research? Because when these same students have asked for money from their parents in the past, they theorize what communication messages might work in order to get more. For example, if a student asked for money from their parents last semester because they said they were running out of food, and it worked, they might do that again in order to get more money. What is happening is that these students are developing hypotheses regarding what communication behaviors will work to influence their parents. If the behaviors work, it validates they hypothesis. If the behaviors don't work, students can learn from this and adjust their behaviors in future exchanges to obtain a different outcome. It is likely you engage in these types of communication research activities on a daily basis.



Likely you have engaged in basic levels of Communication research without even knowing it. Remember our discussion in the last chapter that theory is "a way of framing an experience or event—an effort to understand and account for something and the way it functions in the world" (Foss, Foss & Griffin, 8). Well, we generally do not understand how something functions in the world unless we have had some level of experience with it, and then evaluate the outcome of that experience. Have you ever planned out what you would say and do to persuade someone to go on a date? Have you ever intentionally violated the communicative expectations (such as arriving late or forgetting to do a favor) of a friend, "just to see what would happen?" While we do not consider these to be examples of formal Communication research, they do reveal what Communication research is about. Remember our discussion in Chapter 1, those of us who study Communication are interested in researching "who says what, through what channels (media) of communication, to whom, [and] what will be the results?" (Smith, Lasswell and Casey 121).

The term "research" often conjures up visions of a mad scientist dressed in a white lab coat working through the night with chemicals, beakers, and gases on his/her latest scientific experiment. But how does this measure up with the realities of researching human communication? Researching communication presents its own set of challenges and circumstances that must be understood to better conceptualize how we can further our understanding of the ways we communicate with one another.

Contributions and Affiliations

- Survey of Communication Study. **Authored by**: Scott T Paynton and Linda K Hahn. **Provided by**: Humboldt State University. **Located at**: https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Survey_of_Communication_Study/Preface. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*
- Image of woman in dress. **Authored by**: ..Alison Wonderland... **Located at**: https://flic.kr/p/6Lkd8V. **License**: *CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives*

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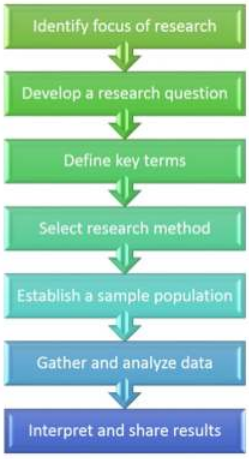
1.5.2: Doing Communication Research

Students often believe that researchers are well organized, meticulous, and academic as they pursue their research projects. The reality of research is that much of it is a hit-and-miss endeavor. Albert Einstein provided wonderful insight to the messy nature of research when he said, “If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?” Because a great deal of Communication research is still exploratory, we are continually developing new and more sophisticated methods to better understand how and why we communicate. Think about all of the advances in communication technologies (snapchat, instagram, etc.) and how quickly they come and go. Communication research can barely keep up with the ongoing changes to human communication.

Researching something as complex as human communication can be an exercise in creativity, patience, and failure. Communication research, while relatively new in many respects, should follow several basic principles to be effective. Similar to other types of research, Communication research should be systematic, rational, self-correcting, self-reflexive, and creative to be of use (Babbie; Bronowski; Buddenbaum; Novak; Copi; Peirce; Reichenbach; Smith; Hughes & Hayhoe).

Seven Basic Steps of Research

While research can be messy, there are steps we can follow to avoid some of the pitfalls inherent with any research project. Research doesn’t always work out right, but we do use the following guidelines as a way to keep research focused, as well as detailing our methods so other can replicate them. Let’s look at seven basic steps that help us conduct effective research.



- **Identify a focus of research**. To conduct research, the first thing you must do is identify what aspect of human communication interests you and make that the focus of inquiry. Most Communication researchers examine things that interest them; such as communication phenomena that they have questions about and want answered. For example, you may be interested in studying conflict between romantic partners. When using a deductive approach to research, one begins by identifying a focus of research and then examining theories and previous research to begin developing and narrowing down a research question.
- **Develop a research question(s)**. Simply having a focus of study is still too broad to conduct research, and would ultimately end up being an endless process of trial and error. Thus, it is essential to develop very specific research questions. Using our example above, what specific things would you want to know about conflict in romantic relationships? If you simply said you wanted to study conflict in romantic relationships, you would not have a solid focus and would spend a long time conducting your research with no results. However, you could ask, “Do couples use different types of conflict management strategies when they are first dating versus after being in a relationship for a while? It is essential to develop specific questions that guide what you research. It is also important to decide if an answer to your research question already exists somewhere in the plethora of research already conducted. A review of the literature available at your local library may help you decide if others have already asked and answered a similar question. Another convenient resource will be your university’s online database. This database will most likely provide you with resources of previous research through academic journal articles, books, catalogs, and various kinds of other literature and media.

- **Define key terms**. Using our example, how would you define the terms conflict, romantic relationship, dating, and long-term relationship? While these terms may seem like common sense, you would be surprised how many ways people can interpret the same terms and how particular definitions shape the research. Take the term long-term relationship, for example, what are all of the ways this can be defined? People married for 10 or more years? People living together for five or more years? Those who identify as being monogamous? It is important to consider populations who would be included and excluded from your study based on a particular definition and the resulting generalizability of your findings. Therefore, it is important to identify and set the parameters of what it is you are researching by defining what the key terms mean to you and your research. A research project must be fully **operationalized**, specifically describing how variables will be observed and measured. This will allow other researchers an opportunity to repeat the process in an attempt to replicate the results. Though more importantly, it will provide additional understanding and credibility to your research.

Communication Research Then

Wilber Schramm – The Modern Father of Communication

Although many aspects of the Communication discipline can be dated to the era of the ancient Greeks, and more specifically to individuals such as Aristotle or Plato, Communication Research really began to develop in the 20th century. James W. Tankard Jr. (1988) states in the article, Wilbur Schramm: Definer of a Field that, “Wilbur Schramm (1907-1987) probably did more to define and establish the field of Communication research and theory than any other person” (p. 1). In 1947 Wilbur Schramm went to the University of Illinois where he founded the first Institute of Communication Research. The Institute’s purpose was, “to apply the methods and disciplines of the social sciences (supported, where necessary, by the fine arts and natural sciences) to the basic problems of press, radio and pictures; to supply verifiable information in those areas of communications where the hunch, the tradition, the theory and thumb have too often ruled; and by so doing to contribute to the better understanding of communications and the maximum use of communications for the public good” (p. 2).

- **Select an appropriate research methodology**. A methodology is the actual step-by-step process of conducting research. There are various methodologies available for researching communication. Some tend to work better than others for examining particular types of communication phenomena. In our example, would you interview couples, give them a survey, observe them, or conduct some type of experiment? Depending on what you wish to study, you will have to pick a process, or methodology, in order to study it. We’ll discuss examples of methodologies later in this chapter.
- **Establish a sample population or data set**. It is important to decide who and what you want to study. One criticism of current Communication research is that it often relies on college students enrolled in Communication classes as the sample population. This is an example of convenience sampling. Charles Teddlie and Fen Yu write, “Convenience sampling involves drawing samples that are both easily accessible and willing to participate in a study” (78). One joke in our field is that we know more about college students than anyone else. In all seriousness, it is important that you pick samples that are truly representative of *what* and *who* you want to research. If you are concerned about how long-term romantic couples engage in conflict, (remember what we said about definitions) college students may not be the best sample population. Instead, college students might be a good population for examining how romantic couples engage in conflict in the early stages of dating.
- **Gather and analyze data**. Once you have a research focus, research question(s), key terms, a method, and a sample population, you are ready to gather the actual data that will show you what it is you want to answer in your research question(s). If you have ever filled out a survey in one of your classes, you have helped a researcher gather data to be analyzed in order to answer research questions. The actual “doing” of your methodology will allow you to collect the data you need to know about how romantic couples engage in conflict. For example, one approach to using a survey to collect data is to consider adapting a questionnaire that is already developed. Communication Research Measures II: A Sourcebook is a good resource to find valid instruments for measuring many different aspects of human communication (Rubin et al.).

Communication Research Now

Communicating Climate Change Through Creativity

Communicating climate change has been an increasingly important topic for the past number of years. Today we hear more about the issue in the media than ever. However, “the challenge of climate change communication is thought to require systematic evidence about public attitudes, sophisticated models of behaviour change and the rigorous application of social scientific research”

(Buirski). In South Africa, schools, social workers, and psychologist have found ways to change the way young people and children learn about about the issue. Through creatively, “climate change is rendered real through everyday stories, performances, and simple yet authentic ideas through children and school teachers to create a positive social norm” (Buirski). By engaging children’s minds rather than bombarding them with information, we can capture their attention (Buirski).

- **Interpret and share results**. Simply collecting data does not mean that your research project is complete. Remember, our research leads us to develop and refine theories so we have more sophisticated representations about how our world works. Thus, researchers must interpret the data to see if it tells us anything of significance about how we communicate. If so, we share our research findings to further the body of knowledge we have about human communication. Imagine you completed your study about conflict and romantic couples. Others who are interested in this topic would probably want to see what you discovered in order to help them in their research. Likewise, couples might want to know what you have found in order to help themselves deal with conflict better.

Although these seven steps seem pretty clear on paper, research is rarely that simple. For example, a master’s student conducted research for their Master’s thesis on issues of privacy, ownership and free speech as it relates to using email at work. The last step before obtaining their Master’s degree was to share the results with a committee of professors. The professors began debating the merits of the research findings. Two of the three professors felt that the research had not actually answered the research questions and suggested that the master’s candidate rewrite their two chapters of conclusions. The third professor argued that the author HAD actually answered the research questions, and suggested that an alternative to completely rewriting two chapters would be to re-write the research questions to more accurately reflect the original intention of the study. This real example demonstrates the reality that, despite trying to account for everything by following the basic steps of research, research is always open to change and modification, even toward the end of the process.

Communication Research and You

Because we have been using the example of conflict between romantic couples, here is an example of communication in action by Thomas Bradbury, Ph.D regarding the study of conflict between romantic partners. What stands out to you? What would you do differently?

Which Conflicts Consume Couples the Most
http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/blogs/which-conflicts-consume-couples-most

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.5.3: Motivational Factors for Research

We think it is important to discuss the fact that human nature influences all research. While some researchers might argue that their research is objective, realistically, no research is totally objective. What does this mean? Researchers have to make choices about what to research, how they will conduct their research, who will pay for their research, and how they will present their research conclusions to others. These choices are influenced by the motives and material resources of researchers. The most obvious case of this in the physical sciences is research sponsored by the tobacco industry that downplays the health hazards associated with smoking (Frisbee & Donley). Intuitively, we know that certain motivations influence this line of research as it is an example of an extreme case of motivational factors influencing research. Realistically though, all researchers are motivated by certain factors that influence their research.

We will highlight three factors that motivate the choices we make when conducting communication research: 1) The intended outcomes, 2) theoretical preferences, and 3) methodological preferences.

Intended Outcomes

One question researchers ask while doing their research project is, “What do I want to accomplish with this research?” Three primary research goals are to increase understanding of a behavior or phenomenon, predict behavior, or create social change.

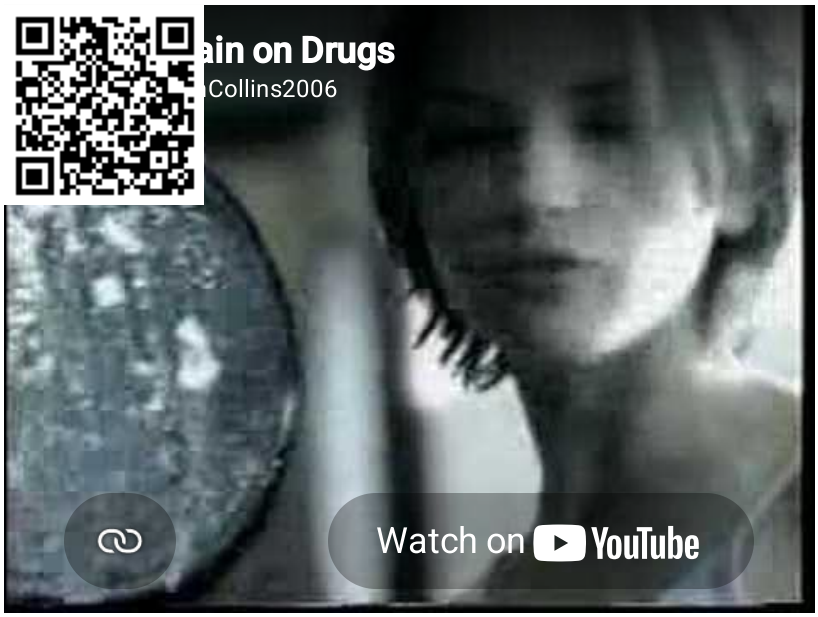
Case In Point

The Evolution of Anti-drug Commercials

In 1987 an anti-drug campaign, Your Brain on Drugs began to air on television. Wikipedia writes, “The first PSA, from 1987, showed a man who held up an egg and said, “This is your brain,” before picking up a frying pan and adding, “This is drugs.” He then cracks open the egg, fries the contents, and says, “This is your brain on drugs.” Finally he looks up at the camera and asks, “Any questions?”



After careful examination, researchers quickly discovered that this ad campaign was not effective, as it actually made the frying of an egg appealing, especially to those people who were watching the ad that were hungry! Thus, in 1998, they revised the PSA to make it more dramatic.



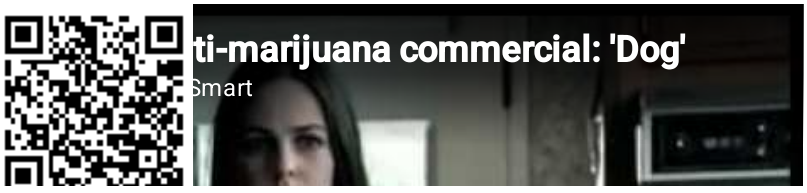
Scholars who study health campaigns are interested in finding the most effective ways to help get accurate health information to people so they can act on that information.

Here are some anti-marijuana advertisements the millennial generation may be familiar with:

There is this anti-marijuana commercial that tries to bring about the fears of smoking marijuana. Seth Stevenson states the commercial brings out two fears: “1) the fear that nonsmoker friends, or lovers, might find them tiresome and pathetic, and 2) the fear that they might be growing dependent on the drug.”



The same can be said for this video. In the video a pet dog tells what looks to be its teenage owner to quit smoking weed. This is supposed to evoke guilt upon the owner and carry out to the viewer. Both campaigns “effectively [pick] at both of these insecurities” that anti-drug campaigns attempt to associate with smoking week.



Do you find any of these ive for teens/young adults today.



A great deal of Commun arch. As we gain greater understanding of human c understand how and why people communicate. One es to understand how they use language to define a nurses routinely refer to themselves as "patient ac om being an assistant to physicians. Having this un urses about the impacts of their language choices in h

A second intended outcom and control are taken from the physical sciences (rem ommunication researchers want to use the results of their research to predict and control communication in certain contexts. This type of research can help us make communicative choices from an informed perspective. In fact, when you communicate, you often do so with the intention of prediction and control. Imagine walking on campus and seeing someone you would like to ask out. Because of your past experiences, you predict that if you say certain things to them in a certain way, you might have a greater likelihood that they will respond positively. Your predictions guide your behaviors in order to control the exchange at some level. This same idea motivates many Communication researchers to approach their research with the intention of being able to predict and control communication contexts. For example, in the article **The Fear of Public Speaking**, Sian Beilock, Ph.D explains prediction and control in action.

A third intended outcome of Communication research is positive **critical/cultural change** in the world. Scholars often perform research in order to challenge communicative norms and effect cultural and societal change. Research that examines health communication campaigns, for example, seeks to understand how effective campaigns are in changing our health behaviors such as using condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases or avoiding high fat foods. When it is determined that health campaigns are ineffective, researchers often suggest changes to health communication campaigns to increase their efficacy in reaching the people who need access to the information (Stephenson & Southwell).

As humans, researchers have particular goals in mind. Having an understanding of what they want to accomplish with their research helps them formulate questions and develop appropriate methodologies for conducting research that will help them achieve their intended outcomes.

Theoretical Preferences

Remember that theoretical paradigms offer different ways to understand communication. While it is possible to examine communication from multiple theoretical perspectives, it has been our experience that our colleagues tend to favor certain theoretical paradigms over others. Put another way, we all understand the world in ways that make sense to us.

Which theoretical paradigm(s) do you most align yourself with? How would this influence what you would want to accomplish if you were researching human communication? What types of communication phenomena grab your attention? Why? These are questions that researchers wrestle with as they put together their research projects.

Methodological Preferences

As you've learned, *the actual process of doing research* is called the **methodology**. While most researchers have preferences for certain theoretical paradigms, most researchers also have preferred methodologies for conducting research in which they develop increased expertise throughout their careers. As with theories, there are a large number of methodologies available for conducting research. As we did with theories, we believe it is easier for you to understand methodologies by categorizing them into paradigms. Most Communication researchers have a preference for one research paradigm over the others. For our purposes, we have divided methodological paradigms into *1) rhetorical methodologies, 2) quantitative methodologies, and 3) qualitative methodologies.*

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.5.4: Rhetorical Methodologies

We encode and decode messages everyday. As we take in messages, we use a number of criteria to evaluate them. We may ask, “Was the message good, bad, or both?” “Was it effective or ineffective?” “Did it achieve its intended outcome?” “How should I respond to the message?” Think about the last movie you watched. Did you have a conversation about the movie with others? Did that conversation include commentary on various parts of the film such as the set design, dialogue, plot, and character development? If so, you already have a taste of the variety of elements that go into rhetorical research. Simply stated, rhetorical methods of research are sophisticated and refined ways to evaluate messages. Foss explains that we use rhetorical approaches as a way “of systematically investigating and explaining symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (6).

Steps for Doing Rhetorical Research

We already outlined the seven basic steps for conducting research, but there are ways to vary this process for different methodologies. Below are the basic steps for conducting rhetorical research.

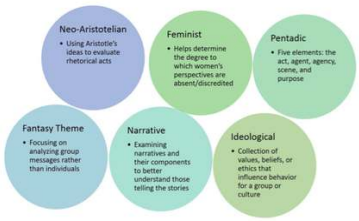
1. Determine a focus of study such as political speeches, television shows or genres, movies or movie genres, commercials, magazine texts, the rhetoric of social movement organizations, music lyrics, visual art, public memorials, etc.
2. Choose a rhetorical research method to evaluate and critique rhetorical acts and/or messages.
3. Analyze the message(s) of focus such as a Presidential address by using a particular rhetorical method.
4. Interpret the implications of the rhetorical act, as well as the rhetorical act itself. For example, a scholar might choose to rhetorically research television violence and provide interpretations regarding the implications of television violence on viewers.
5. Share the results of research. From sharing research comes the opportunity to improve our ability to create and evaluate effective messages. We can also use what we learn from rhetorical research to shape the ways messages are constructed and delivered.

Types of Methods for Rhetorical Criticism

What do rhetorical methods actually look like? How are they done? While each rhetorical methodology acts as a unique lens for understanding messages, no one is more correct over another. Instead, each allows us a different way for understanding messages and their effects. Let’s examine a few of the more common rhetorical methodologies including, *1) Neo-Aristotelian, 2) Fantasy-Theme, 3) Narrative, 4) Pentadic, 5) Feminist, and 6) Ideological.*

- **Neo-Aristotelian Criticism**. In Chapter 2 you learned quite a bit about the rhetorical roots of our field, including a few of the contributions of Aristotle. The neo-Aristotelian method uses Aristotle’s ideas to evaluate rhetorical acts. First, a researcher recreates the context for others by describing the historical period of the message being studied. Messages are typically speeches or other forms of oral rhetoric as this was the primary focus of rhetoric during the Classical Period. Second, the researcher evaluates the message using the canons of rhetoric. For example, the researcher may examine what types of logic are offered in a speech or how its delivery enhances or detracts from the ethos of the speaker. Finally, the researcher assesses the effectiveness of the message given its context and its use of the canons.
- **Fantasy Theme Criticism**. Fantasy Theme analysis is a more contemporary rhetorical method credited to Ernest G. Bormann (1972; 1985; 1990; 2000; Cooren et al.). The focus of this methodology is on groups rather than individuals, and is particularly well-suited for analyzing group messages that come from social movements, political campaigns, or organizational communication. Essentially, a fantasy is a playful way of interpreting an experience (Foss). Fantasy theme research looks for words or phrases that characterize the shared vision of a group in order to explain how the group characterizes or understands events around them. Fantasy theme analysis offers names and meaning to a group’s experience and presents outsiders with a frame for interpreting the group’s rhetorical response.
- **Narrative Criticism**. Much of what you learned as a child was probably conveyed to you through stories (bedtime stories, fables, and fairy tales) that taught you about gender roles, social roles, ethics, etc. Fairy tales, for example, teach us that women are valued for their youth and beauty and that men are valued when they are strong, handsome, smart, and riding a white horse! Other stories you remember may be more personal, as in the telling of your family’s immigration to the United States and the values learned from that experience. Whatever the case, narrative rhetorical research contends that people learn through the sharing of stories. A researcher using this method examines narratives and their component parts—the plot, characters, and settings—to better understand the people (culture, groups, etc.) telling these stories. This research approach also focuses on the effects of repeating narratives. Think about Hollywood romantic comedies such as *When Harry Met Sally*, *Silver Lining Playbook*, *Knocked Up*, and *Bridesmaids*. When you see one of these movies, does it feel like you’ve seen it before? For example, For example, these movies use usually have a confused character and some conflict that ends in a perfect relationship. Why does Hollywood do this? What is the purpose and/or effect of retelling these story lines over and over again? These are some of the concerns of researchers who use narrative analysis to research rhetorical acts.
- **Pentadic Criticism**. Kenneth Burke developed the idea of the pentad using the metaphor of drama. As in a dramatic play, the pentad contains five elements—the act, agent, agency, scene, and purpose. The act tells what happened, the agent is who performed the act, agency includes the tools/means the agent used to perform the act, the scene provides the context for the act, and the purpose explains why the act occurred. By using the elements of the pentad to answer questions of who, what, when, where, and why, a rhetorical researcher may uncover a communicator’s motives for her or his rhetorical actions. Click below to watch a visual representation of Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad.





- **Feminist Criticism**. Most feminist perspectives share the basic assumptions that women are routinely oppressed by patriarchy, women's experiences are different then men's, and women's perspectives are not equally incorporated into our culture (Foss). We can use feminist rhetorical research to help us determine the degree to which women's perspectives are both absent and/or discredited in rhetorical acts. Thus, feminist rhetorical research, "is the analysis of rhetoric to discover how the rhetorical construction of gender is used as a means for oppression and how that process can be challenged and resisted" (Foss, 168). Although many think of "women" in reference to feminism, it is important to note that many men consider themselves feminists and that feminism is concerned with oppression of all forms—race, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and gender.
- **Ideological Criticism**. Ideology is a collection of values, beliefs, or ethics that influence modes of behavior for a group or culture. Rhetorical scholars interested in understanding a culture's values often use ideological methods. Ideologies are complex and multifaceted, and ideological methods draw from diverse schools of thought such as Marxism, feminism, structuralism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism. This research often uncovers assumptions and biases in our language that provide insight into how dominant groups and systems are maintained rhetorically, and how they can be challenged and transformed through rhetoric. Artifacts of popular culture such as movies, television shows, etc. are often the focus of this research as they are the sites at which struggles about meanings occur in the popular culture.

Case In Point

Rhetorical Methods In Action

In 2012, Mallary Jean Tenore examines rhetorical strategies that lead to successful speeches in an article titled "**10 rhetorical strategies that made Bill Clinton's DNC speech effective.**" She looks at different rhetorical methods used to develop strong arguments in speech writing.

In contrast, Dr. Stephen H. Browne's (2003) rhetorical criticism entitled, "Jefferson's First Declaration of Independence: A Summary View of the Rights of British America Revisited." explores Jefferson's Summary View of the Rights of British America to understand and demonstrate Jefferson's skill as a storyteller, and explain what Jefferson was trying to accomplish through a series of narratives. This piece demonstrates rhetorical research used as a means of understanding a historical rhetorical act in its particular context.

Outcomes of Rhetorical Methodologies

What is the value of researching acts of communication from a rhetorical perspective? The systematic research of messages tells us a great deal about the ways people communicate, the contexts in which they communicate, the effects of communication in particular contexts, and potential areas to challenge and transform messages to create social change.

Rhetorical research methodologies help us better determine how and why messages are effective or ineffective, as well as the outcomes of messages on audiences. Think about advertising campaigns. Advertising agencies spend millions of dollars evaluating the effectiveness of their messages on audiences. The purpose of advertising is to persuade us to act in some way, usually the purchasing of products or services. Advertisers not only evaluate the effectiveness of their messages by determining the amount of products sold, they also evaluate effectiveness by looking at audience response to the messages within the current cultural and social contexts.

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.5.5: Quantitative Methods

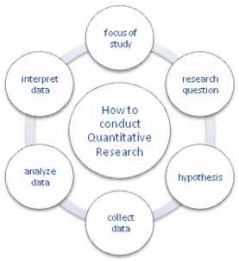
Steps for Doing Quantitative Research

Rhetorical research methods have been being developed since the Classical Period. As the transition was made to seeing communication from a social scientific perspective, scholars began studying communication using the methods established from the physical sciences. Thus, quantitative methods represent the steps of using the Scientific Method of research.

1. Decide on a focus of study based primarily on your interests. What do you want to discover or answer?
2. Develop a research question(s) to keep your research focused.
3. Develop a hypothesis(es). A hypothesis states how a researcher believes the subjects under study will or will not communicate based on certain variables. For example, you may have a research question that asks, “Does the gender of a student impact the number of times a college professor calls on his/her students?” From this, you might form two hypotheses: “Instructors call on female students less often then male students.” and “Instructors call on students of their same sex.”
4. Collect data in order to test hypotheses. In our example, you might observe various college classrooms in order to count which students professors call on more frequently.
5. Analyze the data by processing the numbers using statistical programs like SPSS that allow quantitative researchers to detect patterns in communication phenomena. Analyzing data in our example would help us determine if there are any significant differences in the ways in which college professors call on various students.
6. Interpret the data to determine if patterns are significant enough to make broad claims about how humans communicate? Simply because professors call on certain students a few more times than other students may or may not indicate communicative patterns of significance.
7. Share the results with others. Through the sharing of research we continue to learn more about the patterns and rules that guide the ways we communicate.

The term **quantitative** refers to *research in which we can quantify, or count, communication phenomena*. Quantitative methodologies draw heavily from research methods in the physical sciences explore human communication phenomena through the collection and analysis of numerical data. Let’s look at a simple example. What if we wanted to see how public speaking textbooks represent diversity in their photographs and examples. One thing we could do is quantify these to come to conclusions about these representations. For quantitative research, we must determine which communicative acts to count? How do we go about counting them? Is there any human communicative behavior that would return a 100% response rate like the effects of gravity in the physical sciences? What can we learn by counting acts of human communication?

Suppose you want to determine what communicative actions illicit negative responses from your professors. How would you go about researching this? What data would you count? In what ways would you count them? Who would you study? How would you know if you discovered anything of significance that would tell us something important about this? These are tough questions for researchers to answer, particularly in light of the fact that, unlike laws in the physical sciences, human communication is varied and unpredictable.



Nevertheless, there are several quantitative methods researchers use to study communication in order to reveal patterns that help us predict and control our communication. Think about polls that provide feedback for politicians. While people do not all think the same, this type of research provides patterns of thought to politicians who can use this information to make policy decisions that impact our lives. Let’s look at a few of the more frequent quantitative methods of communication research.

Types of Quantitative Methods

There are many ways researchers can quantify human communication. Not all communication is easily quantified, but much of what we know about human communication comes from quantitative research.

- **Experimental Research** is the most well-established quantitative methodology in both the physical and social sciences. This approach uses the principles of research in the physical sciences to conduct experiments that explore human behavior. Researchers choose whether they will conduct their experiments in lab settings or real-world settings. Experimental research generally includes a control group (the group where variables are not altered) and the experimental group(s) (the group in which variables are altered). The groups are then carefully monitored to see if they enact different reactions to different variables.

To determine if students were more motivated to learn by participating in a classroom game versus attending a classroom lecture, the researchers designed an experiment. They wanted to test the hypothesis that students would actually be more motivated to learn from the game. Their next question was, “do students actually learn more by participating in games?” In order to find out the answers to these questions they conducted the following experiment. In a number of classes instructors were asked to proceed with their normal lecture over certain content (control group), and in a number of other classes, instructors used a game that was developed to teach the same content (experimental group). The students were issued a test at the end of the semester to see which group did better in retaining information, and to find out which method most motivated students to want to learn the material. It was determined that students were more motivated to learn by participating in the game, which proved the hypothesis. The other thing that stood out was that students who participated in the game actually remembered more of the content at the end of the semester than those who listened to a lecture. You might have hypothesized these conclusions yourself, but until research is done, our assumptions are just that (Hunt, Lippert & Paynton).

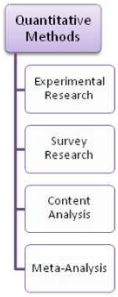
Case In Point

Quantitative Methods In Action

Wendy S. Zabada-Ford (2003) conducted survey research of 253 customers to determine their expectations and experiences with physicians, dentists, mechanics, and hairstylists. Her article, “Research Communication Practices of Professional Service Providers: Predicting Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty” researched the perceptions of customers’ personalized service as related to their expectations in order to predict their satisfaction with the actual service they received. In this study, the goal was to be able to predict the behavior of customers based on their expectations before entering a service-provider context.

Michael T. Stephenson’s (2003) article, “Examining Adolescents’ Responses to Anti-marijuana PSAs” examined how adolescents respond to anti-marijuana public service announcements in the U.S. On the surface, this study may fit into the “understanding” part of the continuum of intended outcomes. However, this research can be used to alter and change messages, such as PSAs, to produce behavioral change in the culture. In this case, the change would be to either keep adolescents from smoking marijuana, or to get them to stop this behavior if they are currently engaged in it.

- **Survey Research** is used to ask people a number of questions about particular topics. Surveys can be online, mailed, handed out, or conducted in interview format. After researchers have collected survey data, they represent participants' responses in numerical form using tables, graphs, charts, and/or percentages. On our campus, anonymous survey research was done to determine the drinking and drug habits of our students. This research demonstrated that the percentage of students who frequently use alcohol or drugs is actually much lower than what most students think. The results of this research are now used to educate students that not everyone engages in heavy drinking or drug use, and to encourage students to more closely align their behaviors with what actually occurs on campus, not with what students perceive happens on campus. It is important to remember that there is a possibility that people do not always tell the truth when they answer survey questions. We won't go into great detail here due to time, but there are sophisticated statistical analyses that can account for this to develop an accurate representation of survey responses.



- **Content Analysis**. Researchers use content analysis to count the number of occurrences of their particular focus of inquiry. Communication researchers often conduct content analyses of movies, commercials, television shows, magazines, etc., to count the number of occurrences of particular phenomena in these contexts to explore potential effects. Harmon, for example, used content analysis in order to demonstrate how the portrayal of blackness had changed within Black Entertainment Television (BET). She did this by observing the five most frequently played films from the time the cable network was being run by a black owner, to the five most frequently played films after being sold to white-owned Viacom, Inc. She found that the portrayal, context and power of the black man changes when a white man versus a black man is defining it. Content analysis is extremely effective for demonstrating patterns and trends in various communication contexts. If you would like to do a simple content analysis, count the number of times different people are represented in photos in your textbooks. Are there more men than women? Are there more caucasians represented than other groups? What do the numbers tell you about how we represent different people?
- **Meta-Analysis**. Do you ever get frustrated when you hear about one research project that says a particular food is good for your health, and then some time later, you hear about another research project that says the opposite? Meta-analysis analyzes existing statistics found in a collection of quantitative research to demonstrate patterns in a particular line of research over time. Meta-analysis is research that seeks to combine the results of a series of past studies to see if their results are similar, or to determine if they show us any new information when they are looked at in totality. The article, *Impact of Narratives on Persuasion in Health Communication: A Meta-Analysis* examined past research regarding narratives and their persuasiveness in health care settings. The meta-analysis revealed that in-person and video narratives had the most persuasive impacts while written narratives had the least (Shen, Sheer, Li).

Outcomes of Quantitative Methodologies

Because it is unlikely that Communication research will yield 100% certainty regarding communicative behavior, why do Communication researchers use quantitative approaches? First, the broader U.S. culture values the ideals of quantitative science as a means of learning about and representing our world. To this end, many Communication researchers emulate research methodologies of the physical sciences to study human communication phenomena. Second, you'll recall that researchers have certain theoretical and methodological preferences that motivate their research choices. Those who understand the world from an Empirical Laws and/or Human Rules Paradigm tend to favor research methods that test communicative laws and rules in quantitative ways.

Even though Communication research cannot produce results with 100% accuracy, quantitative research demonstrates patterns of human communication. In fact, many of your own interactions are based on a loose system of quantifying behavior. Think about how you and your classmates sit in your classrooms. Most students sit in the same seats every class meeting, even if there is not assigned seating. In this context, it would be easy for you to count how many students sit in the same seat, and what percentage of the time they do this. You probably already recognize this pattern without having to do a formal study. However, if you wanted to truly demonstrate that students communicatively manifest territoriality to their peers, it would be relatively simple to conduct a quantitative study of this phenomenon. After completing your research, you could report that X% of students sat in particular seats X% of times. This research would not only provide us with an understanding of a particular communicative pattern of students, it would also give us the ability to predict, to a certain degree, their future behaviors surrounding space issues in the classroom.

Quantitative research is also valuable for helping us determine similarities and/or differences among groups of people or communicative events. Representative examples of research in the areas of gender and communication (Berger; Slater), culture and communication (McCann, Ota, Giles, & Caraker; Hylmo & Buzzanell), as well as ethnicity and communication (Jiang Bresnahan, Ohashi, Nebashi, Wen Ying, Shearman; Murray-Johnson) use quantitative methodologies to determine trends and patterns of communicative behavior for various groups. While these trends and patterns cannot be applied to all people, in all contexts, at all times, they help us understand what variables play a role in influencing the ways we communicate.

While quantitative methods can show us numerical patterns, what about our personal lived experiences? How do we go about researching them, and what can they tell us about the ways we communicate? Qualitative methods have been established to get at the "essence" of our lived experiences, as we subjectively understand them.

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.5.6: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research methodologies draw much of their approach from the social sciences, particularly the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, and Social-Psychology. If you've ever wished you could truly capture and describe the essence of an experience you have had, you understand the goal of qualitative research methods. Rather than statistically analyzing data, or evaluating and critiquing messages, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the subjective lived-experience of those they study. In other words, how can we come to a more rich understanding of how people communicate?

Steps for Doing Qualitative Research

Qualitative approaches break from traditional research ideals developed in the physical sciences. As a result, the steps for conducting qualitative research vary from the seven basic steps outlined above.



1. Planning is the first step for qualitative research. (Lindlof 176). You might want to study the communication of registered nurses. Obviously, the topic "the communication of registered nurses" is too large so careful planning in regards to who should be the focus of study, in what context, what research questions should be asked, etc. are all part of the initial planning of research.
2. Getting in is the second step of qualitative research (Lindlof). Because qualitative research usually focuses on human communication in real-world settings, researchers must gain access to the people and contexts they wish to study. For example, would you want an audio or video recording of your interaction with a physician as you tell him/her your medical problems (DiMatteo, Robinson, Heritage, Tabbarah, & Fox; Barry)?
3. Observing and learning make up the third step of qualitative research. For example, researchers must decide whether or not to reveal themselves to those they are studying. A researcher may choose to conduct interviews, look at communication artifacts, observe communication as it occurs, write field-notes, and/or audio or video record communication. Each of these choices has an impact on the outcomes of the research.
4. Analyze what you have observed. There are exhaustive methods for examining and analyzing qualitative data. Issues of right versus wrong ways of analysis can be addressed by recognizing that the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to everyone, but to share the lived experiences of those who are researched.
5. Share conclusions of the research. Again, research should be shared with others so they can gain a greater understanding of the lived-experience of those researched.

In an attempt to define qualitative methods Thomas Lindlof states that qualitative research examines the "form and content of human behavior…to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations" (21). Anderson and Meyer state that qualitative methods, "do not rest their evidence on the logic of mathematics, the principle of numbers, or the methods of statistical analysis" (247). Dabbs says that qualitative research looks at the quality of phenomena while quantitative methods measure quantities and/or amounts. In qualitative research researchers are interested in the, "what, how, when, and where of a thing….[looking for] the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg 2-3). Data collection comes in the form of words or pictures (Neuman 28). As Kaplan provides a very simple way of defining qualitative research when he says, "if you can measure it, that ain't it" (206).

Types of Qualitative Methods

While qualitative research sounds simple, it can be a "messy" process because things do not always go as planned. One way to make qualitative research "cleaner" is to be familiar with, and follow, the various established qualitative methods available for studying human communication.

- **Ethnography**. Ethnography is arguably the most recognized and common method of qualitative research in Communication. Ethnography "places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study. From this vantage, researchers can examine various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations" to others (Berg 148). Ethnographers try to understand the communicative acts of people as they occur in their actual communicative environments. One way to think of this is the idea of learning about a new culture by immersing oneself in that culture. While there are many strategies for conducting ethnography, the idea is that a researcher must enter the environment of those under study to observe and understand their communication.
- **Focus Group Interviewing**. Researchers who use focus group interviewing meet with groups of people to understand their communication characteristics. (Berg). These interviews foster an environment for participants to discuss particular topics of interest to the group and/or researcher. While we are all familiar with the numbers that we encounter in political polls, every so often television news organizations will conduct focus group interviews to find out how particular groups actually feel about, and experience, the political process as a citizen. This is an applied version of focus group research techniques and provides insight into the ways various groups understand and enact their realities.
- **Action Research**. A qualitative method whose intended outcome is social change is action research. Action research seeks to create positive social change through "a highly reflective, experiential, and participatory mode of research in which all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subject alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research enterprise" (Berg 196; Wadsworth). The goal of action research is to provide information that is useful to a particular group of people that will empower the members of that group to create change as a result of the research (Berg). An example of action research might be when researchers study the teaching strategies of teachers in the classroom. Typically, teachers involve themselves in the research and then use the findings to improve their teaching methods. If you've ever had a professor who had unique styles of teaching, it is likely that he/she may have been involved in research that examined new approaches to teaching students.



- **Unobtrusive Research**. Another method for conducting qualitative research is unobtrusive research. As Berg points out, “to some extent, all the unobtrusive strategies amount to examining and assessing human traces” (209). We can learn a great deal about the behavior of others by examining the traces humans leave behind as they live their lives. In a research class offered at our university, for instance, students investigated the content of graffiti written in university bathrooms. Because our campus has an environmentally conscious culture, much of the graffiti in bathrooms reflects this culture with slogans written on paper towel dispensers that read, “Paper towels=trees.” The students who conducted this research were using unobtrusive strategies to determine dimensions of student culture in the graffiti that was left behind in bathrooms.
- **Historiography**. Historiography is a method of qualitative research “for discovering, from records and accounts, what happened during some past period” (Berg 233). Rather than simply putting together a series of facts, research from this perspective seeks to gain an understanding of the communication in a past social group or context. For example, the timelines in the history chapter of this text are an attempt to chronologically put together the story of the discipline of Communication. While there is no “true” story, your authors have tried to piece together, from their own research, the important pieces that make up what we believe is the story of the formation of Communication study.
- **Case Studies**. Case studies involve gathering significant information about particular people, contexts, or phenomena to understand a particular case under investigation. This approach uses many methods for data collection but focuses on a particular case to gain “holistic description and explanation” (Berg 251). Those who use case study approaches may look at organizations, groups within those organizations, specific people, etc. The idea is to gain a broad understanding of the phenomena and draw conclusions from them. For example, a case study may examine a specific teaching method as a possible solution to increase graduation rates while improving student information retention (Foss et al.). Examining specific cases may help some teachers rethink their current teaching method and offer some alternatives to the standardized teaching paradigms.

While there are other qualitative research methodologies, the methods one chooses to examine communication are most often decided by the researcher’s intended outcomes, resources available, and the research question(s) of focus. There are no hard rules for qualitative research. Instead, researchers must make many choices as they engage in this process.

Outcomes of Qualitative Methodologies

What can we learn by using qualitative research methods for studying communication? Qualitative Communication researchers often believe that quantitative methods do not capture the essence of our lived experience. In other words, it is difficult to quantify everything about our lives and therefore, we need different strategies for understanding our world. Think of the various ways you experience and communicate in your relationships? It’s highly unlikely that you spend the bulk of your communication quantifying your daily experiences. However, through methods like observation, interviewing, journaling, etc., we might be able to get a better understanding of the ways people experience and communicate their feelings.

Communication Research and You

Qualitative Methods In Actions

Developing the ability to perform research is becoming a necessary skill in both the world of academia as well as in today’s competitive workforce. With the move from the industrial age to the information age, many jobs center around the creation and dissemination of information. With so many online options for retrieving information, it is more important to have skills in gathering information rather than memorizing facts and data. As it is vital to be able to access proper information when needed, many universities require a specific amount of research hours for both undergraduate and masters degree programs. A variety of career opportunities require research experience such as marketing agencies or health industries.

Another value of qualitative research is that it resonates with readers who are able to identify with the lived-experiences represented in the research (Neuman). Statistical studies often seem detached from how we experience life. However, qualitative studies contain “rich description, colorful detail, and unusual characters; they give the reader a feel for social settings (Neuman 317). This rich description allows us to identify with the communication experiences of others, and learn through this identification.

Over the years, female scholars have demonstrated a greater frequency in the use of qualitative approaches (Grant, Ward & Rong; Ward & Grant), producing significant contributions to our understanding of human communication using these methods. From understanding to social change, feminist scholars demonstrate the importance of qualitative inquiry for strengthening the body of scholarship in our discipline. While researchers who use quantitative approaches tend to value prediction and control as potential outcomes of their research, those who use qualitative approaches seek greater understanding of human communication phenomena, or evaluate current pragmatic uses of human communication to help identify and change oppressive power structures.

Contributions and Affiliations

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1.5.7: Communication Research Summary

Summary

Communication research is important because it focuses on a common goal—to enhance our interactions with others. In this chapter we highlighted how research is done and the basic steps that guide most research projects—identify the topic, write a research question, define key terms, select a methodology, establish a sample, gather and analyze the data, and finally, interpret and share the results. When conducting research, three factors motivate the choices we make: our intended outcomes, theoretical preferences, and methodological preferences. Depending on these factors, research may lead us to greater understanding, allow us to predict or control a communication situation, or create cultural change.

Conceptualizing Communication research can be done more easily by understanding the three broad methodological approaches/paradigms for conducting Communication research: Rhetorical Methodologies, Quantitative Methodologies, and Qualitative Methodologies. The rhetorical approach evaluates messages in various contexts such as political discourse, art, and popular culture. A variety of methods are available such as neo-aristotelian, fantasy theme, narrative, pentadic, feminist, and ideological criticism. Quantitative methods are characterized by counting phenomena and are useful for predicting communication outcomes or comparing cultures and populations. They include experimental research, surveys, content analysis, and meta-analysis. Qualitative methods offer the opportunity to understand human communication as it occurs in a "natural" context rather than a laboratory setting. This is accomplished through ethnography, focus groups, action research, unobtrusive research, historiography, and case studies. While these approaches share similarities, their focus and specific methods are quite different and produce different outcomes. No research methodology or method is better than another. Instead, approaches to Communication research simply reveal different aspects of human communication in action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you were going to conduct communication research, what topic(s) would be most interesting to you? What specific questions would you want to ask and answer? How would you go about doing this?
2. Of the three broad research methodologies, do you find yourself having a preference for one of them? If so, what specific type of research method would you want to use within the area you have a preference for?
3. If you were going to conduct research, what outcome would you want to gain from your research? Are you more interested in understanding, prediction/control, or creating social change? What is the value of each of these approaches?

KEY TERMS

- action research
- case studies
- content analysis
- continuum of intended outcomes
- control group
- critical/cultural change
- ethnography
- data
- experimental group
- experimental research
- fantasy theme
- feminist
- focus group interviewing
- historiography
- ideological
- key terms
- meta-analysis
- methodological preferences
- methodology

- narrative
- neo-Aristotelian
- pentadic
- prediction/control
- qualitative methodologies
- quantitative methodologies
- research
- research focus
- research questions
- rhetorical methodologies
- sample
- survey research
- theoretical preferences
- understanding
- unobtrusive research

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.1: Rhetorical Criticism

Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

- Define rhetoric.
- Identify key features of classical rhetorical theory.
- Identify the challenges that contemporary theorists are making to the study of rhetoric.
- Define rhetorical criticism.
- Explain the purpose and uses of rhetorical criticism.
- Explain the different models of rhetorical criticism.
- Understand how rhetorical theory and criticism are a current part of the communication discipline.

In this chapter devoted to rhetorical theory and criticism, we will explore both of these separate but related fields of inquiry, briefly map out their history, discuss some of the major rhetorical theories and methods of doing rhetorical criticism, and finally, explain how this specialization contributes to the larger discipline of Communication. But, before going any further, let's begin by highlighting the definitional and historical debate so we may begin with a common understanding of the term, "rhetoric." Remember from Chapter 5 that we are defining **rhetoric** as *"any kind of symbol use that functions in any realm"* (Foss, Foss, and Griffin 7).

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Thumbnail: Bust of Aristotle. Marble, Roman copy after a Greek bronze original by Lysippos from 330 BC; the alabaster mantle is a modern addition. (Public Domain)

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2.1.1: Rhetorical Theory and Practice

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2.1.1.1: Rhetorical Criticism Overview

What do you think of when you hear the word “rhetoric”? Do you have a positive association with the word? Perhaps it feels difficult to define. We often hear that rhetoric is connected to politics, or specifically, the speeches made by politicians, as in, “That campaign speech was just a bunch of empty rhetoric.” Sound familiar? As is often the case, the popular media has distorted the meaning of this word thus, making it difficult to understand. Another problem is that “rhetoric is not a content area that contains a definite body of knowledge, like physics; instead, rhetoric might be understood as the study and practice of shaping content” (Covino and Jolliffe 4). A third source of difficulty when it comes to defining this concept is that scholars themselves have been debating this term for thousands of years!

One would think that after thousands of years people would finally come to an agreement about what rhetoric means. But as is the way with all symbols (words in this case) their meaning can and does change over time to reflect the ever-changing social, political, religious, and cultural context in which they operate. More specifically, they change to reflect the needs, attitudes and beliefs of the people living and communicating within a particular context. Let us take a trip around the world and through time to explore the origin and meaning of rhetoric. As we tour the origins and various definitions of rhetoric we will also highlight the view or scope allowed by each, for “a way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (Burke 49).

Contributions and Affiliations

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2.1.1.2: Understanding Rhetorical Criticism

In the second half of this chapter we would like to discuss a close associate to rhetorical theory—rhetorical criticism. To explain this exciting subdiscipline we will discuss the scope of rhetorical criticism, the purpose of this method, the kinds of knowledge produced, and the relationship between rhetorical theory and criticism. We will conclude with examples of how rhetorical criticism seeks to answer contemporary socio and political concerns.

Rhetorical criticism is *an epistemology or way of knowing many scholars find effective in coming to an understanding about the communication process and the artifact under study*. (An **artifact** or **text** is simply *the thing that the critic wants to learn about*. Artifacts can be, for example, speeches, songs, sermons, films or works of art.) Think about a speech you have heard that was very moving and inspirational. At its conclusion perhaps you wondered, "I know that was a great speech, but why"? Or perhaps a visit to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. inspired the question, "How did the artist take a controversial subject (the war) and memorialize it in a way that diffuses the controversy"? Or maybe you are a fan of the show South Park. You recognize that there are jokes that make fun of particular groups of people such as ethnic and racial minorities that could be labeled "racist." Yet, you do not believe that the overall point or message of this program is to espouse a racist agenda. So, what is going on with this show that allows it to contain some of its racial message? These are the types of questions that rhetorical criticism can answer.

Scope

While there is general agreement among rhetorical scholars that criticism is an appropriate method of study, there are differing opinions about why and how it contributes to an overall understanding of rhetoric. Depending on the rhetorical critic, the assumptions about rhetorical criticism vary. As a way of uncovering some of the various assumptions scholars bring to this method of inquiry, we will look at the various definitions of criticism and rhetoric and what is considered within the scope of rhetorical criticism.

To Persuade?

We can begin to see the relationship between rhetorical theory and criticism when we examine the beginnings of criticism. Pay attention to the shared qualities and assumptions. In an early (1925) essay on rhetorical criticism, the study of rhetoric was limited to that of speakers and speeches, and included a number of points to which the critic should attend: speaker's personality, speaker's public character, audience, speaker's leading ideas, motives, topics, proofs, judgment of human nature, questions considered, textual authenticity, arrangement, mode of expression preparation, delivery, style, effect on audience, influence on the time (Wichelns). With this broad agenda for critics, Wichelns failed to provide them with a method to accomplish these goals. His essay was influential in that it lead to an exclusive focus and assumption that criticism was to be centered on oral rhetoric. Hopefully, you can see how this parallels the focus of rhetoric in the classical period.

Other scholars tried to fill in some of the gaps of this early essay. Ewbank tried to broaden the scope in 1931 by performing "case studies" where the critic wrote from personal experience derived from witnessing the speech. He looked at the audience's immediate reactions and the effect of the speech on them. Hunt (1935) said the critic should be focused more on values and less on performance of a work. He wanted critics to make value judgments but gave no definition of such. Bryant (1937) was the first person to question the exclusive focus on "great" individuals. He wanted a focus on social forces or movements and thought forces and figures should be studied together. Booth expanded rhetoric to include novels, plays, editorials and songs.

Of the more recent critics, Cathcart says "rhetoric is used . . . to refer to a communicator's intentional use of language and other symbols to influence or persuade selected receivers to act, believe, or feel the way the communicator desires in problematic situations" (2). Of criticism he says it is "that special form of communication which examines how communication is accomplished and whether it is worthwhile. . . Criticism is thus the counterpart of creativity" (3). Imbedded in these definitions are Cathcart's assumptions that only messages that are intended are within the scope of study. Such messages are designed to change the listener or the situation in some way, presumably to solve the problematic situation. This implies that the rhetor knows how to solve the problem and believes that he or she has the best solution. The requirement of a "problematic situation" narrows the scope considerably as does Cathcart's examples of rhetoric—public discourse such as speeches, essays, interviews, and slogans (2). Thus, for Cathcart, a rhetor comes to the problematic speaking situation with his or her solution based on what he or she believes the audience needs to resolve the conflict. Criticism is used to assess whether the rhetor was successful in persuading the audience to accept the solution and the strategies used to gain such acceptance.

Black in Rhetorical Criticism, defines rhetoric as, “discourse that aims to influence” (17). Criticism then, “is a discipline that, through the investigation and appraisal of the activities and products of men, seeks as its end the understanding of man himself. . . .rhetorical criticism is the criticism of rhetorical discourse” (9, 10). Here, Black offers and suggests a broader scope than Cathcart. Rhetoric is not limited to solely problematic situations; thus, it does not assume that the rhetor has a solution for the audience. Like Cathcart, he assumes the rhetorical goal is to influence and persuade and is concerned with the strategies that are most effective; scholars look at “what he says and how he says it” (17).

Many other critics assume the intent to persuade as the natural goal of rhetoric and focus on the strategies for doing so. Stewart says rhetorical criticism is “the study of man’s past attempt to change the behavior of fellow man, primarily through verbal symbols” (1). Brock and Scott claim rhetoric may be defined as the human effort to induce cooperation through the use of symbols” (6). By reading about the various definitions and assumptions of rhetorical criticism we hope you can begin to see a relationship between some of the early definitions of rhetorical theory (as persuasion) and how that impacted the development of rhetorical criticism.

Or Not to Persuade?

The definitions offered by Foss, however, suggest at least two different assumptions. She defines rhetoric as “the action humans perform when they use symbols for the purpose of communication with one another” (4). Like other theorists and critics, Foss is concerned with symbolic action, however, she does not assume that the sole propose of those symbols is to persuade others. Rhetoric may be intended to persuade, but it may also be “an invitation to understanding”: an offer to others to see our world the way we do, not in the hope that they will change, but that they will understand (5). At other times rhetoric may be used for self-discovery, to bring people together, or entertainment. With the focus on communication as understanding rather than persuasion, Foss offers critics a broad scope for the study of rhetorical discourse.

Foss defines criticism as “the process of systematically investigating and explaining symbolic acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding rhetorical processes” (7). Like other critics she wants to understand strategies or processes, but she does not assume that she can understand “man,” rather she wants to understand rhetoric and how humans use it. From her definitions, we see that Foss approaches rhetorical criticism with two assumptions that differ from other scholars. First, she does not assume that the role of the rhetorical critic is to judge the effectiveness of the speaker or discourse: their purpose is to understand. Second, she does not believe that the critic must possess knowledge of the motives of the communicator. In her perspective, this is not necessary because, regardless of intent, a message has been transmitted and produces an effect upon the audience. The goal is to uncover the meanings that are produced, not necessarily the intended meaning.

Purpose

While scholars debate the purpose of rhetorical criticism, the arguments fall into one of two categories: judgment and understanding. While, this may be an oversimplification in some cases, it is useful for our purpose here. Those who see rhetorical criticism as a means of judgment are concerned with articulating the effectiveness of a text or artifact and the strategies that contributed or detracted from its overall success. How effective was President Bush, for example, in persuading the American people and the world that we should go to war with Iraq in his Sate of the Union address in January 2003?

Those concerned with understanding may be concerned with comprehension and appreciation of the artifact itself and how that knowledge contributes to an understanding of rhetoric and rhetorical processes. A critic interested in this sort of project might ask a question such as, Does the 2003 film, Charlie’s Angels II: Full Throttle, offer an empowering feminist voice or does it reinscribe a traditionally feminine image? Both questions can be answered by rhetorical criticism: they are just different kinds of questions.

Currently, the collective opinion seems to be moving in the direction of understanding as the purpose of rhetorical criticism. We see that Foss is less concerned with judgment as she is with comprehension as suggested in her above definitions of rhetoric and criticism. She sees a direct and explicit correlation between the criticism of an artifact and an understanding of rhetorical theory: “the critic is interested in discovering what the artifact teaches us about the nature of rhetoric” (8). The overall goal is to contribute to our effectiveness as communicators. When we know and understand how rhetoric works we are able to critique the rhetorical choices of others and make effective rhetorical choices for our own communication. The aim for the individual is to be rhetorically effective in a given situation by understanding the communicative options available to him or her.

Other specific purposes can include artistic, analytic, and ideological. Leff describes the artistic critic as one who sees the text as art and wants to foster an appreciation in the reader (224). The purpose is for the reader to understand and therefore, appreciate the art form. The analytic critic sees the text, (such as advertisements or political campaigns) as an object of study and seeks the means to comprehend. Wanderer talks of the ideological or advocate critic as looking at how a text may be oppressive, suppress the readers' interpretations, closes off other readings or possibilities (social protests, minorities.) Feminist and ideological criticism seek the emancipation of all human potential and exposes how that potential is being silenced by the existing ideologies.

What Can We Learn?

The value of rhetorical criticism comes from the insights it can provide about rhetorical communication and the artifact we study. Through these methodological process critics come to a greater awareness about the variety of communication options open to us in a given situation. This awareness helps us to be effective communicators. Conversely, discovering what is ineffective in a discourse teaches us what not to do when we communicate with others. By uncovering hidden meanings in a text we learn how various messages are produced and their effects. This can help us decipher how we may want to respond in a given situation: "The value of both critical theory and textual criticism derives from the extent to which they inform discursive practice and advance our understanding of rhetorical communication" (Henry 220-221). Criticism also helps us learn about a specific text. When we can identify a text with pervasive effects, rhetorical criticism can inform us as to how and why that text is so effective. Thus, rhetorical criticism enables scholars to learn more about their own communication strategies, the study of rhetoric, and the specific artifacts that interest us.

The Relationship Between Theory and Criticism

Many critics are concerned with the relationship between theory and practice and how an understanding of one contributes to the other. In this way theory and criticism are mutually interdependent: the purpose for criticism is to unite theory and practice. Criticism must be informed by method so others can see why and how we reason about quality i.e. we need theory for criticism and criticism for theory (Farrell 4). Campbell says the purpose of criticism is to contribute to the modification and application of theory (18). Criticism helps us see gaps in theory and the limits of knowledge so we may ascertain social significance of discourse. If there is a gap in theory criticism helps us create a new one. Hart, however, claims that critics do not have to choose between studying texts and contributing to theory; productive criticism can do both, regardless of the critic's intention. If you remember back to the chapter on theory at the beginning of the text we talked about theory as an idea of how something works. The "something" in this case is language or discourse; rhetorical theories provide models for how language functions as part of the human experience and rhetorical criticism is a way of testing and revising the particular theory with a real life case study.

Contributions and Affiliations

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2.1.1.3: Current Uses of Rhetorical Theory and Criticism

By now you should have a clear understanding of what rhetorical theory and criticism are and the uses they serve for the discipline as well as the world outside academia. We would like to conclude this chapter by detailing some of the current issues and questions occupying rhetorical scholars. As the examples are numerous, we will speak to three specific content areas: the study of social movements, political and campaign rhetoric, and studies of popular culture.

Social Movements

One of the exciting things about Communication is that is it has always been interested in the large sociopolitical issues facing society. Social change as it occurs through social movements is one such area of research. Think back to your history lessons concerning minority populations in the United States. Has the political status of women; African Americans; Asians; gays, lesbians, bisexual, and transgendered individuals always been what it is today? (We are not suggesting here that there is finally equality among people of various races, ethnicities, genders, or sexual orientations; only that it has been much worse.) How have those changes come about? Certainly laws and customs have changed in an attempt to provide more equal access to resources and opportunities. But prior to such legislative changes a change in attitude was necessary. Here is where social movement rhetoric played a vital role in changes our nation's history. The rhetoric of leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Caesar Chavez have all been influential in changing attitudes. Scholars interested in these issues study the discourse of the leaders (i.e. their speeches) as well as the rhetorical vision they create for their audience. Moreover, they also attempt to learn from the past about what sort of rhetorical strategies will be successful in contemporary and future movements. As Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen explain, "one of the goals of studying social movements is to make predictions" (141).

Public Address

Another area of research that falls within the scope of rhetorical theory and criticism is that of public address. This area is concerned with politics and political oratory. Some students of rhetoric may go onto careers in speech writing and campaign design on the behalf of political candidates. In this context they are able to utilize their skills in rhetoric and persuasion to answer the challenge of, how can I get people to vote for a particular candidate. Kathleen Hall Jamison is an example of such a person. She worked on the Dukakis presidential campaign and has authored several books in this area. Similarly, one might be in the business of analyzing political speeches and offering suggestions about what is effective and ineffective in a politician's rhetoric.

Popular Culture

The study and critique of popular culture is something that most, if not all, of us participate in at some level. Do you ever watch music videos with your friends and comment on the use of some of the images? Do you look forward to the commercials during the Super Bowl to see the latest and innovative advertising techniques? As you watch, critique, and analyze these images, you are beginning the process of rhetorical criticism. The only difference between you and the professional critic (beside lots of schooling) is that the professional critic has decided to make his or her analysis systematic. This is accomplished by employing one of the formal methods discussed earlier, such as the pentad or a feminist critique. As most people participate in some form of popular culture such as television, films, music, sports, or fashion, you can see the potential impact that popular culture messages and images have on a society. Thus, scholars of popular culture feel it is important to pay critical attention to them rather than dismiss them as trivial.

Contributions and Affiliations

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2.1.1.4: Implications of Rhetorical Analysis

Media is one of the most important places where this kind of analysis needs to happen. Rhetoric—the way we use language and images to persuade—is what makes media work. Think of all the media you see and hear every day: Twitter, television shows, web pages, billboards, text messages, podcasts. Even as you read this chapter, more ways to get those messages to you quickly and in a persuasive manner are being developed. Media is constantly asking you to buy something, act in some way, believe something to be true, or interact with others in a specific manner. Understanding rhetorical messages is essential to help us to become informed consumers, but it also helps evaluate the ethics of messages, how they affect us personally, and how they affect society.

Take, for example, a commercial for men's deodorant that tells you that you'll be irresistible to women if you use their product. This campaign doesn't just ask you to buy the product, though. It also asks you to trust the company's credibility, or ethos, and to believe the messages they send about how men and women interact, about sexuality, and
about what constitutes a healthy body. You have to decide whether or not you will choose to buy the product and how you will choose to respond to the messages that the commercial sends.

Or, in another situation, a Facebook group asks you to support health care reform. The rhetoric in this group uses people's stories of their struggles to obtain affordable health care. These stories, which are often heart-wrenching, use emotion to persuade you—also called pathos. You are asked to believe that health care reform is necessary and urgent, and you are asked to act on these beliefs by calling your congresspersons and asking them to support the reforms as well.

Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy. For example, research has shown that only 2% of women consider themselves beautiful ("Campaign"), which has been linked to the way that the fashion industry defines beauty. We are also told by the media that buying more stuff can make us happy, but historical surveys show that US happiness peaked in the 1950s, when people saw as many advertisements in their lifetime as the average American sees in one year (Leonard).

Our worlds are full of these kinds of social influences. As we interact with other people and with media, we are continually creating and interpreting rhetoric. In the same way that you decide how to process, analyze or ignore these messages, you create them. You probably think about what your clothing will communicate as you go to a job
interview or get ready for a date. You are also using rhetoric when you try to persuade your parents to send you money or your friends to see the movie that interests you. When you post to your blog or tweet you are using rhetoric. In fact, according to rhetorician Kenneth Burke, rhetoric is everywhere: "wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning,' there is 'persuasion.' Food eaten and digested is not rhetoric. But in the meaning of food there is much rhetoric, the meaning being persuasive enough for the idea of food to be used, like the ideas of religion, as a rhetorical device of statesmen" (71–72). In other words, most of our actions are persuasive in nature. What we choose to wear (tennis shoes vs. flip flops), where we shop (Whole Foods Market vs. Wal-Mart), what we eat (organic vs. fast food), or even the way we send information (snail mail vs. text message) can work to persuade others.

Chances are you have grown up learning to interpret and analyze these types of rhetoric. They become so commonplace that we don't realize how often and how quickly we are able to perform this kind of rhetorical analysis. When your teacher walked in on the first day of class, you probably didn't think to yourself, "I think I'll do some rhetorical
analysis on her clothing and draw some conclusions about what kind of personality she might have and whether I think I'll like her." And, yet, you probably were able to come up with some conclusions based on the evidence you had.

However, when this same teacher hands you an advertisement, photograph or article and asks you to write a rhetorical analysis of it, you might have been baffled or felt a little overwhelmed. The good news is that many of the analytical processes that you already use to interpret the rhetoric around you are the same ones that you'll use for these assignments.

The Rhetorical Situation, Or Discerning Context

One of the first places to start is context. Rhetorical messages always occur in a specific situation or context. The president's speech might respond to a specific global event, like an economic summit; that's part of the context. You choose your clothing depending on where you are going or what you are doing; that's context. A television commercial

comes on during specific programs and at specific points of the day; that's context. A billboard is placed in a specific part of the community; that's context, too.

In an article called "The Rhetorical Situation," Lloyd Bitzer argues that there are three parts to understanding the context of a rhetorical moment: exigence, audience and constraints. Exigence is the circumstance or condition that invites a response; "imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be" (Bitzer 304). In other words, rhetorical discourse is usually responding to some kind of problem. You can begin to understand a piece's exigence by asking, "What is this rhetoric responding to?" "What might have happened to make the rhetor (the person who creates the rhetoric) respond in this way?"

The exigence can be extremely complex, like the need for a new Supreme Court justice, or it can be much simpler, like receiving an email that asks you where you and your friends should go for your road trip this weekend. Understanding the exigence is important because it helps you begin to discover the purpose of the rhetoric. It helps you understand what the discourse is trying to accomplish.

Another part of the rhetorical context is audience, those who are the (intended or unintended) recipients of the rhetorical message. The audience should be able to respond to the exigence. In other words, the audience should be able to help address the problem. You might be very frustrated with your campus's requirement that all first-year students purchase a meal plan for on-campus dining. You might even send an email to a good friend back home voicing that frustration. However, if you want to address the exigence of the meal plans, the most appropriate audience would be the person/office on campus that oversees meal plans. Your friend back home cannot solve the problem (though she may be able to offer sympathy or give you some good suggestions), but the person who can change the meal plan requirements is probably on campus. Rhetors make all sorts of choices based on their audience. Audience can determine the type of language used, the formality of the discourse, the medium or delivery of the rhetoric, and even the types of reasons used the make the rhetor's argument. Understanding the audience helps you begin to see and understand the rhetorical moves that the rhetor makes.

The last piece of the rhetorical situation is the constraints. The constraints of the rhetorical situation are those things that have the power to "constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (Bitzer 306). Constraints have a lot to do with how the rhetoric is presented. Constraints can be "beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives" (Bitzer 306). Constraints limit the way the discourse is delivered or communicated. Constraints may be something as simple as your instructor limiting your proposal to one thousand words, or they may be far more complex like the kinds of language you need to use to persuade a certain community.

So how do you apply this to a piece of rhetoric? Let's say you are flipping through a magazine, and you come across an advertisement that has a large headline that reads "Why Some People Say 'D'OH' When You Say 'Homer'" ("Why"). This ad is an Ad Council public service announcement (PSA) to promote arts education and is sponsored by Americans for the Arts and NAMM, the trade association of the international music products industry.

Since you want to understand more about what this ad means and what it wants you to believe or do, you begin to think about the rhetorical situation. You first might ask, "what is the ad responding to? What problem does it hope to address?" That's the exigence. In this case, the exigence is the cutting of arts funding and children's lack of exposure to the arts. According to the Ad Council's website, "the average kid is provided insufficient time to learn and experience the arts. This PSA campaign was created to increase involvement in championing arts education both in and out of school" ("Arts"). The PSA is responding directly to the fact that kids are not getting enough arts education.

Then you might begin to think about to whom the Ad Council targeted the ad. Unless you're a parent, you are probably not the primary audience. If you continued reading the text of the ad, you'd notice that there is information to persuade parents that the arts are helpful to their children and to let them know how to help their children become more involved with the arts. The ad tells parents that "the experience will for sure do more than entertain them. It'll build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And that's reason enough to make a parent say, 'D'oh!,' For Ten Simple Ways to instill art in your kids' lives visit AmericansForTheArts.org" ("Why"). Throughout the text of the ad, parents are told both what to believe about arts education and how to act in response to the belief.

There also might be a secondary audience for this ad—people who are not the main audience of the ad but might also be able to respond to the exigence. For example, philanthropists who could raise money for arts education or legislators who might pass laws for arts funding or to require arts education in public schools could also be intended
audiences for this ad.

Finally, you might want to think about the constraints or the limitations on the ad. Sometimes these are harder to get at, but we can guess a few things. One constraint might be the cost of the ad. Different magazines charge differently for ad space as well as placement within the magazine, so the Ad Council could have been constrained by how much money they wanted to spend to circulate the ad. The ad is also only one page long, so there might have been a limitation on the amount of space for the ad. Finally, on the Ad Council's webpage, they list the requirements for organizations seeking the funding and support of the Ad Council. There are twelve criteria, but here are a few:

1. The sponsor organization must be a private non-profit 501(c)3 organization, private foundation, government agency or coalition of such groups.

2. The issue must address the Ad Council's focus on Health & Safety, Education, or Community. Applications which benefit children are viewed with favor—as part of the Ad Council's Commitment to Children.

3. The issue must offer a solution through an individual action.

4. The effort must be national in scope, so that the message has relevance to media audiences in communities throughout the nation. ("Become")

Each of these criteria helps to understand the limitations on both who can participate as rhetor and what can be said.

The exigence, audience and constraints are only one way to understand the context of a piece of rhetoric, and, of course, there are other ways to get at context. Some rhetoricians look at subject, purpose, audience and occasion. Others might look at the "rhetorical triangle" of writer, reader, and purpose.

An analysis using the rhetorical triangle would ask similar questions about audience as one using the rhetorical situation, but it would also ask questions about the writer and the purpose of the document. Asking questions about the writer helps the reader determine whether she or he is credible and knowledgeable. For example, the Ad Council
has been creating public service announcements since 1942 ("Loose Lips Sink Ships," anyone?) and is a non-profit agency. They also document their credibility by showing the impact of their campaigns in several ways: "Destruction of our forests by wildfires has been reduced from 22 million acres to less than 8.4 million acres per year, since our
Forest Fire Prevention campaign began" and "6,000 Children were paired with a mentor in just the first 18 months of our mentoring campaign" ("About"). Based on this information, we can assume that the Ad Council is a credible rhetor, and whether or not we agree with the rhetoric they produce, we can probably assume it contains reliable information. Asking questions about the next part of the rhetorical triangle, the purpose of a piece of rhetoric, helps you understand what the rhetor is trying to achieve through the discourse. We can discern the purpose by asking questions like "what does the rhetor want me to believe after seeing this message?" or "what does the rhetor want me to do?" In some ways, the purpose takes the exigence to the next step. If the exigence frames the problem, the purpose frames the response to that problem.

The rhetorical situation and rhetorical triangle are two ways to begin to understand how the rhetoric functions within the context you find it. The key idea is to understand that no rhetorical performance takes place in a vacuum. One of the first steps to understanding a piece of rhetoric is to look at the context in which it takes place. Whatever terminology you (or your instructor) choose, it is a good idea to start by locating your analysis within a rhetorical situation.

The Heart of the Matter—The Argument

The rhetorical situation is just the beginning of your analysis, though. What you really want to understand is the argument—what the rhetor wants you to believe or do and how he or she goes about that persuasion. Effective argumentation has been talked about for centuries. In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle was teaching the men of Athens
how to persuade different kinds of audiences in different kinds of rhetorical situations. Aristotle articulated three "artistic appeals" that a rhetor could draw on to make a case—logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos is commonly defined as argument from reason, and it usually appeals to an audience's intellectual side. As audiences we want to know the "facts of the matter," and logos helps present these—statistics, data, and logical statements. For example, on our Homer ad for the arts, the text tells parents that the arts will "build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science" ("Why"). You might notice that there aren't numbers or charts here, but giving this information appeals to the audience's intellectual side.

That audience can see a continuation of the argument on the Ad Council's webpage, and again much of the argument appeals to logos and draws on extensive research that shows that the arts do these things:

- Allow kids to express themselves creatively and bolster their self-confidence.
- Teach kids to be more tolerant and open.
- Improve kids' overall academic performance.
- Show that kids actively engaged in arts education are likely to have higher SAT scores than those with little to no arts involvement.
- Develop skills needed by the 21st century workforce: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, teamwork and more.
- Keep students engaged in school and less likely to drop out. ("Arts")

Each bullet above is meant to intellectually persuade parents that they need to be more intentional in providing arts education for their children.

Few of us are persuaded only with our mind, though. Even if we intellectually agree with something, it is difficult to get us to act unless we are also persuaded in our heart. This kind of appeal to emotion is called pathos. Pathetic appeals (as rhetoric that draws on pathos is called) used alone without logos and ethos can come across as emotionally manipulative or overly sentimental, but are very powerful when used in conjunction with the other two appeals.

Emotional appeals can come in many forms—an anecdote or narrative, an image such as a photograph, or even humor. For example, on their web campaign, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) uses an image of a baby chick and of Ronald McDonald wielding a knife to draw attention to their Chicken McCruely Un-Happy Meal. These images are meant to evoke an emotional response in the viewer and, along with a logos appeal with the statistics about how cruelly chickens are treated, persuade the viewer to boycott Mc-Donalds.

Pathos can also be a very effective appeal if the rhetor has to persuade the audience in a very short amount of time, which is why it is used heavily in print advertisements, billboards, or television commercials. An investment company will fill a 30-second commercial with images of families and couples enjoying each other, seeming happy, and surrounded by wealth to persuade you to do business with them. The 30-second time spot does not allow them to give the 15-year growth of each of their funds, and pathetic appeals will often hold our interest much longer than intellectual appeals.

The ad promoting the importance of art uses humor to appeal to the audience's emotional side. By comparing the epic poet Homer to Homer Simpson and his classic "d'oh!" the ad uses humor to draw people into their argument about the arts. The humor continues as they ask parents if their kids know the difference between the Homers, "The only Homer some kids know is the one who can't write his own last name" ("Why"). The ad also appeals to emotion through its language use (diction), describing Homer as "one very ancient dude," and describing The Odyssey as "the sequel" to The Iliad. In this case, the humor of the ad, which occurs in the first few lines, is meant to draw the reader in and help them become interested in the argument before the ad gets to the logos, which is in the last few lines of the ad.

The humor also makes the organization seem real and approachable, contributing to the ethos. The humor might lead you to think that Americans for the Arts is not a stuffy bunch of suits, but an organization you can relate to or one that has a realistic understanding of the world. Ethos refers to the credibility of the rhetor—which can be a person or an organization. A rhetor can develop credibility in many ways. The tone of the writing and whether that tone is appropriate for the context helps build a writer's ethos, as does the accuracy of the information or the visual presentation of the rhetoric.

In the Homer ad, the ethos is built in several ways. The simple, humorous and engaging language, such as “Greek Gods. Achilles Heel. Trojan Horse. All of these icons are brought to us by one very ancient dude—Homer. In The Iliad and its sequel, The Odyssey, he presented Greek mythology in everyday language” (“Why”) draws the audience in and helps the tone of the ad seem very approachable. Also, the knowledge of Greek mythology and the information about how the arts help children—which also contribute to the logos appeal—make the ad seem credible and authoritative. However, the fact that the ad does not use too many statistics or overly technical language also contributes to the ethos of the ad because often sounding too intellectual can come across as pompous or stuffy.

Aristotle’s artistic appeals are not the only way to understand the argument of rhetoric. You might choose to look at the claim or the unstated assumptions of a piece; someone else might consider the visual appeal of the rhetoric, like the font, page layout, types of paper, or images; another person might focus on the language use and the specific word choice and sentence structure of a piece. Logos, pathos, and ethos can provide a nice framework for analysis, but there are numerous ways to understand how a piece of rhetoric persuades (or fails to persuade).

Looking at the context and components of a piece of rhetoric often isn’t enough, though, because it is important to draw conclusions about the rhetoric—does it successfully respond to the exigence? Is it an ethical approach? Is it persuasive? These kinds of questions let you begin to create your own claims, your own rhetoric, as you take a stand on what other people say, do, or write.

Beginning to Analyze

Once you have established the context for the rhetoric you are analyzing, you can begin to think about how well it fits into that context. You’ve probably been in a situation where you arrived way underdressed for an occasion. You thought that the dinner was just a casual get together with friends; it turned out to be a far more formal affair, and you felt very out of place. There are also times when discourse fails to respond to the situation well—it doesn’t fit. On the other hand, successful discourses often respond very well to the context. They address the problem, consider the audience’s needs, provide accurate information, and have a compelling claim. One of the reasons you work to determine the rhetorical situation for a piece of discourse is to consider whether it works within that context. You can begin this process by asking questions like:

- Does the rhetoric address the problem it claims to address?
- Is the rhetoric targeted at an audience who has the power to make change?
- Are the appeals appropriate to the audience?
- Does the rhetor give enough information to make an informed decision?
- Does the rhetoric attempt to manipulate in any way (by giving incomplete/inaccurate information or abusing the audience’s emotions)?
- What other sub-claims do you have to accept to understand the rhetor’s main claim? (For example, in order to accept the Ad Council’s claim that the arts boost math and science scores, you first have to value the boosting of those scores.)
- What possible negative effects might come from this rhetoric?

Rhetorical analysis asks how discourse functions in the setting in which it is found. In the same way that a commercial for denture cream seems very out of place when aired during a reality television show aimed at teenagers, rhetoric that does not respond well to its context often fails to persuade. In order to perform analysis, you must understand the context and then you must carefully study the ways that the discourse does and does not respond appropriately to that context.

The bottom line is that the same basic principles apply when you look at any piece of rhetoric (your instructor’s clothing, an advertisement, the president’s speech): you need to consider the context and the argument. As you begin to analyze rhetoric, there are lots of different types of rhetoric you might encounter in a college classroom, such as

- Political cartoon
- Wikipedia entry
- Scholarly article

- Bar Graph
- Op-Ed piece in the newspaper
- Speech
- YouTube video
- Book chapter
- Photograph
- PowerPoint Presentation

All of the above types of discourse try to persuade you. They may ask you to accept a certain kind of knowledge as valid, they may ask you to believe a certain way, or they may ask you to act. It is important to understand what a piece of rhetoric is asking of you, how it tries to persuade you, and whether that persuasion fits within the context you encounter it in. Rhetorical analysis helps you answer those questions.

Implications of Rhetorical Analysis, Or Why Do This Stuff Anyway?

So you might be wondering if you know how to do this analysis already—you can tell what kind of person someone is by their clothing, or what a commercial wants you to buy without carefully listening to it—why do you need to know how to do more formal analysis? How does this matter outside a college classroom?

Well, first of all, much of the reading and learning in college requires some level of rhetorical analysis: as you read a textbook chapter to prepare for a quiz, it is helpful to be able to distill the main points quickly; when you read a journal article for a research paper, it is necessary to understand the scholar's thesis; when you watch a video in class, it is useful to be able to understand how the creator is trying to persuade you. But college is not the only place where an understanding of how rhetoric works is important. You will find yourself in many situations—from boardrooms to your children's classrooms or churches to city council meetings where you need to understand the heart of the arguments being presented.

One final example: in November 2000, Campbell's Soup Company launched a campaign to show that many of their soups were low in calories and showed pre-pubescent girls refusing to eat because they were "watching their weight." A very small organization called Dads and Daughters, a group that fights advertising that targets girls with negative body images, contacted Campbell's explaining the problems they saw in an ad that encouraged young girls to be self-conscious about their weight, and asked Campbell's to pull the ad. A few days later, Campbell's Vice President for Marketing and Corporate Communications called. One of the dads says, "the Vice President Acknowledged he had received their letter, reviewed the ad again, saw their point, and was pulling the ad," responding to a "couple of guys writing a letter" ("Media"). Individuals who understand rhetorical analysis and act to make change can have a tremendous influence on their world.

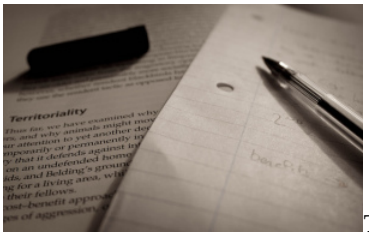
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2.1.1.5: Research and Critical Reading

Introduction

Good researchers and writers examine their sources critically and actively. They do not just compile and summarize these research sources in their writing, but use them to create their own ideas, theories, and, ultimately, their own, new understanding of the topic they are researching. Such an approach means not taking the information and opinions that the sources contain at face value and for granted, but to investigate, test, and even doubt every claim, every example, every story, and every conclusion. It means not to sit back and let your sources control you, but to engage in active conversation with them and their authors. In order to be a good researcher and writer, one needs to be a critical and active reader.



This chapter is about the importance of critical and active reading. It is also about the connection between critical reading and active, strong writing. Much of the discussion you will find in this chapter in fundamental to research and writing, no matter what writing genre, medium, or academic discipline you read and write in. Every other approach to research writing, every other research method and assignment offered elsewhere in this book is, in some way, based upon the principles discussed in this chapter.

Reading is at the heart of the research process. No matter what kinds of research sources and, methods you use, you are always reading and interpreting text. Most of us are used to hearing the word “reading” in relation to secondary sources, such as books, journals, magazines, websites, and so on. But even if you are using other research methods and sources, such as interviewing someone or surveying a group of people, you are reading. You are reading their subjects‟ ideas and views on the topic you are investigating. Even if you are studying photographs, cultural artifacts, and other non-verbal research sources, you are reading them, too by trying to connect them to their cultural and social contexts and to understand their meaning. Principles of critical reading which we are about to discuss in this chapter apply to those research situations as well.

I like to think about reading and writing as not two separate activities but as two tightly connected parts of the same whole. That whole is the process of learning and making of new meaning. It may seem that reading and writing are complete opposite of one another. According to the popular view, when we read, we “consume” texts, and when we write, we “produce” texts. But this view of reading and writing is true only if you see reading as a passive process of taking in information from the text and not as an active and energetic process of making new meaning and new knowledge. Similarly, good writing does not come from nowhere but is usually based upon, or at least influenced by ideas, theories, and stories that come from reading. So, if, as a college student, you have ever wondered why your writing teachers have asked you to read books and articles and write responses to them, it is because writers who do not read and do not actively engage with their reading, have little to say to others.

We will begin this chapter with the definition of the term “critical reading.” We will consider its main characteristics and briefly touch upon ways to become an active and critical reader. Next, we will discuss the importance of critical reading for research and how reading critically can help you become a better researcher and make the research process more enjoyable. Also in this chapter, a student-writer offers us an insight into his critical reading and writing processes. This chapter also shows how critical reading can and should be used for critical and strong writing. And, as all other chapters, this one offers you activities and projects designed to help you implement the advice presented here into practice.

What Kind of Reader Are You?



You read a lot, probably more that you think. You read school textbooks, lecture notes, your classmates' papers, and class websites. When school ends, you probably read some fiction, magazines. But you also read other texts. These may include CD liner notes, product reviews, grocery lists, maps, driving directions, road signs, and the list can go on and on. And you don't read all these texts in the same way. You read them with different purposes and using different reading strategies and techniques. The first step towards becoming a critical and active reader is examining your reading process and your reading preferences. Therefore, you are invited to complete the following exploration activity.

Writing Activity: Analyzing your Reading Habits

List all the reading you have done in the last week. Include both "school" and "out-of school" reading. Try to list as many texts as you can think of, no matter how short and unimportant they might seem. Now, answer the following questions.

- What was your purpose in reading each of those texts? Did you read for information, to pass a test, for enjoyment, to decide on a product you wanted to buy, and so on? Or, did you read to figure out some complex problem that keeps you awake at night?
- You have probably come up with a list of different purposes. How did each of those purposes influence your reading strategies? Did you take notes or try to memorize what you read? How long did it take you to read different texts? Did you begin at the beginning and read till you reached the end, or did you browse some texts? Consider the time of day you were reading. Consider even whether some texts tired you out or whether you thought they were "boring." Why?
- What did you do with the results of your reading? Did you use them for some practical purpose, such as buying a new product or finding directions, or did you use them for a less practical purpose, such as understanding some topic better or learning something about yourself and others?

When you finish, share your results with the rest of the class and with your instructor.

Having answered the questions above, you have probably noticed that your reading strategies differed depending on the reading task you were facing and on what you planned to do with the results of the reading. If, for example, you read lecture notes in order to pass a test, chances are you "read for information," or "for the main" point, trying to remember as much material as possible and anticipating possible test questions. If, on the other hand, you read a good novel, you probably just focused on following the story. Finally, if you were reading something that you hoped would help you answer some personal question or solve some personal problem, it is likely that you kept comparing and contrasting the information that you read your own life and your own experiences.

You may have spent more time on some reading tasks than others. For example, when we are interested in one particular piece of information or fact from a text, we usually put that text aside once we have located the information we were looking for. In other cases, you may have been reading for hours on end taking careful notes and asking questions.

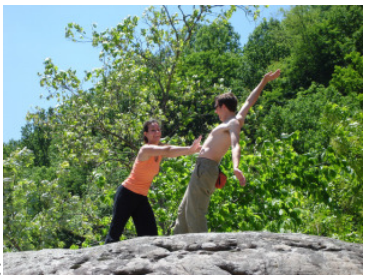
If you share the results of your investigation into your reading habits with your classmates, you may also notice that some of their reading habits and strategies were different from yours. Like writing strategies, approaches to reading may vary from person to person depending on our previous experiences with different topics and types of reading materials, expectations we have of different texts, and, of course, the purpose with which we are reading.

Life presents us with a variety of reading situations which demand different reading strategies and techniques. Sometimes, it is important to be as efficient as possible and read purely for information or "the main point." At other times, it is important to just "let go" and turn the pages following a good story, although this means not thinking about the story you are reading. At the heart of writing and research, however, lies the kind of reading known as critical reading. Critical examination of sources is what makes their use in research possible and what allows writers to create rhetorically effective and engaging texts.

Key Features of Critical Reading

Critical readers are able to interact with the texts they read through carefully listening, writing, conversation, and questioning. They do not sit back and wait for the meaning of a text to come to them, but work hard in order to create such meaning. Critical readers are not made overnight. Becoming a critical reader will take a lot of practice and patience. Depending on your current reading philosophy and experiences with reading, becoming a critical reader may require a significant change in your whole understanding of the reading process. The trade-off is worth it, however. By becoming a more critical and active reader, you will also become a better researcher and a better writer. Last but not least, you will enjoy reading and writing a whole lot more because you will become actively engaged in both.

One of my favorite passages describing the substance of critical and active reading comes from the introduction to their book *Ways of Reading* whose authors David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky write:



Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You make your mark on the book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simply a matter of hanging back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In fact, one of the difficult things about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them—doing their work, continuing their projects—and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda (1).

Notice that Bartholomae and Petrosky describe reading process in pro-active terms. Meaning of every text is "made," not received. Readers need to "push and shove" in order to create their own, unique content of every text they read. It is up the you as a reader to make the pages in front of you "speak" by talking with and against the text, by questioning and expanding it.

Critical reading, then, is a two-way process. As reader, you are not a consumer of words, waiting patiently for ideas from the printed page or a web-site to fill your head and make you smarter. Instead, as a critical reader, you need to interact with what you read, asking questions of the author, testing every assertion, fact, or idea, and extending the text by adding your own understanding of the subject and your own personal experiences to your reading.

The following are key features of the critical approach to reading:

- No text, however well written and authoritative, contains its own, pre-determined meaning.
- Readers must work hard to create meaning from every text.
- Critical readers interact with the texts they read by questioning them, responding to them, and expanding them, usually in writing.
- To create meaning, critical readers use a variety of approaches, strategies, and techniques which include applying their personal experiences and existing knowledge to the reading process.
- Critical readers seek actively out other texts, related to the topic of their investigation.

The following section is an examination of these claims about critical reading in more detail.

Texts Present Ideas, Not Absolute Truths

In order to understand the mechanisms and intellectual challenges of critical reading, we need to examine some of our deepest and long-lasting assumptions about reading. Perhaps the two most significant challenges facing anyone who wants to become a more active and analytical reader is understanding that printed texts doe not contain inarguable truths and learning to questions and talk back to those texts. Students in my writing classes often tell me that the biggest challenge they face in trying to become critical readers is getting away from the idea that they have to believe everything they read on a printed page. Years of schooling have taught many of us to believe that published texts present inarguable, almost absolute truths. The printed page has authority because, before publishing his or her work, every writer goes through a lengthy process of approval, review, revision, fact-checking, and so

on. Consequently, this theory goes, what gets published must be true. And if it is true, it must be taken at face value, not questioned, challenged, or extended in any way.

Perhaps, the ultimate authority among the readings materials encountered by college belongs to the textbook. As students, we all have had to read and almost memorize textbook chapters in order to pass an exam. We read textbooks "for information," summarizing their chapters, trying to find "the main points" and then reproducing these main points during exams. I have nothing against textbook as such, in fact, I am writing one right now. And it is certainly possible to read textbooks critically and actively. But, as I think about the challenges which many college students face trying to become active and critical readers, I come to the conclusion that the habit to read every text as if they were preparing for an exam on it, as if it was a source of unquestionable truth and knowledge prevents many from becoming active readers.

Treating texts as if they were sources of ultimate and unquestionable knowledge and truth represents the view of reading as consumption. According to this view, writers produce ideas and knowledge, and we, readers, consume them. Of course, sometimes we have to assume this stance and read for information or the "main point" of a text. But it is critical reading that allows us to create new ideas from what we read and to become independent and creative learners.

Critical reading is a collaboration between the reader and the writer. It offers readers the ability to be active participants in the construction of meaning of every text they read and to use that meaning for their own learning and self-fulfillment. Not even the best researched and written text is absolutely complete and finished. Granted, most fields of knowledge have texts which are called "definitive." Such texts usually represent our best current knowledge on their subjects. However, even the definitive works get revised over time and they are always open to questioning and different interpretations.

Reading is a Rhetorical Tool

To understand how the claim that every reader makes his or her meaning from texts works, it is necessary to examine what is know as the rhetorical theory of reading. The work that best describes and justifies the rhetorical reading theory is Douglas Brent‟s 1992 book Reading as Rhetorical Invention: Knowledge, Persuasion, and the Teaching of Research-Based Writing. I like to apply Brent‟s ideas to my discussions of critical reading because I think that they do a good job demystifying critical reading‟s main claims. Brent‟s theory of reading is a rhetorical device puts significant substance behind the somewhat abstract ideas of active and critical reading, explaining how the mechanisms of active interaction between readers and texts actually work.



Briefly explained, Brent treats reading not only as a vehicle for transmitting information and knowledge, but also as a means of persuasion. In fact, according to Brent, knowledge equals persuasion because, in his words, "Knowledge is not simply what one has been told. Knowledge is what one believes, what one accepts as being at least provisionally true." (xi). This short passage contains two assertions which are key to the understanding of mechanisms of critical reading. Firstly, notice that simply reading "for the main point" will not necessarily make you "believe" what you read. Surely, such reading can fill our heads with information, but will that information become our knowledge in a true sense, will we be persuaded by it, or will we simply memorize it to pass the test and forget it as soon as we pass it? Of course not! All of us can probably recall many instances in which we read a lot to pass a test only to forget, with relief, what we read as soon as we left the classroom where that test was held. The purpose of reading and research, then, is not to get as much as information out of a text as possible but to change and update one‟s system of beliefs on a given subject (Brent 55-57).

Brent further states: "The way we believe or disbelieve certain texts clearly varies from one individual to the next. If you present a text that is remotely controversial to a group of people, some will be convinced by it and some not, and those who are convinced will be convinced in different degrees. The task of a rhetoric of reading is to explain systematically how these differences arise—how people are persuaded differently by texts" (18).

Critical and active readers not only accept the possibility that the same texts will have different meanings for different people, but welcome this possibility as an inherent and indispensable feature of strong, engaged, and enjoyable reading process. To answer his own questions about what factors contribute to different readers‟ different interpretations of the same texts, Brent offers us the following principles that I have summarized from his book:

- Readers are guided by personal beliefs, assumptions, and pre-existing knowledge when interpreting texts. You can read more on the role of the reader‟s pre-existing knowledge in the construction of meaning later on in this chapter.
- Readers react differently to the logical proofs presented by the writers of texts.
- Readers react differently to emotional and ethical proofs presented by writers. For example, an emotional story told by a writer may resonate with one person more than with another because the first person lived through a similar experience and the second one did not, and so on.

The idea behind the rhetorical theory of reading is that when we read, we not only take in ideas, information, and facts, but instead we “update our view of the world.” You cannot force someone to update their worldview, and therefore, the purpose of writing is persuasion and the purpose of reading is being persuaded. Persuasion is possible only when the reader is actively engaged with the text and understands that much more than simple retrieval of information is at stake when reading.

One of the primary factors that influence our decision to accept or not to accept an argument is what Douglas Brent calls our “repertoire of experience, much of [which] is gained through prior interaction with texts” (56). What this means is that when we read a new text, we do not begin with a clean slate, an empty mind. However unfamiliar the topic of this new reading may seem to us, we approach it with a large baggage of previous knowledge, experiences, points of view, and so on. When an argument “comes in” into our minds from a text, this text, by itself, cannot change our view on the subject. Our prior opinions and knowledge about the topic of the text we are reading will necessarily “filter out” what is incompatible with those views (Brent 56-57). This, of course, does not mean that, as readers, we should persist in keeping our old ideas about everything and actively resist learning new things. Rather, it suggests that the reading process is an interaction between the ideas in the text in front of us and our own ideas and pre-conceptions about the subject of our reading. We do not always consciously measure what we read according to our existing systems of knowledge and beliefs, but we measure it nevertheless. Reading, according to Brent, is judgment, and, like in life where we do not always consciously examine and analyze the reasons for which we make various decisions, evaluating a text often happens automatically or subconsciously (59).

Applied to research writing, Brent‟s theory or reading means the following:

- The purpose of research is not simply to retrieve data, but to participate in a conversation about it. Simple summaries of sources is not research, and writers should be aiming for active interpretation of sources instead
- There is no such thing as an unbiased source. Writers make claims for personal reasons that critical readers need to learn to understand and evaluate.
- Feelings can be a source of shareable good reason for belief. Readers and writers need to use, judiciously, ethical and pathetic proofs in interpreting texts and in creating their own.
- Research is recursive. Critical readers and researchers never stop asking questions about their topic and never consider their research finished.

Active Readers Look for Connections Between Texts

Earlier on, I mentioned that one of the traits of active readers is their willingness to seek out other texts and people who may be able to help them in their research and learning. I find that for many beginning researchers and writers, the inability to seek out such connections often turns into a roadblock on their research route. Here is what I am talking about.

Recently, I asked my writing students to investigate some problem on campus and to propose a solution to it. I asked



them to use both primary (interviews, surveys, etc.) and secondary (library, Internet, etc.)

research. Conducting secondary research allows a writer to connect a local problem he or she is investigating and a local solution he or she is proposing with a national and even global context, and to see whether the local situation is typical or a-typical.

One group of students decided to investigate the issue of racial and ethnic diversity on our campus. The lack of diversity is a “hot” issue on our campus, and recently an institutional task force was created to investigate possible ways of making our university more diverse.

The students had no trouble designing research questions and finding people to interview and survey. Their subjects included students and faculty as well as the university vice-president who was changed with overseeing the work of the diversity task force. Overall, these authors have little trouble conducting and interpreting primary research that led them to conclude that, indeed, our campus is not diverse enough and that most students would like to see the situation change.

The next step these writers took was to look at the websites of some other schools similar in size and nature to ours, to see how our university compared on the issue of campus diversity with others. They were able to find some statistics on the numbers of minorities at other colleges and universities that allowed them to create a certain backdrop for their primary research that they had conducted earlier.

But good writing goes beyond the local situation. Good writing tries to connect the local and the national and the global. It tries to look beyond the surface of the problem, beyond simply comparing numbers and other statistics. It seeks to understand the roots of a problem and propose a solution based on a local and well as a global situation and research. The primary and secondary research conducted by these students was not allowing them to make that step from analyzing local data to understanding their problem in context. They needed some other type of research sources.

At that point, however, those writers hit an obstacle. How and where, they reasoned, would we find other secondary sources, such as books, journals, and websites, about the lack of diversity on our campus? The answer to that question was that, at this stage in their research and writing, they did not need to look for more sources about our local problem with the lack of diversity. They needed to look at diversity and ways to increase it as a national and global issue. They needed to generalize the problem and, instead of looking at a local example, to consider its implications for the issue they were studying overall. Such research would not only have allowed these writers to examine the problem as a whole but also to see how it was being solved in other places. This, in turn, might have helped them to propose a local solution.

Critical readers and researchers understand that it is not enough to look at the research question locally or narrowly. After conducting research and understanding their problem locally, or as it applies specifically to them, active researchers contextualize their investigation by seeking out texts and other sources which would allow them to see the big picture.

Sometimes, it is hard to understand how external texts which do not seem to talk directly about you can help you research and write about questions, problems, and issues in your own life. In her 2004 essay, “Developing ‘Interesting Thoughts’: Reading for Research,” writing teacher my former colleague Janette Martin tells a story of a student who was writing a paper about what it is like to be a collegiate athlete. The emerging theme in that paper was that of discipline and sacrifice required of student athletes. Simultaneously, that student was reading a chapter from the book by the French philosopher Michel Foucault called Discipline and Punish. Foucault‟s work is a study of the western penitentiary system, which, of course cannot be directly compared to experiences of a student athlete. At the same time, one of the leading themes in Foucault‟s work is discipline. Martin states that the student was able to see some connection between Foucault and her own life and use the reading for her research and writing (6). In addition to showing how related texts can be used to explore various aspects of the writer‟s own life, this example highlights the need to read texts critically and interpret them creatively. Such reading and research goes beyond simply comparing of facts and numbers and towards relating ideas and concepts with one another.

From Reading to Writing

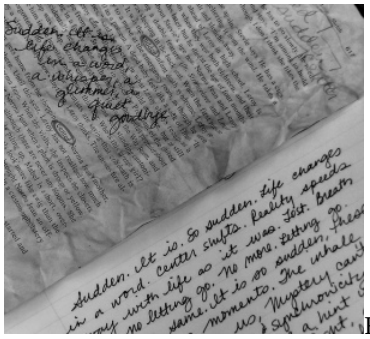
Reading and writing are the two essential tools of learning. Critical reading is not a process of passive consumption, but one of interaction and engagement between the reader and the text. Therefore, when reading critically and actively, it is important not only to take in the words on the page, but also to interpret and to reflect upon what you read through writing and discussing it with others.

Critical Readers Understand the Difference Between Reacting and Responding to A Text

As stated earlier in this chapter, actively responding to difficult texts, posing questions, and analyzing ideas presented in them is the key to successful reading. The goal of an active reader is to engage in a conversation with the text he or she is reading. In order to fulfill this goal, it is important to understand the difference between reacting to the text and responding to it.

Reacting to a text is often done on an emotional, rather than on an intellectual level. It is quick and shallow. For example, if we encounter a text that advances arguments with which we strongly disagree, it is natural to dismiss those ideas out of hand as not wrong and not worthy of our attention. Doing so would be reacting to the text based only on emotions and on our pre-set opinions about its arguments. It is easy to see that reacting in this way does not take the reader any closer to understanding the text. A wall of disagreement that existed between the reader and the text before the reading continues to exist after the reading.

Responding to a text, on the other hand, requires a careful study of the ideas presented and arguments advanced in it. Critical readers who possess this skill are not willing to simply reject or accept the arguments presented in the text after the first reading right away. To continue with our example from the preceding paragraph, a reader who responds to a controversial text rather than reacting to it might apply several of the following strategies before forming and expressing an opinion about that text.



- Read the text several times, taking notes, asking questions, and underlining key places.
- Study why the author of the text advances ideas, arguments, and convictions, so different from the reader‟s own. For example, is the text‟s author advancing an agenda of some social, political, religious, or economic group of which he or she is a member?
- Study the purpose and the intended audience of the text.
- Study the history of the argument presented in the text as much as possible. For example, modern texts on highly controversial issues such as the death penalty, abortion, or euthanasia often use past events, court cases, and other evidence to advance their claims. Knowing the history of the problem will help you to construct meaning of a difficult text.
- Study the social, political, and intellectual context in which the text was written. Good writers use social conditions to advance controversial ideas. Compare the context in which the text was written to the one in which it is read. For example, have social conditions changed, thus invalidating the argument or making it stronger?
- Consider the author’s (and your own) previous knowledge of the issue at the center of the text and your experiences with it. How might such knowledge or experience have influenced your reception of the argument?

Taking all these steps will help you to move away from simply reacting to a text and towards constructing informed and critical response to it.

To better understand the key differences between reacting and responding and between binary and nuanced reading, consider the table below.

Reacting to Texts	Responding to Texts
• Works on an emotional level rather than an intellectual level • Prevents readers from studying purposes, intended audiences, and contexts of texts they are working with • Fails to establish dialog between the reader and the text by locking the reader in his or her pre-existing opinion about the argument	• Works on an intellectual and emotional level by asking the readers to use all three rhetorical appeals in reading and writing about the text • Allows for careful study of the text's rhetorical aspects • Establishes dialog among the reader, text, and other readers by allowing all sides to reconsider existing positions and opinions
Binary Reading	**Nuanced Reading**
• Provides only "agree or disagree" answers • Does not allow for an understanding of complex arguments • Prevents the reader from a true rhetorical engagement with the text	• Allows for a deep and detailed understanding of complex texts • Takes into account "gray areas" of complex arguments • Establishes rhetorical engagement between the reader and the text

Critical Readers Resist Oversimplified Binary Responses

Critical readers learn to avoid simple "agree-disagree" responses to complex texts. Such way of thinking and arguing is often called "binary" because is allows only two answers to every statement and every questions. But the world of ideas is complex and, a much more nuanced approach is needed when dealing with complex arguments.

When you are asked to "critique" a text, which readers are often asked to do, it does not mean that you have to "criticize" it and reject its argument out of hand. What you are being asked to do instead is to carefully evaluate and analyze the text‟s ideas, to understand how and why they are constructed and presented, and only then develop a response to that text. Not every text asks for an outright agreement or disagreement. Sometimes, we as readers are not in a position to either simply support an argument or reject it. What we can do in such cases, though, is to learn more about the text‟s arguments by carefully considering all of their aspects and to construct a nuanced, sophisticated response to them. After you have done all that, it will still be possible to disagree with the arguments presented in the reading, but your opinion about the text will be much more informed and nuanced than if you have taken the binary approach from the start.

Two Sample Student Responses

To illustrate the principles laid out in this section, consider the following two reading responses. Both texts respond to a very well known piece, "A Letter from Birmingham Jail," by Martin Luther King, Jr. In the letter, King responds to criticism from other clergymen who had called his methods of civil rights struggle "unwise and untimely." Both student writers were given the same response prompt:

> "After reading King's piece several times and with a pen or pencil in hand, consider what shapes King‟s letter. Specifically, what rhetorical strategies is he using to achieve a persuasive effect on his readers? In making your decisions, consider such factors as background information that he gives, ways in which he addresses his immediate audience, and others. Remember that your goal is to explore King‟s text, thus enabling you to understand his rhetorical strategies better."

Student "A"

Martin Luther King Jr's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" is a very powerful text. At the time when minorities in America were silenced and persecuted, King had the courage to lead his people in the struggle for equality. After being jailed in Birmingham, Alabama, King wrote a letter to his "fellow clergymen" describing his struggle for civil rights. In the letter, King recounts a brief history of that struggle and rejects the accusation that it is "unwise and untimely." Overall, I think that King's letter is a very rhetorically effective text, one that greatly helped Americans to understand the civil rights movement.

Student "B"

King begins his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by addressing it to his "fellow clergymen." Thus, he immediately sets the tone of inclusion rather than exclusion. By using the word "fellow" in the address, I think he is trying to do two things. First of all, he

presents himself as a colleague and a spiritual brother of his audience. That, in effect, says “you can trust me,” “I am one of your kind.” Secondly, by addressing his readers in that way, King suggests that everyone, even those Americans who are not directly involved in the struggle for civil rights, should be concerned with it. Hence the word “fellow.” King’s opening almost invokes the phrase “My fellow Americans” or “My fellow citizens” used so often by American Presidents when they address the nation.

King then proceeds to give a brief background of his actions as a civil rights leader. As I read this part of the letter, I was wondering whether his readers would really have not known what he had accomplished as a civil rights leader. Then I realized that perhaps he gives all that background information as a rhetorical move. His immediate goal is to keep reminding his readers about his activities. His ultimate goal is to show to his audience that his actions were non-violent but peaceful. In reading this passage by King, I remembered once again that it is important not to assume that your audience knows anything about the subject of the writing. I will try to use this strategy more in my own papers.

In the middle of the letter, King states: “The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation.” This sentence looks like a thesis statement and I wonder why he did not place it towards the beginning of the text, to get his point across right away. After thinking about this for a few minutes and rereading several pages from our class textbook, I think he leaves his “thesis” till later in his piece because he is facing a notso-friendly (if not hostile) audience. Delaying the thesis and laying out some background information and evidence first helps a writer to prepare his or her audience for the coming argument. That is another strategy I should probably use more often in my own writing, depending on the audience I am facing.

Reflecting on the Responses

To be sure, much more can be said about King‟s letter than either of these writers have said. However, these two responses allow us to see two dramatically different approaches to reading. After studying both responses, consider the questions below.

- Which response fulfills the goals set in the prompt better and why?
- Which responses shows a deeper understanding of the texts by the reader and why?
- Which writer does a better job at avoiding binary thinking and creating a sophisticated reading of King‟s text and why?
- Which writer is more likely to use the results of the reading in his or her own writing in the future and why?
- Which writer leaves room for response to his text by others and why?

Critical Readers Do not Read Alone and in Silence

One of the key principles of critical reading is that active readers do not read silently and by themselves. By this I mean that they take notes and write about what they read. They also discuss the texts they are working with, with others and compare their own interpretations of those texts with the interpretations constructed by their colleagues.

 As a college student, you are probably used to taking notes of what you read. When I was in college, my favorite way of preparing for a test was reading a chapter or two from my textbook, then closing the book, then trying to summarize what I have read on a piece of paper. I tried to get the main points of the chapters down and the explanations and proofs that the textbooks‟ authors used. Sometimes, I wrote a summary of every chapter in the textbook and then studied for the test from those summaries rather than from the textbook itself. I am sure you have favorite methods of note taking and studying from your notes, too.

But now it strikes me that what I did with those notes was not critical reading. I simply summarized my textbooks in a more concise, manageable form and then tried to memorize those summaries before the test. I did not take my reading of the textbooks any further than what was already on their pages. Reading for information and trying to extract the main points, I did not talk back to the texts, did not question them, and did not try to extend the knowledge which they offered in any way. I also did not try to

connect my reading with my personal experiences or pre-existing knowledge in any way. I also read in silence, without exchanging ideas with other readers of the same texts. Of course, my reading strategies and techniques were dictated by my goal, which was to pass the test.

Critical reading has other goals, one of which is entering an on-going intellectual exchange. Therefore it demands different reading strategies, approaches, and techniques. One of these new approaches is not reading in silence and alone. Instead, critical readers read with a pen or pencil in hand. They also discuss what they read with others.

Strategies for Connecting Reading and Writing

If you want to become a critical reader, you need to get into a habit of writing as you read. You also need to understand that complex texts cannot be read just once. Instead, they require multiple readings, the first of which may be a more general one during which you get acquainted with the ideas presented in the text, its structure and style. During the second and any subsequent readings, however, you will need to write, and write a lot. The following are some critical reading and writing techniques which active readers employ as they work to create meanings from texts they read.

Underline Interesting and Important Places in the Text

Underline words, sentences, and passages that stand out, for whatever reason. Underline the key arguments that you believe the author of the text is making as well as any evidence, examples, and stories that seem interesting or important. Don‟t be afraid to “get it wrong.” There is no right or wrong here. The places in the text that you underline may be the same or different from those noticed by your classmates, and this difference of interpretation is the essence of critical reading.

Take Notes

Take notes on the margins. If you do not want to write on your book or journal, attach post-it notes with your comments to the text. Do not be afraid to write too much. This is the stage of the reading process during which you are actively making meaning. Writing about what you read is the best way to make sense of it, especially, if the text is difficult.

Do not be afraid to write too much. This is the stage of the reading process during which you are actively making meaning. Writing about what you read will help you not only to remember the argument which the author of the text is trying to advance (less important for critical reading), but to create your own interpretations of the text you are reading (more important).

Here are some things you can do in your comments

- Ask questions.
- Agree or disagree with the author.
- Question the evidence presented in the text
- Offer counter-evidence
- Offer additional evidence, examples, stories, and so on that support the author‟s argument
- Mention other texts which advance the same or similar arguments
- Mention personal experiences that enhance your reading of the text

Write Exploratory Responses

Write extended responses to readings. Writing students are often asked to write one or two page exploratory responses to readings, but they are not always clear on the purpose of these responses and on how to approach writing them. By writing reading responses, you are continuing the important work of critical reading which you began when you underlined interesting passages and took notes on the margins. You are extending the meaning of the text by creating your own commentary to it and perhaps even branching off into creating your own argument inspired by your reading. Your teacher may give you a writing prompt, or ask you to come up with your own topic for a response. In either case, realize that reading responses are supposed to be exploratory, designed to help you delve deeper into the text you are reading than note-taking or underlining will allow.

When writing extended responses to the readings, it is important to keep one thing in mind, and that is their purpose. The purpose of these exploratory responses, which are often rather informal, is not to produce a complete argument, with an introduction, thesis, body, and conclusion. It is not to impress your classmates and your teacher with “big” words and complex sentences. On the contrary, it is to help you understand the text you are working with at a deeper level. The verb “explore” means to investigate something by looking at it more closely. Investigators get leads, some of which are fruitful and useful and some of which are dead-

ends. As you investigate and create the meaning of the text you are working with, do not be afraid to take different directions with your reading response. In fact, it is important resist the urge to make conclusions or think that you have found out everything about your reading. When it comes to exploratory reading responses, lack of closure and presence of more leads at the end of the piece is usually a good thing. Of course, you should always check with your teacher for standards and format of reading responses.

Try the following guidelines to write a successful response to a reading:

Remember your goal—exploration. The purpose of writing a response is to construct the meaning of a difficult text. It is not to get the job done as quickly as possible and in as few words as possible.

As you write, "talk back to the text." Make comments, ask questions, and elaborate on complex thoughts. This part of the writing becomes much easier if, prior to writing your response, you had read the assignment with a pen in hand and marked important places in the reading.

If your teacher provides a response prompt, make sure you understand it. Then try to answer the questions in the prompt to the best of your ability. While you are doing that, do not be afraid of bringing in related texts, examples, or experiences. Active reading is about making connections, and your readers will appreciate your work because it will help them understand the text better.

While your primary goal is exploration and questioning, make sure that others can understand your response. While it is OK to be informal in your response, make every effort to write in a clear, error-free language.

Involve your audience in the discussion of the reading by asking questions, expressing opinions, and connecting to responses made by others.

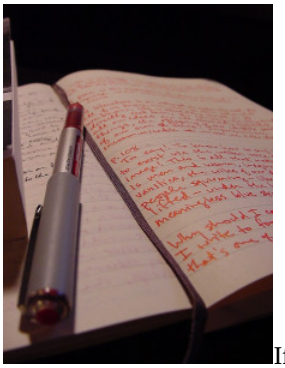
Use Reading for Invention

Use reading and your responses to start your own formal writing projects. Reading is a powerful invention tool. While preparing to start a new writing project, go back to the readings you have completed and your responses to those readings in search for possible topics and ideas. Also look through responses your classmates gave to your ideas about the text. Another excellent way to start your own writing projects and to begin research for them is to look through the list of references and sources at the end of the reading that you are working with. They can provide excellent topic-generating and research leads.

Keep a Double-Entry Journal

Many writers like double-entry journals because they allow us to make that leap from summary of a source to interpretation and persuasion. To start a double-entry journal, divide a page into two columns. As you read, in the left column write down interesting and important words, sentences, quotations, and passages from the text. In the right column, right your reaction and responses to them. Be as formal or informal as you want. Record words, passages, and ideas from the text that you find useful for your paper, interesting, or, in any, way striking or unusual. Quote or summarize in full, accurately, and fairly. In the right-hand side column, ask the kinds of questions and provide the kinds of responses that will later enable you to create an original reading of the text you are working with and use that reading to create your own paper.

Don't Give Up



If the text you are reading seems too complicated or "boring," that might mean that you have not attacked it aggressively and critically enough. Complex texts are the ones worth pursuing and investigating because they present the most interesting ideas. Critical reading is a liberating practice because you do not have to worry about "getting it right." As long

as you make an effort to engage with the text and as long as you are willing to work hard on creating a meaning out of what you read, the interpretation of the text you are working with will be valid.

IMPORTANT: So far, we have established that no pre-existing meaning is possible in written texts and that critical and active readers work hard to create such meaning. We have also established that interpretations differ from reader to reader and that there is no "right" or "wrong" during the critical reading process. So, you may ask, does this mean that any reading of a text that I create will be a valid and persuasive one? With the exception of the most outlandish and purposely-irrelevant readings that have nothing to do with the sources text, the answer is "yes." However, remember that reading and interpreting texts, as well as sharing your interpretations with others are rhetorical acts. First of all, in order to learn something from your critical reading experience, you, the reader, need to be persuaded by your own reading of the text. Secondly, for your reading to be accepted by others, they need to be persuaded by it, too. It does not mean, however, that in order to make your reading of a text persuasive, you simply have to find "proof" in the text for your point of view. Doing that would mean reverting to reading "for the main point," reading as consumption. Critical reading, on the other hand, requires a different approach. One of the components of this approach is the use of personal experiences, examples, stories, and knowledge for interpretive and persuasive purposes. This is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

One Critical Reader's Path to Creating a Meaning: A Case Study

Earlier on in this chapter, we discussed the importance of using your existing knowledge and prior experience to create new meaning out of unfamiliar and difficult texts. In this section, I'd like to offer you one student writer‟s account of his meaningmaking process. Before I do that, however, it is important for me to tell you a little about the class and the kinds of reading and writing assignments that its members worked on.

All the writing projects offered to the members of the class were promoted by readings, and students were expected to actively develop their own ideas and provide their own readings of assigned texts in their essays. The main text for the class was the anthology *Ways of Reading* edited by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky that contains challenging and complex texts. Like for most of his classmates, this approach to reading and writing was new to Alex who had told me earlier that he was used to reading "for information" or "for the main point."

In preparation for the first writing project, the class read Adrienne Rich's essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision." In her essay, Rich offers a moving account of her journey to becoming a writer. She makes the case for constantly "revising" one‟s life in the light of all new events and experiences. Rich blends voices and genres throughout the essay, using personal narrative, academic argument, and even poetry. As a result, Rich creates the kind of personal-public argument which, on the one hand, highlights her own life, and on the other, illustrates that her Rich's life is typical for her time and her environment and that her readers can also learn from her experiences.

To many beginning readers and writers, who are used to a neat separation of "personal" and "academic" argument, such a blend of genres and styles may seem odd. In fact, on of the challenges that many of the students in the class faced was understanding why Rich chooses to blend personal writing with academic and what rhetorical effects she achieves by doing so. To After writing informal responses to the essay and discussing it in class, the students were offered the following writing assignment:

> Although Rich tells a story of her own, she does so to provide an illustration of an even larger story—one about what it means to be a woman and a writer. Tell a story of your own about the ways you might be said to have been named or shaped or positioned by an established or powerful culture. Like Rich (and perhaps with similar hesitation), use your own experience as an illustration of both your own situation and the situation of people like you. You should imagine that the assignment is a way for you to use (and put to the test) some of Rich's terms, words like "re-vision," "renaming," and "structure." (Bartholomae and Petrosky 648).

Notice that this assignment does not ask students to simply analyze Rich's essay, to dissect its argument or "main points." Instead, writers are asked to work with their own experiences and events of their own lives in order to provide a reading of Rich which is affected and informed by the writers‟ own lives and own knowledge of life. This is critical reading in action when a reader creates his or her one's own meaning of a complex text by reflecting on the relationship between the content of that text and one‟s own life.

In response to the assignment, one of the class members, Alex Cimino-Hurt, wrote a paper that re-examined and reevaluated his upbringing and how those factors have influenced his political and social views. In particular, Alex was trying to reconcile his own and his parents‟ anti-war views with the fact than a close relative of his was fighting in the war in Iraq as he worked on the paper. Alex used such terms as “revision” and “hesitation” to develop his piece.

Like most other writers in the class, initially Alex seemed a little puzzled, even confused by the requirement to read someone else‟s text through the prism of his own life and his own experiences. However, as he drafted, revised, and discussed his writing with his classmates and his instructor, the new approach to reading and writing became clearer to him. After finishing the paper, Alex commented on his reading strategies and techniques and on what he learned about critical reading during the project:

On Previous Reading Habits and Techniques

Previously when working on any project whether it be for a History, English, or any other class that involved reading and research, there was a certain amount of minimalism. As a student I tried to balance the least amount of effort with the best grade. I distinctly remember that before, being taught to skim over writing and reading so that I found “main” points and highlighted them. The value of thoroughly reading a piece was not taught because all that was needed was a shallow interpretation of whatever information that was provided followed by a regurgitation. [Critical reading] provided a dramatic difference in perspective and helped me learn to not only dissect the meaning of a piece, but also to see why the writer is using certain techniques or how the reading applies to my life.

On Developing Critical Reading Strategies

When reading critically I found that the most important thing for me was to set aside a block of time in which I wouldn’t have to hurry my reading or skip parts to “Get the gist of it”. Developing an eye for…detail came in two ways. The first method is to read the text several times, and the second is to discuss it with my classmates and my teacher. It quickly became clear to me that the more I read a certain piece, the more I got from it as I became more comfortable with the prose and writing style. With respect to the second way, there is always something that you can miss and there is always a different perspective that can be brought to the table by either the teacher or a classmate.

On Reading Rich’s Essay

In reading Adrienne Rich’s essay, the problem for me wasn’t necessarily relating to her work but instead just finding the right perspective from which to read it. I was raised in a very open family so being able to relate to others was learned early in my life. Once I was able to parallel my perspective to hers, it was just a matter of composing my own story. Mine was my liberalism in conservative environments—the fact that frustrates me sometimes. I felt that her struggle frustrated her, too. By using quotations from her work, I was able to show my own situation to my readers.

On Writing the Paper

The process that I went through to write an essay consisted of three stages. During the first stage, I wrote down every coherent idea I had for the essay as well as a few incoherent ones. This helped me create a lot of material to work with. While this initial material doesn‟t always have direction it provides a foundation for writing. The second stage involved rereading Rich‟s essay and deciding which parts of it might be relevant to my own story. Looking at my own life and at Rich‟s work together helped me consolidate my paper. The third and final stage involved taking what is left and refining the style of the paper and taking care of the mechanics.

Advice for Critical Readers

The first key to being a critical and active reader is to find something in the piece that interests, bothers, encourages, or just confuses you. Use this to drive your analysis. Remember there is no such thing as a boring essay, only a boring reader.

- Reading something once is never enough so reading it quickly before class just won’t cut it. Read it once to get your brain comfortable with the work, then read it again and actually try to understand what’s going on in it. You can’t read it too many times.
- Ask questions. It seems like a simple suggestion but if you never ask questions you’ll never get any answers. So, while you‟re reading, think of questions and just write them down on a piece of paper lest you forget them after about a line and a half of reading.

Conclusion

Reading and writing are rhetorical processes, and one does not exist without the other. The goal of a good writer is to engage his or her readers into a dialog presented in the piece of writing. Similarly, the goal of a critical and active reader is to participate in that dialog and to have something to say back to the writer and to others. Writing leads to reading and reading leads to writing. We write because we have something to say and we read because we are interested in ideas of others.

Reading what others have to say and responding to them help us make that all-important transition from simply having opinions about something to having ideas. Opinions are often over-simplified and fixed. They are not very useful because, if different people have different opinions that they are not willing to change or adjust, such people cannot work or think together. Ideas, on the other hand, are ever evolving, fluid, and flexible. Our ideas are informed and shaped by our interactions with others, both in person and through written texts. In a world where thought and action count, it is not enough to simply "agree to disagree." Reading and writing, used together, allow us to discuss complex and difficult issues with others, to persuade and be persuaded, and, most importantly, to act.

Reading and writing are inextricably connected, and I hope that this chapter has shown you ways to use reading to inform and enrich you writing and your learning in general. The key to becoming an active, critical, and interested reader is the development of varied and effective reading techniques and strategies. I'd like to close this chapter with the words from the writer Alex Cimino-Hurt: "Being able to read critically is important no matter what you plan on doing with your career or life because it allows you to understand the world around you."

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2.1.1.6: Elements of the Rhetorical Situation

When composing, every writer must take into account the conditions under which the writing is produced and will be read. It is customary to represent the three key elements of the rhetorical situation as a triangle of writer, reader, and text, or, as they are represented on this image, as "communicator," "audience," and "message."

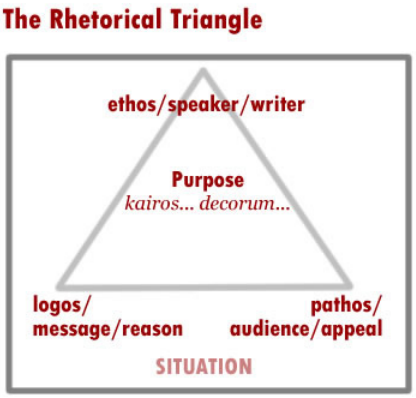


Figure 1.1 *- Source: St. Edward's University*

The three elements of the rhetorical situation are in a constant and dynamic interrelation. All three are also necessary for communication through writing to take place. For example, if the writer is taken out of this equation, the text will not be created. Similarly, eliminating the text itself will leave us with the reader and writer, but without any means of conveying ideas between them, and so on.

Moreover, changing on or more characteristics of any of the elements depicted in the figure above will change the other elements as well. For example, with the change in the beliefs and values of the audience, the message will also likely change to accommodate those new beliefs, and so on.

In his discussion of rhetoric, Aristotle states that writing's primary purpose is persuasion. Other ancient rhetoricians' theories expand the scope of rhetoric by adding new definitions, purposes, and methods. For example, another Greek philosopher and rhetorician Plato saw rhetoric as a means of discovering the truth, including personal truth, through dialog and discussion. According to Plato, rhetoric can be directed outward (at readers or listeners), or inward (at the writer him or herself). In the latter case, the purpose of rhetoric is to help the author discover something important about his or her own experience and life.

The third major rhetorical school of Ancient Greece whose views have profoundly influenced our understanding of rhetoric were the Sophists. The Sophists were teachers of rhetoric for hire. The primary goal of their activities was to teach skills and strategies for effective speaking and writing. Many Sophists claimed that they could make anyone into an effective rhetorician. In their most extreme variety, Sophistic rhetoric claims that virtually anything could be proven if the rhetorician has the right skills. The legacy of Sophistic rhetoric is controversial. Some scholars, including Plato himself, have accused the Sophists of bending ethical standards in order to achieve their goals, while others have praised them for promoting democracy and civic participation through argumentative discourse.

What do these various definitions of rhetoric have to do with research writing? Everything!

If you have ever had trouble with a writing assignment, chances are it was because you could not figure out the assignment's purpose. Or, perhaps you did not understand very well whom your writing was supposed to appeal to. It is hard to commit to purposeless writing done for no one in particular.

Research is not a very useful activity if it is done for its own sake. If you think of a situation in your own life where you had to do any kind of research, you probably had a purpose that the research helped you to accomplish. You could, for example, have been considering buying a car and wanted to know which make and model would suite you best. Or, you could have been looking for an apartment to rent and wanted to get the best deal for your money. Or, perhaps your family was planning a vacation and researched

the best deals on hotels, airfares, and rental cars. Even in these simple examples of research that are far simpler than research most writers conduct, you as a researcher were guided by some overriding purpose. You researched because you had a purpose to accomplish.

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Rhetorical Analysis

We have heard that “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” but, in fact, we do it all the time. Daily we find ourselves in situations where we are forced to make snap judgments. Each day we meet different people, encounter unfamiliar situations, and see media that asks us to do, think, buy, and act in all sorts of ways.

In fact, our saturation in media and its images is one of the reasons why learning to do rhetorical analysis is so important. The more we know about how to analyze situations and draw informed conclusions, the better we can become about making savvy judgments about the people, situations, and media we encounter.

Rhetorical Analysis is a high-order critical thinking skill. It takes practice to become effective at formal and intentional analysis of text and media. An ***analysis*** breaks a subject apart to study it closely, and from this inspection, ideas for writing emerge. When writing assignments call on you to analyze, they require you to identify the parts of the subject (parts of an ad, parts of a short story, parts of Hamlet’s character), and then show how these parts fit or don’t fit together to create some larger effect or meaning. Your interpretation of how these parts fit together constitutes your claim or thesis, and the task of your essay is then to present an argument defending your interpretation as a valid or plausible one to make. Our biggest bit of advice about analysis is to don't try to do it all in your head. Analysis works best when you put all the cards on the table, so to

speak. Identify and isolate the parts of your analysis, and record important features and characteristics of each one. As patterns emerge, you sort and connect these parts in meaningful ways.. The critical reading skills you are developing–like differentiating fact from opinion and making inferences–will help you become a more savvy consumer and a more discerning citizen.



Figure: Image from Pixabay

Facts versus Opinions

Facts

Facts are statements that can be definitely proven using objective data. The statement that is a fact is absolutely valid. In other words, the statement can be pronounced as true or false. For example, 2 + 2 = 4. This expression identifies a true statement, or a fact, because it can be proved with objective data.

Opinions

Opinions are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions. Experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience; this credibility is sometimes called “ethos” and is one way that we make our arguments persuasive. For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums, and you seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should they offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa. In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

Media and Rhetoric

Media is one of the most important places where this kind of analysis needs to happen. *Rhetoric*—the way we use language and images to persuade—is what makes media work. Think of all the media you see and hear every day: Twitter, television shows, web pages, billboards, text messages, podcasts, and more. Media is constantly asking you to buy something, act in some way, believe

something to be true, or interact with others in a specific manner. Understanding rhetorical messages is essential to help us become informed consumers, but it also helps evaluate the ethics of messages, how they affect us personally, and how they affect society.

Take, for example, a commercial for men's deodorant that tells you that you'll be irresistible to women if you use their product. This campaign doesn't just ask you to buy the product, though. It also asks you to trust the company's credibility, or ethos, and to believe the messages they send about how men and women interact, about sexuality, and about what constitutes a healthy body. You have to decide whether or not you will choose to buy the product and how you will choose to respond to the messages that the commercial sends.

Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy.

Rhetoric as Social Influence

Our worlds are full of these kinds of social influences. As we interact with other people and with media, we are continually creating and interpreting rhetoric. In the same way that you decide how to process, analyze or ignore these messages, you create them. You probably think about what your clothing will communicate as you go to a job interview or get ready for a date. You are use rhetoric when trying to persuade your parents to send you money or your friends to see the movie that interests you. When you post to your blog or favorite social media app, you are using rhetoric.

Most of our actions are persuasive in nature. What we choose to wear (tennis shoes vs. flip flops), where we shop (Whole Foods Market vs. Wal-Mart), what we eat (organic vs. fast food), or even the way we send information (snail mail vs. text message) can work to persuade others.

Chances are you have grown up learning to interpret and analyze these types of rhetoric. They become so commonplace that we don't realize how often and how quickly we are able to perform this kind of rhetorical analysis. When your teacher walked in on the first day of class, you probably didn't think to yourself, "I think I'll do some rhetorical analysis on her clothing and draw some conclusions about what kind of personality she might have and whether I think I'll like her." And, yet, you probably were able to come up with some conclusions based on the evidence you had.

However, when this same teacher hands you an advertisement, photograph or article and asks you to write a rhetorical analysis of it, you might have been baffled or felt a little overwhelmed. The good news is that many of the analytical processes that you already use to interpret the rhetoric around you are the same ones that you'll use for these assignments.

Exercise 1

- Watch the *Mad Men* advertising pitch for "The Kodak Carousel," "Mad Men - It's not a slide projector, or a wheel... it's a Carousel" by SpeechCoachLA, and think about the way the advertisers use images and language to persuade…this is rhetoric!
- Answer the following questions in a file/document:
  1. What is it about the advertising pitch that is supposed to connect with the public and get them to buy the product, in this case the Kodak Carousel?
  2. What is it about nostalgia (Don Draper said in Greek it means "the pain of an old wound") that is more powerful than memory?
  3. Is the advertising pitch by Don Draper effective at persuading the public? Why or why not?

You will be graded on the following criteria:

Rhetorical Analysis and Media				
Criteria				
Describe an author's point of view and tone				
Analyze an author's effectiveness in achieving intended purpose				
Explains why advertising pitch will appeal to consumer				
Explains what it is about nostalgia that is more powerful than memory				
Explains why advertising pitch is or is not effective at persuasion				

Exercise 2: Further study

1. Download Backpacks vs Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis.
2. Annotate the text.
3. Answer the following questions in a document/file:
    1. What are the implications of rhetorical analysis? (p. 3, p. 46)
    2. What is the "rhetorical situation"? (p. 5, p.48)
    3. What is the argument in rhetorical analysis? (p. 9, p. 52)
    4. What does context have to do with Rhetorical Analysis? (p.12, p.55)
    5. Why is rhetorical analysis important in college? (p.14, p.57)
    6. What are examples of rhetoric that you see and hear on a daily basis?
    7. What are some ways that you create rhetoric?

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Reading and Rhetorical Context

We have looked at the use of rhetoric from the viewpoint of a writer. Consider how the same elements hold true from the viewpoint as a reader.

As a reader, pay attention to these factors that shaped the document. Consider:

- What do I know about the **author**, just by reading this text? How does the author's experience or education shape the reading?
- What do I know about the **goals** for this work, just by reading this text? How do these goals influence what actually appears in the text?
- What do I know about the **intended audience** for this work? Am I a member of that intended audience?

In the following video, see how reading can literally "change your brain" to help with learning:



Video 2.1.1.8.1

Reading Can Change Your Brain! Authored by: Seeker. *All Rights Reserved. Standard YouTube license.*

Critical Reading

Life presents us with a variety of reading situations, which demand different reading strategies and techniques. Sometimes, it is important to be as efficient as possible and read purely for information or "the main point." At other times, it is important to just "let go" and turn the pages reading a good story although this sometimes means not thinking deeply about the story you are reading. At the heart of writing and research, however, lies the kind of reading known as critical reading. The critical examination of sources is what makes their use in research possible and what allows writers to create rhetorically effective and engaging texts.

Critical readers are able to interact with the texts they read through carefully listening, writing, conversation, and questioning. They do not sit back and wait for the meaning of a text to come to them; instead, they work hard in order to create such meaning. Critical readers are not made overnight. Becoming a critical reader takes a lot of practice and patience. Depending on your current reading philosophy and experiences with reading, becoming a critical reader may require a significant change in your whole understanding of the reading process. The trade-off is worth it, however. By becoming a more critical and active reader, you will also become a better researcher and a better writer. Last but not least, you will enjoy reading and writing a whole lot more because you will become actively engaged in both.

Critical reading, then, is a two-way process. As reader, you are not a consumer of words, waiting patiently for ideas from the printed page or a web-site to fill your head and make you smarter. Instead, as a critical reader, you will interact with what you read, asking questions of the author, testing every assertion, fact, or idea, and extending the text by adding your own understanding of the subject and your own personal experiences.

The idea behind the rhetorical theory of reading is that when we read, we not only take in ideas, information, and facts, but in the process we also "update our view of the world." This is what it means to be a monitoring citizen. You cannot force someone to update his or her worldview; therefore, the purpose of writing is persuasion, and the purpose of reading is to be persuaded. Persuasion is possible only when the reader is actively engaged with the text and understands that much more than simple retrieval of information is at stake when reading.

Key features of the critical approach to reading:

- No text, however skillfully written or authoritative, contains its own, pre-determined meaning. Audiences bring their education, situated knowledge, and experience to bear on texts in order to better understand their meanings.
- Readers must work hard to create meaning from every text. All complex texts contain surface meaning and subtext. Often, readers have to think of the bigger picture in making sense of how a subject can influence broader culture.
- Critical readers interact with the texts that they read by questioning them, responding to them, and expanding them, usually in writing.
- Critical readers actively search for related texts to place these works in conversation with each other to advance important ideas. Consider how subjects from your other courses and experiences connect to the sources you are reading.

Advice for Critical Readers

The first key to being a critical and active reader is to find something in the piece that interests, bothers, encourages, or just confuses you. Use this to drive your analysis.

- Reading something once is never enough, so reading it quickly before class just won't cut it. Read it once to get your brain comfortable with the work; then read it again and actually try to understand what's going on in it.
- Annotate the text while you read. Annotation is a key reading-writing activity. Writing while you read allows you to have a conversation with the text. It keeps your brain active while you read, it clarifies questions that you might want to bring to class, and it gives you a place to start your writing because you've already thought about it. We cannot overstate the importance of annotation while reading. There are a number of ways to annotate, and strategies for that are explained below.
- Ask questions. It seems like a simple suggestion, but if you never ask questions you'll never get any answers. So, while you're reading, think of questions and just write them down on a piece of paper lest you forget them.

Evaluating Information with Critical Thinking

Evaluating information can be one of the most complex tasks you will be faced with in college. But if you utilize the following four strategies, you will be well on your way to success:

- Read to understand, by using text coding
- Examine arguments
- Clarify thinking
- Cultivate "habits of mind"

1. Read for Understanding Using Text Coding

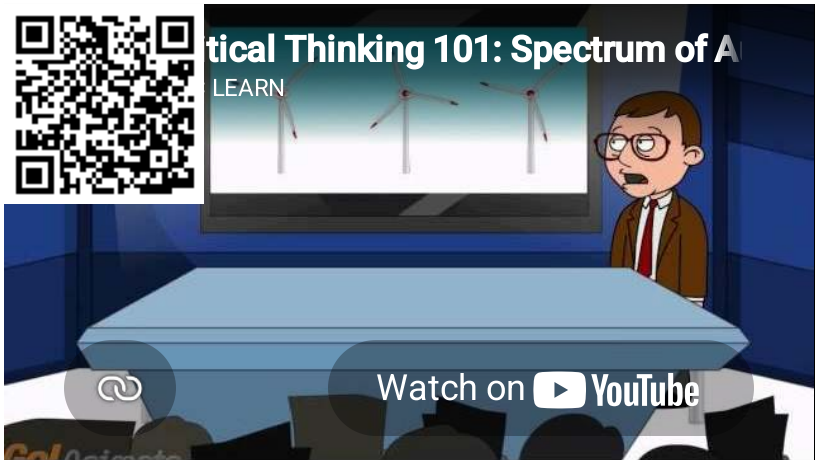
When you read and take notes, use the **text coding strategy**. Text coding is a way of tracking your thinking while reading. It entails marking the text and recording what you are thinking either in the margins or perhaps on Post-it notes (if your copy of the text is from the library or rented). As you make connections and ask questions in response to what you read, monitor your comprehension and enhance your long-term understanding of the material.

With text coding, mark important arguments and key facts. Indicate where you agree and disagree or have further questions. You don't necessarily need to read every word, but make sure you understand the concepts or the intentions behind what is written. Feel free to develop your own shorthand style when reading or taking notes. The following are a few options to consider using while coding text.

Shorthand	Meaning
!	Important
L	Learned something new
!	Big idea surfaced
*	Interesting or important fact
?	Dig deeper
✓	Agree
≠	Disagree

2. Examine Arguments

When you examine arguments or claims that an author, speaker, or other source is making, your goal is to identify and examine the hard facts. You can use the **spectrum of authority strategy** for this purpose. The spectrum of authority strategy assists you in identifying the "hot" end of an argument—feelings, beliefs, cultural influences, and societal influences—and the "cold" end of an argument—scientific influences. The following video explains this strategy.



Video **2.1.1.8.1**

Critical Thinking: Spectrum of Authority. Authored by:UBC Learn. *All Rights Reserved.Standard YouTube license.*

3. Clarify Thinking

When you use critical thinking to evaluate information, you need to clarify your thinking to yourself and, maybe, to others. Doing this well is mainly a process of asking and answering probing questions, such as the logic questions discussed earlier in this chapter. Design your questions to fit your needs, but be sure to cover adequate ground. What is the purpose? What question are we trying to answer? What point of view is being expressed? What assumptions are we, or others, making? What are the facts and data we know, and how do we know them? What are the concepts we're working with? What are the conclusions, and do they make sense? What are the implications?

4. Cultivate "Habits of Mind"

"Habits of mind" are the personal commitments, values, and standards you have adopted about the principles of good thinking. Consider your intellectual commitments, values, and standards. Do you approach problems with an open mind, a respect for truth, and an inquiring attitude? Some good habits to have when thinking critically are: being receptive to having your opinions changed, having respect for others, being independent and not accepting something is true until you've had the time to examine the available evidence, being fair-minded, having respect for a reason, having an inquiring mind, not making assumptions, and always, especially, questioning your own conclusions—in other words, developing an intellectual work ethic. Try to work these qualities into your daily life.

Contributors

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2.1.1.9: Rhetorical Criticism Summary

Summary

By now you have a more complex understanding of the term rhetoric and realize the distinction between the use of the term in the popular press and its meaning within the context of the Communication discipline. At a very basic level, you know that it refers to the process in which humans use symbols to communicate with one another. Moreover, you should know the contributions of classical and well as contemporary theorists to understanding human symbol use. As a way of knowing, rhetorical criticism provides scholars with a unique methodological tool for understanding communication. Through the contributions and paradigm shifts from classical to contemporary scholars, the scope of rhetorical criticism has been widened to include a variety of social events, acts, and artifacts that we encounter in our daily life. This method has a direct impact on our lives by informing us about the communicative options available to us when communicating with others in cultural, professional, personal and political contexts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What specific contributions did classical theorists make to the study of rhetoric?
2. How have contemporary rhetorical theorists challenged the canon?
3. Compare and contrast classical rhetorical theories versus contemporary ones.
4. What idea has been at the center of most definitions of rhetoric? Do you think rhetoric should refer only to persuasion? What are the limits and advantages to such an approach?
5. What role do you think the study of rhetoric can play in today's social world? The political context?
6. What are some examples of the use of classical rhetorical theory in contemporary rhetorical discourse?
7. What sort of research question would you, as a scholar interested in the rhetoric of popular culture, ask?
8. What might some of the limitations of rhetorical criticism as a method?
9. What are the elements of Burke's pentad? Give an example of how you would apply it to the study of a particular body of discourse.
10. What kind of research question would you want to ask using the method of feminist criticism?

KEY TERMS

- Afrocentric
- Aristotle
- Artifact
- Aspasia of Miletus
- Audience analysis
- Canons
- Cicero
- Dialectic
- Ethos
- Fantasy Theme Criticism
- Feminist Criticism
- Humanism
- Ideological Criticism
- Logos
- Narrative Criticism
- Neo-Aristotelian Criticism
- Pan Chao
- Pathos
- Pentadic Criticism
- Persuasion
- Plato
- Postmodernism
- Public Address

- Quintillian
- Rationalism
- Rhetoric
- Rhetorical Criticism
- Social Constructionism
- Socrates
- Types of speeches

Contributions and Affiliations

- Survey of Communication Study. **Authored by**: Scott T Paynton and Linda K Hahn. **Provided by**: Humboldt State University. **Located at**: en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Survey_of_Communication_Study/Preface. **License**: *CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike*

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Contributions and Affiliations

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2.1.2: Rhetorical Lenses

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2.1.2.1: Critical Race Theory

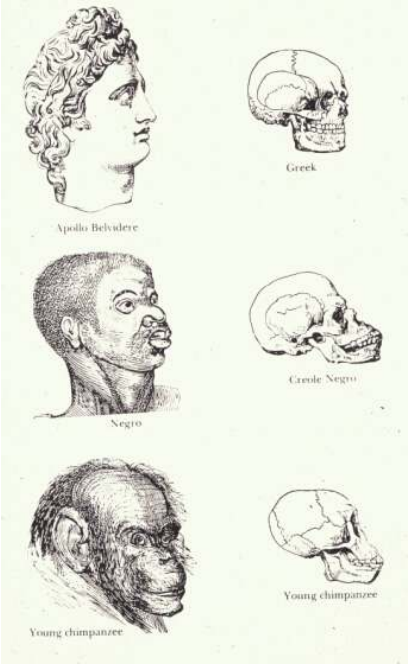
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2.1.2.1.1: Race

“Concepts of race did not exist prior to racism. Instead, it is inequality and oppression that have produced the idea of essential racial differences” (Ferber, 2009: 176).

In the context of the United States, there is a binary understanding of race as either Black[1] or white. This is not to say that only two races are recognized, just to say that these are the constructed “oppositional poles” of race. What do we mean by **race**? What does Abby Ferber in the quote above mean by race? More than just descriptive of skin color or physical attributes, in biologized constructions of race, race determines intelligence, sexuality, strength, motivation, and “culture.” These ideas are not only held by self-proclaimed racists, but are woven into the fabric of American society in social institutions. For instance, prior to the 20th Century, people were considered to be legally “Black” if they had any African ancestors. This was known as the **one-drop rule**, which held that if you had even one drop of African “blood,” you would have been considered Black. The same did not apply to white “blood”—rather, whiteness was defined by its purity. Even today, these ideas continue to exist. People with one Black and one white parent (for instance, President Barack Obama) are considered Black, and someone with one Asian parent and one white parent is usually considered Asian.

Many cultural ideas of racial difference were justified by the use of science. White scientists of the early 19th Century set out to “prove” Black racial inferiority by studying biological difference. Most notable were studies that suggested African American skulls had a smaller cranial capacity, contained smaller brains, and, thus, less intelligence. Later studies revealed both biased methodological practices by scientists and findings that brain size did not actually predict intelligence. The practice of using science in an attempt to support ideas of racial superiority and inferiority is known as **scientific racism**.

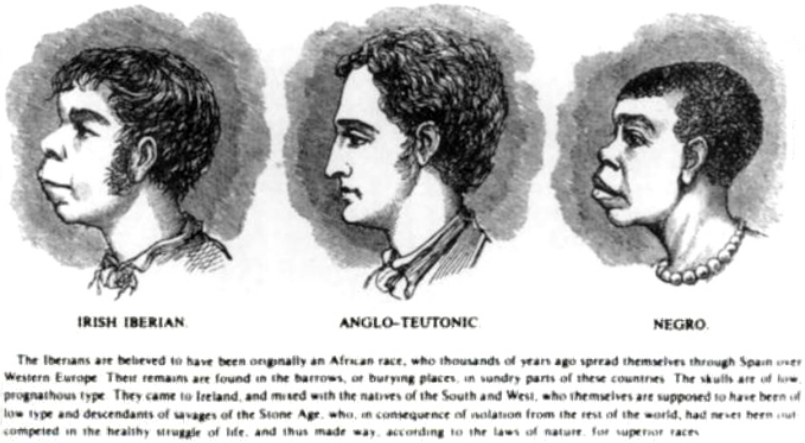


“Indigenous Races of the Earth (1857)” by Josiah Clark Nott and George Robins Gliddon is in the Public Domain, CC0

Traces of scientific racism are evident in more recent “studies” of Black Americans. These studies and their applications often are often shaped by ideas about African Americans from the era of chattel slavery in the Americas. For instance, the Moynihan Report, also known as “The Negro Family: A Case for National Action” (1965) was an infamous document that claimed the non-nuclear family structure found among poor and working-class African American populations, characterized by an absent father and matriarchal mother, would hinder the entire race’s economic and social progress. While the actual argument was much more nuanced, politicians picked up on this report to propose an essentialist argument about race and the “culture of poverty.” They played upon stereotypes from the era of African-American slavery that justified treating Black Americans as less than human. One of these stereotypes is the assumption that Black men and women are hypersexual; these images have been best analyzed by Patricia Hill Collins (2004) in her work on “controlling images” of African Americans— images such as the “Jezebel” image of Black women and

the “Buck” image of Black men discussed earlier. Slave owners were financially invested in the reproduction of slave children since children born of mothers in bondage would also become the property of owners, so much so that they did not wait for women to get pregnant of their own accord but institutionalized practices of rape against slave women to get them pregnant (Collins, 2004). It was not a crime to rape a slave—and this kind of rape was not seen as rape—since slaves were seen as property. But, since many people recognized African American slaves as human beings, they had to be framed as fundamentally different in other ways to justify enslavement. The notion that Black people are “naturally” more sexual and that Black women were therefore “unrapable” (Collins 2004) served this purpose. Black men were framed as hypersexual “Bucks” uninterested in monogamy and family; this idea justified splitting up slave families and using Black men to impregnate Black women. The underlying perspectives in the Moynihan Report—that Black families are composed of overbearing (in both senses of the word: over-birthing and over-controlling) mothers and disinterested fathers and that if only they could form more stable nuclear families and mirror the white middle-class they would be lifted from poverty—reflect assumptions of natural difference found in the ideology supporting American slavery. The structural causes of racialized economic inequality— particularly, the undue impoverishment of Blacks and the undue enrichment of whites during slavery and decades of unequal laws and blocked access to employment opportunities (Feagin 2006)—are ignored in this line of argument in order to claim fundamental biological differences in the realms of gender, sexuality and family or racial “culture.” Furthermore, this line of thinking disparages alternative family forms as dysfunctional rather than recognizing them as adaptations that enabled survival in difficult and even intolerable conditions.

Of course, there are other racial groups recognized within the United States, but the Black/white binary is the predominant racial binary system at play in the American context. We can see that this Black/white binary exists and is socially constructed if we consider the case of the 19th Century Irish immigrant. When they first arrived, Irish immigrants were “blackened” in the popular press and the white, Anglo-Saxon imagination (Roediger 1991). Cartoon depictions of Irish immigrants gave them dark skin and exaggerated facial features like big lips and pronounced brows. They were depicted and thought to be lazy, ignorant, and alcoholic nonwhite “others” for decades.



“Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View (1899)” by H. Strickland Constable is in the Public Domain, CC0

An illustration from the H. Strickland Constable’s *Ireland from One or Two Neglected Points of View* shows an alleged similarity between “Irish Iberian” and “Negro” features in contrast to the higher “Anglo-Teutonic.” The accompanying caption reads:

“The Iberians are believed to have been originally an African race, who thousands of years ago spread themselves through Spain over Western Europe. Their remains are found in the barrows, or burying places, in sundry parts of these countries. The skulls are of low prognathous type. They came to Ireland and mixed with the natives of the South and West, who themselves are supposed to have been of low type and descendants of savages of the Stone Age, who, in consequence of isolation from the rest of the world, had never been out-competed in the healthy struggle of life, and thus made way, according to the laws of nature, for superior races.”

Over time, Irish immigrants and their children and grandchildren assimilated into the category of “white” by strategically distancing themselves from Black Americans and other non-whites in labor disputes and participating in white supremacist racial practices and ideologies. In this way, the Irish in America *became* white. A similar process took place for Italian-Americans, and, later, Jewish American immigrants from multiple European countries after the Second World War. Similar to Irish Americans, both groups *became* white after first being seen as non-white. These cases show how socially constructed race is and how this labeling process still

operates today. For instance, are Asian-Americans, considered the “model minority,” the next group to be integrated into the white category, or will they continue to be regarded as foreign threats? Only time will tell.

1. Here, we capitalize Black and not white in recognition of Black as a reclaimed, and empowering, identity. ↵

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2.1.2.1.2: Literary Snapshot- "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Lewis Carroll, as we found out in previous chapters, is most famous for two books: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). These books follow the adventures of a seven-year-old, Alice, who tumbles down a rabbit hole (*Wonderland*) and enters a magic mirror (*Looking-Glass*), entering a nonsensical world of the imagination. If you have not already read these classic books—or wish to reread them—you can access them at the following links:

http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html

etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/CarGlas.html

In one of the most well-known scenes from *Wonderland*, Alice encounters a Caterpillar sitting on top of a mushroom, "with its arms folded, quietly smoking a long hookah, and taking not the smallest notice of her or of anything else."Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 4, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html. The two engage in an exchange typical of this novel: their conversation is long, confrontational, and convoluted, as each partner in the conversation fails to understand or be understood by the other:

The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth, and addressed her in a languid, sleepy voice.

"Who are *you*?" said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, "I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."

"What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar sternly. "**Explain yourself!"**

"I can't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, sir," said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see."

"I don't see," said the Caterpillar.

"I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly," Alice replied very politely, "for I can't understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."

"It isn't," said the Caterpillar.

"Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet," said Alice; "but when you have to turn into a chrysalis—you will some day, you know—and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel it a little queer, won't you?"

"Not a bit," said the Caterpillar.

"Well, perhaps your feelings may be different," said Alice; "all I know is, it would feel very queer to *me*."

"You!" said the Caterpillar contemptuously. "Who are **you**?"

Which brought them back again to the beginning of the conversation. Alice felt a little irritated at the Caterpillar's making such *very* short remarks, and she drew herself up and said, very gravely, "I think, you ought to tell me who *you* are, first."

"Why?" said the Caterpillar.

Here was another puzzling question; and as Alice could not think of any good reason, and as the Caterpillar seemed to be in a *very* unpleasant state of mind, she turned away.

"Come back!" the Caterpillar called after her. "I've something important to say!"

This sounded promising, certainly: Alice turned and came back again.

"Keep your temper," said the Caterpillar.

"Is that all?" said Alice, swallowing down her anger as well as she could.

"No," said the Caterpillar.

Alice thought she might as well wait, as she had nothing else to do, and perhaps after all it might tell her something worth hearing. For some minutes it puffed away without speaking, but at last it unfolded its arms, took the hookah out of its mouth again, and said, "So you think you're changed, do you?" [bold added]Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 5, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html.

Many readers identify closely with Alice in these scenes. They're bewildered at the behavior of the creatures Alice encounters and, perhaps, become as frustrated as she does when the citizens of Wonderland talk in circles around her. The "puzzling questions" Alice encounters seem unanswerable, simply nonsense that Alice is right to dismiss.

However, if we think of *Wonderland* as a narrative of encounter—a story of different cultures colliding—we might draw more nuanced conclusions about these scenes. Could we, for instance, read such scenes from the perspective of the inhabitants of Wonderland? How might the Caterpillar think of Alice during their exchanges? Consider these paragraphs:

The Caterpillar was the first to speak.

"What size do you want to be?" it asked.

"Oh, I'm not particular as to size," Alice hastily replied; "only one doesn't like changing so often, you know."

"I *don't* know," said the Caterpillar.

Alice said nothing: she had never been so much contradicted in her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper.

"Are you content now?" said the Caterpillar.

"Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind," said Alice: "three inches is such a wretched height to be."

"It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).

"But I'm not used to it!" pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought of herself, "I wish the creatures wouldn't be so easily offended!"

"You'll get used to it in time," said the Caterpillar; and it put the hookah into its mouth and began smoking again.Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 5, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html.

The Caterpillar takes offense when Alice suggests that "three inches is such a wretched height to be." As the story points out, the Caterpillar is "exactly three inches high," and it is angered that Alice defines the best possible height as her own height, dismissing its body as "wretched" without even considering its feelings. When Alice thinks, "I wish the creatures wouldn't be so easily offended," she reveals a feeling of innate superiority over the beings she encounters. Though the Caterpillar speaks with her, it is a "creature" who shouldn't be "so easily offended" even though she directly insults it.

As we see in Chapter 4, literary scholars are often interested in questions of identity in literary works. In that chapter we discuss identities drawn from gender and sexuality; in this chapter we look at identities drawn from race, ethnicity, and/or cultural background. For scholars interested in literary depictions of race and ethnicity, scenes such as the Caterpillar's in *Wonderland* can be read as demonstrating problematic attitudes toward minorities within Western cultures or toward people in non-Western societies. Such problematic attitudes are particularly disconcerting when found in widely read, **canonical** stories such as *Wonderland*. Let's look for a minute at the way the Caterpillar is depicted in the text and in early illustrations of the novel.



Illustration by Sir John Tenniel for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

The Caterpillar is described as "quietly smoking a long hookah" and appears, from behind, almost like a thin man sitting cross-legged while smoking. Keep in mind that *Wonderland* was published in 1865, when the British Empire stretched around the world and was described as a "vast empire on which the sun never sets." The British Empire in 1865 controlled territories in the Mideast and Asia, including Hong Kong, India, and Singapore. The 1860s were also, as Jon Stratton points out in *Writing Sites: A Genealogy of the Postmodern World*, "the major period of British exploration and colonisation (sic) of Africa."Jon Stratton, *Writing Sites: A Genealogy of the Postmodern World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 168. You can see how far the British Empire expanded by looking at the red areas (British territories) on this map of the British Empire in 1886.



Map of the world by Captain J.C.R. Colomb and Maclure & Co. Published as a supplement for The Graphic, as the "Imperial Federation" (July, 1886).

To its original British readers, then, the Caterpillar would have evoked romanticized images of these "exotic" civilizations, smoking with a device that originated in the Middle East and would have been familiar to British citizens because of their presence in India. By contrast, Alice is drawn as the ideal of a nineteenth-century English girl, with white skin and blonde hair, knowledge of diverse academic subjects such as biology and poetry, and a heightened sense of manners and propriety.

For Stratton, *Wonderland* can be read as a "fantasy of civilising [*sic*] the natives" as Alice enters "an Other world where people behave differently," to which she "brings her own standards and manners to bear without any reference to the local set."Jon Stratton, *Writing Sites: A Genealogy of the Postmodern World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 170. Because Alice believes that her rules and standards are universal and should be obvious to all the people she encounters in Wonderland, she can be seen as a symbol of the British Empire, which worked to impose British standards of education, manners, religion, and politics on the people whose countries they controlled. "Were Alice to lose her place as the arbiter of meaning," Stratton claims, "she would lose her privileged position in Wonderland," a place where "colonial Otherness threatens the fixity of meaning by offering alternatives."Jon Stratton, *Writing Sites: A Genealogy of the Postmodern World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 172. Like the female image of Britannia in the center of the map shown, Alice is surrounded by exotic "natives" who she expects will look to her as a model of civilization.

The Caterpillar disrupts Alice's presumption of her own authority in Wonderland. He demands to know "Who are *you*?" and the question confuses and disturbs Alice. She insists, "I think, you ought to tell me who *you* are, first," but when the Caterpillar asks her "Why?" she "could not think of any good reason." Alice maintains a belief in her own superiority—a belief that she should be able to demand answers of the Caterpillar but not the other way around—but her experiences in Wonderland unsettle those beliefs.

Though Alice insists that the citizens of Wonderland are strange or foreign, for the citizens of Wonderland, Alice is the stranger unfairly judging their society and its customs based on her own cultural biases and assumptions.

Interestingly, the **colonial** ideas that are implicit in Carroll's original *Wonderland* become explicit in the latest film adaptation of the novel, Tim Burton's *Alice in Wonderland* (2010). At the end of that film, Alice (who is nineteen in Burton's version) decides that she will help her father expand his business to China. As Kevin Slaten points out, this means that Alice will likely be involved in British-Chinese relations during the time of the Opium Wars, a pair of conflicts that decimated many areas along China's coast and led to what Chinese historians deemed a "century of humiliation" for the nation.Kevin Slaten, "Who Else Might Be Mad at Alice? China," *Real Clear World*, March 12, 2010, http://www.realclearworld.com/articles/2010/03/12/who_else_might_be_mad_at_alice_china_98853.html. In other words, Burton places Alice in China during a period of colonial aggression, perhaps signaling that Alice's insistence on her authority over the denizens of Wonderland has prepared her to enact such authority on behalf of British trade interests in the "real world." Tim Burton's ending to *Alice in Wonderland* can be seen as a **postcolonial** interpretation of Lewis Carroll's novel: a critique of the politics underlying what seems to be a simple children's story.

Your Process

1. What are some other scenes in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* that might read differently if you considered the other characters' perspectives rather than just Alice's?
2. What are some literary works that you think of as "ethnic" or "cultural"—that seem different or foreign to your own experience? Create a list in your notes. Then create a list of works that seem "normal," or familiar to your own experience. Compare your two lists. How is your experience of literature shaped by your own cultural, ethnic, or racial background?

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2.1.2.1.3: Postcolonial, Racial, and Ethnic Theory- An Overview

As you've seen throughout this textbook, the field of English or literary studies has changed significantly through the years. At one time, to study English meant to study only literature from England. In fact, it meant to study, almost exclusively, poetry from England. As we see in Chapter 4, the poetry that English students read for the majority of the field's history was almost exclusively written by men. It may not surprise you to learn that the majority of the men that English students read came from Western cultures and were white. The experiences of minorities (within Western culture) and non-Western people were largely excluded from the canon. When their experiences did appear in widely read books, poems, plays, and essays, their experiences were usually filtered through perspective of a white author.

Over the past decades, many literary scholars have begun working to change this reality. Drawing from a range of disciplines, including history, anthropology, and sociology, these scholars have demonstrated how the literary canon excludes the voices of minority and non-Western writers, thinkers, and subjects. They have exposed attitudes of prejudice within canonical works. They have also worked to recover and celebrate works by writers from previously ignored or denigrated racial and ethnic backgrounds. Though their subjects vary widely—from the African American experience in the United States to those of Indians living under British colonial rule—scholars interested in racial, ethnic, and postcolonial studies share a conviction that literature is not politically neutral. Instead, they argue that literature both reflects and shapes the values of the cultures that produce it and that literary critics have a duty to analyze and often critique the cultural values embedded in the texts we study.



Figure **2.1.2.1.3.1**: Illustration by Edward Winsor Kemble for Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884).*

Think, for instance, of the frequent debates that have arisen over Mark Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (you can read *Huck Finn*Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1912; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1995), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Huc.html. in its entirety at http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Huc.html). For years, literary critics, scholars, students, and parents have debated whether the novel, written by a white American man, should be considered racist (and, if so, whether it should be taught in schools). These debates center on three major issues: (1) the novel's depiction of Jim, the runaway slave who is simultaneously the novel's moral center and a frequent object of ridicule; (2) the novel's frequent use of a racial epithet to describe its African American characters; and (3) the heavy dialect through which the speech of black Americans is presented in the book. Schools have frequently debated banning Twain's novel, often in response to the concerns of parents or students.See Gregory Roberts, "'Huck Finn' a Masterpiece—Or an Insult," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 25, 2003, [1]. There is no easy solution to these debates. As literary critic Stephen Railton put it nearly thirty years ago: "Is *Huck Finn* racist? Yes and no; no and yes."Stephen Railton, "Jim and Mark Twain: What Do Dey Stan' For?" *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. http://www.vqronline.org/articles/1987/summerrailton-jim-mark/. However you feel about this novel, however, these debates illustrate the importance of literary critics considering issues of race, ethnicity, and culture as they read and interpret literature.

Though it has happened more slowly than many cultural critics would like, the literary canon has shifted in the past decades to reflect a wider sense of who writes literature and what we should learn from it. The fact that we study American literature at all reflects an earlier shift away from a strict focus on English writing. Moreover, students in American literature classrooms today

study more writers of color than did students even twenty years ago. Some African American writers are now studied so frequently they could be called canonical, including Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Charles Chesnutt, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison. American literature classes often cover writing by Native American writers, such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Louise Erdich, and Sherman Alexie, and by Hispanic, Chicano/a, or Latino/a American writers such as George Santayana, Isabel Allende, and Gary Soto. Moreover, British literature classrooms now routinely include works by authors from former British colonies, such as Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Jean Rhys (Dominica), Salman Rushdie (India), and Anita Desai (India). Finally, courses in world literature regularly teach minority and/or postcolonial writers who compose in languages other than English.

We recognize that these are incomplete lists. Indeed, even separating authors into these distinct categories can be problematic, as many writers span geographic regions, ethnic identities, or racial backgrounds. Nevertheless, these names can help get us started thinking about the diverse voices that literature classrooms now include. Of course, scholars working in these fields would point out that there is much work yet to be done to build a truly representative curriculum. Though minority and non-Western writers are now studied regularly, they still occupy relatively small places in most literature classrooms and curricula.

Your Process

1. What minority or non-Western writers have been part of your literary education to this point? Jot down a few examples.
2. Now think about how those writers shaped your understanding of our literary inheritance. How did reading those writers change your ideas about literature, culture, or history? How would your literary education have been different with a textbook of thirty years ago that largely excluded nonwhite voices?
3. How does your cultural background shape your response to these questions?

Scholars working in these fields often seek to challenge **Eurocentrism**, which is a worldview that considers European societies (and those closely related to them, such as white American society) as the model to which other societies should aspire. Taking a slightly different focus, the critic Edward Said coined the term **Orientalism**, which refers to a set of false assumptions and stereotypes that Western cultures maintain about societies other than themselves.Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1994). These **Others** are sometimes portrayed as excessively bad (demonic others) and sometimes as excessively beautiful (exotic others), but neither view actually builds a true picture of non-Western societies or people. In other words, literary critics are wary of texts in which a foreign society is portrayed as ideal, just as they are when a foreign society is portrayed as depraved.

Looking at literature through the lens of social and cultural identity often requires that critics read beyond the surface meanings of texts and think about the ethnic, cultural, and social implications of the words on the page. For instance, let's consider Phillis Wheatley's "On being brought from Africa to America," which was published in her 1773 collection, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*:

On Being Brought from Africa to America.

'TWAS mercy brought me from my *Pagan* land,

Taught my benighted soul to understand

That there's a God, that there's a *Saviour* too:

Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

Some view our sable race with scornful eye,

"Their colour is a diabolic die."

Remember, *Christians*, *Negros*, black as *Cain*,

May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," in *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (Denver: W. H. Lawrence, 1887), 17.

Wheatley was a slave, brought to Boston on the slave ship *Phillis* in 1761 and owned by John and Susanna Wheatley, who gave her an education, which was uncommon for slaves at the time. On the surface, Wheatley's poem seems to praise the system of slavery that brought her to America, noting that it was "mercy" that "brought [her] from [her] *Pagan* land." With that latter phrase she

seems to disown her heritage as simply pagan, a "benighted" contrast to the Christian education she has received in the United States. We might even accuse Wheatley of **mimicry**, or attempting to imitate the language and (as you can see in the following engraving) dress of the ruling class.



Figure **2.1.2.1.3.2**: Portrait by Scipio Moorehead as a frontispiece to Phillis Wheatley's *Poems on Various Subjects*… (1773).

However, scholars of African American literature might urge us to read the poem as a subtle critique of the American slave system. In her article "A Slave's Subtle War: Phillis Wheatley's Use of Biblical Myth and Symbol," Sondra O'Neale begins by insisting that "any evaluation of Phillis Wheatley must consider her status as a slave." O'Neale notes that a slave who wanted to write during this time period "first had to acquire the requisite language skills." Then "appropriate whites had to authenticate the writer's mental and moral capacity, and then the slave's master had to agree that the slave could publish the work. Moreover, the slave's offering was carefully censored to ensure that it was in no way incendiary."Sondra O'Neale, "A Slave's Subtle War: Phillis Wheatley's Use of Biblical Myth and Symbol," *Early American Literature* 21, no. 2 (1986): 144–45. In other words, Wheatley could not write a bald condemnation of slavery; her owners held absolute sway over both her writing and her person, and to be published, she had to write within the constraints imposed on her by whites invested in keeping the slave system intact.

For O'Neale, Wheatley "challenged eighteenth-century evangelicals in their cherished religious arena by redeploying the same language and doctrine that whites had used to define the African, thereby undercutting conventional colonial assumptions about race and skin color."Sondra O'Neale, "A Slave's Subtle War: Phillis Wheatley's Use of Biblical Myth and Symbol," *Early American Literature*21, no. 2 (1986): 145. In the poem, Wheatley refers to "*Negros*, black as *Cain*." In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many religious and political commentators taught that African people descended from the biblical Cain, who was cursed by God after murdering his brother, Abel. In the King James Bible, it says "the LORD set a mark upon Cain" to identify him to other people, and many white commentators argued that this mark was a dark skin tone.Gen. 4:15 (King James Version). By associating black people with Cain, whites implied that blacks were inferior people both physically and morally—marked as "other" than whites, whom they considered normal.

Wheatley's poem reappropriates these ideas into a critique of Christians who refuse to acknowledge the brotherhood of African people: "Remember, *Christians*, *Negros*, black as *Cain*." First, the terms "Christian," "Negroes," and "black as Cain" are presented in a close sequence, as Wheatley conflates her presumably white readers ("*Christians*") with herself and her people ("*Negros*, black as *Cain*"). In the next line she insists that black Americans "May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train," where they would, presumably, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with white Christians. Wheatley notes, "Some view our sable race with scornful eye," and say "Their colour is a diabolic die," but she refuses this mischaracterization of her people. They are not "diabolic"—a "demonic other"—but instead equal in potential to white Americans. Though she cannot directly condemn slavery, Wheatley's poem

simultaneously evokes and calls into the question prejudiced ideas about African Americans. By writing such refined poetry, Wheatley embodies the mental equality of blacks and whites, and in these final lines she insists on that equality. If her readers grant this last concession, however—if they agree that blacks and whites can indeed join the same "angelic train"—then the systems of denigration and oppression they support will be exposed as resting on false pretenses. In other words, we can read Wheatley's mimicry as subversive. She is an African American writer working within the strict limitations of the slave system to write and distribute poetry that subtly undermines that very system.

Your Process

Read the following Wheatley poem, "To the University of Cambridge, in New-England." As you read, consider what underlying messages Wheatley might seek to convey, as in the poem we discussed previously. Jot down your ideas.

While an intrinsic ardor prompts to write,
The muses promise to assist my pen;
'Twas not long since I left my native shore
The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom:
Father of mercy, 'twas thy gracious hand
Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.
Students, to you 'tis giv'n to scan the heights
Above, to traverse the ethereal space,
And mark the systems of revolving worlds.
Still more, ye sons of science ye receive
The blissful news by messengers from heav'n,
How Jesus' blood for your redemption flows.
See him with hands out-stretcht upon the cross;
Immense compassion in his bosom glows;
He hears revilers, nor resents their scorn:
What matchless mercy in the Son of God!
When the whole human race by sin had fall'n,
He deign'd to die that they might rise again,
And share with him in the sublimest skies,
Life without death, and glory without end.
Improve your privileges while they stay,
Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears
Or good or bad report of you to heav'n.
Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,
By you be shun'd, nor once remit your guard;
Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg.
Ye blooming plants of human race divine,
An Ethiop tells you 'tis your greatest foe;
Its transient sweetness turns to endless pain,

> And in immense perdition sinks the soul.

Wheatley is an interesting example because her work speaks to the concerns of scholars interested in the African American literary tradition and scholars interested in issues of conquest and colonialism. Wheatley wrote, after all, when Massachusetts was a British colony, and she came to Massachusetts after being forcibly seized from her home in either Senegal or Gambia, in West Africa. Next we'll look at another text that can help us understand the concerns of postcolonial critics. Nearly 150 years after Wheatley was captured, Joseph Conrad published one of the most famous works ever written about the African continent, *Heart of Darkness* (1899).Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/ConDark.html.

Your Process

1. As we've suggested throughout this text, these process papers will make more sense if you are familiar with the literary work under discussion. For this section, you should read Joseph Conrad's novella, *Heart of Darkness*, which you can find in full as an e-text provided by the University of Virginia (etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/ConDark.html).
2. As you read, pay particular attention to the way that Conrad portrays relationships between European and African characters in the text.

Though *Heart of Darkness* was written, in part, as a critique of Belgian colonialism and commerce in the Congo, many postcolonialist critics have pointed out that the novella perpetuates attitudes of racism and Eurocentrism through its portrayal of Africans.

Most famously, Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe wrote in "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" that the novella "projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality."Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness,'" in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: Anchor, 2012). Achebe notes that few Africans are allowed to speak in Conrad's text. Through most of the novella, he notes, the African characters simply make noises—grunts and babble and sounds. Only two African characters speak: one to express cannibal propensities and another to announce the death of the white enigma, Mr. Kurtz. Achebe insists, despite the stylistic merits of Conrad's work (which he admits are considerable), that "the real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art. My answer is: No, it cannot."Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness,'" in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: Anchor, 2012). In other words, Achebe insists that the text's aesthetic qualities cannot and should not redeem its cultural and racial attitudes. Such a commitment to the political and social implications of literature characterizes much ethnic criticism.

If that attitude seems extreme, consider the following excerpt from a 2003 article in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. It's written by Caryl Phillips, who initially met with Achebe to defend Joseph Conrad's writing against Achebe's critiques, but their conversation took another turn:

"I am an African. What interests me is what I learn in Conrad about myself. To use me as a symbol may be bright or clever, but if it reduces my humanity by the smallest fraction I don't like it."

"Conrad does present Africans as having 'rudimentary' souls."

Achebe draws himself upright.

"Yes, you will notice that the European traders have 'tainted' souls, Marlow has a 'pure' soul, but I am to accept that mine is 'rudimentary'?" He shakes his head. "Towards the end of the 19th century, there was a very short-lived period of ambivalence about the certainty of this colonising mission, and Heart of Darkness falls into this period. But you cannot compromise my humanity in order that you explore your own ambiguity. I cannot accept that. My humanity is not to be debated, nor is it to be used simply to illustrate European problems."

The realisation hits me with force. I am not an African. Were I an African I suspect I would feel the same way as my host. But I was raised in Europe, and although I have learned to reject the stereotypically reductive images of Africa and Africans, I am undeniably

interested in the break-up of a European mind and the health of European civilisation. I feel momentarily ashamed that I might have become caught up with this theme and subsequently overlooked how offensive this novel might be to a man such as Chinua Achebe and to millions of other Africans. Achebe is right; to the African reader the price of Conrad's eloquent denunciation of colonisation is the recycling of racist notions of the "dark" continent and her people. Those of us who are not from Africa may be prepared to pay this price, but this price is far too high for Achebe. However lofty Conrad's mission, he has, in keeping with times past and present, compromised African humanity in order to examine the European psyche.Caryl Phillips, "Out of Africa," *The Guardian*, February 21, 2003, http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003...s.chinuaachebe.

Phillips begins to understand that he shares, to some degree, Conrad's Eurocentric perspective and thus has not to this point understood Achebe's African perspective. When Phillips begins to see how Conrad's focus on the novella's European characters leads him to disregard its African characters, Phillips also begins to accept Achebe's postcolonial critique of the novel.

Your Process

1. Listen to Chinua Achebe's 2009 interview with NPR about *Heart of Darkness*(http://www.npr.org/templates/story/s...ryId=113835207).Robert Siegel, "Chinua Achebe: 'Heart of Darkness' Is Inappropriate," *All Things Considered*, NPR, audio, October 15, 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/s...ryId=113835207. Can you understand why Achebe, as an African, takes such umbrage at the portrayal of Africans in this canonical novel? Should such concerns shape what we read in literature classrooms?
2. You can read Caryl Phillips's full article about his discussion with Achebe at http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2003...s.chinuaachebe. How does Phillips's epiphany square with your own thoughts about Achebe and Conrad?
3. To learn more about postcolonial writers and critics, visit the Postcolonial Web (http://www.postcolonialweb.org/misc/authors.html) or read Deepika Bahri's "Introduction to Postcolonial Studies" (http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Intro.html).George P. Landlow, "Home Page," The Postcolonial Web, http://www.postcolonialweb.org/; Deepika Bahri, "Introduction to Postcolonial Studies," Dept. of Postcolonial Studies, Emory University, http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Intro.html.

To sum up, when you want to read with an eye toward racial, ethnic, or postcolonial issues, you should consider the following questions:

1. How does this work represent different groups of people? Does it valorize one particular culture at the expense of another? Are characters from particular groups portrayed positively or negatively? Does the work employ stereotypes or broad generalizations?
2. How does this work present political power and/or domination? Are there clear lines drawn between conquerors and conquered people in the work? Does the work seem to argue that these lines are appropriate, or does it challenge the divisions between colonizer and colonized?
3. What is the historical or cultural context of the work? Is the story set during a time of conflict or peace? Is the story set in a location where one culture colonized another? Does the story unfold before the colonial period, during the colonial period, or after the colonial period?
4. Can you discern any particular political agendas at work in the text? That is, does the novel, story, poem, play, or essay seem to make an argument about racial relations, ethnic identity, or political oppression?

The theories we outline in this chapter share many concerns but can be applied in many different ways. To that end, we provided three sample papers in this chapter. Each uses a slightly different lens to investigate a given literary text. Please review all the papers since they will prepare you for the chapter's conclusion, which will synthesize the insights of all three papers.

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2.1.2.1.4: Writing about Race, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity- A Process Approach

To review, race, ethnic, and cultural identity theory provides us with a particular lens to use when we read and interpret works of literature. Such reading and interpreting, however, never happens after just a first reading; in fact, all critics reread works multiple times before venturing an interpretation. You can see, then, the connection between reading and writing: as Chapter 1 indicates, writers create multiple drafts before settling for a finished product. The writing process, in turn, is dependent on the multiple rereadings you have performed to gather evidence for your essay. It's important that you integrate the reading and writing process together. As a model, use the following ten-step plan as you write using race, ethnic, and cultural identity theory:

1. Carefully *read the work* you will analyze.
2. *Formulate a general question* after your initial reading that identifies a problem—a tension—related to a historical or cultural issue.
3. *Reread the work*, paying particular attention to the question you posed. Take notes, which should be focused on your central question. *Write an exploratory journal entry* or *blog post* that allows you to play with ideas.
4. *Construct a working thesis* that makes a claim about the work and accounts for the following:
    1. What does the work mean?
    2. How does the work demonstrate the theme you've identified using a new historical approach?
    3. "So what" is significant about the work? That is, why is it important for you to write about this work? What will readers learn from reading your interpretation? How does the theory you apply illuminate the work's meaning?
5. *Reread the text to gather textual evidence* for support.
6. *Construct an informal outline* that demonstrates how you will support your interpretation.
7. *Write a first draft.*
8. *Receive feedback* from peers and your instructor via *peer review* and *conferencing* with your instructor (if possible).
9. *Revise the paper*, which will include revising your original thesis statement and restructuring your paper to best support the thesis. Note: You probably will revise many times, so it is important to receive feedback at every draft stage if possible.
10. *Edit and proofread* for correctness, clarity, and style.

We recommend that you follow this process for every paper that you write from this textbook. Of course, these steps can be modified to fit your writing process, but the plan does ensure that you will engage in a thorough reading of the text as you work through the writing process, which demands that you allow plenty of time for reading, reflecting, writing, reviewing, and revising.

Peer Reviewing

A central stage in the writing process is the feedback stage, in which you receive revision suggestions from classmates and your instructor. By receiving feedback on your paper, you will be able to make more intelligent revision decisions. Furthermore, by reading and responding to your peers' papers, you become a more astute reader, which will help when you revise your own papers. In Chapter 10, you will find peer-review sheets for each chapter.

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2.1.2.2: Biographical Study

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2.1.2.2.1: Author Analysis

This is the third section of a long critical analysis. Writing about the author will include these patterns:

Pattern 1: Biographical Information

Pattern 2: Social Information

Pattern 3: Literary Information

First, read the prompts on the following pages. Notice that most of them call for information that you can't possibly know. **You will have to look for that information in outside sources.** Start with some links. Remember, most authors have web pages devoted to their work (some living have their own actual page). The following statement is critical:

> **Note**
>
> Record all sources, and you must get all of the following that is available for that source: **who** said it, **where** (in what source) it was said, and **when** it was said (see MLA documenting sources).

Biographical Information

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. How did the author's childhood and family interactions affect his writing?
2. What in the author's life created or contributed to the author's opinion?
3. How did the author's education affect his or her beliefs?
4. How did the author's life experiences affect his or her beliefs?
5. Did the author practice what he or she preached?
6. How does the author define an issue?
7. What was the author's background?
8. Who or what does the author compare the central issue with?
9. How does the author classify events, things, or issues?
10. What were the author's opinions on related and unrelated topics?

Generally, you will find much information about authors. Ask your instructor, a librarian, or writing center personnel about where to find such information if you need some help.

Social Information

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. What social situations does this work describe or address?
2. What is the author's attitude toward men and women?
3. What social events in childhood affected the author's thinking?
4. What types or type of group did he or she belong to?
5. What was acceptable and unacceptable in the society?
6. What effects do social institutions have on the writing? (marriage, children, parenting, government, church)
7. What specific social areas did he or she address?
8. Should society act like this? And why do we?
9. Are we a product of our social surroundings?
10. What solutions are suggested?

Literary Information

> **Note**
>
> The following prompts apply primarily to authors of **LITERARY** selections; these questions do NOT generally apply to non-fiction or academic articles.

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. Who is the author's audience?
2. Who is being written for?
3. What is the author's attitude toward men?
4. What is the author's attitude toward women?
5. Did the gender of the author have an effect on this work?
6. Is the author's attitude toward the "non-audience" gender-biased?
7. What male conventions exist in the text?
8. What activities, emotions, values are privileged in this text?
9. Does the reader react to the work depending on the gender of the author?
10. Does the author condescend?
11. Does the author feel it is necessary to "explain" his or her more profound thoughts?
12. Does the author assume his or her reader will automatically disagree?
13. Does the author pretend to a relevance, an attitude, or an awareness he or she does not possess?
14. Is there pressure from the author for the reader to conform to the author's social standards?
15. Does the writer feel he or she is excluded justly or unjustly because of social, racial, or ethical discrimination?
16. Is there a physical, emotional, or intellectual deviation from the normal severe enough to have colored the author's view?
17. Are the deviations severe enough to have made the author's viewpoint distinctively different from others?
18. Has an emotional or physical trauma resulted in an altered viewpoint?
19. Does the presence of physical or emotional trauma-oriented disturbance validate or invalidate the author's work for the general public?

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2.1.2.2.2: Sample Biography- Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)



Figure 1: Virginia Woolf

Virginia Woolf was born into late-Victorian London on January 25, 1882. Her mother was Julia Stephen (1846-1895), famous in the artistic and literary world for her beauty and in high demand for her skills as an informal nurse. Woolf's father was Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), a well-known literary critic and founder of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, who struggled with a sense of inadequacy in spite of his reputation. The family lived at 22 Hyde Park Gate in London and rented a summer house at St. Ives in Cornwall. The children grew up with governesses, and while the boys went on to school and university, the girls received much less formal education, a particularly sore point with Woolf, and a spur for her feminism. However, she read hugely from her father's library, and developed a formidable and individual intellect. Her parents' literary circle also helped to develop the foundations of her writing and thought.

Julia and Leslie had each been married previously. With his first wife, Minny Thackeray (1840-1875), Leslie had a daughter, Laura (1870-1884). He floundered at being widowed and left to bring up the young girl, who had increasing emotional and developmental problems. Julia, a friend of Minny's, seemed a lifeline. She had had three children with Herbert Duckworth (1833-1870), whose sudden death gave her the sorrow that many friends saw as her main characteristic. George (1868-1934), Stella (1869-1897), and Gerald (1870-1937), along with Laura, were part of the new household when Julia and Leslie married in 1878.

Julia and Leslie had four more children together, of which Virginia was the third. Vanessa (1879-1961) was her childhood companion and fellow editor of the family newsletter, *The Hyde Park Gate News*; the two remained close friends and sometimes rivals in adulthood, when Vanessa married Clive Bell, who was a friend of her brother Thoby, had three children, and worked as an artist. Thoby (1880-1906) was a popular and good-looking young man whose Cambridge friends formed the initial Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists, with which all the Stephen siblings were connected to some degree. Adrian (1883-1948) was his mother's favourite, but he clashed with his father and siblings, and became a psychoanalyst. The house at 22 Hyde Park Gate was full of children and energy, but also of sadness. Woolf wrote of being sexually molested by both her Duckworth half-brothers, which powerfully affected her. Laura was institutionalized in the 1890s as her disorders worsened. Julia Stephen suddenly died of influenza when Virginia was 13, "the worst disaster that could happen," as she put it, which led to her first mental breakdown. In his own grief, Leslie leaned heavily on the girls, causing immense resentment. Stella Duckworth took on most of the responsibility, but she married in 1897, to Leslie's distress. She died a few months after the wedding of peritonitis connected with pregnancy,

another heavy blow to the family. Virginia's mental health remained very fragile, but she carried on studying, reading, and writing, while helping Vanessa with their father's demands.

When Leslie died of cancer in 1904, Virginia was saddened but liberated. With his death, she saw the Victorian past falling away. She suffered another nervous breakdown, which led to a suicide attempt, that year, but improved when she and her siblings left Hyde Park Gate and moved to unfashionable Bloomsbury to begin their own lives. Virginia enjoyed teaching adult courses at Morley College and working on her writing, as well as meeting with Thoby's friends, but Thoby died at 26 of typhoid after a European trip, and again the family was crushed. Virginia worked on her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, which describes a young woman's journey into South America and illness. In 1912, she agreed to marry Thoby's friend Leonard Woolf (1880-1969), a Jewish writer who worked for the Colonial Civil Service, in spite of her uncertainty about their compatibility. Leonard provided support when Virginia made another suicide attempt in 1913, and had another breakdown in 1915, when *The Voyage Out* was finally published. With him, she established the Hogarth Press, named after their London house, in 1917, which published works by both Leonard and Virginia, as well as by other contemporary writers. The happiness of the marriage has been debated, and Virginia had a long affair with the Hogarth writer Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962) beginning in 1923, but regardless, Virginia saw Leonard as one of her most important readers and supports. In different ways, they were both interested in new artistic forms and genres, and the changing political landscape.

Over the next decades, Woolf produced many acclaimed modernist works, in spite of further troubles with mental health, often drawing on her own past and continually pushing the boundaries of form and perspective. *Night and Day* (1919) describes young people trying to find their own way in the new 20th century; *Jacob's Room* (1922) memorializes Thoby and her family, as does *The Waves* (1931), with its fluid depiction of childhood's effects, and also *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a resurrection of her parents and early life. Her essays collected in *The Common Reader* volumes (1925 and 1932) cover a broad variety of subjects, and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), set on a single day, depicts the way life attempts to carry on in spite of the shock of the World War I. An inventive biographer, Woolf wrote *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), a love letter to Vita Sackville-West, to equality, and to androgyny; *Flush, A Biography* (1933), a playful tour de force about the Brownings' dog; and *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940), which attempts truly to capture the life of her friend. *A Room of One's Own* (1929), like the later *Three Guineas* (1938), is a seminal feminist text. *The Years* (1934) cost her a great effort, again returning to Victorian childhood's effects on adulthood, and led to another depression. Fearing a German invasion of England, as well as another breakdown, she drowned herself in the River Ouse near her home in Sussex in 1941. She had completed her final novel, *Between the Acts*, the story of a historical pageant at a country house menaced by war. The end of the book has the central couple sitting alone in a kind of prehistoric dark, but finishes with the line, "They spoke." Even in darkness and apparent meaninglessness, Woolf's characters speak, and she is drawn to record them.

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2.1.2.2.3: Sample Biography - Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)



Figure 1: Aldous Huxley.

Aldous Huxley was descended from two eminent Victorian families—he was a grandson of noted biologist and writer on science, Thomas Henry Huxley, grandnephew of Matthew Arnold, and nephew of Victorian novelist Mary Augusta Ward (who wrote under her married name Mrs. Humphry Ward), Arnold's niece. His unusual Christian name commemorates a major character, Aldous Raeburn, in the novel *Marcella*, which Mrs. Ward published in the year of Huxley's birth, 1894.

Born in Godalming, Surrey, England, he received his first schooling from his mother, Julia Arnold Huxley. He then moved on to Hillside Preparatory School, Eton, and eventually, Balliol College, Oxford, taking a first in English in 1916. Two early blows—the death of his mother when he was only nine, and an attack of keratitis while he was a student at Eton, which left him nearly blind for the rest of his life—may have sharpened his tendency toward introversion. Certainly the latter affliction precluded a career in science, paving the way for a life in letters.

In the course of his long literary career, Aldous Huxley published poetry collections, plays, essays, short fiction, travel narratives, biography, and criticism, but, like George Orwell, author of *Nineteen-Eighty-four*, he is best remembered as the author of a hugely influential utopian satire. Both men used the genre more than once. *Brave New World* began, like Orwell's *Coming Up for Air*, as a response to H. G. Wells's utopia, *Men Like Gods* (1923), and Huxley later wrote two more utopian-dystopian novels: *Ape and Essence* (1948) and *Island* (1962).

Although Huxley felt that he was not a "born novelist, but an essayist who writes novels," he became an innovative fictional stylist, effectively using cinematic montage technique for the purpose of exposition in the third chapter of *Brave New World*, thereby sparing the reader from that major defect of most utopian novels—the tedious guided tour of utopian schools, hospitals, and factories. With his use of montage and intertextuality, Huxley did for the novel what Eliot had done for modern poetry in *The Waste Land* 10 years earlier. Like Eliot, Huxley often uses multiple references to canonical works. In *Brave New World*, his 50 allusions to Shakespeare help develop theme. He also incorporates ideas of fashionable Freudians such as Ernest Jones and his interpretation of *Hamlet* to deepen the sense of the Savage's sexual repression. At opportune moments, he echoes key lines from Gray's "Elegy" and "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton" to underscore the ignorance-is-bliss theme and key images that recall the Utilitarian schoolroom in Dickens's *Hard Times*. Nor does he hesitate to use bathos: the deliberate contrasting of high culture with popular culture—excerpts from fictional advertising jingles and popular 1920s-era romances such as Elinor Glyn's *Three Weeks* satirize the contemporary lowering of musical and literary standards.

One notes a gradually emerging social conscience in Huxley at the time of his writing *Brave New World*. In fact, his satiric description of the reified workers in a dystopian factory was based on his visit to a Lucas automotive parts factory in Birmingham the previous spring.

In *Brave New World*, the novel's most sympathetic character, Helmholtz Watson, like Wordworth on Westminster Bridge, finds the silence of the sleeping metropolis to be eloquent: the very absence of the numinous in the wholly materialistic state begins, paradoxically, to suggest a presence. Watson is one of the first in what becomes a steady string of protagonists in his future novels who advocate what Huxley called "the great central technique, which traces the art of obtaining freedom from the fundamental human disability of egotism…repeatedly described by the mystics of all ages and countries." His final utopian novel, *Island* (1962), is, in fact, Huxley's final word on the subject of how to construct the good society. He died in Hollywood on November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

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2.1.2.2.4: Sample Biography - Max Weber (1854-1920)

MAX WEBER (1864-1920)

"Die bange Nacht is nun herum
wir reiten still, wir reiten stumm
wir reiten ins Verderben" – Herwegh, Reiterlied[1]

NOTE ON SOURCES: We are fortunate to have a comprehensive biography of Max Weber written by his wife, Marianne, first published six years after his death, in 1926. For decades, this was the primary source of information about Weber's life. Recently, however, our knowledge in this area has been greatly supplemented by Joachim Radkau's Max Weber: A Biography, published in English in 2009. Radkau's sympathetic portrait nevertheless includes several less flattering details of Weber's personality and character, not included in his wife's biography. For more on Weber's intellectual development, and less about his personal life, read Fritz Ringer's Max Weber: An Intellectual Biography, published in 2004.

Overview

Max, full name Maximilian Karl Emil, Weber was born in Erfurt, a bustling commercial city in what is now central Germany, on April 21, 1864. Weber spent his life in a rapidly industrializing and increasing militaristic Germany, living through the devastations of the first World War, and witnessing the rise of fascism during the early years of the Weimar Republic. Like many writers and thinkers of his day, he was interested in how this new industrial society came to be. His most famous work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, was a partial answer to that question. Weber would also come to create a particular approach to sociological inquiry, more focused on interpretation and less focused on policy proposals than Durkheim's.

Social Background/Family

Weber was the first of eight children, born to a wealthy statesman (Max Weber, Sr.) and his somewhat devout wife Helene (Fallenstein). The Webers had been a prosperous family for many generations, making their money in the linen trade. Max grew up in bourgeois comfort, in a home devoted to politics and intellectual pursuits. In fact, Weber's younger brother, Alfred, would also become a sociologist.

Education and Training

In 1882, Max earned his high school diploma and, according to his wife's biography, "also helped his friends to cheat their way through." His teachers, she claimed expressed some doubts about his moral maturity, finding him a troublesome if intelligent student. At age 18, he enrolled at the University of Heidelberg, where he followed in his father's footsteps by studying law. He also took up fencing at his father's fraternity house. By all accounts he led an active social life in college, visiting other bourgeois families, drinking, fencing, and even dueling (from which he suffered a distinctive scar on his face for the rest of his life). Marianne tells us he had no talent for saving money and would often ask for increases to his allowance.

In his second year, he took time off to serve in the military, but found military life difficult. Despite becoming a squad leader, he complained in a letter home that "the military existence is gradually getting too stupid and loathsome, especially since in recent weeks it has left no room whatsoever for anything else." He liked the military much more after entering into officer's training, and he left the following year with admiration of the "machine" and a greater sense of patriotism.

He returned to university and eventually earned a law degree in 1889, with a dissertation on the history of trading companies in the Middle Ages. For seven years he lived in the family home, studying further and teaching classes when he could. He did not leave home until his marriage in 1893, to his cousin Marianne Schnitger. During this time, Marianne tells us, he felt oppressed by his father, who ran his house with strong authority, requiring obedience of his children and his wife, who suffered a great deal. Max, she says, "was reserved and never asked relieved himself by a frank discussion of the problems. He repressed everything." He urgently wanted to leave.

When his cousin came to visit, moving from the country to the city, they quickly became attached. Here is how Marianne tells the story of their engagement:

> The seriousness of their relationship was lightened by their sparkling humor and impish banter. The engagement was still supposed to be kept secret, but as Weber remarked, "Every jackass here gives me a meaningful look and asks me whether something has happened to me. I would never have thought I was beaming so."

Career

In 1894, the newly married couple moved to Freiburg, where Weber was appointed Professor of Economics. In 1896, they moved to the Heidelberg, where Weber continued as an Economics Professor. He spent his time researching and writing on economics and legal history. Max and Marianne had no children. Instead, they maintained a vibrant social circle of intellectuals.

In 1897, Max's father died. Max and his father had quarreled two months before, particularly about his father's treatment of his mother, and every biographer points out that the death hit Max very hard. He became depressed and suffered insomnia. Eventually, he had to leave teaching altogether to spend some time in recovery. He made one brief foray back into teaching in 1902 but left again in 1903 and would not return to an official posting until 1919, one year before his death. During that time, he wrote much that would be published after his death, on matters sociological and political.

He spent much of 1904 touring the United States, notes and letters of which letters have recently been published.[2] Given the importance of Benjamin Franklin to his own understanding of the development of the spirit of capitalism, visiting the United States was an important chapter in his life. Weber took many notes on what he witnessed there. When visiting upstate New York, he observed,

> My trip to Buffalo yesterday was very pleasant, even though all the walking around along lengthy streets was fairly strenuous. Despite the magnificent buildings, the shopping streets as a whole look no more inviting than those in New York: Everything is obscured with a black sooty haze, windows are sometimes dirty- in short, new and yet already falling into disrepair, somewhat like our own suburbs., By contrast, the residential district is the world of elegance, nothing but tree-lined green streets with charming wood-frame houses that look as if someone had just taken them out of the toy box and placed them on the velvety green lawn. They are the only completely new and original architecture that I've seen here so far, and aesthetically far more satisfying than the imposing stone palaces in New York (September 9th).

In contrast to this pleasant scene, Weber was struck by the dirty sootiness of Chicago, the fifth largest city in the world at the time,

> Chicago is one of the most unbelievable cities. In the city among the skyscrapers, the condition of the streets is utterly hair-raising. Soft coal is burned there. When the hot dry wind off the wastelands to the southwest blows through the streets, and especially when the dark yellow sunsets, the city looks fantastic…. Everything is mist and think haze, and the whole lake is covered by a purple pall of smoke…It is an endless human desert….[In the stockyards], for as far as one can see from the Armour firm's clock tower there is nothing but herds of cattle, lowing, bleating, endless filth. But on the horizon, all around – for the city continues for miles and miles until it melts into the multitude of the suburbs – there are churches and chapels, grain elevators, smoking chimneys, and houses of every size (September 19th).

In 1907, he received an inheritance that allowed him to put off paid employment. He and Marianne lived well and continued to host intellectual parties and discussions. They experimented (disastrously says Radkau) with an open marriage. In 1909 Weber helped found the German Sociological Association, serving as its first treasurer. In 1912, he tried to organize a leftist political party, but was ultimately unsuccessful. When World War I began, in 1914, Weber volunteered and was appointed as a reserve officer. Weber would eventually become a strong critic of Germany's nationalist expansionism and called for the expansion of suffrage. He was one of the advisers to the committee that drafted the Weimar Constitution. He unsuccessfully ran for a seat in parliament. It was at this time that he returned to the university, where he gave a famous lecture criticizing opportunistic politicians. The lectures from his last year of life were written down and have circulated as important Weberian texts for years. At the time of his death, he was working on what he considered his masterwork, *Economy and Society*. Marianne would continue the work and publish it as Max's own in 1922. Marianne continued to work his notes and half-finished manuscripts into books and publish them for the next several years.

His Work

In the early years, Weber wrote mostly on legal history and economics. He was very productive during this time and published his dissertation on trading companies in the middle ages in 1889, a book on Roman agrarian history in 1891, a book on farm labor in

Eastern Germany in 1892, a book on the stock exchange in 1894, and a book on the state and economic policy in 1895. After his father's death, it was several years before he could work again. He wrote *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, first published as an essay in 1904. This work marks his turn to more sociological writing. Although he continued to write and lecture in these later years, almost everything was left unfinished at his death. Marianne Weber did much to compile and publish this later work, including his famous *Economy and Society* (1922) and *General Economic History* (1924). The English-speaking world knows Weber primarily through translation, and most of these translations were completed in the 1940s and 1950s, many by Talcott Parsons, the great mid-century American sociologist working out of Harvard University.

Questions

1. How does Weber's background and career compare to that of Durkheim, his near contemporary? To Marx?
2. Weber was a keen observer. How is this evidence in the brief extracts from his 1904 visit to the United States?

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1. This is a song Weber was known to sing near the end of his life, during the tumultuous Weimar years. It can be translated as, "The anxious night is over now; we are riding quietly, we are riding silently, we are riding to perdition." (Marianne Weber, Max Weber, Wiley and Sons (1975 translation)). ↵
2. See Scaff's Max Weber in America (2011). ↵

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2.1.2.3: Dramatism (Kenneth Burke)

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2.1.2.3.1: Explaining Your Perspective

Learning Objectives

- Introduce Kenneth Burke's Pentad as a means for focusing on the essential aspects of the subject.
- Discuss how to provide background information for clarification and further analysis.
- Show how a consideration of audience helps to determine which explanations should be included and which ones can remain implied.
- Discuss how to expand explanations through comparison/contrast and personal experience.

To see a world in a grain of sand

And Heaven in a wild flower

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand

And eternity in an hour William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence" The Mentor Book of Major British Poets, ed. Oscar Williams (New York: The New American Library, 1963), 40.

As one of the more mystical poets of the Romantic period, William Blake may have been thinking about the transformative power of the imagination when he wrote these lines, but his words apply equally well to how analysis can open up new perspectives that give greater understanding and appreciation for our subjects. In this chapter, you will learn how to both explain and show the significance of your initial assertions by looking again at the key aspects of the examples that first inspired them. In doing so, your point of view will evolve as your assertions become increasingly clear and complex. Always keep in mind that the more deeply you think about one area of analysis, the more fully you can understand the other areas. To illustrate, let's take a fresh look at one of the most well known movies of all time.

For those of you who have not seen *The Wizard of Oz*,Victor Fleming, dir., The Wizard of Oz (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1939). the 1939 film based on the novel by L. Frank Baum, here is a brief synopsis. Dorothy, a young girl from Kansas, is bored with the life that she leads on her uncle and aunt's farm and spends much of her time dreaming of running away to a magical place "over the rainbow." Besides her fantasies, she gets most of her happiness from taking care of her dog, Toto, but soon a mean yet influential woman takes the dog away from her and threatens to drown him in a river. Though Toto escapes and returns to Dorothy, Dorothy decides to run away to protect her pet and seek more exciting adventures. She doesn't get far, however, before she feels guilty for causing her Auntie Em so much worry and returns home, only to get caught in a tornado that takes her, her dog, and her house to the magical land of Oz.

At this point, the movie changes from black and white to color as Dorothy leaves her home to explore these strange new surroundings. Immediately we see that the house has landed on the Wicked Witch of the East, much to the gratitude of the Munchkins, strange little people whom the witch oppresses. Unfortunately for Dorothy, the witch's sister (the Wicked Witch of the West) is not at all pleased by this and threatens revenge. Before the Wicked Witch of the West can carry this out, however, Glenda, the Good Witch from the North, protects Dorothy by placing the deceased witch's magical ruby slippers on her feet. Glenda tells Dorothy to follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City where the Wizard of Oz lives, the only man wise and powerful enough to protect her and help her to return home.

On the way there, Dorothy encounters a scarecrow, a tin man, and a cowardly lion who accompany her on her journey in the hopes that they too will get something from the wizard: a brain, a heart, and courage.

When they finally reach the wizard, he appears as a disembodied head emerging out of fire and speaking with a booming voice of authority. He refuses to help them until they return with the broom of the Wicked Witch of the West, which eventually they do, but on their return they discover that the fiery wizard is merely a projection of a "smoke and mirror" machine. The real wizard, whom Toto finds operating the machine behind a curtain, is an ordinary man with no more power to grant wishes than the rest of them. Nonetheless, he points out to the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Lion that they already performed deeds that showed intelligence, compassion, and courage—proving to them that they already possessed the qualities that they thought they lacked. He is not, however, so successful in helping Dorothy, and it seems as though she will never be able to return to Kansas.

Just when all seems lost, Glenda returns and tells Dorothy that she can return home simply by clicking the heals of her slippers together and repeating the phrase: “There’s no place like home.” The resulting magic returns Dorothy to Kansas where she wakes up in her own bed. When she tells her family about her adventure, they believe that it was only a dream brought about by a concussion caused during the storm. Dream or not, Dorothy tells her family that she’s happy to be back and that if she ever feels the urge to look for happiness and fulfillment again, she doesn’t need to look any further than her own backyard.

The Pentad

There are many different ways to analyze this film, but let’s just focus on two common perspectives. Certain feminist analyses have taken issue with how the film might be seen as a warning to women to avoid the dangers of having too much power or straying too far from their “proper” role in the home. Yet others argue the exact opposite and instead see the film as a reminder to trust our own thoughts and feelings over those of questionable authorities. If you tried to explain each of these perspectives by simply summarizing the general plot, your explanation would seem too broad or too obvious. To fully justify your interpretation, you need to look again at the film with a more critical eye, concentrating on those features that validate your main assertions. To determine which details are the most significant and how they relate to each other, I recommend that you use a heuristic (derived from a concept by the social philosopher Kenneth Burke) called **“the Pentad”**. The Pentad helps you to break apart any scene, whether real or fictional, into five interrelated components that determine its overall shape and direction:

- **Act:** What generally happens.
- **Agent:** Those involved in what happens.
- **Agency:** The means through which it happens.
- **Scene:** When and where it happens.
- **Purpose:** Why it happens.

Of the five areas, the “purpose” is the most difficult to define. It can be understood as the motivation for the actions within the subject itself or it could be stated in terms of what it means to you as spelled out in your working thesis. When defined the second way, the Pentad can help you to explain your thesis more thoroughly by helping you to select the most relevant details and consider how they relate to each other. But, of course, this can happen only after you have taken the time to consider the subject long enough to come up with a working thesis in the first place. To illustrate, consider how the Pentad helps us to look again at *The Wizard of Oz* in light of the two perspectives mentioned.

If the **Purpose** is to show how the film may discourage women from leaving the home to pursue careers or take on prominent positions in society, then the way you delineate the other aspects of the Pentad may look like this.

- **Act:** Dorothy’s attempts to leave her home are shown as short lived and irresponsible. She finds satisfaction only at the end of the film when she decides to wander no further than her own backyard, thus preparing her for her inevitable future as a stay-at-home wife and mother.
- **Agent:** Powerful women in both Kansas and Oz are shown as “wicked” and abusive. In contrast, Auntie Em and Glenda are considered “good” because of their feminine and homespun qualities. Glenda knows magic but uses it only in small ways and primarily acts as a nurturing figure.
- **Agency:** Objects of power that fall into women’s hands (the broom, the ruby slippers) are either misunderstood or misused. Dorothy learns to disregard these objects, giving away the broom and using the slippers only to get back to a place where they no longer contain power.
- **Scene:** Though Oz is certainly more “colorful” than Kansas, it’s also shown as more dangerous and unsatisfying, which is why Dorothy chooses to leave it almost as soon as she gets there. At the time the film appeared, women were mostly expected to stay at home and any desire to have a career was often seen as strange or unnatural.

After considering all of these elements, you can then explain your perspective more thoroughly:

> *For many generations, **The Wizard of Oz** has not only served as entertainment but also as subtle propaganda for rigid gender roles. When the film was released in 1939, few women felt that they could pursue careers outside of the home. Those who wanted to do something else with their lives were often viewed as abnormal or irresponsible. The film clearly reinforces this attitude. Throughout, the women who seek more powerful positions are shown as “wicked” and crazy whereas those who are simply content to look after the home or look pretty are shown as good and stable. Though Dorothy is at first unsatisfied with*

> *her role as future homemaker, she eventually decides to embrace it, trading in magical objects like the ruby slippers and witch's broom for her peaceful yet static rural existence.*

This is clearly a valid perspective, one that justifies the main assertion with clear and appropriate examples. But while it brings to light something that should be seriously considered, it is not the only permissible way to see the film. Let's consider the other perspective that the **Purpose** of the film might be to encourage a questioning of the traditional family structure along with other beliefs passed down by reason of tradition or authority. As the purpose behind our analysis changes, so do the other corresponding elements of the Pentad:

- **Act:** The characters eventually come to accept their own traits and abilities without any need for external validation. Because the authority figures prove to be unreliable, phony, or just plain wicked, the characters eventually learn to rely on themselves.
- **Agent:** Dorothy's three companions eventually learn that they don't need a wizard to grant them the qualities that they already possess. Dorothy too learns to stand up to a witch, to call a wizard a phony, and to eventually tap the power within her that she needs to get back home.
- **Agency:** The wizard uses his "smoke and mirror" device to enhance his authority. Though he tries to create a persona that is "all powerful" and frightening, he is only a little man with no more power or ability to grant wishes than the rest of them.
- **Scene:** Oz is a place for personal enlightenment. And while the film may reflect the cultural attitudes of its time, it may also have inspired future generations to question authority and challenge existing norms.

As before, evaluating these different elements leads to a stronger explanation:

> *While the characters in the film **The Wizard of Oz** do not wear buttons stamped with the phrase "Question Authority," the film as a whole strongly suggests that we do so. Though the characters Dorothy encounters look to the wizard to grant them a brain, a heart, and courage, they already show plenty of intelligence, feeling, and bravery. It's only after Toto inadvertently exposes the real wizard's "smoke and mirror" contraption that they see the phony behind the curtain and realize that they don't need his validation to prove their self-worth. Likewise Dorothy learns to stand up to questionable authorities, and though she chooses to remain in the home, she has helped inspire countless others to say "no" to the rigid roles that restrict them*

Even though these perspectives are very different, each paragraph reveals a reasonable position arising from a close and thoughtful viewing of the film. And perhaps the most useful aspect of the Pentad is that it not only helps you to reexamine the details of your subject in light of your purpose but also to see how the other elements relate to each other. For instance, it helps us to see how exposing the agency of the wizard's machine inspires the agents to stand up for themselves. As you apply the Pentad, you might also be surprised by how many details you picked up on subconsciously when you arrived at your initial working thesis, justifying your perspective to yourself as well as to others.

Providing Background Information

Doing extra research and providing more **background information** can open up even more areas for analysis of *The Wizard of Oz*. For instance some scholars have argued that the story is based on the political situation at the turn of the Twentieth Century, the time of the novel's release, and chronicles the rise of the Populist Party, as represented by Dorothy, that attempted to take on the more established Democrat and Republican Parties, as represented by the two wicked witches. You might also want to read interviews with L. Frank Baum, the author, or Victor Fleming, the director, to find out what inspired them to create the book and the movie.

In addition to suggesting new avenues for interpretation, providing background information and research can help you to explain certain aspects of your subjects that might seem unclear because the terms, sounds or images are abstract, dated or specialized. For instance, to explain the quote from *The Tempest* in the first chapter you might first need to provide modern versions of some of the more archaic terms or reveal how a "baseless fabric" might refer to the painted sets on a stage. Likewise, if you are considering a historical event or a political speech, you should provide information about the surrounding circumstances and the key people involved in the outcome. For instance, to explain why President Bush decided to invade Iraq, you would need to know something about the potential threat Saddam Hussein posed, American economic interests in the Middle East, President Bush's character and personal motivations, and the general mood of the American public after 9/11.

Considering the Audience

Just how much background you need to provide mostly depends on what you know about the people who will be reading your essay. For instance you will not need to review the basic principles of Sigmund Freud's theory of id/ego/superego when writing for your psychology professor. But you might want to explain this when writing to your peers. On the other hand, when writing for your professors, you might need to explain references to popular culture that would be unnecessary if you were writing only to your friends. Despite what you may have been taught in the past, you should never assume that your audience doesn't know anything because you do not want to bore them by explaining obvious references any more than you want to confuse them by withholding important background.

For this reason, you should also take the context of your writing into account before developing your explanations. If, for instance, you were writing an essay for a class about a book that was previously assigned, you would not have to begin with a general synopsis, but could jump straight to the section that corresponds most closely with your assertions. If, however, you were writing to a broader audience, you should first provide them with a general background or a summary of the piece before examining the sections that specifically stood out for you.

Likewise the tone and style of your essay will vary depending on context, audience, and purpose. When writing to a friend on Facebook, you might use vocabulary, abbreviations, and icons that you would never use when writing a more formal essay for your instructor. Even among teachers your tone and style will vary depending on how formal they expect your writing to appear. Teachers, like everyone else, have their own subjective impressions as to what constitutes effective writing. But try not to let this bother you too much because in learning how to communicate effectively to the various audiences you find in school, you will gain a greater rhetorical flexibility to communicate outside of it.

Explaining a Subject Through Comparison and Contrast

Once you provide enough background information for your specific audience, you can further explain your subject through **comparison and contrast** with others that relate to it. For instance, to lend validity to the feminist perspective on *The Wizard of Oz*, you might compare the film to others of the same period that also show powerful women in a negative light. Consider, for instance, how the evil queen in Walt Disney's 1937 film *Snow White and the Seven DwarvesDavid Hand, dir., Snow White and the Seven Dwarves (Walt Disney Productions, 1937).* uses her magic to get what she wants, while Snow White, the ideal of femininity, simply waits for a man to come along and rescue her.

You could also underscore how a subject is influenced by cultural attitudes through contrast. For example, if you wanted to explain why a show like *South Park* or *Family Guy* has particular appeal to young people today, you might contrast these shows with coming of age television series from other periods. For instance, you could contrast an episode of *South Park* with an episode of *Leave it to Beaver*, an iconic series from the 1950s. Though the main characters, Beaver and Wally Cleaver, often get into trouble, it is never anything like the kind that Eric Cartman gets into, and, unlike Cartman, who is spoiled by his single mother, the Cleaver kids are always able to talk out their difficulties with their father who helps them to learn from their mistakes at the end of each episode. Again, the conclusions you draw from this contrast could vary. You might assert that this reveals the necessity of a strong father figure to keep children in check, or you might suggest that the tightly controlled patriarchal family structure of the 1950s inspired rebellion and ridicule in the decades that followed.

Along these lines, you might also consider explaining your subject by contrasting it with how it could have been different by calling our attention to the details that were deliberately omitted. For instance you might analyze an advertisement by revealing what it doesn't show about the product. Advertisements for fast food restaurants usually show families sitting together, relaxed, and having a good time, but they never show how people usually eat at these places, quickly and alone. And these ads certainly do not reveal the negative effects that eating too much fast food can have on the body, such as heart disease or obesity. Similarly, we can tell a lot about how people feel about something or someone not only by the terms they use but also by the ones they refuse to use. For instance, if the first time you say "I love you" to your significant other only garners the response "thank you," you might begin to suspect that your feelings run more deeply than those of your partner.

Explaining a Subject Through Personal Values and Experiences

As discussed in the first chapter, the process through which we discover meaning takes place in the interaction between the subject **and** the viewer/reader/listener. So to fully explain how and why you came up with your assertions, you should also consider how your experiences, your values, even your mood at the moment of encounter can shed light on how you see your subject. As the above examples indicate, you might begin by considering how your surrounding culture influences your response. For instance, Thomas de Zengotita argues that Americans have become so used to media constructions of reality that they often get bored with the real world that is unmitigated by it. To illustrate, he points out that if you were to see wolves in the wild, you might at first be fascinated, but then will quickly lose interest because the sight cannot measure up to the ones that you are used to seeing in movies and on television:

And you will get bored really fast if that 'wolf' doesn't do anything. The kids will start squirming in, like, five minutes; you'll probably need to pretend you're not getting bored for a while longer. But if that little smudge of canine out there in the distance continues to just loll around in the tall grass, and you don't have a really powerful tripod-supported telelens gizmo to play with, you will get bored. You will begin to appreciate how much technology and editing goes into making those nature shows.Thomas de Zengotita, "The Numbing of the American Mind," Harpers (April 2002), 37.

Other times, your response may emerge from what is going on in your life at the moment of encounter. Consider, for instance, how time and experience might change how we view a subject. When I first heard the song "Time" from Pink Floyd's album, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, I came across a line that confused me, "And then one day you find ten years have got behind you /No one told you when to run; you missed the starting gun." At fifteen, I could not understand how ten years could just get "behind you." That amount of time was pretty much my entire conscious life. But now at fifty, I understand the line much better. It often seems as though the last ten years have zoomed by, and I have missed "the starting gun" on so many things that I wanted to accomplish.

But we need to be careful here. One reason many teachers do not allow students to use the word "I" is that they often overuse it. If every sentence began with the phrase "I see it this way because" the essay would soon become monotonous and repetitive. Most of the time, you do not need to write this (or similar phrases like "in my opinion") because it is implied that as the writer you are expressing your point of view. However, like most rules of writing that teachers pass down this one can be taken too far. Often, using "I" will make your writing clearer, more accurate, and more meaningful than constructions that begin with generic subjects like "the reader," "the viewer" or "one." These terms can make it tempting to not justify our perspectives, because they can give the impression that all people see a subject in the same way; this simply isn't true, as evidenced by the fact that we can use these terms to make contradictory assertions: "the reader sees the poem as about the renewal and energy the life force brings to both people and nature"; "the reader views the poem as about the destructive consequences of time." Think of how much more accurate, meaningful, and clear it is for me to write: "when I was younger I understood the poem to be about the mystery and power that creates life in people and nature, but now (having just turned fifty) I see it as revealing the inevitable decay of both."

Those teachers who tell their students to never use "I" expect them to seem like objective and indifferent scholars. Yet according to Joan Didion, one of the most prolific and respected essayists of our time, the nature of writing is never like this:

In many ways writing is the act of saying *I*, of imposing oneself upon other people, of saying **listen to me, see it my way, change your mind.** It's an aggressive, even a hostile act. You can disguise its aggressiveness all you want with veils of subordinate clauses and qualifiers and tentative subjunctives, with ellipses and evasions with the whole manner of intimating rather than claiming, of alluding rather than stating but there's no getting around the fact that setting words on paper is the tactic of a secret bully, an invasion, an imposition of the writer's sensibility on the readers most private space.Joan Didion, "Why I Write" (New York Times Magazine, December 5, 1976).

Michel de Montaigne, the man credited with inventing the essay form, would clearly agree with Didion's assessment because he frequently used the personal pronoun to acknowledge the subjective nature of his perspectives. Consider this excerpt from "Of Idleness": "Lately when **I** returned to my home,…it seemed to me that **I** could do my mind no greater favor than to let it entertain itself in full idleness and stay and settle in itself, which **I** hoped it might do more easily now, having become weightier and riper with time."Michael de Montaigne, "Of Idleness" Montaigne's Essays and Selected Writing, trans. Donald M Frame (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1963), 7. Imagine if he had been expected to write these lines without the use of the personal pronoun: "when one returns to one's home, it seems to a person….". So don't be afraid of including that vertical line when it adds accuracy, clarity, or depth to your explanations.

Whether you choose to explain your subject through background information, cultural influence, personal experience, comparison and contrast with other subjects, or some combination of these, you should never ignore this area of analysis. Your interpretation of a subject may seem apparent to you, but your reader may see it very differently and not understand how you derived your perspectives. By providing explanations, you show that you took the time to pay careful attention. Though not everyone will agree with your point of view, most will at least respect it if they see that you derived your assertions from a close consideration of the subject and did not just rely on a gut reaction based on a brief glance.

Example 2.1.2.3.1.1

Think of an important event that happened to you, one that you can vividly recall. First consider how the details of it correspond with the Pentad. What generally happened? Which key people were involved? Through what means did it happen? When and where did it happen? And, finally, why did it happen? In answering the last question, you might think of different reasons; for instance, what motivated the actions at the time and what lessons it may have taught you down the road. Now think of how these various aspects relate to each other. For example, if the scene where it took place was unfamiliar to you at the time, how did that shape your response as an agent? Freewrite on these various aspects and on how each relates to the other and then consider how this process gave you a better understanding of both the event and its consequences.

Exercise 2.1.2.3.1.2

Look over the event that you just analyzed and write a brief letter about it to two different audiences: to a friend who experienced it with you and to a stodgy older person. Consider the difference in content, how you provide more or less background information to explain what happened and include various considerations as to why and how it happened. Notice, also, the difference in the overall tone, vocabulary and voice. Now think of how you might write the letter to a friend who was not there with you or to a more mellow open-minded older person.

Key takeaways

- A closer examination of a particular aspect of a subject can lead to a more thorough justification of how we derived our assertions from it.
- Background information can reveal the surface meaning of a subject but should not substitute for a more thorough justification of an interpretation.
- You can explain a subject further by comparing and contrasting it with others (actual or hypothetical), and by relating how your personal beliefs and experiences cause you to see it in a unique light.
- Understanding the needs of the audience who will be reading your essay can help you to determine what additional information you need to provide about both the subject and yourself.

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2.1.2.4: Feminism and Queer Theory

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2.1.2.4.1: Introduction- Feminist Movements

“History is also everybody talking at once, multiple rhythms being played simultaneously. The events and people we write about did not occur in isolation but in dialogue with a myriad of other people and events. In fact, at any given moment millions of people are all talking at once. As historians we try to isolate one conversation and to explore it, but the trick is then how to put that conversation in a context which makes evident its dialogue with so many others—how to make this one lyric stand alone and at the same time be in connection with all the other lyrics being sung.”

—Elsa Barkley Brown, “’What has happened here,’” pp. 297-298.

Feminist historian Elsa Barkley Brown reminds us that social movements and identities are not separate from each other, as we often imagine they are in contemporary society. She argues that we must have a relational understanding of social movements and identities within and between social movements—an understanding of the ways in which privilege and oppression are linked and how the stories of people of color and feminists fighting for justice have been historically linked through overlapping and sometimes conflicting social movements. In this chapter, we use a relational lens to discuss and make sense of feminist movements, beginning in the 19th Century up to the present time. Although we use the terms “first wave,” “second wave,” and “third wave,” characterizing feminist resistance in these “waves” is problematic, as it figures distinct “waves” of activism as prioritizing distinct issues in each time period, obscuring histories of feminist organizing in locations and around issues not discussed in the dominant “waves” narratives. Indeed, these “waves” are not mutually exclusive or totally separate from each other. In fact, they inform each other, not only in the way that contemporary feminist work has in many ways been made possible by earlier feminist activism, but also in the way that contemporary feminist activism informs the way we think of past feminist activism and feminisms. Nonetheless, understanding that the “wave” language has historical meaning, we use it throughout this section. Relatedly, although a focus on prominent leaders and events can obscure the many people and actions involved in everyday resistance and community organizing, we focus on the most well known figures, political events, and social movements, understanding that doing so advances one particular lens of history.

Additionally, feminist movements have generated, made possible, and nurtured feminist theories and feminist academic knowledge. In this way, feminist movements are fantastic examples of **praxis**—that is, they use critical reflection about the world to change it. It is because of various social movements—feminist activism, workers’ activism, and civil rights activism throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries—that “feminist history” is a viable field of study today. Feminist history is part of a larger historical project that draws on the experiences of traditionally ignored and disempowered groups (e.g., factory workers, immigrants, people of color, lesbians) to re-think and challenge the histories that have been traditionally written from the experiences and points of view of the powerful (e.g., colonizers, representatives of the state, the wealthy)—the histories we typically learn in high school textbooks.

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2.1.2.4.2: 19th Century Feminist Movements

What has come to be called the first wave of the feminist movement began in the mid 19th century and lasted until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, which gave women the right to vote. White middle-class first wave feminists in the 19th century to early 20th century, such as suffragist leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, primarily focused on women's suffrage (the right to vote), striking down coverture laws, and gaining access to education and employment. These goals are famously enshrined in the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments, which is the resulting document of the first women's rights convention in the United States in 1848.



"'Votes for Women' sellers, 1908."The Library of the London School of Economics and Political Science is in the Public Domain

Demanding women's enfranchisement, the abolition of coverture, and access to employment and education were quite radical demands at the time. These demands confronted the ideology of the **cult of true womanhood**, summarized in four key tenets—piety, purity, submission and domesticity—which held that white women were rightfully and naturally located in the private sphere of the household and not fit for public, political participation or labor in the waged economy. However, this emphasis on confronting the ideology of the cult of true womanhood was shaped by the white middle-class standpoint of the leaders of the movement. As we discussed in Chapter 3, the cult of true womanhood was an ideology of white womanhood that systematically denied black and working-class women access to the category of "women," because working-class and black women, by necessity, had to labor outside of the home.

The white middle-class leadership of the first wave movement shaped the priorities of the movement, often excluding the concerns and participation of working-class women and women of color. For example, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony formed the National Women Suffrage Association (NWSA) in order to break from other suffragists who supported the passage of the 15th Amendment, which would give African American men the right to vote before women. Stanton and Anthony privileged white women's rights instead of creating solidarities across race and class groups. Accordingly, they saw women's suffrage as the central goal of the women's rights movement. For example, in the first issue of her newspaper, *The Revolution*, Susan B. Anthony wrote, "We shall show that the ballot will secure for woman equal place and equal wages in the world of work; that it will open to her the schools, colleges, professions, and all the opportunities and advantages of life; that in her hand it will be a moral power to stay the tide of crime and misery on every side" (cited by Davis 1981: 73). Meanwhile, working-class women and women of color *knew* that mere access to voting did not overturn class and race inequalities. As feminist activist and scholar Angela Davis (1981) writes, working-class women "…were seldom moved by the suffragists' promise that the vote would permit them to become equal to their men—their exploited, suffering men" (Davis 1981: 74-5). Furthermore, the largest suffrage organization, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)—a descendent of the National Women Suffrage Association—barred the participation of Black women suffragists in its organization.

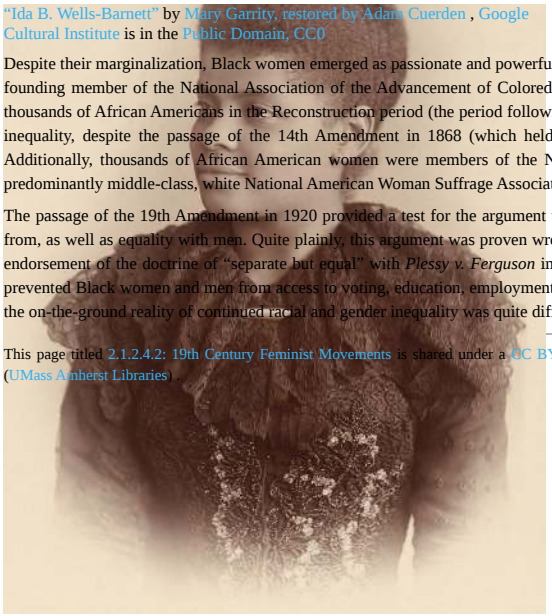
Although the first wave movement was largely defined and led by middle class white women, there was significant overlap between it and the **abolitionist movement**—which sought to end slavery—and the racial justice movement following the end of the Civil War. Historian Nancy Cott (2000) argues that, in some ways, both movements were largely about having self-ownership and control over one's body. For slaves, that meant the freedom from lifelong, unpaid, forced labor, as well as freedom from the sexual assault that many enslaved Black women suffered from their masters. For married white women, it meant recognition as people in the face of the law and the ability to refuse their husbands' sexual advances. White middle-class abolitionists often made analogies between slavery and marriage, as abolitionist Antoinette Brown wrote in 1853 that, "The wife owes service and labor to her husband as much and as absolutely as the slave does to his master" (Brown, cited. in Cott 2000: 64). This analogy between marriage and slavery had historical resonance at the time, but it problematically conflated the unique experience of the racialized oppression of slavery that African American women faced with a very different type of oppression that white women faced under coverture. This illustrates quite well Angela Davis' (1983) argument that while white women abolitionists and feminists of the time made important contributions to anti-slavery campaigns, they often failed to understand the uniqueness and severity of slave women's lives and the complex system of chattel slavery.

Black activists, writers, newspaper publishers, and academics moved between the racial justice and feminist movements, arguing for inclusion in the first wave feminist movement and condemning slavery and **Jim Crow laws** that maintained racial segregation. Sojourner Truth's famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech, which has been attributed to the Akron Women's Convention in 1851, captured this contentious linkage between the first wave women's movement and the abolitionist movement well. In her speech, she critiqued the exclusion of black women from the women's movement while simultaneously condemning the injustices of slavery:

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me!….I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?

Feminist historian Nell Painter (1996) has questioned the validity of this representation of the speech, arguing that white suffragists dramatically changed its content and title. This illustrates that certain social actors with power can construct the story and possibly misrepresent actors with less power and social movements.





"Ida B. Wells-Barnett" by Mary Garrity, restored by Adam Cuerden , Google Cultural Institute is in the Public Domain, CC0

Despite their marginalization, Black women emerged as passionate and powerful leaders. Ida B. Wells , a particularly influential activist who participated in the movement for women's suffrage, was a founding member of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a journalist, and the author of numerous pamphlets and articles exposing the violent lynching of thousands of African Americans in the Reconstruction period (the period following the Civil War). Wells argued that lynching in the Reconstruction Period was a systematic attempt to maintain racial inequality, despite the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868 (which held that African Americans were citizens and could not be discriminated against based on their race) (Wells 1893). Additionally, thousands of African American women were members of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, which was pro-suffrage, but did not receive recognition from the predominantly middle-class, white National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

The passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 provided a test for the argument that the granting of women's right to vote would give them unfettered access to the institutions they had been denied from, as well as equality with men. Quite plainly, this argument was proven wrong, as had been the case with the passage of the 18th Amendment followed by a period of backlash. The formal legal endorsement of the doctrine of "separate but equal" with *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896, the complex of Jim Crow laws in states across the country, and the unchecked violence of the Ku Klux Klan, prevented Black women and men from access to voting, education, employment, and public facilities. While equal rights existed in the abstract realm of the law under the 18th and 19th amendments, the on-the-ground reality of continued racial and gender inequality was quite different.

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2.1.2.4.3: Early to Late 20th Century Feminist Movements

Social movements are not static entities; they change according to movement gains or losses, and these gains or losses are often quite dependent on the political and social contexts they take place within. Following women's suffrage in 1920, feminist activists channeled their energy into institutionalized legal and political channels for effecting changes in labor laws and attacking discrimination against women in the workplace. The Women's Bureau—a federal agency created to craft policy according to women workers' needs—was established in 1920, and the YWCA, the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women (BPW) lobbied government officials to pass legislation that would legally prohibit discrimination against women in the workplace.

These organizations, however, did not necessarily agree on what equality looked like and how that would be achieved. For example, the BPW supported the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which they argued would effectively end employment discrimination against women. Meanwhile, the Women's Bureau and the YWCA opposed the ERA, arguing that it would damage the gains that organized labor had made already. The disagreement clearly brought into relief the competing agendas of defining working women first and foremost as women (who are also workers), versus defining working women first and foremost as workers (who are also women). Nearly a century after suffrage, the ERA has yet to be passed, and debate about its desirability even within the feminist movement continues.

While millions of women were already working in the United States at the beginning of World War II, labor shortages during World War II allowed millions of women to move into higher-paying factory jobs that had previously been occupied by men. Simultaneously, nearly 125,000 African American men fought in segregated units in World War II, often being sent on the front guard of the most dangerous missions (Zinn 2003). Japanese Americans whose families were interned also fought in the segregated units that had the war's highest casualty rates (Odo 2017; Takaki 2001). Following the end of the war, both the women who had worked in high-paying jobs in factories and the African American men who had fought in the war returned to a society that was still deeply segregated, and they were expected to return to their previous subordinate positions. Despite the conservative political climate of the 1950s, civil rights organizers began to challenge both the *de jure* segregation of Jim Crow laws and the *de facto* segregation experienced by African Americans on a daily basis. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954, which made "separate but equal" educational facilities illegal, provided an essential legal basis for activism against the institutionalized racism of Jim Crow laws. Eventually, the Black Freedom Movement**,** also known now as the civil rights movement would fundamentally change US society and inspire the second wave feminist movement and the radical political movements of the New Left (e.g., gay liberationism, black nationalism, socialist and anarchist activism, the environmentalist movement) in the late 1960s.

Although the stories and lives of the leaders of the civil rights movement are centered in popular representations, this grassroots mass movement was composed of working class African American men and women, white and African American students, and clergy that utilized the tactics of non-violent direct action (e.g., sit-ins, marches, and vigils) to demand full legal equality for African Americans in US society. For example, Rosa Parks—famous for refusing to give up her seat at the front of a Montgomery bus to a white passenger in December, 1955 and beginning the Montgomery Bus Boycott—was not acting as an isolated, frustrated woman when she refused to give up her seat at the front of the bus (as the typical narrative goes). According to feminist historians Ellen Debois and Lynn Dumenil (2005), Parks "had been active in the local NAACP for fifteen years, and her decision to make this stand against segregation was part of a lifelong commitment to racial justice. For some time NAACP leaders had wanted to find a good test case to challenge Montgomery's bus segregation in courts" (Debois and Dumenil, 2005: 576). Furthermore, the bus boycott that ensued after Parks' arrest and lasted for 381 days, until its success, was an organized political action involving both working-class African American and white women activists. The working-class Black women who relied on public transportation to go to their jobs as domestic servants in white households refused to use the bus system, and either walked to work or relied on rides to work from a carpool organized by women activists. Furthermore, the Women's Political Caucus of Montgomery distributed fliers promoting the boycott and had provided the groundwork and planning to execute the boycott before it began.





"Photograph of Rosa Parks with Dr. Martin Luther King jr. (ca. 1955)" by National Archives and Records Administration Records of the U.S. Information Agency Record Group 306 is in the Public Domain, CC0

Additionally, the sit-in movement was sparked by the Greensboro sit-ins, when four African American students in Greensboro, North Carolina, sat at and refused to leave a segregated lunch counter at a Woolworth's store in February of 1960. The number of students participating in the sit-ins increased as the days and weeks went on, and the sit-ins began to receive national media attention. Networks of student activists began sharing the successes of the tactic of the nonviolent sit-in, and began doing sit-ins in their own cities and towns around the country throughout the early 1960s.

"Ella Baker" by The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights is licensed under CC BY 3.0

Importantly, the sit-in movement led to the formation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), initiated by Ella Baker shortly after the first sit-in strikes in Greensboro. The student activists of SNCC took part in the Freedom Rides of 1961, with African American and white men and women participants, and sought to challenge the Jim Crow laws of the south, which the Interstate Commerce Commission had ruled to be unconstitutional. The freedom riders experienced brutal mob violence in Birmingham and were jailed, but the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and SNCC kept sending riders to fill the jails of Birmingham. SNCC also participated in Freedom Summer in 1964, which was a campaign that brought mostly white students from the north down to the south to support the work of Black southern civil rights activists for voting rights for African Americans. Once again, Freedom Summer activists faced mob violence, but succeeded in bringing national attention to southern states' foot-dragging in terms of allowing African Americans the legal rights they had won through activism and grassroots organizing.



"Freedom Riders attacked" by Unknown, The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities is in the Public Domain

SNCC's non-hierarchical structure gave women chances to participate in the civil rights movement in ways previously blocked to them. However, the deeply embedded sexism of the surrounding culture still seeped into civil rights organizations, including SNCC. Although women played pivotal roles as organizers and activists throughout the civil rights movement, men occupied the majority of formal leadership roles in the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), the NAACP, and CORE. Working with SNCC, Black women activists such as Fannie Lou Hamer and Diane Nash became noted activists and leaders within the civil rights movement in the early 1960s. Despite this, women within SNCC were often expected to do "women's work" (i.e., housework and secretarial work). White women SNCC activists Casey Hayden and Mary King critiqued this reproduction of gendered roles within the movement and called for dialogue about sexism within the civil rights movement in a memo that circulated through SNCC in 1965, titled "Sex and Caste: A Kind of Memo." The memo became an influential document for the birth of **the second wave feminist movement**, a movement focused generally on fighting patriarchal structures of power, and specifically on combating occupational sex segregation in employment and fighting for reproductive rights for women. However, this was not the only source of second wave feminism, and white women were not the only women spearheading feminist movements. As historian Becky Thompson (2002) argues, in the mid and late 1960s, Latina women, African American women, and Asian American women were

developing multiracial feminist organizations that would become important players within the U.S. second wave feminist movement.

In many ways, the second wave feminist movement was influenced and facilitated by the activist tools provided by the civil rights movement. Drawing on the stories of women who participated in the civil rights movement, historians Ellen Debois and Lynn Dumenil (2005) argue that women's participation in the civil rights movement allowed them to challenge gender norms that held that women belonged in the private sphere, and not in politics or activism. Not only did many women who were involved in the civil rights movement become activists in the second wave feminist movement, they also employed tactics that the civil rights movement had used, including marches and non-violent direct action. Additionally, the Civil Rights Act of 1964—a major legal victory for the civil rights movement—not only prohibited employment discrimination based on race, but Title VII of the Act also prohibited sex discrimination. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—the federal agency created to enforce Title VII—largely ignored women's complaints of employment discrimination, 15 women and one man organized to form the National Organization of Women (NOW), which was modeled after the NAACP. NOW focused its attention and organizing on passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), fighting sex discrimination in education, and defending *Roe v. Wade*—the Supreme Court decision of 1973 that struck down state laws that prohibited abortion within the first three months of pregnancy.



"bell hooks" by Cmongirl is in the Public Domain, CC0

Although the second wave feminist movement challenged gendered inequalities and brought women's issues to the forefront of national politics in the late 1960s and 1970s, the movement also reproduced race and sex inequalities. Black women writers and activists such as Alice Walker, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins developed **Black feminist thought** as a critique of the ways in which second wave feminists often ignored racism and class oppression and how they uniquely impact women and men of color and working-class people. One of the first formal Black feminist organizations was the Combahee River Collective, formed in 1974. Black feminist bell hooks (1984) argued that feminism cannot just be a fight to make women equal with men, because such a fight does not acknowledge that all men are not equal in a capitalist, racist, and homophobic society. Thus, hooks and other Black feminists argued that sexism cannot be separated from racism, classism and homophobia, and that these systems of domination overlap and reinforce each other. Therefore, she argued, you cannot fight sexism without fighting racism, classism, and homophobia. Importantly, black feminism argues that an intersectional perspective that makes visible and critiques multiple sources of oppression and inequality also inspires coalitional activism that brings people together across race, class, gender, and sexual identity lines.

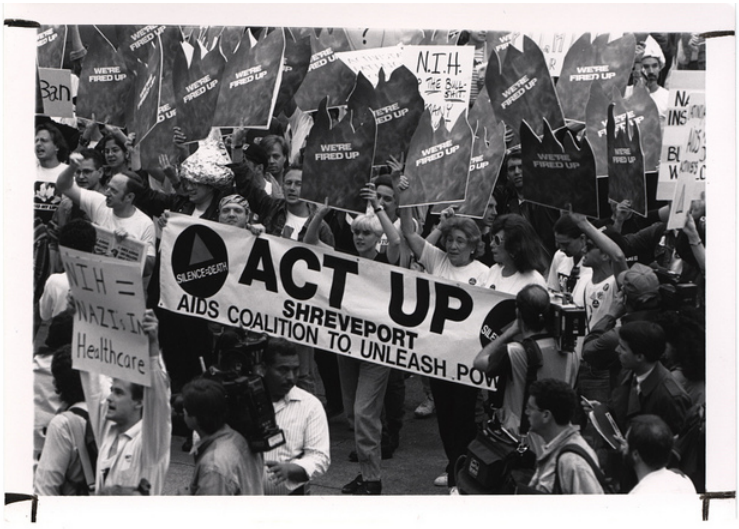
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2.1.2.4.4: Third Wave and Queer Feminist Movements

"We are living in a world for which old forms of activism are not enough and today's activism is about creating coalitions between communities."

—Angela Davis, cited by Hernandez and Rehman in *Colonize This!*

Third wave feminism is, in many ways, a hybrid creature. It is influenced by second wave feminism, Black feminisms, transnational feminisms, Global South feminisms, and queer feminism. This hybridity of third wave activism comes directly out of the experiences of feminists in the late 20th and early 21st centuries who have grown up in a world that supposedly does not need social movements because "equal rights" for racial minorities, sexual minorities, and women have been guaranteed by law in most countries. The gap between law and reality—between the abstract proclamations of states and concrete lived experience—however, reveals the necessity of both old and new forms of activism. In a country where white women are paid only 75.3% of what white men are paid for the same labor (Institute for Women's Policy Research 2016), where police violence in black communities occurs at much higher rates than in other communities, where 58% of transgender people surveyed experienced mistreatment from police officers in the past year (James et. al 2016), where 40% of homeless youth organizations' clientele are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (Durso and Gates 2012), where people of color—on average—make less income and have considerably lower amounts of wealth than white people, and where the military is the most funded institution by the government, feminists have increasingly realized that a **coalitional politics** that organizes with other groups based on their shared (but differing) experiences of oppression, rather than their specific identity, is absolutely necessary. Thus, Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake (1997) argue that a crucial goal for the third wave is "the development of modes of thinking that can come to terms with the multiple, constantly shifting bases of oppression in relation to the multiple, interpenetrating axes of identity, and the creation of a coalitional politics based on these understandings" (Heywood and Drake 1997: 3).



The ACT UP demonstrations at NIH included various groups from different parts of the United States. This photograph shows the Shreveport, Louisiana ACT UP group at the NIH. "ACT UP Demonstration at NIH" by NIH History Office is in the Public Domain, CC0

In the 1980s and 1990s, third wave feminists took up activism in a number of forms. Beginning in the mid 1980s, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) began organizing to press an unwilling US government and medical establishment to develop affordable drugs for people with HIV/AIDS. In the latter part of the 1980s, a more radical subset of individuals began to articulate a **queer** politics, explicitly reclaiming a derogatory term often used against gay men and lesbians, and distancing themselves from the gay and lesbian rights movement, which they felt mainly reflected the interests of white, middle-class gay men and lesbians. As discussed at the beginning of this text, queer also described anti-categorical sexualities. The queer turn sought to develop more radical political perspectives and more inclusive sexual cultures and communities, which aimed to welcome and support transgender and gender non-conforming people and people of color. This was motivated by an intersectional critique of the existing hierarchies within sexual liberation movements, which marginalized individuals within already sexually marginalized

groups. In this vein, Lisa Duggan (2002) coined the term **homonormativity**, which describes the normalization and depoliticization of gay men and lesbians through their assimilation into capitalist economic systems and domesticity—individuals who were previously constructed as "other." These individuals thus gained entrance into social life at the expense and continued marginalization of queers who were non-white, disabled, trans, single or non-monogamous, middle-class, or non-western. Critiques of homonormativity were also critiques of gay identity politics, which left out concerns of many gay individuals who were marginalized within gay groups. Akin to homonormativity, Jasbir Puar coined the term **homonationalism,** which describes the white nationalism taken up by queers, which sustains racist and xenophobic discourses by constructing immigrants, especially Muslims, as homophobic (Puar 2007). **Identity politics** refers to organizing politically around the experiences and needs of people who share a particular identity. The move from political association with others who share a particular identity to political association with those who have differing identities, but share similar, but differing experiences of oppression (coalitional politics), can be said to be a defining characteristic of the third wave.

Another defining characteristic of the third wave is the development of new tactics to politicize feminist issues and demands. For instance, ACT UP began to use powerful street theater that brought the death and suffering of people with HIV/AIDS to the streets and to the politicians and pharmaceutical companies that did not seem to care that thousands and thousands of people were dying. They staged die-ins , inflated massive condoms, and occupied politicians' and pharmaceutical executives' offices. Their confrontational tactics would be emulated and picked up by anti-globalization activists and the radical Left throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Queer Nation was formed in 1990 by ACT UP activists, and used the tactics developed by ACT UP in order to challenge homophobic violence and heterosexism in mainstream US society.



A mass "die-in" on the lawn of Bldg. 1 closed the demonstration as ranks of uniformed officers, some on horseback, protected NIH headquarters during the "Storm the NIH" demonstration on May 21, 1990. "ACT UP Demonstration on the lawn of Building 1" by NIH History Office is in the Public Domain, CC0

Around the same time as ACT UP was beginning to organize in the mid-1980s, **sex-positive feminism** came into currency among feminist activists and theorists. Amidst what is known now as the "Feminist Sex Wars" of the 1980s, sex-positive feminists argued that sexual liberation, within a sex-positive culture that values consent between partners, would liberate not only women, but also men. Drawing from a social constructionist perspective, sex-positive feminists such as cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin (1984) argued that no sexual act has an inherent meaning, and that not all sex, or all representations of sex, were inherently degrading to women. In fact, they argued, sexual politics and sexual liberation are key sites of struggle for white women, women of color, gay men, lesbians, queers, and transgender people—groups of people who have historically been stigmatized for their sexual identities or sexual practices. Therefore, a key aspect of queer and feminist subcultures is to create sex-positive spaces and communities that

not only valorize sexualities that are often stigmatized in the broader culture, but also place sexual consent at the center of sex-positive spaces and communities. Part of this project of creating sex-positive, feminist and queer spaces is creating media messaging that attempts to both consolidate feminist communities and create knowledge from and for oppressed groups.

In a media-savvy generation, it is not surprising that cultural production is a main avenue of activism taken by contemporary activists. Although some commentators have deemed the third wave to be "post-feminist" or "not feminist" because it often does not utilize the activist forms (e.g., marches, vigils, and policy change) of the second wave movement (Sommers, 1994), the creation of alternative forms of culture in the face of a massive corporate media industry can be understood as quite political. For example, the Riot Grrrl movement, based in the Pacific Northwest of the US in the early 1990s, consisted of do-it-yourself bands predominantly composed of women, the creation of independent record labels, feminist 'zines, and art. Their lyrics often addressed gendered sexual violence, sexual liberationism, heteronormativity, gender normativity, police brutality, and war. Feminist news websites and magazines have also become important sources of feminist analysis on current events and issues. Magazines such as *Bitch* and *Ms.*, as well as online blog collectives such as *Feministing* and the *Feminist Wire* function as alternative sources of feminist knowledge production. If we consider the creation of lives on our own terms and the struggle for autonomy as fundamental feminist acts of resistance, then creating alternative culture on our own terms should be considered a feminist act of resistance as well.

As we have mentioned earlier, feminist activism and theorizing by people outside the US context has broadened the feminist frameworks for analysis and action. In a world characterized by global capitalism, transnational immigration, and a history of colonialism that has still has effects today, **transnational feminism** is a body of theory and activism that highlights the connections between sexism, racism, classism, and imperialism. In "Under Western Eyes," an article by transnational feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), Mohanty critiques the way in which much feminist activism and theory has been created from a white, North American standpoint that has often exoticized "3rd world" women or ignored the needs and political situations of women in the Global South. Transnational feminists argue that Western feminist projects to "save" women in another region do not actually liberate these women, since this approach constructs the women as passive victims devoid of agency to save themselves. These "saving" projects are especially problematic when they are accompanied by Western military intervention. For instance, in the war on Afghanistan, begun shortly after 9/11 in 2001, U.S. military leaders and George Bush often claimed to be waging the war to "save" Afghani women from their patriarchal and domineering men. This crucially ignores the role of the West—and the US in particular—in supporting Islamic fundamentalist regimes in the 1980s. Furthermore, it positions women in Afghanistan as passive victims in need of Western intervention—in a way strikingly similar to the victimizing rhetoric often used to talk about "victims" of gendered violence (discussed in an earlier section). Therefore, transnational feminists challenge the notion—held by many feminists in the West—that any area of the world is inherently more patriarchal or sexist than the West because of its culture or religion through arguing that we need to understand how Western imperialism, global capitalism, militarism, sexism, and racism have created conditions of inequality for women around the world.

In conclusion, third wave feminism is a vibrant mix of differing activist and theoretical traditions. Third wave feminism's insistence on grappling with multiple points-of-view, as well as its persistent refusal to be pinned down as representing just one group of people or one perspective, may be its greatest strong point. Similar to how queer activists and theorists have insisted that "queer" is and should be open-ended and never set to mean one thing, third wave feminism's complexity, nuance, and adaptability become assets in a world marked by rapidly shifting political situations. The third wave's insistence on coalitional politics as an alternative to identity-based politics is a crucial project in a world that is marked by fluid, multiple, overlapping inequalities.

In conclusion, this unit has developed a relational analysis of feminist social movements, from the first wave to the third wave, while understanding the limitations of categorizing resistance efforts within an oversimplified framework of three distinct "waves." With such a relational lens, we are better situated to understand how the tactics and activities of one social movement can influence others. This lens also facilitates an understanding of how racialized, gendered, and classed exclusions and privileges lead to the splintering of social movements and social movement organizations. This type of intersectional analysis is at the heart not only of feminist activism but of feminist scholarship. The vibrancy and longevity of feminist movements might even be attributed to this intersectional reflexivity—or, the critique of race, class, and gender dynamics in feminist movements. The emphasis on coalitional politics and making connections between several movements is another crucial contribution of feminist activism and scholarship. In the 21st century, feminist movements confront an array of structures of power: global capitalism, the prison system, war, racism, ableism, heterosexism, and transphobia, among others. What kind of world do we wish to create and live in? What alliances and

coalitions will be necessary to challenge these structures of power? How do feminists, queers, people of color, trans people, disabled people, and working-class people go about challenging these structures of power? These are among some of the questions that feminist activists are grappling with now, and their actions point toward a deepening commitment to an intersectional politics of social justice and praxis.

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2.1.2.4.5: Feminist Theory- An Overview

Let's whet our appetite for literature in a different, maybe more peculiar way. Let's read a different text, this one from a local Wisconsin cookbook, the *Amberg Centennial 1890–1990 Cookbook*.American Legion Auxiliary #428, *Amberg Centennial 1890–1990 Cookbook* (n.p.: n.d.).The two recipes come from the section "Game."

Duck with Wild Rice

2 ducks	1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 onion, chopped	1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 (5 ounce) package wild rice	1 (8 ounce) can mushrooms and liquid
½ cup butter	½ cup flour
1 ½ cups half and half	1 (4 ounce) package slivered almonds, toasted
2 ribs celery, chopped	salt and pepper to taste

Boil duck, onion, and celery until tender. Remove meat from bones. Set aside. Cook rice. Set aside. Melt butter and sauté onion. Stir in flour and half-and-half to make cream sauce. Add parsley and seasonings. Add cooked duck, rice, mushrooms, and almonds to cream sauce. Bake mixture in a casserole at 350° for 30–45 minutes. Serves 6–8.

—Mrs. Charles T. Dekuester (Doris Van Vleit)

Bessie's Birds

12 birds (dove or quail)	1 cup beef consommé
1 cup uncooked rice	1 (10–3/4 ounce) can onion soup
¼ cup chopped bell pepper	½ cup flour
¼ cup chopped onion	salt and pepper
butter or bacon drippings	

Sauté salted and floured birds in small amount of butter or bacon drippings to brown well. Put rice in bottom of buttered oblong casserole dish. Place birds on top of rice. Sprinkle peppers and onion on top. Pour consommé and onion soup over casserole. Cover casserole with aluminum foil and bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Serves 6.

Chicken may be substituted for the birds.

—Mrs. Hugh Guy (Viola Barette)

CLASS PROCESS

1. Put students in groups of three or four.
2. Have them read the recipes carefully.
3. Have them interpret the recipes as they would examine a story or poem.
4. What "themes" can they find in the recipe text?
5. Generate class discussion, as you are guided by the discussion following the excerpt.

The recipes reflect a particular view of women and their role in the domestic space. In other words, the woman's domain is in the house, her workspace the kitchen, where she will cook for her husband (and by extension the children). Notice that each recipe privileges the male name, with the woman's maiden name—her original name and identity—put in parenthesis. Even the use of *Mrs.* denotes her married status, whereby *Mr.* does not tell us the married status of the male. We are in the realm of **patriarchy**, the condition that demonstrates male domination over women. The recipes are even more interesting, for the section of this cookbook is "Game," further suggesting particular gender roles: men, the sportsmen, go hunting for this game, while the women, remaining at

home, cook up that game for the family. If we interpret these recipes as we might a piece of literature, we can identify particular themes that represent feminist criticism: women are inferior to men in patriarchy; women's space is the private place of domesticity, the man's space is public (in this case the rugged wild); the woman's identity is determined by her husband's identity (she, like Eve, is dependent on her husband's rib, so to speak).

Now let's look at a literary use of the kitchen as a domestic space. Here is the cast of characters and opening set description for Susan Glaspell's one-act play, *Trifles* (1916). The play was first performed by the Provincetown Players in Massachusetts, with Glaspell playing the role of Mrs. Hale. A year later, Glaspell turned the play into a short story, "A Jury of Her Peers," partly to reach a larger reading audience. The inspiration for the play came from a murder reported in the *Des Moines Register*.Articles on case: www.midnightassassin.com/sgarticles.html.

- GEORGE HENDERSON (County Attorney)
- HENRY PETERS (Sheriff)
- LEWIS HALE, A neighboring farmer
- MRS PETERS
- MRS HALE

SCENE: *The kitchen is the now abandoned farmhouse of* JOHN WRIGHT, *a gloomy kitchen, and left without having been put in order—unwashed pans under the sink, a loaf of bread outside the bread-box, a dish-towel on the table—other signs of incompleted work. At the rear the outer door opens and the* SHERIFF *comes in followed by the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *and* HALE. *The* SHERIFF *and*HALE *are men in middle life, the* COUNTY ATTORNEY *is a young man; all are much bundled up and go at once to the stove. They are followed by the two women—the* SHERIFF*'s wife first; she is a slight wiry woman, a thin nervous face.* MRS HALE *is larger and would ordinarily be called more comfortable looking, but she is disturbed now and looks fearfully about as she enters. The women have come in slowly, and stand close together near the door.*Susan Glaspell, *Trifles* (1916; Project Gutenberg, 2011), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10623/10623-h/10623-h.htm#TRIFLES.

The following excerpt is the opening of the short story "A Jury of Her Peers":

WHEN Martha Hale opened the storm-door and got a cut of the north wind, she ran back for her big woolen scarf. As she hurriedly wound that round her head her eye made a scandalized sweep of her kitchen. It was no ordinary thing that called her away—it was probably farther from ordinary than anything that had ever happened in Dickson County. But what her eye took in was that her kitchen was in no shape for leaving; her bread all ready for mixing, half the flour sifted and half unsifted.

She hated to see things half done; but she had been at that when the team from town stopped to get Mr. Hale, and then the sheriff came running in to say his wife wished Mrs. Hale would come too—adding, with a grin, that he guessed she was getting scarey and wanted another woman along. So she had dropped everything right where it was.Susan Glaspell, "A Jury of Her Peers," in *The Best Short Stories of 1917*, ed. Edward J. O'Brien (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1918; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1996), etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin...ublic&part=all.

CLASS PROCESS

1. Have the students read *Trifles*.
2. Ask the students to make a chart on a piece of paper: label the left side "men," the right side "women."
3. Students should then fill in the chart: what symbols are associated with the men and women?

When we turn to the *Trifles* example, we see how a writer uses this domestic space and its implications to create a symbolic statement about gender. The men all have first and last names and are given an occupation (attorney, sheriff, or farmer); the women are only known by their husband's names—they are not even given first names. This naming becomes important in the play, for the suspected murderer Minnie Wright is referred to as Minnie Foster by Mrs. Peters and Mrs. Hale, suggesting that she had lost her identity by marrying her husband, who was a cold and cruel man, even preventing her from singing in the choir or having a telephone in the house (see Gretchen Panzer's sample paper on voice in *The Great Gatsby* later in the chapter).

Furthermore, the setting of the play is important—all the action on stage takes place in the kitchen, a kitchen that is in disarray. The men, of course, view the messy kitchen as a fault of Minnie's: she just isn't a very good housewife and housekeeper, for that is her primary role according to the men. To be a housewife, in addition, means that women are only concerned with "trifles," insignificant things. Later in the play and the short story we find out that Minnie's canning—her preserves—have been ruined

because the jars have frozen and burst. Again, the men see this as sloppy housekeeping, while the women view the preserves as Minnie's hard work to care for her family. The idea of "preserves" or "preservation" becomes a central theme in Glaspell's work, for Minnie must preserve her dignity as a woman, even if it means that she must murder her husband. The great irony of the play and short story is that the women discover the evidence—the strangled bird—that would be enough to convict Minnie of murder, but they withhold this evidence, thus implying that Minnie will be set free. The women create their own justice system, becoming a jury of their peers: women.

Feminism is a powerful literary theory that is dedicated to social and political change. "How to define feminism? Ah, that is the question," a befuddled Hamlet might ask. A useful definition can be found in Michael Kimmel and Thomas Mosmiller's *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776–1990: A Documentary History* (1992). They focus on four central points:

1. There is evidence that women are treated differently and unequally.
2. Women are not treated equally in the private and public sphere.
3. If these points are true, then that's wrong and becomes a moral problem.
4. Thus feminism is a commitment to change.Michael Kimmel and Thomas Mosmiller, *Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776–1990 a Documentary History* (Boston: Beacon, 1992).

CLASS PROCESS

1. On the blackboard or whiteboard, have the students generate examples for points 1 and 2 of the list. This should lead to a spirited discussion.

Two other definitions will be useful to you: Barbara Smith argues that "feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free *all* women: women of color, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, Jewish women, lesbians, old women—as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement."from *A History of U.S. Feminisms* by Kory Dicker (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2008), p. 7. Noted feminist author bell hooks adds, "Feminism is a struggle to end sexist oppression. Therefore it is necessarily a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels, as well as a commitment to reorganize society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires."bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto, 2000).

Feminist literary criticism is also about this commitment to equality, to change, and it works its way by arguing that literature is a powerful cultural force that mirrors gender attitudes. Feminist literary criticism can be categorized into three stages: patriarchal criticism, gynocriticism, and feminine writing.

Patriarchal criticism examines the prejudices against women by male writers. Such criticism analyzes the way that canonical authors—mostly men—create images of women. For example, Gretchen Panzer's sample paper in this chapter explores how F. Scott Fitzgerald silences Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby*, further reinforcing the notion that this great American novel depicts women in demeaning ways.F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Scribner, 2003). This criticism is often focused on close textual study since it will examine how men and women are depicted in literary texts. Patriarchal criticism will be central to this chapter.

Gynocriticism is concerned with women writers, particularly in the ways that women writers have become included within the canon. In American literature, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* are classic examples;Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, 2nd ed., ed. Nancy A. Walker (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000); Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000). these texts, now part of the canon of American literature, have only been seen as such for the past twenty-five years or so. Another interesting example is the evolution of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, which reflects the insertion of women into the canon. The edition for 1968,M. H. Abrams, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1968). which covers the Middle Ages, the seventeenth century, the Restoration and the eighteenth century, the Romantic period, the Victorian age, and the twentieth century, includes no women. That's right—not one single woman! The latest (eighth) edition of this anthology,Stephen Greenblatt and M. H. Abrams, eds., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996). published thirty-eight years later, includes the following women writers:

- *Middle Ages*: Marie De France and Margery Kempe

- *Sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*: Queen Elizabeth, Mary (Sydney) Herbert, Aemilia Lanyer, Mary Wroth, Katherine Philips, and Margaret Cavendish
- *Restoration and eighteenth century*: Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Frances Burney
- *Romantic period*: Anna Letitia Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth, and Felicia Dorothea Hemans
- *Victorian age*: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Christina Rossetti
- *Twentieth century*: Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, Jean Rhys, Nadine Gordimer, Alice Munro, and Anne Carson

What does it mean, consequently, when there are no representations of women? Historically, if women didn't exist in the canon, then we did not—we could not—study them. But with the rise of the field of women's studies in the 1960s, which introduced the idea of feminist literary criticism, we now value the study of women and their accomplishments, as well as thinking about how gender is constructed and perpetuated generally. This evolution about women and literature is mirrored in the evolving contents of the Norton anthology, which also reflects the evolving canon that is more inclusive, particularly to women writers.

Feminine writing explores the notion that women may write differently than men, suggesting that there may be a "women's writing" that is an alternative to male writing. Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977)Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998). traces women's writing into three stages. The first stage is **Imitation** or **Feminine** (1840–80), where women imitated men. The classic examples of this are Charlotte and Emily Brontë (of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* fame, respectively), who took on male names—Currer Bell and Acton Bell.Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, ed. Richard J. Dunn (New York: Norton, 2001); Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Richard J. Dunn (New York: Norton, 2003). To give another famous example, George Eliot, who wrote the Victorian classic *Middlemarch*, was actually Mary Ann Evans.George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. Bert G. Hornback (New York: Norton, 2000). The second stage of women's writing is **Protest** or **Feminist** (1880–1920), which sees women becoming much more political as writers, reacting directly to male domination in society and literature. Kate Chopin is an example of this stage, as is Virginia Woolf. Finally, the third stage, **Self-Discovery** or **Female** (1920–), becomes more radical as women turn inward toward the female, toward the body, creating works that mirror a writing particular to women.

As you can see, to narrowly define feminist literary criticism is difficult, for there are a myriad of approaches to take. Feminism is often referred to in the plural—feminisms—because there is such diversity within feminism about core terms and philosophies. A useful starting point is *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, edited by Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl.Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl, eds., *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, rev. ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997). You can examine the table of contents at www.amazon.com/Feminisms-Anthology -Literary-Theory-Criticism/dp/0813523893#reader_0813523893.

A look at this table of contents will show you the complexity of feminist literary criticism and provide you with some ideas to focus your feminist paper on.

Your Process

1. Choose a literary work to examine: either a male or female writer.
2. Look through the table of contents of *Feminisms* and choose three chapter areas that might lead to a focus for your paper.
3. Write down several possible working thesis ideas for your paper.
4. Remember, you may decide to focus your paper on gender criticism or masculinity studies, which are defined in the Key Terms.

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2.1.2.4.6: Gender Criticism and Queer Theory

Gender criticism is an extension of feminist literary criticism, focusing not just on women but on the construction of gender and sexuality, especially LGBTQ issues, which gives rise to queer theory. Gender criticism suggests that power is not just top down or patriarchal—a man dominating a woman; it suggests that power is multifaceted and never just in one direction. For example, in the nineteenth century while many women argued for suffrage (or the right to vote), at the same time those very women who were white could be dominating or holding power over African Americans in the American slave system. In the nineteenth century, many white women were pictured as angelic, ideal, and the angel in the house who protected men from the cruel world of commerce (see Coventry Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House*Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*, The Victorian Web, http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/patmore/angel. at http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/patmore/angel). But that idealized view of women is incomplete given that we know from diaries and other historical evidence that white women could have sexual longing (shocking!), treat others barbarically, or even be sadistic and murderous. Thus identity is complicated and rich, involving much more than gender alone. It is the intersection of a variety of things—including geographical location, age, race, class, nationality, ability, and sexuality as well as gender—that make up our identities.

A key to gender criticism, consequently, is that gender is a socially constructed ideology that is reflected in our culture and political, social, economic, educational, and religious institutions and is coded in the very language we use. For example, the adjective *queer*, the *Oxford English Dictionary*(*OED*) tells us, originally meant something "strange, odd, peculiar, eccentric," the earliest use being from 1513.*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "queer." Not until 1894, partly a result of the sodomy trial of Oscar Wilde, where he was convicted of being a homosexual and sentenced to prison,"Famous World Trials: The Trials of Oscar Wilde, 1895," University of Missouri–Kansas City, http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/wilde/wilde.htm. did the word *queer* (as an adjective or a noun) come to be associated with homosexuality, and then in a strictly derogatory sense.

Like feminism, gender criticism examines how gender is caught between the notion of **essentialism**—the belief that women are naturally and fundamentally different than men based on their biological sex, that nonheterosexual identities are deviant from the biological heteronormative distinction between male and female—and **constructionism**—the belief that gender is not essentialist or based on biological nature but is constructed through culture. One of the most famous scenes from literature depicting this essentialism versus constructionism debate comes from Mark Twain's classic *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. At the end of chapter 10, Jim and Huck determine that the best way to find information so that the two can avoid capture is to have Huck put on a disguise and go into the nearby town:

"Next morning I said it was getting slow and dull, and I wanted to get a stirring up some way. I said I reckoned I would slip over the river and find out what was going on. Jim liked that notion; but he said I must go in the dark and look sharp. Then he studied it over and said, couldn't I put on some of them old things and dress up like a girl? That was a good notion, too. So we shortened up one of the calico gowns, and I turned up my trouser-legs to my knees and got into it. Jim hitched it behind with the hooks, and it was a fair fit. I put on the sun-bonnet and tied it under my chin, and then for a body to look in and see my face was like looking down a joint of stove-pipe. Jim said nobody would know me, even in the daytime, hardly. I practiced around all day to get the hang of the things, and by and by I could do pretty well in them, only Jim said I didn't walk like a girl; and he said I must quit pulling up my gown to get at my britches-pocket. I took notice, and done better."Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1912; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1995), chap. 10, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Huc.html.

In the next chapter, Huck, dressed as a girl, meets Mrs. Judith Loftus. Huck tells her his name is Sarah Williams, and Mrs. Loftus asks Huck-Sarah to help her with a few tasks, such as throwing a piece of lead at a rat and helping with threading a needle. When she tosses an extra piece of lead to Huck-Sarah, his true identity as a boy is exposed. After Huck tells Mrs. Loftus that his name is George, she criticizes his attempt to fool her:

"Well, try to remember it, George. Don't forget and tell me it's Elexander before you go, and then get out by saying it's George Elexander when I catch you. And don't go about women in that old calico. You do a girl tolerable poor, but you might fool men, maybe. Bless you, child, when you set out to thread a needle don't hold the thread still and fetch the needle up to it; hold the needle still and poke the thread at it; that's the way a woman most always does, but a man always does t'other way. And when you throw at a rat or anything, hitch yourself up a tiptoe and fetch your hand up over your head as awkward as you can, and miss your rat about six or seven foot. Throw stiff-armed from the shoulder, like there was a pivot there for it to turn on, like a girl; not from the wrist and elbow, with your arm out to one side, like a boy. And, mind you, when a girl tries to catch anything in her lap she throws

her knees apart; she don't clap them together, the way you did when you catched the lump of lead. Why, I spotted you for a boy when you was threading the needle; and I contrived the other things just to make certain. Now trot along to your uncle, Sarah Mary Williams George Elexander Peters, and if you get into trouble you send word to Mrs. Judith Loftus, which is me, and I'll do what I can to get you out of it. Keep the river road all the way, and next time you tramp take shoes and socks with you. The river road's a rocky one, and your feet'll be in a condition when you get to Goshen, I reckon."Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1912; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1995), chap. 11, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Twa2Huc.html.

Mrs. Judith Loftus views sexuality as essentialist—there are real, innate differences between a girl and boy, which perpetuate the stereotypes about gender. Another way to view her comments, however, is to acknowledge that gender is a performance, a role that we play or construct. If we read Judith's comments in this light, then *Huckleberry Finn* becomes a more enlightened text on gender than one might initially think.

Just as we think gender is constructed, queer theorists argue that sexuality is constructed and not just "natural" as well. Lady Gaga sings, "Baby I was born this way," but others, like Adrienne Rich, argue that sexuality exists on a continuum and is more fluid than a binary equation of straight or gay.Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 227–54. Rich suggests that "**compulsory heterosexuality**," the drive to make everything heterosexual, shapes our sexual socialization to such an extent that the only choice is to be straight.Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993). Building from Sigmund Freud's ideas on sexuality, sex researcher Alfred Kinsey created the Kinsey scale, which suggests that human sexuality exists on a 0–6 scale, with 0 being exclusively homosexual and 6 being exclusively heterosexual. In all his research, he discovered that most people were somewhere around a 3 (bisexual) and that few people were at either ends of the straight/gay spectrum."Kinsey's Heterosexual-Homosexual Rating Scale," Kinsey Institute, http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/research/ak-hhscale.html.

In addition, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, a prominent queer theorist, suggests culture is so **heteronormative** (making heterosexuality the norm) that gay characters—and, particularly, the affection between men in literature—is rendered invisible and must be routed through a character of the opposite gender to be acceptable. A classic example comes from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850); Hester becomes the target as Dimmesdale and Chillingworth work about their male desire by competing for Hester.Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850; Project Gutenberg, 2005), http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/33. In her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), Sedgwick coins the term "**homosocial desire**" to refer to relationships between men that are not explicitly sexual, but could actually have erotic components if allowed to exist.Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). Homosocial worlds include all-male contexts like boarding schools, the military, and sports.Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985). The recent idea of the "bromance" from films such as *I Love You, Man* (2009) is an example of homosocial expression. It is no accident that we often laugh when using the term "bromance" because it seems ludicrous, given the norms of masculinity in our culture, that men might love one another and express that love as women in female friendships often do. It would require heterosexual men to potentially break out of certain norms of how they are supposed to act. We'll discuss this more in a minute when we talk about masculinity.

This idea that some expressions or identities are invisible and then visible once you have a particular lens to see them (theorists call this ideology) is as important to feminist literary criticism as it is to gender and sexuality criticism. What if we look at Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* anew in a way that focuses on how men might care for and love one another as they are sequestered on this famous, frightening ship, the *Pequod*. Chapter 94, "A Squeeze of the Hand," finds the whalemen breaking up the spermaceti from a just-harvested sperm whale. Spermaceti is the wax or oil in the skull of the sperm whale, and this oil was valuable and used to make candles and various ointments. Suddenly, Melville's description of the squeezing of the whale sperm takes on an erotic meaning perhaps previously unnoticed. This interpretation changes the way we may traditionally read the book:

Squeeze! squeeze! squeeze! all the morning long; I squeezed that sperm till I myself almost melted into it; I squeezed that sperm till a strange sort of insanity came over me; and I found myself unwittingly squeezing my co-laborers' hands in it, mistaking their hands for the gentle globules. Such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this avocation beget; that at last I was continually squeezing their hands, and looking up into their eyes sentimentally; as much as to say,—Oh! my dear fellow beings,

why should we longer cherish any social acerbities, or know the slightest ill-humor or envy! Come; let us squeeze hands all round; nay, let us all squeeze ourselves into each other; let us squeeze ourselves universally into the very milk and sperm of kindness.Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Harper, 1851; Power Moby-Dick, 1998), http://www.powermobydick.com/Moby094.html.

After this paragraph, Ishmael states,

Would that I could keep squeezing that sperm for ever! For now, since by many prolonged, repeated experiences, I have perceived that in all cases man must eventually lower, or at least shift, his conceit of attainable felicity; not placing it anywhere in the intellect or the fancy; but in the wife, the heart, the bed, the table, the saddle, the fire-side, the country; now that I have perceived all this, I am ready to squeeze case eternally. In thoughts of the visions of the night, I saw long rows of angels in paradise, each with his hands in a jar of spermaceti.Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (New York: Harper, 1851; Power Moby-Dick, 1998), http://www.powermobydick.com/Moby094.html.

Melville's text flirts with homoerotic desire, but that desire is short-lived as the narrator suggests that men must "lower" their desire to other outlets—"but in the wife."

Ultimately, gender and sexuality theorists go back in history and look at who might have been left out. Where are there absences in the canon such that gay and lesbian authors and characters might be included? And when gay and lesbian characters are present, how are they perceived?

What about a supposedly "straight" text that appears to have a queer subtext previously unseen? For example, Julia Ward Howe was a nineteenth-century author who wrote the famous "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and founded Mother's Day. However, she also wrote a secret novel, *The Hermaphrodite*, which featured a male gender-bending protagonist who loves both sexes but particularly another man.Julia Ward Howe, *The Hermaphrodite*, ed. Gary Williams (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004). Once discovered, this book was a shocking addition to the profile people had created of Howe. Howe's text is considered a "recovered" text and has been brought back into circulation, a common phenomenon in the literature of marginalized groups where texts have disappeared only to be rediscovered and read.

Your Process

1. Can you think of texts where a character is forced into certain roles, behaviors, and actions because of compulsory heterosexuality?
2. Is that character's sexuality more complex than you realized?
3. When you consider sexuality on a continuum, does it change how characters interact?
4. Could your observations lead to a focus for a literary analysis?

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2.1.2.4.7: Gender Criticism- Masculinity Studies

Just as feminist literary criticism and gender and sexuality criticism consider how identity shapes us, so does **masculinity studies** grow out of these fields and consider how men are often forced into what theorist Jackson Katz calls a "**man box**," or the very narrow box that defines what a "real man" is.Jackson Katz, *Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity*, directed by Sut Jhally (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 1999), DVD. If you are a sports fan, you will see many "man-box" commercials during a football game, for example, and often the humorous ads are those when a man doesn't act like a "man."

In his recent book, *Dude, You're a Fag* (2012), C. J. Pascoe looks at masculinity and sexuality in high school and examines all the ways that gay baiting (using gayness as a way to taunt someone about nongender- and nonsexuality-conforming behavior) is used to shore up young men's sense of self.C. J. Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). For example, consider the difference of a girl being called a tomboy or a boy being called a sissy. Which is worse? Typically for a young man to be called a sissy is a kind of social death. Why? When a man is compared to someone who is perceived to have less power, in this instance a woman, then he is considered less manly and, therefore, by implication he must be gay, which creates pressure for men to conform to one idea of maleness. Media representations constantly assert what is proper masculinity, and it typically involves being a violent, hypersexual thug who is never dominated but only dominates.

How does this construction of masculinity affect maleness in literature? Consider Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Scribner, 2003). The book is narrated by Jake Barnes and concerns the exploits of the Lost Generation after World War I. Jake loves the femme fatale Brett Ashley, but he has been wounded in the war and is impotent. He's not fully a man. While much of Hemingway's work is challenged by feminists for being antiwoman, or **misogynist**, particularly in the depiction of Brett Ashley, a masculinity studies reading of the text depicts the unbearable struggle Jake encounters because he can't fulfill the societal expectations of being a man, which emphasize sexual potency. By reading Jake through a masculinity studies lens, we now have more compassion for Jake, and we may have a more complex view of Hemingway as a writer as we see him grappling with characters who can't fit neatly into the man box.

We can see more clearly through the lens of masculinity studies how gender norms are not exclusive to women but also affect men, which in turn affects the scope of a text.

Your Process

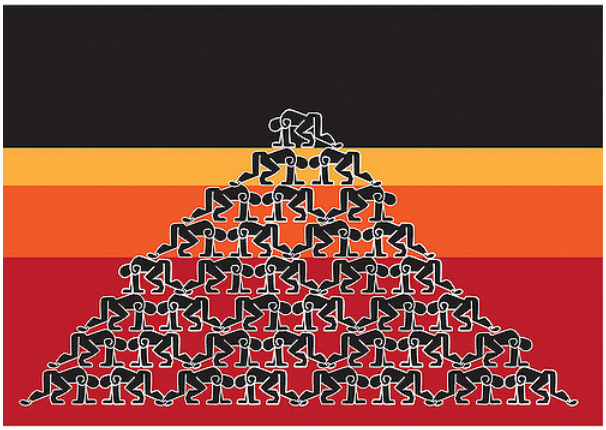
1. Read Robert Browning's "Porphyria's Lover," (http://www.bartleby.com/101/720.html).Robert Browning, "Porphyria's Lover," Bartleby.com, http://www.bartleby.com/101/720.html.
2. List the attributes of the man and the woman in lines 1–30.
3. Do those attributes for the male narrator change after line 30?
4. How might a reader's attitude evolve about the narrator using masculinity studies? Do you have more sympathy for the narrator, even though he is a murderer? Is he driven insane by his desire to fulfill his masculinity, whether as he sees himself, as Porphyria sees him, or as society might see him?

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2.1.2.4.8: Conceptualizing Structures of Power

A **social structure** is a set of long-lasting social relationships, practices and institutions that can be difficult to see at work in our daily lives. They are intangible social relations, but work much in the same way as structures we can see: buildings and skeletal systems are two examples. The human body is structured by bones; that is to say that the rest of our bodies' organs and vessels are where they are because bones provide the structure upon which these other things can reside. Structures limit possibility, but they are not fundamentally unchangeable. For instance, our bones may deteriorate over time, suffer acute injuries, or be affected by disease, but they never spontaneously change location or disappear into thin air. Such is the way with social structures.

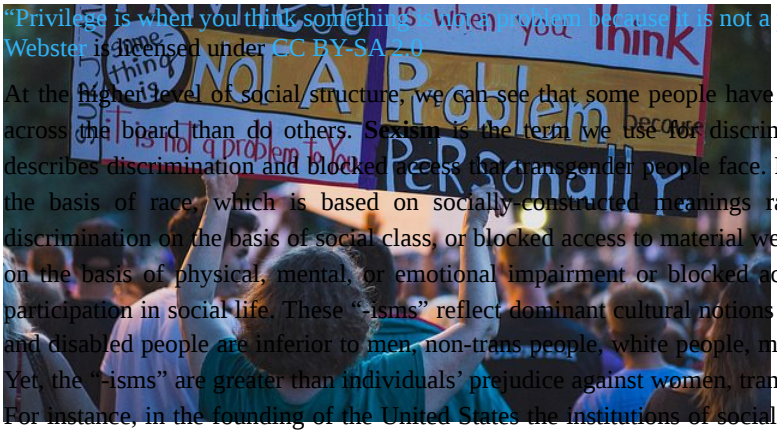


"Social Structure" by Shane is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

The elements of a social structure, the parts of social life that direct possible actions, are the institutions of society. These will be addressed in more detail later, but for now **social institutions** may be understood to include: the government, work, education, family, law, media, and medicine, among others. To say these institutions direct, or structure, possible social action, means that within the confines of these spaces there are rules, norms, and procedures that limit what actions are possible. For instance, family is a concept near and dear to most, but historically and culturally family forms have been highly specified, that is structured. According to Dorothy Smith (1993), the standard North American family (or, SNAF) includes two heterosexually-married parents and one or more biologically-related children. It also includes a division of labor in which the husband/father earns a larger income and the wife/mother takes responsibility for most of the care-taking and childrearing. Although families vary in all sorts of ways, this is the norm to which they are most often compared. Thus, while we may consider our pets, friends, and lovers as family, the state, the legal system, and the media do not affirm these possibilities in the way they affirm the SNAF. In turn, when most people think of who is in their family, the normative notion of parents and children structures who they consider.

Overlaying these social structures are **structures of power**. By **power** we mean two things: 1) access to and through the various social institutions mentioned above, and 2) processes of privileging, normalizing, and valuing certain identities over others. This definition of power highlights the structural, institutional nature of power, while also highlighting the ways in which culture works in the creation and privileging of certain categories of people. Power in American society is organized along the axes of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, age, nation, and religious identities. Some identities are more highly valued, or more normalized, than others—typically because they are contrasted to identities thought to be less valuable or less "normal." Thus, identities are not only descriptors of individuals, but grant a certain amount of collective access to the institutions of social life. This is not to say, for instance, that all white people are alike and wield the same amount of power over all people of color. It does mean that white, middle-class women as a group tend to hold more social power than middle-class women of color. This is where the concept of intersectionality is key. All individuals have multiple aspects of identity, and simultaneously experience some **privileges** due to their socially valued identity statuses and disadvantages due to their devalued identity statuses. Thus a white, heterosexual middle-class woman may be disadvantaged compared to a white middle-class man, but she may experience advantages in different contexts in relation to a black, heterosexual middle-class woman, or a white, heterosexual working-class man, or a white lesbian upper-class woman.





"Privilege is when you think something is not a problem because it is not a problem to you personally – SURJ MN" by Tony Webster is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

At the higher level of social structure, we can see that some people have greater access to resources and institutionalized power across the board than do others. **Sexism** is the term we use for discrimination and blocked access women face. **Genderism** describes discrimination and blocked access that transgender people face. **Racism** describes discrimination and blocked access on the basis of race, which is based on socially-constructed meanings rather than biological differences. **Classism** describes discrimination on the basis of social class, or blocked access to material wealth and social status. **Ableism** describes discrimination on the basis of physical, mental, or emotional impairment or blocked access to the fulfillment of needs and in particular, full participation in social life. These "-isms" reflect dominant cultural notions that women, trans people, people of color, poor people, and disabled people are inferior to men, non-trans people, white people, middle- and upper-class people, and non-disabled people. Yet, the "-isms" are greater than individuals' prejudice against women, trans people, people of color, the poor, and disabled people. For instance, in the founding of the United States the institutions of social life, including work, law, education, and the like, were built to benefit wealthy, white men since at the time these were, by law, the only real "citizens" of the country. Although these institutions have significantly changed over time in response to social movements and more progressive cultural shifts, their sexist, genderist, racist, classist, and ableist structures continue to persist in different forms today. Similar-sounding to "-isms," the language of "-ization," such as in "racialization" is used to highlight the formation or processes by which these forms of difference have been given meaning and power (Omi and Winant 1986). (See further discussion on this process in the section below on social construction).

Just like the human body's skeletal structure, social structures are not immutable, or completely resistant to change. Social movements mobilized on the basis of identities have fought for increased equality and changed the structures of society, in the US and abroad, over time. However, these struggles do not change society overnight; some struggles last decades, centuries, or remain always unfinished. The structures and institutions of social life change slowly, but they can and do change based on the concerted efforts of individuals, social movements and social institutions.

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2.1.2.4.9: Women and the Media

Chapter 10: Women and the Media

Chapter Summary

- Overview
  - History of Exclusion and Stereotypes
  - A New Era of Women's Rights
- Profile: Ann Moore: Leveraging the Value of Women
  - Revamping Time Inc. for the Digital Age
  - Drawn to Sports and Publishing
  - People and InStyle: Women as an Important Market
- Project: Women's Edition
- Questions
- Additional Resources

Chapter 10 discusses the progress that women have made in organizing against exclusion in media. Women who demanded coverage from media outlets were originally categorized as misfits or insane, as they were perceived as departing from their traditional domestic roles. Throughout the 1970s, media outlets and journals covering a range of feminist issues emerged around the world, including *Isis International Bulletin* in Italy and the Philippines and *Manushi* in India. Women have been gaining influence in media both within the United States and across the world. Ann S. Moore was the CEO of Time Inc., the largest publisher in the U.S., and steered the business from the print age to the media age during the 2000s. The Women's Edition program brings together women journalists across the global South to report on various issues from their respective regions and countries.

Key Terms

- Ann S. Moore
- Gender and Media Diversity Journal
- International Federation of Journalists
- International Women's Media Foundation
- *Isis International Bulletin*
- *Manushi*
- *Ms.* Magazine
- Population Reference Bureau (PRB)
- Revolution
- Women's Edition
- Woodhull & Clafin's Weekly
- World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC)



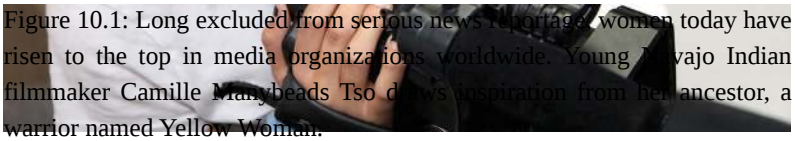


Figure 10.1: Long excluded from serious news reportage, women today have risen to the top in media organizations worldwide. Young Navajo Indian filmmaker Camille Manybeads Tso draws inspiration from her ancestor, a warrior named Yellow Woman.

Overview

By **Carolyn M. Byerly**

Women brought a gendered analysis of the mass media to the global stage in the 1970s when a multipart critique was first presented at the 1976 Mexico City conference, which opened the U.N. Decade for Women. Much of the substance of that critique remains relevant today. But women's fight for equal representation in the media began much earlier.

History of Exclusion and Stereotypes

Women's exclusion from the serious news of the day was raised as early as the 18th century by women suffragists and women's rights activists in Europe and North America. The early suffrage leaders needed the attention of the news media to carry their ideas and activities to wider publics, but male-run newspapers and magazines largely ignored the women activists. The news outlets that did cover women frequently trivialized their goals. Women who departed from the social norms of passivity and deference to male authority, and the traditional roles of wife and mother, risked being characterized as inappropriate, insane or misfits. If they demanded equality with men, the media depicted them either as curiosities or as loud, militant and aggressive. Such characterizations would continue into the early days of modern feminism (Epstein, 1978).

Not only were women's issues and leaders excluded from the media, but bias against women was practiced in reporting women's issues and leaders. Such treatment inspired women in many countries to establish their own magazines, newspapers and book publishing houses during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The post-Civil War *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly* had as its aim to make Victoria Woodhull the first woman president, while the *Lily* had a broad women's rights agenda, and the *Una* championed the rights of immigrant and poor women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony's short-lived but important newspaper the *Revolution* addressed a spectrum of issues related to women's discrimination, including low wages of working women and the right to vote.

A New Era of Women's Rights

By the late 20th century, women across the globe focused on enacting political and legal reforms to extend women's equality and access to social institutions and to ensure protection of their rights. It was a new era for women's rights. Many women became politicized during independence movements, as countries broke from colonial powers. The legacy of that activism carried over into women's media like *Ms.* magazine, founded by U.S. feminists in the early 1970s; *Manushi*, an Indian feminist journal founded in the mid-1970s; and *Isis International Bulletin*, published first in Rome, then later in Manila.

Some feminist leaders were motivated by the enduring problems of exclusion and misogynistic representation in mainstream media to establish their own publishing houses, today numbering many dozens (see www.wifp.org/DWM/publishers.html). Women's organizations like the South African group Gender Links have assumed dual missions of establishing their own journals, like *Gender and Media Diversity Journal*, as well as undertaking training for journalists in order to address persistent patriarchal messages in news, advertising, films and television programs (Gender Links, www.genderlinks.org.za/page/publications).

Another modern media concern was women's lack of access to media professions. Women were severely underrepresented in newsrooms, television and radio stations, film production and ownership of media outlets. More women on the inside, it was argued, would help resolve many of women's other problems with the media. Women such as Ann S. Moore (Time Inc.), profiled in this chapter, acknowledge the importance of women in their media operations.



Figure 10.2: Radio journalist Firtia Mataniah hosts her program on women and management for Jakarta, Indonesia, radio station KBR68H. The station was launched by post-Suharto activists as a voice of democracy in 1999.

Underrepresentation in news production arose through the U.N. Decade for Women (1976-1985), with leaders pushing the United Nations to fund women's news and feature services in the 1970s and 1980s to increase global news flow from progressive women's perspectives. They also gained funding for research on women and media and generated their own research. Two examples are the Brussels-based International Federation of Journalists and the World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC). The latter of these is among advocacy groups that sponsor research aimed at enabling strategy-building for women's equality in the media. WACC's (Canada) periodic study *Who Makes the News?* focuses on women's representation in news worldwide, while the International Women's Media Foundation (United States) conducts research on women's status in news organizations. IWMF also recognizes women journalists for courage in reporting with an annual "Courage in Journalism" award.



Figure 10.3: Ukrainian reporter Lesya Alexeyenko holds a copy of her newspaper, Vilne Slovo. She received journalism training through a USAID program.

Such groups offer workshops to teach media professionals how to include gender angles in news. Women have made slower progress in communications governance and policymaking, at national and international levels, so these remain important areas for critique and action. Programs such as USAID-funded Women's Edition have given women strong foundations for journalism careers.

Carolyn M. Byerly is a professor in the Department of Journalism, School of Communications, Howard University, in Washington, D.C. She researches communications policy related to women and minority ownership, media and gender, race, sexuality and nationality. She is the co-editor of *Women and Media: Global Perspectives* (Blackwell, 2004), co-author of *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction* (Blackwell, 2006) and principal investigator for the study *Global Report on the Status of Women in News Media*, a 59-nation study sponsored by the International Women's Media Foundation (2011).

PROFILE: Ann Moore – Leveraging the Value of Women

Women who have achieved top management positions in media corporations are few. Ann S. Moore rose to the top of one of the world's most influential news organizations, Time Inc., through perseverance, a willingness to take calculated risks and a canny perception of the future of media.

The impressive thing about Ann S. Moore, who ran Time Inc. from 2002 to 2010, is not her global profile as the first woman to head the legendary company that boasts 115 international magazine titles and some 137 million monthly readers. It's not even her down-to-earth, straight-talking style, the friendships with influential policymakers and A-list celebrities or her habitual appearance on every Most Powerful Woman list ever devised. Rather, the impressive thing, as you listen to Moore review her rise to the top, is the out-and-out glee with which she did the job.

Revamping Time Inc. for the Digital Age

It was far from easy. As chair and CEO, Moore arguably led Time Inc. through its greatest trials and transformations — and emerged victorious. She successfully steered the largest magazine publisher in the United States out of its fierce attachment to print and straight into the digital age. She streamlined its multilayered, old-boy centralized structure into more nimble brand clusters, making managers diverse and more accountable. “We were facing a crisis,” she acknowledges today. “It was not easy to completely transform an industry and drag everybody, kicking and screaming, into the 21st century.”

Then again, Moore could draw on deep experience in setting goals and tackling the challenges. A keen observer and an unabashed fan of Time Inc.’s unique role in the media landscape — the company has influence that streams from Main Street to Wall Street and from Pennsylvania Avenue to Hollywood and Vine — Moore enjoyed a career at the company that spanned 32 years. “I know every inch of this business,” she declares, not particularly bragging, but merely stating the facts.

At a meeting just before her departure is officially announced, Moore is comfortably settled into a plump armchair in the spacious, thickly carpeted executive suite on the 34th floor of Rockefeller Center’s landmark Time-Life Building. The sweeping views of midtown Manhattan highlight her success. Moore, at 60, looks back with pride and gusto. Clearly, she has thrived on the risks as much as the wins. “I work with really smart people and we produce really amazing products,” she says. “It’s easy to stay working somewhere for 32 years when you’re not bored.”

Born in Biloxi, Mississippi, the oldest of five kids, Moore spent her formative years on a series of military bases. “My father was in the Air Force until I was in about sixth grade,” she says. “I moved all the time when I was young and I have nothing but fabulous memories of every move.” She credits her dad, who was a pilot, with shaping her attitudes toward work. “I always knew I could do the job of CEO, but it wasn’t my lifelong ambition,” Moore explains. “My father retired from the military and went on to a whole second career in aviation. So I had a model growing up that said, ‘Hey, you don’t have to just do one thing. And you don’t necessarily have to aspire to being the CEO to be successful.’” That outlook served her well as she climbed the ladder. “I always had a lot of confidence,” she says. “You have to not fear failure.”



Figure 10.4: Ann S. Moore was appointed chairwoman and chief executive of Time Inc. in 2002, becoming its first female executive.

Drawn to Sports and Publishing

After high school in McLean, Virginia, Moore went on to Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and then earned an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1978. While her classmates headed for Wall Street, Moore wasn’t interested — “I always

wondered exactly what they do there," she says, jokingly. Instead, Moore went to Time Inc. "I was a big sports fan and that's why I joined the company," she says. "I turned my hobby of reading *Sports Illustrated* into my career."

Through the 1980s, after starting at *Sports Illustrated*, Moore put in stints at *Fortune*, *Money* and *Discover*, moving up with every jump. By the early '90s, back at *Sports Illustrated* as associate publisher, she began to make her mark on the company. Fittingly, Moore earned her claim to fame by tutoring Time Inc. about the value of women.

"I changed the equation at the company because I'm the one who began diversifying into women's and children's magazines," says Moore. She launched *Sports Illustrated Kids* in 1989. "It was the first kid magazine and we hadn't launched anything successful since 1974." At the time, she says, "we thought you couldn't make money targeting women, so even when I moved to *People* in 1991, we thought it was a dual-audience magazine."

People and *InStyle*: Women as an Important Market

Moore was working with then-editor Lanny Jones. The pair transformed *People* into a newsmagazine for women, first moving from black and white to color pages. Next, they changed delivery from Monday to Friday. "News is like bread. The fresher it is, the more exciting it is." Moore also inaugurated *People* special issues, such as its now-famous "Sexiest Man Alive," "Best Dressed, Worst Dressed" and others. "It was a license to steal," she laughs, looking back. "Once you determined this is really a woman's magazine, you could see what you needed to do with *People* to unleash its potential." Nowadays, as it has been for years, *People* is the company's most profitable title and, as Moore likes to point out, People.com leads in online entertainment news, with 13 million unique visitors monthly.

The rest remains Moore's groundbreaking history. She launched *InStyle* in 1991, which is, today, the nation's largest-circulation fashion and beauty magazine — "ahead of Vogue," says Moore. *InStyle* is Time Inc.'s third-most-profitable title (*Sports Illustrated* is second). *Real Simple* came next, in 2000. "We had a little piece of research that I couldn't get out of my mind," says Moore, which said that the average American woman spends 55 minutes a day just looking for things. "Time is the single most precious commodity to American consumers, especially for a woman," she says. "So that was the whole idea behind *Real Simple*. We would get you organized and you would have an extra hour a day."

Moore smiles, leaning back in her comfortable chair, and confides her secret to launching successful magazines. "It was such a simple concept, but it solved a problem. That's where you find holes in the marketplace, and that's what Time Inc. was particularly good at. We invented most of the categories we publish in."

What's in store for Moore as she moves on? She's not saying. With her 26-year-old son, Brendan, enrolled at Harvard Business School and her husband, Donovan Moore, continuing work as a private wealth manager at Bessemer Trust, her horizon looks wide open, especially considering her dad's second-act role model.

And what advice would she give young women who'd like to shadow her dramatic footsteps? True to form, Moore speaks forthrightly: "I think it's all about self-assessment. Who are you? What are you good at? What do you like to do? Then use that to find a match. Turn your hobby into your occupation. You have to take responsibility for your career. I also say to young women, learn how to fill out your dance card. I'm the chairman of Time Inc. because I filled out my dance card better than anyone else. I'm the chairman because I've been here for 32 years and I've launched more magazines than [Time Inc. founder] Henry Luce. That's why I'm in Luce's office."

"And I was very patient."

Joanna L. Krotz is a multimedia journalist and speaker whose work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Worth*, *Money* and *Town & Country* and on MSN and Entrepreneurship.org. She is the author of *The Guide to Intelligent Giving* and founder of the Women's Giving Institute, an organization that educates donors about strategic philanthropy.

PROJECT: Women's Edition

***By* Deborah Mesce**

Funding for women's news and feature services opened the door to journalism careers for many women worldwide in recent decades. The Women's Edition program shows how women may fruitfully collaborate to gain global perspectives on women's issues, and bring that knowledge to their writing.

Around the table sat 12 women journalists from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe, discussing the status of women in their cultures. The Africans said women in their countries have many babies, often too many to care for adequately. Reporters from India, the Philippines and Peru said families were somewhat smaller in their countries. Then the Romanian journalist surprised them all: “You know, in my country the government pays women to have children,” she said, explaining Romania’s strategy to reverse its population decline.

This conversation took place at Women’s Edition, a program that brings together small groups of veteran women journalists from influential media houses across the developing world to examine and report on a range of issues related to women’s health and development. They gain a global perspective on these issues by learning how countries both similar and different from theirs handle the same issues. As a Nepali reporter put it after several years in the program, “Now I think globally and write locally.”

Women’s Edition, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, takes a long-term view of working with journalists. Since 1994 when the program began, 62 journalists have participated. There was little turnover in the early years, but later a two-year participation limit was set. During their tenure in the program, the journalists attend weeklong seminars twice a year in locations around the world. Seminars focus on health and development issues. Each journalist takes away new data and research on specific topics, the insights of experts and memorable experiences from field visits that illuminate the issues. Following each seminar, each journalist prepares a special supplement, a series of articles or a broadcast program for her media house on the seminar topic in the context of her country.

The Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a nongovernmental organization in Washington that runs the project, solicits applications from women editors, reporters and producers every two years. Journalists hear about this from national and international journalism associations, schools and websites. As many as 200 candidates apply. PRB invites around 12 to participate. PRB looks for seasoned journalists who demonstrate a strong interest in women’s health and development issues and who have editorial influence in their newsrooms. To maintain geographic diversity, usually just one journalist is selected from a country.



Figure 10.5: In India, two Women’s Edition journalists photograph a village potter.

Women’s Edition grew from an earlier PRB project, Global Edition, which brought together senior editors from the developing world to focus and write on population and the environment. Similarly, Women’s Edition’s mission is to strengthen and increase

reporting on women's health and development and, in doing so, stimulate discussion on these issues among the public and policymakers in developing countries.

In organizing the seminars, PRB seeks input from the journalists in selecting a topic and then links the topic with a relevant venue. For example, a seminar on trafficking was held in New Delhi, where the journalists visited a brothel in the city's largest red-light district and talked to Nepali sex workers there who had been trafficked years before. For a seminar on violence against women, Women's Edition met in South Africa, which has one of the world's highest rates of rape but also some of the most innovative programs to deal with the problem. Some seminars have been held in conjunction with international conferences and other events, such as the biennial AIDS conferences and special U.N. sessions. Other seminar themes have included links between gender and the environment, women's empowerment and women's reproductive health.



Figure 10.6: Three Women's Edition journalists accompany an activist doing HIV/AIDS outreach in a Johannesburg, South Africa, market as part of a project to stop violence against women.

Sometimes a journalist's report prompts action. After a magazine cover story on the health and social problems child brides face in India, the Tamil Nadu state government launched awareness campaigns in villages where child marriage is common. More often, the journalists receive calls from ministry officials, parliamentarians and NGO leaders who want more information. A Malawian journalist wrote about an innovative rape crisis center her Women's Edition group visited in Johannesburg. She received a call from the Malawian president's daughter, who wanted to become involved in local efforts to replicate it. Sometimes journalists take action on their own: A seminar visit to a rape crisis center in New York so inspired an Indian journalist that she persuaded a physician friend to open such a center in Mumbai.

Women's Edition has a lasting impact on the journalists themselves. They become the experts in their newsrooms on women's issues. They gain confidence in their knowledge and abilities, which helps them to lobby for coverage of women's issues. They receive job promotions and gain more influence over what issues are considered newsworthy. "Gone are the days when health and

women's issues were a once-a-week affair," said Ropa Mapimhidze of Zimbabwe, who was assistant editor at the *Herald* when she participated in Women's Edition. She is now features editor at *Newsday*, a new independent newspaper.

Deborah Mesce is program director for international media training at the Population Reference Bureau and has been coordinator of Women's Edition since 2001. Before joining PRB, she worked for more than 20 years as a reporter and editor for the Associated Press in the Connecticut state bureau and on the national staff in Washington.

Multiple Choice Questions

Questions

1. Which factors inspired women in many countries to establish their own magazines?
    1. Male-run publications largely ignored women activists
    2. The news outlets that did cover women trivialized their goals
    3. Women that departed from the norms of domesticity and passivity were labelled as misfits or insane
    4. Women who demanded equality with men were depicted as militant and aggressive
    5. All of the above
2. The first woman to lead Time Inc. was….
    1. Ann Moore
    2. Ariana Huffington
    3. Jane Fonda
    4. Diane Sawyer
3. People and InStyle demonstrated that…
    1. Women consumers are mostly interested in fashion and celebrity news
    2. Women are an important demographic market in news media
    3. Women were already influential in traditional media networks
    4. There was no need to develop women-specific media
    5. None of the above
4. Women's Edition serves the following purpose(s)…
    1. Brings together groups of women journalists
    2. Examines and reports on a range of women's issues
    3. Enables participants to gain a global perspective
    4. Enables participants to learn from each other in handling similar issues
    5. All of the above
5. The objective of Women's Edition is to…
    1. Advance the political interests of women at the cost of men
    2. Increase reporting on women's health and development
    3. Begin discussion among the public and policy-makers in developing countries
    4. Organize with influential celebrities and policy-makers on issues of gender and development
    5. None of the above

Answers

1. The correct answer is E (all of the above).
2. The correct answer is Ann Moore (answer A). Ariana Huffington is the co-founder of the Huffington Post, so answer B is incorrect. Jane Fonda is an American actress and co-founder of the Women's Media Center (answer C). Diane Sawyer is an American television journalist and co-anchor of ABC News' morning news program.
3. The correct answer is that women are an important market in the news media (answer B). The fact that the first Time magazines that publicists deemed "women-targeted" were fashion and celebrity news does not indicate that women consumers are most interested in fashion and celebrity news (answer A). Women were not yet influential in news networks, so Time Inc. and its subsidiaries were an anomaly (answer C). Answer D is incorrect because there was a clear need to develop women-specific media.

4. The correct answer is E (all of the above).
5. The correct answer is both B and C. Women's Edition aims to increase reporting on women's health and development (answer B) and begin discussions among the public and policymakers in developing countries (answer C). The objective is not to advance the interests of women at the cost of men, as gender equality is not zero-sum (answer A). The mission is not to simply engage with celebrities and policymakers, so answer D is incorrect.

Discussion Questions

1. How are women and men depicted differently in media? Has the history of women's exclusion from media influenced these representations? Why or why not?
2. What are some impacts of the portrayal of women in media on women's success?
3. Select an election in a jurisdiction of your choice. What were the genders of the candidates? How were they represented by media?
4. Do you think that social media provides a greater platform than traditional media for women's representation and influence? Why or why not?
5. How are transgender women portrayed in media?
6. Use the additional resources, your experiences, or the experiences of people you know to reflect on how transgender people experience portrayals of gender and transgender people in media in a designated case study. For instance, you might choose Canadian media, American Media or French Canadian media for your examples.

Essay Questions

1. Review the "2015 Status of Women in U.S. Media" report. Identify areas where there has been progress and where equal representation along lines of gender and race have fallen behind.
2. What are the most common stereotypes of women perpetuated in media? In what ways are these representations dependent on race and class? Will having more women in media play a role in decreasing reliance on stereotypes of women?
3. How has the use of social media influenced women's social and political movements?

Additional Resources

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http://feministing.com/2015/12/21/on-jill-soloway-caitlyn-jenner-and-the-trans-representation-the-media-wants/

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Sheryl Sandberg, Chief Operating Office of Facebook, discusses the reactions to “Lean In” and the ways in which women continue to struggle with success.

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2.1.2.4.10: Critical Introduction to the Field

There was a time when it seemed all knowledge was produced by, about, and for men. This was true from the physical and social sciences to the canons of music and literature. Looking from the angle of mainstream education, studies, textbooks, and masterpieces were almost all authored by white men. It was not uncommon for college students to complete entire courses reading only the work of white men in their fields.

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) is an interdisciplinary field that challenges the androcentric production of knowledge. **Androcentrism** is the privileging of male- and masculine-centered ways of understanding the world.

Alison Bechdel, a lesbian feminist comics artist, described what has come to be known as “the Bechdel Test,” which demonstrates the androcentric perspective of a majority of feature-length films. Films only pass the Bechdel Test if they 1) Feature two women characters, 2) Those two women characters talk to each other, and 3) They talk to each other about something other than a man. Many people might be surprised to learn that a majority of films do not pass this test! This demonstrates how androcentrism is pervasive in the film industry and results in male-centered films.



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Feminist frequency. (2009, December 7). *The bechdel test for women in movies*. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLF6sAAMb4s .

Feminist scholars argue that the common assumption that knowledge is produced by rational, impartial (male) scientists often obscures the ways that scientists create knowledge through gendered, raced, classed, and sexualized cultural perspectives (e.g., Scott 1991). Feminist scholars include biologists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, chemists, engineers, economists and researchers from just about any identifiable department at a university. Disciplinary diversity among scholars in this field facilitates communication across the disciplinary boundaries within the academy to more fully understand the social world. This text offers a general introduction to the field of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies. As all authors of this textbook are trained both as sociologists and interdisciplinary feminist scholars, we situate our framework, which is heavily shaped by a sociological lens, within larger interdisciplinary feminist debates. We highlight some of the key areas in the field rather than comprehensively covering every topic.

The Women’s Liberation Movement and Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th Century called attention to these conditions and aimed to address these absences in knowledge. Beginning in the 1970s, universities across the United States instituted Women’s and Ethnic Studies departments (African American Studies, Asian American Studies, Latin American Studies, Native American Studies, etc.) in response to student protests and larger social movements. These departments reclaimed buried histories and centered the knowledge production of marginalized groups. As white, middle-class, heterosexual women had the greatest access to education and participation in Women’s Studies, early incarnations of the field stressed their experiences and perspectives. In subsequent decades, studies and contributions of women of color, immigrant women, women from the global south, poor and working class women, and lesbian and queer women became integral to Women’s Studies. More recently, analyses of disability, sexualities, masculinities, religion, science, gender diversity, incarceration, indigeneity, and settler colonialism have become

centered in the field. As a result of this opening of the field to incorporate a wider range of experiences and objects of analysis, many Women's Studies department are now re-naming themselves "Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" departments.

Feminist scholars recognize the inextricable connection between the notions of gender and sexuality in U.S. society, not only for women but also for men and people of all genders, across a broad expanse of topics. In an introductory course, you can expect to learn about the impact of stringent beauty standards produced in media and advertising, why childrearing by women may not be as natural as we think, the history of the gendered division of labor and its continuing impact on the economic lives of men and women, the unique health issues addressed by advocates of reproductive justice, the connections between women working in factories in the global south and women consuming goods in the United States, how sexual double-standards harm us all, the historical context for feminist movements and where they are today, and much more.

More than a series of topics, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies offers a way of seeing the world differently. Scholars in this field make connections across institutional contexts (work, family, media, law, the state), value the knowledge that comes from lived experiences, and attend to, rather than ignore, marginalized identities and groups. Thanks to the important critiques of transnational, post-colonial, queer, trans and feminists of color, most contemporary WGSS scholars strive to see the world through the lens of **intersectionality**. That is, they see systems of oppression working in concert rather than separately. For instance, the way sexism is experienced depends not only on a person's gender but also on how the person experiences racism, economic inequality, ageism, and other forms of marginalization within particular historical and cultural contexts.

Intersectionality can be challenging to understand. This video explains the intersectionality framework using the example of gender-specific and race-specific anti-discrimination policies that failed to protect Black women.

Can you think of some other contexts in which people who are marginalized in multiple ways might be left out?

What are some things you can do to include them?



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Peter Hopkins, Newcastle University. (2018, April 22). *What is intersectionality?*. Retrieved from vimeo.com/263719865. Used with permission.

By recognizing the complexity of the social world, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies advocates for social change and provides insight into how this can be accomplished.

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2.1.2.4.11: Feminist and Gender Criticism- A Process Approach

Feminist and gender criticism are powerful literary methods that you can use to analyze literature. Be guided by the following process as you write your feminist or gender criticism paper.

1. Carefully *read the work* you will analyze.
2. *Formulate a general question* after your initial reading that identifies a problem—a tension—that addresses a key issue relevant to feminist, queer theory, or masculnity studies.
3. *Reread the work*, paying particular attention to the question you posed. *Take notes*, which should be focused on your central question. *Write an exploratory journal entry* or *blog post* that allows you to play with ideas.
4. *Construct a working thesis* that makes a claim about the work and accounts for the following:
    1. What does the work mean?
    2. How does the work artistically demonstrate a theme?
    3. "So what" is significant about the work? That is, why is it important for you to write about this work? What will readers "learn" from reading your interpretation?
5. *Reread the text to gather textual evidence* for support. What literary devices are used to achieve the theme?
6. *Construct an informal outline* that demonstrates how you will support your interpretation.
7. *Write a first draft.*
8. *Receive feedback* from peers and your instructor via *peer review* and *conferencing* with your instructor (if possible).
9. *Revise the paper*, which will include revising your original thesis statement and restructuring your paper to best support the thesis. Note: You probably will revise many times, so it is important to receive feedback at every draft stage if possible.
10. *Edit and proofread* for correctness, clarity, and style.

We recommend that you follow this process for every paper that you write from this textbook. Of course, these steps can be modified to fit your writing process, but the plan does ensure that you will engage in a thorough reading of the text as you work through the writing process, which demands that you allow plenty of time for reading, reflecting, writing, reviewing, and revising.

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2.1.2.4.12: Literary Snapshot- "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland"

Lewis Carroll, as we found out in previous chapters, is most famous for two books: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). These books describe the adventures of seven-year-old Alice, who finds herself in a nonsensical world of the imagination after she tumbles down a rabbit hole (*Wonderland*) and enters a magic mirror (*Looking-Glass*).

Let's observe the interaction between Alice and the Caterpillar, which comes from chapter 5 of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, "Advice from a Caterpillar":

> The Caterpillar was the first to speak.
>
> "What size do you want to be?" it asked.
>
> "Oh, I'm not particular as to size," Alice hastily replied; "Only one doesn't like changing so often, you know."
>
> "I *don't* know," said the Caterpillar.
>
> Alice said nothing: she had never been so much contradicted in all her life before, and she felt that she was losing her temper.
>
> "Are you content now?" said the Caterpillar.
>
> "Well, I should like to be a *little* larger, sir, if you wouldn't mind," said Alice: "three inches is such a wretched height to be."
>
> "It is a very good height indeed!" said the Caterpillar angrily, rearing itself upright as it spoke (it was exactly three inches high).
>
> "But I'm not used to it!" pleaded poor Alice in a piteous tone. And she thought to herself, "I wish the creatures wouldn't be so easily offended!"
>
> "You'll get used to it in time," said the Caterpillar; and it put the hookah into its mouth and began smoking again.
>
> This time Alice waited patiently until it chose to speak again. In a minute or two the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth and yawned once or twice, and shook itself. Then it got down off the mushroom, and crawled away into the grass merely remarking as it went, "One side will make you grow taller, and the other side will make you grow shorter."
>
> "One side of *what?* The other side of *what* thought Alice to herself.
>
> "Of the mushroom," said the Caterpillar, just if she had asked it aloud; and in another moment it was out of sight.
>
> Alice remained looking thoughtfully at the mushroom room for a minute, trying to make out which we the two sides of it; and as it was perfectly round, she found this a very difficult question. However, at last she stretched her arms round it as far as they would go, and broke off a bit of the edge with each hand
>
> "And now which is which?" she said to herself, and nibbled a little of the right-hand bit to try the effect; the next moment she felt a violent blow underneath her chin: it had struck her foot! She was a good deal frightened by this very sudden change, but she felt that there was no time to be lost, as she was shrinking rapidly; so she set to work at once to eat some of the other bit. Her chin was pressed so closely against her foot that there was hardly room to open her mouth; but she did it at last, and managed to swallow a morsel of the left-hand bit.
>
> * * * * *
>
> * * * *
>
> * * * * *
>
> "Come, my head's free at last!" said Alice in a tone of delight, which changed into alarm in another moment, when she found that her shoulders were nowhere to be found: all she could see, when she looked down, was an immense length of neck, which seemed to rise like a stalk out of a sea of green leaves that lay far below her.
>
> "What *can* all that green stuff be?" said Alice. "And where *have* my shoulders got to? And oh, my poor hands, how is it I can't see you?" She was moving them about as she spoke, but no result seemed to follow, except a little shaking among the distant green leaves.

As there seemed to be no chance of getting her hands up to her head, she tried to get her head down to them, and was delighted to find that her neck would bend about easily in any direction, like a serpent. She had just succeeded in curving it down into a graceful zigzag, and was going to dive in among the leaves, which she found to be nothing but the tops of the trees under which she had been wandering, when a sharp hiss made her draw back in a hurry: a large pigeon had flown into her face, and was beating her violently with its wings.



Illustration by Sir John Tenniel for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

"Serpent!" screamed the Pigeon.

"I'm *not a* serpent!" said Alice indignantly. "Let me alone!"

"Serpent, I say again!" repeated the Pigeon, but in a more subdued tone, and added with a kind of sob, "I've tried every way, and nothing seems to suit them!"

"I haven't the least idea what you're talking about," said Alice.

"I've tried the roots of trees, and I've tried banks, and I've tried hedges," the Pigeon went on, without attending to her; "but those serpents! There's no pleasing them!"

Alice was more and more puzzled, but she thought there was no use saying anything more till the Pigeon had finished.

"As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs," said the Pigeon; "but I must be on the look out for serpents night and day! Why, I haven't had a wink of sleep these three weeks!"

"I'm very sorry you've been annoyed," said Alice, who was beginning to see its meaning.

"And just as I'd taken the highest tree in the wood," continued the Pigeon, raising its voice to a shriek, "and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, they, must needs come wriggling down from the sky! Ugh, Serpent!"

"But I'm *not a* serpent, I tell you!" said Alice "I'm a—I'm a—"

"Well! *What* are you?" said the Pigeon. "I can see you're trying to invent something!"

"I—I'm a little girl," said Alice, rather doubtfully, as she remembered the number of changes she had gone through that day.

"A likely story indeed!" said the Pigeon in tone of the deepest contempt. "I've seen a good many little girls in my time, but never *one* with such a neck as that! No, no! You're a serpent; and there's no use denying it. I suppose you'll be telling me next that you never tasted an egg!"

> "I *have* tasted eggs, certainly," said Alice, who was a very truthful child; "but little girls eat eggs quite as much as serpents do, you know."
>
> "I don't believe it," said the Pigeon; "but if they do, why, then they're a kind of serpent, that's all I can say."
>
> This was such a new idea to Alice, that she was quite silent for a minute or two, which gave the pigeon the opportunity of adding, "You're looking for eggs, I know *that* well enough; and what does matter to me whether you're a little girl or a serpent?"
>
> "It matters a good deal to *me*," said Alice hastily; "but I'm not looking for eggs, as it happens; and if I was, I shouldn't want *yours:* I don't like them raw."
>
> "Well, be off then!" said the Pigeon in a sulky tone, as it settled down again into its nest. Alice crouched down among the trees as well as she could, for her neck kept getting entangled among the branches, and every now and then she had to stop and untwist it. After a while she remembered that she still held the pieces of mushroom in her hands, and she set to work very carefully, nibbling it at one and then at the other, and growing sometimes taller and sometimes shorter, until she had succeeded in bringing herself down to her usual height.Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 5, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html.

A major theme that runs throughout Carroll's fantasies is that of identity—Alice wanders through Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land trying to find out who she is. In this excerpt she pinpoints a key element to her identity—she is a *girl*.

Gender defines who and what we are. If you were to finish the sentence "girls are…" or "boys are…," you'll likely discover that we all have unconscious norms—that is, assumptions about girls and boys, about men and women, about husbands and wives. The list could go on. These assumptions, though, socialize or train us into accepting particular gender roles that may not be desirable. For example, the first demarcation we make is whether the baby is a girl or a boy, and then we often associate this biological sexual distinction with given gender distinctions: girls are often put in pink, while boys are in blue. Male and female infants are put in "gender-appropriate" clothing to highlight the sex of the baby. This quick example situates us in feminist and gender criticism, which are powerful theories that allow literary critics to examine sex and gender in various texts. Alice begins to do that for us in the excerpt we just read.

The excerpt also highlights some essential notions about feminist and gender criticism, which we learn more about a bit later in this chapter. As Alice contemplates who she is, the Pigeon dismisses her by saying that she's "trying to invent something." That "something," we find out, is Alice's gender—she's a *girl*. In other words, we'll learn that in feminist and gender criticism, sex and gender are different: sex is a set of the biological markers that define whether someone is female, male, or intersex (having biological characteristics that do not fit neatly into either category), while gender evokes the attitudes a society has toward each sex—that is, how we view a person according to his or her gender. We will also complicate this notion in the section on gender criticism, for the male-female heterosexual dynamic excludes gay and lesbian identity, as well as bisexual and transgendered selves. **LGBTQ** (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) issues are at the heart of a category of gender criticism called queer theory.

In addition, though Alice claims that she is a girl, the Pigeon is adamant about her being a *serpent*, which cleverly calls to mind larger themes in feminist criticism that date back to biblical times. In chapter 3 of Genesis, Eve is tempted by the serpent and subsequently tempts Adam to taste the forbidden fruit, thus violating God's prohibition and forcing Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.Gen. 3:1–6 (King James Version). In other words, the Fall of humans supposedly is a result of Eve's indiscretion. John Milton in *Paradise Lost* (1667), a central, canonical text in English literature, essentially argues that our fall is Eve's fault, a heavy burden to place on a woman.John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/MilPL67.html. Such a burden is not lost on feminist critics, and a key early examination of female characters and writers in nineteenth-century literature is Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), which argues that women are often depicted by authors as either pure, virginal creatures or madwomen-demons.Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Nina Auerbach's *Woman and the Demon* (1982) also plays with this dichotomy.Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

We should add one further dynamic to our discussion about Alice. When she claims that she is a *girl*, Alice also suggests that she is not a *boy*, highlighting the fact that the gender construction of men is important. Masculinity studies focuses on the social construction of maleness and how stereotypes of what is constituted as being male become a profound force on how men (and women) act in society.

Alice's gender issues have not been lost on those interpreting Carroll's books. Tim Burton's reimagining of Alice's story in the film *Alice in Wonderland* (2010)*Alice in Wonderland*, directed by Tim Burton (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment, 2010), DVD. situates Carroll's narrative as a Victorian matrimonial tale. The film begins with nineteen-year-old Alice (not the seven-year-old of the novel) being confronted with an unwanted marriage proposal; at nineteen, Alice is expected to marry, and to marry well. But Alice has no desire to be wed and escapes her predicament by following the white rabbit down the rabbit hole to the fantastical world, where she encounters a variety of strange creatures and adventures. At the end of the movie, she returns to the real Victorian world and stands up for her right not to wed. She succeeds, and the end of the movie finds her being an apprentice (which is typically reserved for men) in a shipping business where she will travel to China to open trade routes. Burton's film can be seen as a feminist interpretation of Carroll's books, yet it also draws attention to gender expectations of the Victorian age: Do we, for example, know that Alice's suitor really wants to marry her? Or is he, too, being subjected to the gender expectations of men? And what of all those odd characters that Alice meets? The Mad Hatter, for example, is certainly male, but his gender seems polymorphous—he doesn't fit the conventional view of what it means to be a man; in the same way, the Red Queen doesn't fit the conventional view of being a woman.

We've made this short excerpt from *Alice in Wonderland* do a lot of work to introduce the concepts of feminist and gender criticism. So let's follow the example of Humpty Dumpty, who tells Alice that when he makes a word mean multiple things, he always pays it extra: "They've a temper, some of them—particularly verbs, they're the proudest—adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs—however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That's what *I* say!"

We hope that our chapter on feminist and gender criticism uses words precisely so that these important theories are clear and penetrable.

CLASS PROCESS

1. Have each student in the class keep a "gender log" for one week. In that log have students write down their observations about the gender relationships they see on campus.
2. Do gender stereotypes hold true?
3. What happens when someone defies such stereotypes?

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2.1.2.5: Genre Theory

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2.1.2.5.1: Introduction

Kerry Dirk

There's a joke that's been floating around some time now that you've likely already heard.* It goes something like the following:

Q: What do you get when you rewind a country song?
A: You get your wife back, your job back, your dog back . . .

Maybe this joke makes you laugh. Or groan. Or tilt your head to the side in confusion. Because it just so happens that in order to get this joke, you must know a little something about country music in general and in particular country music lyrics. You must, in other words, be familiar with the country music genre.

Let's look into country music lyrics a bit more. Bear with me on this is if you're not a fan. Assuming I want to write lyrics to a country song, how would I figure out what lyrics are acceptable in terms of country songs? Listening to any country station for a short period of time might leave one with the following conclusions about country songs:

- Country songs tend to tell stories. They often have characters who are developed throughout the song.
- Country songs often have choruses that are broad enough to apply to a variety of verses.
- Country songs are often depressing; people lose jobs, lovers, and friends.
- Country songs express pride for the country style and way of life.
- Country songs are often political, responding to wars and economic crises, for example.

Given these characteristics, I would feel prepared to write some new country lyrics. But what would happen if I wanted to write a country song that didn't do any of the above things? Would it still be a country song?

You are probably already familiar with many genres, although you may not know them as such; perhaps your knowledge of genres is limited to types of books, whether mystery, horror, action, etc. Now I'm going to ask you to stick with me while I show you how knowledge of genres goes far beyond a simple discussion of types. My purposes are to expand your definition of genre (or to introduce you to a definition for the first time) and to help you start thinking about how genres might apply to your own writing endeavors. But above all, I hope to give you an awareness of how genres function by taking what is often quite theoretical in the field of rhetoric and composition and making it a bit more tangible. So why was I talking about country songs? I think that using such references can help you to see, in a quite concrete way, how genres function.

When I started writing this essay, I had some ideas of what I wanted to say. But first, I had to determine what this essay might look like. I've written a lot—letters, nonfiction pieces, scholarly articles, rants—but this was my first time writing an essay to you, a composition student. What features, I asked myself, should go into this essay? How personal could I get? What rhetorical moves might I use, effectively or ineffectively? I hoped that a similar type of essay already existed so that I would have something to guide my own writing. I knew I was looking for other essays written directly to students, and after finding many examples, I looked for common features. In particular, I noted the warm, personal style that was prevalent through every essay; the tone was primarily conversational. And more importantly, I noticed that the writer did not talk as an authoritative figure but as a coach. Some writers admitted that they did not know everything (we don't), and others even went so far as to admit ignorance. I found myself doing what Mary Jo Reiff, a professor who studies rhetoric and composition, did when she was asked to write about her experience of writing an essay about teaching for those new to the field of composition. She writes, "I immediately called on my genre knowledge—my past experience with reading and writing similar texts in similar situations—to orient me to the expectations of this genre" (157).

I further acknowledged that it is quite rare that teachers of writing get to write so directly to students in such an informal manner. Although textbooks are directed at students, they are often more formal affairs meant to serve a different purpose than this essay. And because the genre of this essay is still developing, there are no formal expectations
for what this paper might look like. In my excitement, I realized that perhaps I had been granted more freedom in writing this essay than is typical of an already established, although never static, genre. As a result, I decided to make this essay a mix of personal anecdotes, examples, and voices from teachers of writing. Such an essay seems to
be the most fitting response to this situation, as I hope to come across as someone both informative and friendly. Why am I telling

you this? Because it seems only appropriate that given the fact that I am talking about genre awareness, I should make you aware of my own struggles with writing in a new genre.

I will admit that the word genre used to have a bad reputation and may still make some people cringe. Genre used to refer primarily to form, which meant that writing in a particular genre was seen as simply a matter of filling in the blanks. Anne Freadman, a specialist in genre theory, points out that "it is this kind of genre theory with its failures that has caused the discredit of the very notion of genre, bringing about in turn its disuse and the disrepair many of us found it in" (46). But genre theory has come a long way since then. Perhaps the shift started when the rhetorician Lloyd Bitzer wrote the following:

> Due to either the nature of things or convention, or
> both, some situations recur. The courtroom is the
> locus for several kinds of situations generating the
> speech of accusation, the speech of defense, the charge
> to the jury. From day to day, year to year, comparable
> situations occur, prompting comparable responses;
> hence rhetorical forms are born and a special vocabulary,
> grammar, and style are established. (13)

In other words, Bitzer is saying that when something new happens that requires a response, someone must create that first response. Then when that situation happens again, another person uses the first response as a basis for the second, and eventually everyone who encounters this situation is basing his/her response on the previous ones,
resulting in the creation of a new genre. Think about George Washington giving the first State of the Union Address. Because this genre was completely new, he had complete freedom to pick its form and content. All presidents following him now have these former addresses to help guide their response because the situation is now a reoccurring
one. Amy Devitt, a professor who specializes in the study of genre theory, points out that "genres develop, then, because they respond appropriately to situations that writers encounter repeatedly" ("Generalizing" 576) and because "if each writing problem were to require a completely new assessment of how to respond, writing would be slowed considerably. But once we recognize a recurring situation, a situation that we or others have responded to in the past, our response to that situation can be guided by past responses" ("Generalizing" 576). As such, we can see how a genre like the State of the Union Address helps for more effective communication between the president and
citizens because the president already has a genre with which to work; he/she doesn't have to create a new one, and citizens know what to expect from such an address.

The definition of genre has changed even more since Bitzer's article was written; genres are now viewed as even more than repeating rhetorical situations. Carolyn Miller, a leading professor in the field of technical communication, argues that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered . . . on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). How might this look? These actions don't have to be complex; many genres are a part of our daily lives. Think about genres as tools to help people to get things done. Devitt writes that:

> genres have the power to help or hurt human interaction,
> to ease communication or to deceive, to enable
> someone to speak or to discourage someone from saying
> something different. People learn how to do *small*
> *talk* to ease the social discomfort of large group gatherings
> and meeting new people, but advertisers learn
>
> how to disguise *sales letters as winning sweepstakes entries.*
> (Writing 1)

In other words, knowing what a genre is used for can help people to accomplish goals, whether that goal be getting a job by knowing how to write a stellar resume, winning a person's heart by writing a romantic love letter, or getting into college by writing an effective personal statement.

By this point you might realize that you have been participating in many different genres—whether you are telling a joke, writing an email, or uploading a witty status on Facebook. Because you know how these genres function as social actions, you can quite

accurately predict how they function rhetorically; your joke should generate a laugh, your email should elicit a response, and your updated Facebook status should generate comments from your online friends. But you have done more than simply filled in the blanks. Possibly without even thinking about it, you were recognizing the rhetorical situation of your action and choosing to act in a manner that would result in the outcome you desired. I imagine that you would probably not share a risqué joke with your mom, send a "Hey Buddy" email to your professor, or update your Facebook status as "X has a huge wart on his foot." We can see that more than form matters here, as knowing what is appropriate in these situations obviously requires more rhetorical knowledge than does filling out a credit card form. Devitt argues that "people do not label a particular story as a joke solely because of formal features but rather because of their perception of the rhetorical action that is occurring" (Writing 11). True, genres often have formulaic features, but these features can change even as the nature of the genre remains (Devitt, Writing, 48). What is important to consider here is that if mastering a form were simply a matter of plugging in content, we would all be capable of successfully writing anything when we are given a formula. By now you likely know that writing is not that easy.

Fortunately, even if you have been taught to write in a formulaic way, you probably don't treat texts in such a manner. When approaching a genre for a the first time, you likely view it as more than a simple form: "Picking up a text, readers not only classify it and expect a certain form, but also make assumptions about the text's purposes, its
subject matter, its writer, and its expected reader" (Devitt, Writing 12). We treat texts that we encounter as rhetorical objects; we choose between horror movies and chick flicks not only because we are familiar with their forms but because we know what response they will elicit from us (nail-biting fear and dreamy sighs, respectively). Why am I
picking popular genres to discuss? I think I agree with Miller when she argues the following:

> To consider as potential genres such homely discourse as the letter of recommendation, the user manual, the progress report, the ransom note, the lecture, and the white paper, as well as the eulogy, the apologia, the inaugural, the public proceeding, and the sermon, is not to trivialize the study of genres; it is to take seriously the rhetoric in which we are immersed and the situations in which we find ourselves. (155)

In other words, Miller is saying that all genres matter because they shape our everyday lives. And by studying the genres that we find familiar, we can start to see how specific choices that writers make result in specific actions on the part of readers; it only follows that our own writing must too be purposefully written.

I like examples, so here is one more. Many of you may be familiar with The Onion, a fictitious newspaper that uses real world examples to create humorous situations. Perhaps the most notable genre of The Onion is its headlines. The purpose of these headlines is simple: to make the reader respond by laughing. While many of the articles are also entertaining, the majority of the humor is produced through the headlines. In fact, the headlines are so important to the success of the newspaper that they are tested on volunteers to see the readers' immediate responses. There are no formal features of these headlines besides the fact that they are all quite brief; they share no specific style. But they are a rhetorical action meant to bring about a specific response, which is why I see them as being their own genre. A few examples for those of you unfamiliar with this newspaper would help to explain what I'm saying. Here are a few of my personal favorites (politically charged or other possibly offensive headlines purposefully avoided):

- "Archaeological Dig Uncovers Ancient Race of Skeleton People"
- "Don't Run Away, I'm Not the Flesh-Eating Kind of Zombie"
- "Time Traveler: Everyone In The Future Eats Dippin' Dots"
- "'I Am Under 18' Button Clicked For First Time In History Of Internet"
- "Commas, Turning Up, Everywhere"
- "Myspace Outage Leaves Millions Friendless."
- "Amazon.com Recommendations Understand Area Woman Better Than Husband"
- "Study: Dolphins Not So Intelligent On Land"

• “Beaver Overthinking Dam”

• “Study: Alligators Dangerous No Matter How Drunk You Are”

• “Child In Corner To Exact Revenge As Soon As He Gets Out” (The Onion)

I would surmise with near certainty that at least one of these headlines made you laugh. Why? I think the success lies in the fact that the writers of these headlines are rhetorically aware of whom these headlines are directed toward—college students like you, and more specifically, educated college students who know enough about politics,
culture, and U.S. and world events to “get” these headlines.

And now for some bad news: figuring out a genre is tricky already, but this process is further complicated by the fact that two texts that might fit into the same genre might also look extremely different. But let’s think about why this might be the case. Devitt points out, “different grocery stores make for different grocery lists. Different law courts
make for different legal briefs. And different college classes make for different research papers. Location may not be the first, second, and third most important qualities of writing, as it is for real estate, but location is surely among the situational elements that lead to expected genres and to adaptations of those genres in particular situations”
(“Transferability” 218). Think about a time when you were asked to write a research paper. You probably had an idea of what that paper should look like, but you also needed to consider the location of the assignment. In other words, you needed to consider how your particular teacher’s expectations would help to shape your assignment. This makes knowing a genre about much more than simply knowing its form. You also need to consider the context in which it is being used. As such, it’s important to be aware that the research paper you might be required to write in freshman composition might be completely different than the research paper you might be asked to write for an introductory psychology class. Your goal is to recognize these shifts in location and to be aware of how such shifts might affect your writing.

Let’s consider a genre with which you are surely familiar: the thesis statement. Stop for a moment and consider what this term means to you. Ask your classmates. It’s likely that you each have your own definition of what a thesis statement should and should not look like. You may have heard never to start a thesis statement with a phrase like
“In this essay.” Or you might have been taught that a thesis statement should have three parts, each of which will be discussed in one paragraph of the essay. I learned that many good thesis statements follow the formula “X because Y,” where “X” refers to a specific stance, and “Y” refers to a specific reason for taking that stance. For example, I
could argue “School uniforms should be required because they will help students to focus more on academics and less on fashion.” Now, whether or not this is a good thesis statement is irrelevant, but you can see how following the “X because Y” formula would produce a nicely structured statement. Take this a step further and research “thesis
statements” on the Internet, and you’ll find that there are endless suggestions. And despite their vast differences, they all fit under the genre of thesis statement. How is this possible? Because it comes back to the particular situation in which that thesis statement is being used. Again, location is everything.

I think it’s time to try our hand at approaching a genre with which I hope all of you are only vaguely familiar and completely unpracticed: the ransom note.

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2.1.2.5.2: A Scenario

I've decided to kidnap Bob's daughter Susie for ransom. I'm behind on the mortgage payments, my yacht payments are also overdue, and I desperately need money. It is well known that Bob is one of the wealthiest people in Cash City, so I've targeted him as my future source of money. I've never met Bob, although one time his Mercedes cut me off in traffic, causing me to hit the brakes and spill my drink; the stain still glares at me from the floor of the car. The kidnapping part has been completed; now I need to leave Bob a ransom note. Let's look at a few drafts I've completed to decide which one would be most appropriate.

Ransom Letter 1:

If you ever want to see your daughter alive again, leave 1 million dollars by the blue garbage can at 123 Ransom Rd. at Midnight. Come alone and do not call the police.

Ransom Letter 2:

Hav daughter. Million $. Blu grbg can 123 Ransom Rd. 12AM. No poliz.

Ransom Letter 3:

Dear Bob,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.
You have a lovely house, and I very much enjoyed
my recent visit while you were out of town. Unfortunately,
I have kidnapped your daughter. As I am
currently unable to meet several financial demands, I
am graciously turning to you for help in this matter.
I am sure that we will be able to come to some mutually
beneficial agreement that results in the return of
your daughter and the padding of my wallet. Please
meet with me at the Grounds Coffee House on First
Street so that we may discuss what price is most fitting.
Your daughter, meanwhile, remains in safe and
competent hands. She is presently playing pool with
my son Matt (a possible love connection?), and she
says to tell you "Hi."

Yours truly,

Jim

P.S. Please order me a skim vanilla latte, should you
arrive before I do.

Immediately, you can probably determine that ransom letter one is the best choice. But have you considered why? What does the first letter have that the other two are lacking? Let's first eliminate the most obvious dud—letter number three. Not only does it mimic the friendly, familiar manner of two friends rather than the threatening note of
a deranged kidnapper, but it also suggests both that there is no rush in the matter and that the price is negotiable. Letters one and two are closer; they both contain the same information, but letter two fails to be as rhetorically strong as number one. The spelling errors and choppy feel might suggest that the writer of the note is not intelligent enough to get away with the kidnapping. The first letter is the most rhetorically strong because it is well written and direct. All of these letters would qualify as fitting the genre of ransom letter, but the first one most obviously fits the rhetorical situation.

It may be worthwhile to note some particular challenges you might have to approaching your writing genres as rhetorical situations. Perhaps you have come from a writing background where you learned that certain rules apply to all writing. Just nod if these sound familiar:

- You must have a thesis statement at the end of the introduction.
- Every thesis statement should introduce three points of discussion.
- You cannot use "I" in writing.
- You cannot begin a sentence with a coordinating conjunction.
- Every paragraph should start with a topic sentence.

You get the point. These rules are appealing; they tell us exactly what to do and not to do with regard to writing. I remember happily creating introductions that moved from broad to specific (often starting with "In our world"), constructing three point thesis statements, and beginning paragraphs with "first," "second," and "third." I didn't have to think about audience, or purpose, or even much about content for that matter. All that really mattered was that essay followed a certain formula that was called good writing. But looking back, what resulted from such formulas was not very good; actually, it was quite bad.

That is, of course, not to say that there aren't rules that come with genres; the difference is that the rules change as the genre changes, that no rules apply to all genres, and that genres require more effort than simply following the rules. Because genres usually come with established conventions, it is risky to choose not to follow such conventions. These similarities within genres help us to communicate successfully; imagine the chaos that would ensue if news broadcasts were done in raps, if all legal briefs were written in couplets, or if your teacher handed you a syllabus and told you that it must first be decoded. In sum, "too much choice is as debilitating of meaning as is too little choice. In language, too much variation results eventually in lack of meaning: mutual unintelligibility" (Devitt, "Genre" 53).

But on a brighter note, genres also help us to make more efficient decisions when writing, as we can see how people have approached similar situations. Creating a new genre each time that writing was required would make the writing process much longer, as we would not have past responses to help us with present ones (Devitt, "Generalizing"
576). As a result, the more you are able to master particular genres, the better equipped you may be to master genres that you later encounter:

> When people write, they draw on the genres they know, their own context of genres, to help construct their rhetorical action. If they encounter a situation new to them, it is the genres they have acquired in the past that they can use to shape their new action. Every genre they acquire, then, expands their genre repertoire and simultaneously shapes how they might view new situations. (Devitt, *Writing* 203)

Taking what Devitt says into account, think back to the previous discussion of the research paper. If you already have some idea of what a research paper looks like, you do not have to learn an entirely new genre. Instead, you just have to figure out how to change that particular genre to fit with the situation, even if that change just comes from having a different teacher.

Learning about genres and how they function is more important than mastering one particular genre; it is this knowledge that helps us to recognize and to determine appropriate responses to different situations—that is, knowing what particular genre is called for in a particular situation. And learning every genre would be impossible anyway, as Devitt notes that "no writing class could possibly teach students all the genres they will need to succeed even in school, much less in the workplace or in their civic lives. Hence the value of teaching genre awareness rather than acquisition of particular genres" (Writing 205). This approach helps to make you a more effective writer as well,
as knowing about genres will make you more prepared to use genres that you won't learn in college. For example, I recently needed to write a letter about removing a late fee on a credit card. I had never written this particular type of letter before, but I knew what action I was trying to accomplish. As a result, I did some research on writing letters and determined that I should make it as formal and polite as possible. The body of the letter ended up as follows:

> I have very much enjoyed being a card carrier with this bank for many years. However, I recently had a late fee charged to my account. As you will note from my previous statements, this is the first late fee I

have ever acquired. I do remember making this payment
on time, as I have all of my previous payments.
I hope to remain a loyal customer of this bank for
many years to come, so I would very much appreciate
it if you would remove this charge from my account.

You can see that this letter does several things. First, I build credibility for myself by reminding them that I have used their card for many years. Second, I ask them to check my records to show further that I am typically a responsible card carrier. And third, I hint that if they do not remove the late fee, I might decide to change to a different bank.
This letter is effective because it considers how the situation affects the genre. And yes, the late fee was removed.

Chances are that I have left you more confused than you were before you began this essay. Actually, I hope that I have left you frustrated; this means that the next time you write, you will have to consider not only form but also audience, purpose, and genre; you will, in other words, have to consider the rhetorical effectiveness of your writing. Luckily, I can leave you with a few suggestions:

• First, determine what action you are trying to accomplish. Are you trying to receive an A on a paper? Convince a credit card company to remove a late fee? Get into graduate school? If you don't know what your goal is for a particular writing situation, you'll have a difficult time figuring out what genre to use.

• Second, learn as much as you can about the situation for which you are writing. What is the purpose? Who is the audience? How much freedom do you have? How does the location affect the genre?

• Third, research how others have responded to similar situations. Talk to people who have written what you are trying to write. If you are asked to write a biology research paper, ask your instructor for examples. If you need to write a cover letter for a summer internship, take the time to find out about the location of that internship.

• And finally, ask questions.

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2.1.2.5.3: Discussion

1. What are some genres that you feel you know well? How did you learn them? What are their common rhetorical features?
2. What rules have you been told to follow in the past? How did they shape what you were writing?
3. How much freedom do you enjoy when writing? Does it help to have a form to follow, or do you find it to be limiting?

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2.1.2.6: Historical Case Study

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2.1.2.6.1: History and Biography

Every person analyzes and evaluates the world from a subjective perspective or viewpoint. Subjective concerns rely on judgments rather than external facts. Personal feelings and opinions from a person's history and biography drive subjective concerns. The time period we live (history) and our personal life experiences (biography) influence our perspectives and understanding about others and the social world. Our history and biography guide our perceptions of reality reinforcing our personal bias and subjectivity.



Figure 2. The Influence of History and Biography on Perspective



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Relying on subjective viewpoints and perspectives leads to diffusion of misinformation (inaccurate), disinformation (false or fake), and fallacies (unsound reasoning) that can be detrimental to our physical and socio-cultural environment and negatively impact our perceptions, considerations, and acceptance of others. It takes awareness and deliberate practice to reduce personal bias in our interactions, interpretations, and understanding of others and the social world. We must seek out facts and develop knowledge to enhance our objective eye. By using valid, reliable, proven facts, data, and information, we establish credibility and make sound judgments and better decisions for the world and those we work with and serve.

PERSPECTIVE INFLUENCES

- Describe your dream job in sociology. What are your career goals? How do you want to help and serve people? What changes to you want to make in your community and society?
- According to C. Wright Mills, our history (time we live) and biography (personal experiences) influence our perceptions about the world. Think about the historical and biographical influences on your life and your decision to pursue a career in sociology. Explain how you developed your interest in sociological practice and what led you to pursue a degree in sociology.
- How might your passion to help others be influenced by egocentric ideologies or self-interest? What can you do to have a meaningful career helping others without bias? How will you develop a sociological or objective eye when working with people to address and solve social problems?

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2.1.2.6.2: Ethics Case Study

The issue of ethics is important in the strategic communication profession. Creators of content should heavily rely on a code of ethics when carrying out various tasks. Using ethical reasoning, whether you're designing a campaign or writing a newspaper article, demonstrates basic understanding of the influence of messages on audiences. Ethical communication also helps an organization avoid dilemmas and compromising situations.

Several cases covered in the press highlight the ramifications of failure to use ethical and honest standards in communication efforts. The case study below demonstrates this.

Case study: Ryan Holiday, media manipulation, and the rise of the Tucker Max brand

Media strategist Ryan Holiday made a career of controlling the media to achieve public relations goals. A few years ago, he became a PR specialist for Tucker Max, a controversial blogger and author who garnered attention for his lewd writing and explicit discussions of his sexual adventures with countless women. Holiday played an essential role in a campaign for Max's book *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell*. Pretending to be someone who hated Max's writings, Holiday contacted influencers, bloggers, and television stations about the social controversy caused by the brand. Soon Max's book received widespread attention from national media outlets and writers all over the blogosphere (Ariely & Melamede, 2015).

Filmmakers later created a movie based on the book. Holiday used some of the same tactics to promote the film. He emailed college organizations across the country, again pretending to be someone who was disgusted with the Tucker Max brand. He included photos of fake advertisements that were offensive to women (which Holiday himself had created), and said that the advertisements were used to promote the film (Ariely & Melamede, 2015). He told campus leaders, bloggers, and other influencers to urge people not to see the film.

Holiday was intentionally trying to create protests to generate media coverage and public awareness about the film and the Tucker Max brand in general (Ariely & Melamede, 2015). He used deceptive measures and some aspects of controversy—strong opinions on a topic, social backlash, and a hated public figure—as leverage. And he was very successful: organized groups across the country held protests against the film, furthering the widespread attention on Tucker Max. In this situation, the saying "any press is good press" worked to his advantage.



Figure 2.1.2.6.2.1: “Photo of Author, Ryan Holiday” is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Cases such as this raise several concerns related to the field of strategic communication. Most important, the Tucker Max situation calls into question the ethics Holiday used to control the media. How far should one go to promote an organization or brand? The perception exists that strategic communication professionals, specifically those in public relations, are expert spin doctors and media manipulators; because of this, the profession’s credibility has been damaged. In order to reclaim the trustworthiness of the field, strategic communication professionals must abide by strong ethics in their decision-making processes.

The majority of strategic communication professionals promote their client or organization in an honest and straightforward manner. One case study that demonstrates this comes from a Columbus-based public relations agency, Geben Communication. In 2014, the agency helped promote a small catering business, Two Caterers. It used a targeted media relations strategy and pitched to several local publications and news stations (Geben Communication, 2016) in order to enhance brand awareness. The pitches contained factual information, and those working on the account did not use manipulative tactics to achieve their goal.

Geben Communication’s promotional effort had positive results. Local publications wrote several articles on Two Caterers, and a television station invited the small business to do a cooking demonstration for a morning segment. Furthermore, Two Caterers received accolades and recognition from small business associations and magazines.

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2.1.2.7: Metaphorical Criticism (George Lakoff)

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.1.2.7.1: The Symbolic Nature of Culture

2.1.2.7.1A: The Symbolic Nature of Culture

2.1.2.7.1B: The Origins of Language

2.1.2.7.1C: Language

2.1.2.7.1D: Language and Perception

2.1.2.7.1E: Symbols and Nature

2.1.2.7.1F: Gestures

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2.1.2.7.1I: Sanctions

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2.1.2.7.1A: The Symbolic Nature of Culture

The symbolic systems that people use to capture and communicate their experiences form the basis of shared cultures.

Learning Objectives

- Relate the idea that culture is symbolically coded to arguments about the dynamism of cultures

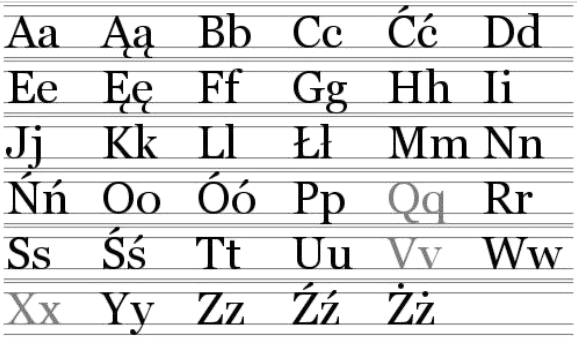
Key Points

- A symbol is any object, typically material, which is meant to represent another (usually abstract), even if there is no meaningful relationship.
- Culture is based on a shared set of symbols and meanings. Symbolic culture enables human communication and must be taught.
- Symbolic culture is more malleable and adaptable than biological evolution.
- The belief that culture is symbolically coded and can be taught from one person to another means that cultures, although bounded, can change.
- According to sociologists, symbols make up one of the 5 key elements of culture; the other key elements are language, values, beliefs, and norms.

Key Terms

- **symbol**: Any object, typically material, which is meant to represent another (usually abstract), even if there is no meaningful relationship.
- **Max Weber**: (1864–1920) A German sociologist, philosopher, and political economist who profoundly influenced social theory, social research, and the discipline of sociology itself.

A symbol is any object, typically material, which is meant to represent another (usually abstract) object, even if there is no meaningful relationship. Anthropologists have argued that, through the course of their evolution, human beings evolved a universal human capacity to classify experiences, and encode and communicate them symbolically, such as with written language. Since these symbolic systems were learned and taught, they began to develop independently of biological evolution (in other words, one human being can learn a belief, value, or way of doing something from another, even if they are not biologically related). That this capacity for symbolic thinking and social learning is a product of human evolution confounds older arguments about nature versus nurture.



The Polish Alphabets: Cultures are shared systems of symbols and meanings. Alphabets are one example of a symbolic element of culture.

This view of culture argues that people living apart from one another develop unique cultures. Elements of different cultures, however, can easily spread from one group of people to another. The belief that culture is symbolically coded and can, therefore, be taught from one person to another, means that cultures, although bounded, can change. Culture is dynamic and can be taught and learned, making it a potentially rapid form of adaptation to changes in physical conditions. Anthropologists view culture as not only a product of biological evolution, but as a supplement to it; culture can be seen as the main means of human adaptation to the natural world.

This view of culture as a symbolic system with adaptive functions, which varies from place to place, led anthropologists to conceive of different cultures as defined by distinct patterns (or structures) of enduring (although arbitrary) conventional sets of meaning. These meanings took concrete form in a variety of artifacts such as myths and rituals, tools, the design of housing, and the planning of villages. Anthropologists distinguish between material culture and symbolic culture, not only because each reflects different kinds of human activity, but also because they constitute different kinds of data that require different methodologies to study.

The sociology of culture concerns culture as it is manifested in society: the ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects that together shape a people's way of life. According to Max Weber, symbols are important aspects of culture: people use symbols to express their spirituality and the spiritual side of real events, and ideal interests are derived from symbols. According to sociologists, symbols make up one of the five key elements of culture, the others being language, values, beliefs, and norms.

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2.1.2.7.1B: The Origins of Language

The origin of language is a widely discussed and controversial topic due to very limited empirical evidence.

Learning Objectives

- Compare and contrast continuity-based theories and discontinuity-based theories about the origin of language

Key Points

- There is no consensus on the ultimate origin or age of human language.
- Continuity-based theories stress that language is so complex that it must have evolved from earlier pre-linguistic systems among pre-humans.
- Discontinuity-based theories stress that language is a unique human trait that appeared fairly suddenly in the transition from pre-hominids to early man.

Key Terms

- **language**: A form of communication using words either spoken or gestured with the hands and structured with grammar, often with a writing system.
- **symbolic**: Referring to something with an implicit meaning.
- **prehistory**: The history of human culture prior to written records.

The origin of language in the human species is a widely discussed topic. There is no consensus on ultimate origin or age. Empirical evidence is limited, and many scholars continue to regard the whole topic as unsuitable for serious study.



Language in daily life: The origin of language in the human species is a widely discussed topic.

Theories about the origin of language can be divided according to their basic assumptions. Some theories are based on the idea that language is so complex that one cannot imagine it simply appearing from nothing in its final form, but that it must have evolved from earlier pre-linguistic systems among our pre-human ancestors. These theories can be called continuity-based theories.

The opposite viewpoint is that language is such a unique human trait that it cannot be compared to anything found among non-humans and that it must therefore have appeared fairly suddenly in the transition from pre-hominids to early man. These theories can be defined as discontinuity-based.

Similarly, some theories see language mostly as an innate faculty that is largely genetically encoded, while others see it as a system that is largely cultural—that is, learned through social interaction. Currently the only prominent proponent of a discontinuity theory of human language origins is Noam Chomsky.

Continuity-based theories are currently held by a majority of scholars, but they vary in how they envision this development. Those who see language as being mostly innate, such as Steven Pinker, hold the precedents to be animal cognition, whereas those who see language as a socially learned tool of communication, such as Michael Tomasello, see it as having developed from animal communication, either primate gestural or vocal communication. Other continuity-based models see language as having developed from music.

Because the emergence of language is located in the early prehistory of man, the relevant developments have left no direct historical traces and no comparable processes can be observed today. Theories that stress continuity often look at animals to see if, for example, primates display any traits that can be seen as analogous to what pre-human language must have been like. Alternatively early human fossils can be inspected to look for traces of physical adaptation to language use or for traces of pre-linguistic forms of symbolic behaviour.

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2.1.2.7.1C: Language

Language may refer either to the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such.

Learning Objectives

- Compare the different ways in which language can be studied

Key Points

- The word ” language ” has at least two basic meanings: language as a general concept, and “a language” (a specific linguistic system, e.g. “French”), a distinction first made by Ferdinand de Saussure.
- Languages, understood as the particular set of speech norms of a particular community, are also a part of the larger culture of the community that speak them.
- Humans use language as a way of signalling identity with one cultural group and difference from others.
- The organic definition of language sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behavior–to learn languages and produce and understand utterances.
- The structuralist view of language sees language as a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning.
- The functional theory of language sees language as a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate.
- Humans use language as a way of signalling identity with one cultural group and difference from others.
- The organic definition of language sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behaviour: to learn languages and produce and understand utterances. These kinds of definitions are often applied by studies of language within a cognitive science framework and in neurolinguistics.
- The structuralist view of language sees language as a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning. This definition stresses the fact that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings.
- The functional theory of language sees language as a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate. This definition stresses the social functions of language and the fact that humans use it to express themselves and to manipulate objects in their environment.

Key Terms

- **semiotics**: The study of signs and symbols, especially as means of language or communication.
- **linguistics**: The scientific study of language.

Language may refer either to the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication, or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication. The scientific study of language in any of its senses is called linguistics.

The word language has at least two basic meanings: language as a general concept, and a specific linguistic system (e.g. French). Ferdinand de Saussure first explicitly formulated the distinction, using the French word *langage* for language as a concept, and *langue* as the specific instance of language.

One definition sees language primarily as the mental faculty that allows humans to undertake linguistic behaviour–to learn languages and produce and understand utterances. These kinds of definitions are often applied by studies of language within a cognitive science framework and in neurolinguistics.

Another definition sees language as a formal system of signs governed by grammatical rules of combination to communicate meaning. This definition stresses the fact that human languages can be described as closed structural systems consisting of rules that relate particular signs to particular meanings.

Yet another definition sees language as a system of communication that enables humans to cooperate. This definition stresses the social functions of language and the fact that humans use it to express themselves and to manipulate objects in their environment.

When described as a system of symbolic communication, language is traditionally seen as consisting of three parts: signs, meanings, and a code connecting signs with their meanings. The study of how signs and meanings are combined, used, and interpreted is called semiotics.

Languages, understood as the particular set of speech norms of a particular community, are also a part of the larger culture of the community that speaks them. Humans use language as a way of signalling identity with one cultural group and difference from others. Human languages are usually referred to as natural languages, and the science of studying them falls under the purview of linguistics. Human language is unique in comparison to other forms of communication, such as those used by animals, because it allows humans to produce an infinite set of utterances from a finite set of elements.



A Bilingual Sign: Members of a culture usually share a common language. Here, a bilingual sign in Wales tells both English and Welsh speakers that smoking is prohibited.

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2.1.2.7.1D: Language and Perception

Various theories assume that language is not simply a representational tool; rather it fundamentally shapes our perception.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Key Points

- The principle of linguistic relativity holds that the structure of a language affects the ways in which its speakers conceptualize their world (i.e., world view), or otherwise influences their cognitive processes.
- A main point of debate in the discussion of linguistic relativity is the strength of correlation between language and thought. The strongest form of correlation is linguistic determinism, which holds that language entirely determines an individual's range of possible cognitive processes.
- The hypothesis of linguistic determinism is now generally agreed to be false, although many researchers still study weaker forms of correlation, often producing positive empirical evidence for a correlation.
- The crucial question is whether human psychological faculties are mostly universal and innate, or whether they are mostly a result of learning, and, therefore, subject to cultural and social processes that vary between places and times.

Key Terms

- **Perception**: (cognition) That which is detected by the five senses; not necessarily understood (imagine looking through fog, trying to understand if you see a small dog or a cat); also that which is detected within consciousness as a thought, intuition, deduction, etc.
- **relativity**: The state of being relative to something else.

Various theories assume that language fundamentally shapes our perception. One example is the principle of linguistic relativity. This principle holds that the structure of a language affects the ways in which its speakers conceptualize his or her world (worldview) or otherwise influences their cognitive processes. Popularly known as the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, or Whorfianism, the principle is often defined as having two versions:

1. The strong version states that language determines thought and emotions/feelings, and linguistic categories limit and determine cognitive categories
2. The weak version argues that linguistic categories and usage influence thought and certain kinds of non-linguistic behavior.

The concept of linguistic relativity describes different formulations of the principle that cognitive processes, such as thought, emotion/feelings and experience, may be influenced by the categories and patterns of the language a person speaks. Empirical research into the question has been associated mainly with the names of Benjamin Lee Whorf, who wrote on the topic in the 1930s, and his mentor Edward Sapir, who did not himself write extensively on the topic.

A main point of debate in the discussion of linguistic relativity is the strength of correlation between language and thought and emotion/feelings. The strongest form of correlation is linguistic determinism, which holds that language entirely determines the range of possible cognitive processes of an individual. The hypothesis of linguistic determinism is now generally agreed to be false, though many researchers are still studying weaker forms of correlation, often producing positive empirical evidence for a correlation.





On Language and Perception: Cognition and Communication Research Centre film describing recent research on the mapping between language and perception, and whether the language one speaks affects how one thinks.

The centrality of the question of the relation between thought or emotions/feelings and language has brought attention to the issue of linguistic relativity, not only from linguists and psychologists, but also from anthropologists, philosophers, literary theorists, and political scientists. For example, can people experience or feel something they have no word to explain it with?

The crucial question is whether human psychological faculties are mostly universal and innate, or whether they are mostly a result of learning, and, therefore, subject to cultural and social processes that vary between places and times. The Universalist view holds that all humans share the same set of basic faculties, and that variability due to cultural differences is negligible. This position often sees the human mind as mostly a biological construction, so that all humans sharing the same neurological configuration can be expected to have similar or identical basic cognitive patterns.

The contrary position can be described in several ways. The constructivist view holds that human faculties and concepts are largely influenced by socially constructed and learned categories that are not subject to many biological restrictions. The idealist view holds that the human mental capacities are generally unrestricted by their biological-material basis. The essentialist view holds that there may be essential differences in the ways the different individuals or groups experience and conceptualize the world. The relativist position, which basically refers to a kind of Cultural relativism, sees different cultural groups as having different conceptual schemes that are not necessarily compatible or commensurable, nor more or less in accord with the external reality.



Edward Sapir: Empirical research into the question of linguistic relativity has been associated mainly with the names of Benjamin Lee Whorf, who wrote on the topic in the 1930s, and his mentor Edward Sapir, who did not himself write extensively on the topic.





The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis: The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis suggests that language shapes the way we see the world.

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2.1.2.7.1E: Symbols and Nature

Language is a symbolic system of communication based on a complex system of rules relating spoken, signed, or written symbols.

Learning Objectives

Key Points

- Human language is thought to be fundamentally different from and of much higher complexity than that of other species as it is based on a complex system of rules that result in an indefinite number of possible utterances from a finite number of elements.
- Written languages use visual symbols to represent the sounds of the spoken languages, but they still require syntactic rules that govern the production of meaning from sequences of words.
- Human language differs from communication used by animals because the symbols and grammatical rules of any particular language are largely arbitrary, so that the system can only be acquired through social interaction.
- The study of how signs and meanings are combined, used, and interpreted is called semiotics.
- Signs can be composed of sounds, gestures, letters, or symbols, depending on whether the language is spoken, signed, or written.
- Language is traditionally seen as consisting of three parts: signs, meanings, and a code connecting signs with their meanings.

Key Terms

- **semiotics**: The study of signs and symbols, especially as means of language or communication.
- **human language**: Human language is typically used for communication, and may be spoken, signed, or written.
- **written language**: A written language is the representation of a language by means of a writing system.

Language is traditionally thought to consist of three parts: signs, meanings, and a code connecting signs with their meanings. Semiotics is the study of how signs and meanings are combined, used, and interpreted. Signs can consist of sounds, gestures, letters, or symbols, depending on whether the language is spoken, signed, or written.

Language as a whole, therefore, is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication. A single language is any specific example of such a system. Language is based on complex rules relating spoken, signed, or written symbols to their meanings. What results is an indefinite number of possible innovative utterances from a finite number of elements.

Human language is thought to be fundamentally different from and of much higher complexity than the communication systems of other species (). Human language differs from communication used by animals () because the symbols and grammatical rules of any particular language are largely arbitrary, meaning that the system can only be acquired through social interaction. ()

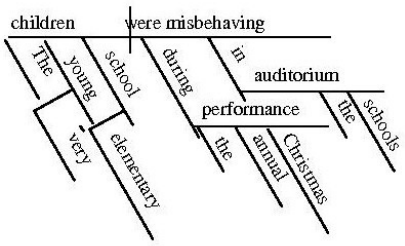




Can Parrots Really Talk?: Parrots mimic the sounds of human language, but have they really learned the symbolic system?



A Barking Dog: Animal sounds, like a dog's bark, may serve basic communication functions, but they lack the symbolic elements of human language.



A Sentence Diagram: Human language's grammatical structure makes it unique.

Written language is the representation of a language by means of a writing system. Written language exists only as a complement to a specific spoken

language. Written languages use visual symbols to represent the sounds of the spoken languages, but they still require syntactic rules that govern the production of meaning from sequences of words.

A sign language is a language which, instead of acoustically conveying sound patterns, uses manual communication and body language to convey meaning. This can involve simultaneously combining hand shapes; orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body; and facial expressions to fluidly express a speaker's thoughts. Sign languages, like spoken languages, organize elementary units into meaningful semantic units.

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2.1.2.7.1F: Gestures

A gesture is a form of non-verbal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the role of gestures in the communication process

Key Points

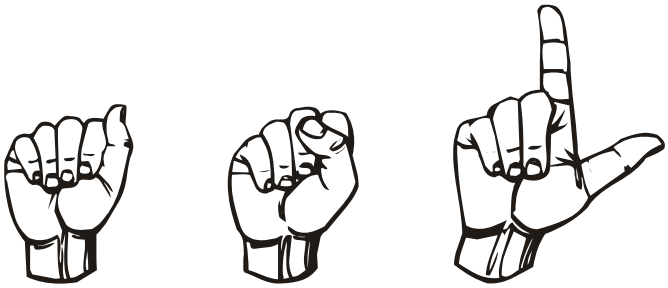
- Gestures allow individuals to communicate a variety of feelings and thoughts, from contempt and hostility to approval and affection, often together with body language in addition to spoken words.
- The most familiar categories of gestures are the so-called emblems or quotable gestures. These are conventional, culture -specific gestures that can be used as replacement for words, such as the handwave used in the U.S. for “hello” and “goodbye”.
- Another broad category of gestures comprises those gestures used spontaneously when we speak. These gestures are closely coordinated with speech.
- Gestural languages such as American Sign Language and its regional siblings operate as complete natural languages that are gestural in modality.
- Gesturing is probably universal; there have been no reports of communities that do not gesture. Gestures are a crucial part of everyday conversation such as chatting, describing a route, or negotiating prices on a market.

Key Terms

- **gesture**: A motion of the limbs or body, especially one made to emphasize speech.
- **quotable gestures**: Quotable gestures are conventional, culture-specific gestures that can be used as replacement for words.
- **gestural languages**: A gestural language is a language which, instead of acoustically conveyed sound patterns, uses manual communication and body language to convey meaning. This can involve simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to fluidly express a speaker’s thoughts.

A gesture is a form of non-verbal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages, either in place of speech or together and in parallel with spoken words. Gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body. Gestures differ from physical non-verbal communication that does not communicate specific messages, such as purely expressive displays, proxemics, or displays of joint attention. Gestures allow individuals to communicate a variety of feelings and thoughts, from contempt and hostility to approval and affection, often together with body language in addition to spoken words.

The most familiar categories of gestures are the so-called emblems or quotable gestures. These are conventional, culture-specific gestures that can be used as replacement for words, such as the handwave used in the U.S. for “hello” and “goodbye. ” Another broad category of gestures comprises those gestures used spontaneously when we speak. These gestures are closely coordinated with speech. Gestural languages such as American Sign Language and its regional siblings operate as complete natural languages that are gestural.



Gestural Language: American Sign Language, or ASL, is a gestural language. This is how to sign the letters A-S-L.

Many animals, including humans, use gestures to initiate a mating ritual. This may include elaborate dances and other movements. Gestures play a major role in many aspects of human life. Gesturing is probably universal; there have been no reports of communities that do not gesture. Gestures are a crucial part of everyday conversation such as chatting, describing a route, or negotiating prices on a market; they are ubiquitous. Gestures have been documented in the arts such as in Greek vase paintings, Indian Miniatures, and European paintings.



Hand Gestures: Military air marshallers use hand and body gestures to direct flight operations aboard aircraft carriers.



Pointing: Pointing at another person with an extended finger is considered rude in many cultures.

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2.1.2.7.1G: Values

Cultures have values that are largely shared by their members, which identify what should be judged as good or evil.

Learning Objectives

- Contrast values and norms

Key Points

- The values of a society can often be identified by noting which people receive honor or respect.
- Values are related to the norms of a culture, but they are more global and abstract than norms.
- Norms are rules for behavior in specific situations, while values identify what should be judged as good or evil.
- Members take part in a culture even if each member's personal values do not entirely agree with some of the normative values sanctioned in the culture.
- Values clarification is helping people clarify what their lives are for and what is worth working for.
- Cognitive moral education is based on the belief that students should learn to value things like democracy and justice as their moral reasoning develops.

Key Terms

- **norm**: A rule that is enforced by members of a community.
- **culture**: The beliefs, values, behavior, and material objects that constitute a people's way of life.
- **subculture**: A portion of a culture distinguished from the larger society around it by its customs or other features.

Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. Values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong, or what "ought" to be. Some examples of values are the concepts of "equal rights for all," "excellence deserves admiration," and "people should be treated with respect and dignity. " Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior.

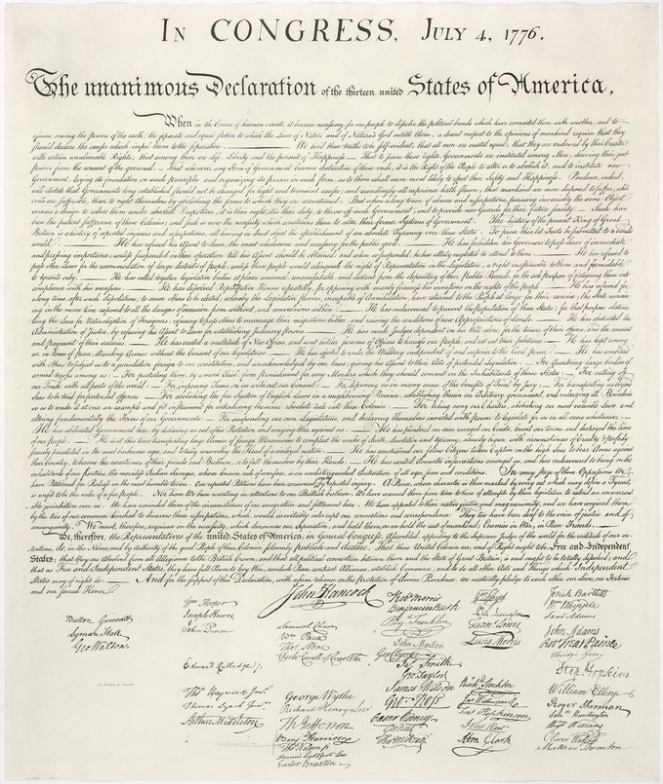
Cultures have values that are largely shared by their members. Different cultures reflect different values. Noting which people receive honor or respect can provide clues to the values of a society. In the US, for example, some professional athletes are honored (in the form of monetary payment) more than college professors.

Values are related to the norms of a culture, but they are more global and abstract than norms. Norms are rules for behavior in specific situations, while values identify what should be judged as good or evil. Flying the national flag on a holiday is a norm, but it reflects the value of patriotism. Wearing dark clothing and appearing solemn are normative behaviors at a funeral; in certain cultures, this reflects the values of respect for and support of friends and family. Different cultures reflect different values.

Members take part in a culture even if each member's personal values do not entirely agree with some of the normative values sanctioned in the culture. This reflects an individual's ability to synthesize and extract aspects valuable to them from the multiple subcultures to which they belong. If a group member expresses a value that is in serious conflict with the group's norms, the group's authority may encourage conformity or stigmatize the non-conforming behavior of its members.



Punk: Punk social groups are often considered marginal and are excluded from certain mainstream social spaces.



Declaration of Independence: Independence and freedom are fundamental values in the U.S.



Punks as non-conformists: Members of the punk movement refused to conform to some of the normative values prevalent in Western culture.



The Liberty Bell: Many consider liberty to be a fundamental American value.

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2.1.2.7.1H: Norms

Learning Objectives

- Explain the origin, reinforcement, and significance of social norms in a society or group

Social norms are the explicit or implicit rules specifying acceptable behaviors within a society or group. They define the expected or acceptable behavior in particular circumstances. Social norms can also be defined as the shared ways of thinking, feeling, desiring, deciding, and acting which are observable in regularly repeated behaviors and are adopted because they are assumed to solve problems.

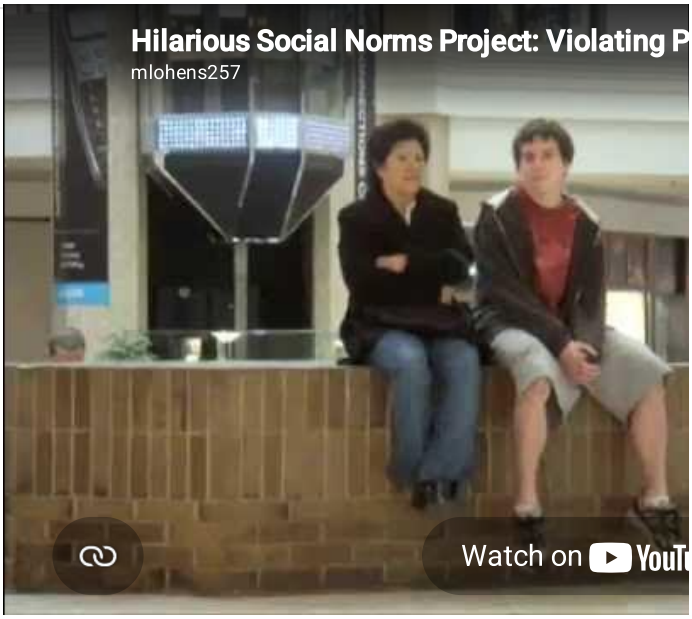
Social norms are neither static nor universal; they change with respect to time and vary with respect to culture, social classes, and social groups. What is deemed acceptable dress, speech, or behavior in one social group may not be acceptable in another.

Deference to social norms maintains one's acceptance and popularity within a particular group. Social norms can be enforced formally (e.g., through sanctions) or informally (e.g., through body language and non-verbal communication cues). By ignoring or breaking social norms, one risks facing formal sanctions or quiet disapproval, finding oneself unpopular with or ostracized from a group.



Formal Sanctions: Norms may be enforced through informal sanctions, such as derision, or formal sanctions, such as arrest.

As social beings, individuals learn when and where it is appropriate to say certain things, use certain words, discuss certain topics, or wear certain clothes, and when it is not. Groups may adopt norms in two different ways. One form of norm adoption is the formal method, where norms are written down and formally adopted (e.g., laws, legislation, club rules). Social norms are much more likely to be informal and to emerge gradually (e.g., not wearing socks with sandals).





Social Norms of Personal Space: Students demonstrate social norms of personal space by violating the norms. This type of experiment is called a breaching experiment.

Groups internalize norms by accepting them as reasonable and proper standards for behavior within the group. That said, while it is more likely that a new individual entering a group will adopt the group's norms, values, and perspectives, newcomers to a group can also change a group's norms.



Same-Sex Marriage and Social Norms: In most Western countries, norms have prohibited same-sex marriage, but those norms are now changing.

Key Points

- Norms can be defined as the shared ways of thinking, feeling, desiring, deciding, and acting which are observable in regularly repeated behaviours and are adopted because they are assumed to solve problems.
- Social norms are neither static nor universal; they change with respect to time and vary with respect to culture, social classes, and social groups.
- Social norms can be enforced formally (e.g., through sanctions) or informally (e.g., through body language and non-verbal communication cues).
- One form of norm adoption is the formal method, where norms are written down and formally adopted. However, social norms are more likely to be informal and emerge gradually (e.g., not wearing socks with sandals).

Key Terms

- **social classes**: Social class (or simply “class”) is a set of concepts in the social sciences and political theory centered on models of social stratification in which people are grouped into a set of hierarchical social categories.
- **social group**: A collection of humans or animals that share certain characteristics, interact with one another, accept expectations and obligations as members of the group, and share a common identity.
- **social norms**: Social norms are described by sociologists as being laws that govern society’s behaviors.

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2.1.2.7.1I: Sanctions

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between methods of formal and informal social control

Sanctions are mechanisms of social control. As opposed to forms of internal control, like cultural norms and values, sociologists consider sanctions a form of external control. Sanctions can either be positive (rewards) or negative (punishment), and can arise from either formal or informal control.



ormal Sanctions: Societies use formal and nal sanctions to enforce norms.

Informal Social Control and Deviance

The social values present in individuals are products of informal social control. This type of control emerges from society, but is rarely stated explicitly to individuals. Instead, it is expressed and transmitted indirectly, through customs, norms and mores. Whether consciously or not, individuals are socialized. With informal sanctions, ridicule or ostracism can cause a straying individual to realign behavior toward group norms. Informal sanctions may include shame, ridicule, sarcasm, criticism, and disapproval. In extreme cases, sanctions may include social discrimination and exclusion. If a young boy is caught skipping school, and his peers ostracize him for his deviant behavior, they are exercising an informal sanction on him. Informal sanctions can check deviant behavior of individuals or groups, either through internalization, or through disincentivizing the deviant behavior.

As with formal controls, informal controls reward or punish acceptable or unacceptable behavior, otherwise known as deviance. Informal controls are varied and differ from individual to individual, group to group, and society to society. egulate their subjects, groups, of various kinds can promulgate ons to reward or punish behavior. gulate behavior, government and rcement mechanisms and other s and imprisonment. Authoritarian nts may rely on more directly ctions might include censorship, political freedom, or violence. e sanctions emerge in situations es of either the government or



A Prison Cell Block: Incarceration is a type of formal sanction.



Shame: Shame can be used as a type of informal sanction.

Key Points

- Sanctions can either be positive (rewards) or negative (punishment).
- Sanctions can arise from either formal or informal control.
- With informal sanctions, ridicule or ostracism can realign a straying individual towards norms. Informal sanctions may include shame, ridicule, sarcasm, criticism, and disapproval.
- Groups, organizations, and societies of various kinds can promulgate rules that act as formal sanctions to reward or punish behavior. For example, government and organizations use law enforcement mechanisms and other formal sanctions such as fines and imprisonment.
- To maintain control and regulate their subjects, authoritarian organizations and governments use severe sanctions such as censorship, expulsion, and limits on political freedom.

Key Terms

- **social control**: any control, either formal or informal, that is exerted by a group, especially by one's peers
- **sanction**: a penalty, or some coercive measure, intended to ensure compliance; especially one adopted by several nations, or by an international body
- **Informal sanctions**: These are the reactions of individuals and groups that bring about conformity to norms and laws. These can include peer and community pressure, bystander intervention in a crime, and collective responses such as citizen patrol groups.

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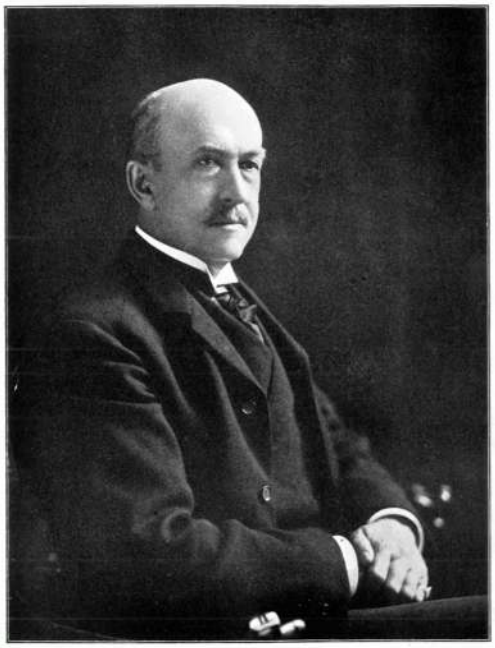
2.1.2.7.1J: Folkways and Mores

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between folkways and mores

Societal norms, or rules that are enforced by members of a community, can exist as both formal and informal rules of behavior. Informal norms can be divided into two distinct groups: folkways and mores. Folkways are informal rules and norms that, while not offensive to violate, are expected to be followed. Mores (pronounced *more-rays*) are also informal rules that are not written, but, when violated, result in severe punishments and social sanction upon the individuals, such as social and religious exclusions,.

William Graham Sumner, an early U.S. sociologist, recognized that some norms are more important to our lives than others. Sumner coined the term *mores* to refer to norms that are widely observed and have great moral significance. Mores are often seen as taboos; for example, most societies hold the more that adults not engage in sexual relations with children. Mores emphasize morality through right and wrong, and come with heavy consequences if violated.



William Graham Sumner, 1840-1910: William Graham Sumner coined the terms “folkways” and “mores. “

Sumner also coined the term *folkway* to refer to norms for more routine or casual interaction. This includes ideas about appropriate greetings and proper dress in different situations. In comparison to the morality of mores, folkways dictate what could be considered either polite or rude behavior. Their violation does not invite any punishment or sanctions, but may come with reprimands or warnings.

An example to distinguish the two: a man who does not wear a tie to a formal dinner party may raise eyebrows for violating folkways; were he to arrive wearing only a tie, he would violate cultural mores and invite a more serious response.

Key Points

- Societal norms, or rules that are enforced by members of a community, can exist as both formal and informal rules of behavior. Informal norms can be divided into two distinct groups: folkways and mores.
- Both “mores” and “folkways” are terms coined by the American sociologist William Graham Sumner.
- Mores distinguish the difference between right and wrong, while folkways draw a line between right and rude. While folkways may raise an eyebrow if violated, mores dictate morality and come with heavy consequences.

Key Terms

- **mores**: A set of moral norms or customs derived from generally accepted practices. Mores derive from the established practices of a society rather than its written laws.
- **William Graham Sumner**: An American academic with numerous books and essays on American history, economic history, political theory, sociology, and anthropology.
- **folkway**: A custom or belief common to members of a society or culture.

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2.1.2.7.2: Figurative Language

Figurative Language

Figurative language uses words or expressions not meant to be taken literally. Whether you realize it or not, we encounter them every day. When we exaggerate we use **hyperbole**: *I'm so hungry I can eat a horse*; when Rhianna sings about *stars like diamonds in the sky* she uses **simile**; when we say *opportunity knocked on my door* we are using **personification**. In addition to making our conversations interesting and capturing our intense feelings, figurative language is very important to the making of poetry. It is a tool that allows us to make connections, comparisons, and contrasts in ways that produce insight, raise questions, and add specificity. Earlier we worked to make words more specific. We changed *apple*, *blue*, and *boat* into *golden delicious*, *turquoise*, and *sailboat*. The changes made the images more immediate and sharper and offered the reader opportunities to understand the poem. Figures of speech are the next step to adding layers to your poems, to adding even more complexity and meaning.

Types of Figurative Language

Metaphor

Figurative language, often the comparison made between two seemingly unlike things, is almost all image-based and, therefore, a good friend of poetry. In fact, some, like Owen Barfield in his essay on metaphor in Poets.org, would go so far as to say that poetry *is* **metaphor**:

Quote:

> The most conspicuous point of contact between meaning and poetry is *metaphor*. For one of the first things that a students of etymology—even quite an amateur student—discovers for himself is that every language, with its thousands of abstract terms, and its nuances of meaning and association, is *apparently* nothing, from beginning to end, but an unconscionable tissue of dead, or petrified, metaphors. If we trace the meaning of a great many words—or those of the elements of which they are composed—about as far back as etymology can take us, we are at once made to realize that an overwhelming proportion, if not all, of them referred in earlier days to one of these two things—a solid, sensible object, or some animal (probably human) activity. Examples abound on every page of the dictionary. Thus, an apparently objective scientific term like *elasticity*, on the one hand, and the metaphysical *abstract* on the other, are both traceable to verbs meaning "draw" or "drag." *Centrifugal* and *centripetal* are composed of a noun meaning "a goad" and verbs signifying "to flee" and "to seek" respectively; epithet, theme, thesis, anathema, hypothesis, etc., go back to a Greek verb, "to put," and even *right* and *wrong*, it seems, once had the meaning "stretched" and so "straight" and "wringing" or "sour." Some philologists, looking still further back into the past, have resolved these two classes into one, but this is immaterial to the point at issue.
>
> (Owen Barfield, "Metaphor")



Image from Pixabay

"Nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses"

"Nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the senses," wrote philosopher John Locke. In short, the way we know *anything* is through the senses — even abstract idea originates through experience gained through our bodies. And in the case of language's origin, as explained above, it appears that all words, at their invention, referred to something concrete: an object or a specific action that evoked the senses. As we continue to use words, they evolve, for they live their own life. And when we use a word, we invite its history and permutations into its meaning. Of course, this is all way too much to think about at once in the writing process. But it is why writers revise and cross-examine their diction, thinking out what meanings the word may suggest. Language is *naturally* symbolic in origin, in its fabric. And an art that uses words cannot help but also have more meanings than just the literal. The following types of figurative language are used most often in poetry:

- **Metaphor**: A direct comparison between two unlike things, as in *Hope is the thing with feathers*(Emily Dickinson, "Hope").
- **Simile**:A comparison that uses *like* or *as*, as in *something inside me / rising explosive as my parakeet bursting / from its cage* (Bruce Snider, "Chemistry")
- **Personification**:Human characteristics being applied to non-human things, as in *irises, all / funnel & hood, papery tongues whispering little / rumors in their mouths* (Laura Kasischke, "Hostess").
- **Metonymy**:When one thing is represented by another thing associated with it, as in *The pen is mightier than the sword* (where pen stands in for writing, and sword stands in for warfare or violence).
- **Synecdoche**: When a part of something symbolizes the whole, or the whole of something symbolizes the part, as in *All hands on deck* (where *hands* stands in for *men*), or *The whole world loves you* (where *whole world* represents only a small number of its human population).

When we read such literary devices, our mind lights up a new pathway between the two things and we discover new ways of thinking about the relationship between these two things. We wonder, how is his love a red, red rose? But before we wonder, our senses have already made a connection. As we look closer at the poem, we begin to explore the idea more.

The following is a poem by Laura Kasischke. Can you identify the numerous metaphors and similes?

Confections

Caramel is sugar burnt

to syrup in a pan. Chaos
is a pinch of joy, a bit of screaming. An infant sleeping's
a milky sea. A star

is fire and flower. Divinity
is beaten out of egg whites

into cool white peaks. Friendship

begins and ends in suspicion, unless
it ends in death. Ignite

a glass of brandy in a pan, and you'll

have cherries jubilee: sex
without love's sodden nightgown

before your house burns down. Music's

a bomb of feathers
in the air
inthe moment before it explodes
and settles itself whispering
onto the sleeves of a child's choir robe. And

a candied apple's
like a heartache—exactly

like a heartache—something
sweet and red tortured to death

with something sweeter, and more red.

Laura Kasischke, "Confections" from Fire & Flower. *Copyright © 1998 by Laura Kasischke. Reprinted with the permission of The Permissions Company, Inc., on behalf of Alice James Books, www.alicejamesbooks.org.*

The poem begins with a sentence that mimics a metaphor — stating something is something else: *carmel is sugar burnt / to syrup in a pan*. It sounds like a metaphor, but it actually isn't. Carmel actually is sugar burnt to syrup. Rather than a metaphor, the first two lines function as a definition, which sets the stage (note my own figurative language) for understanding how metaphors work in our minds, for whether definition or metaphor, we use the same structure: x is y; our minds equate the one thing with the other. In the poem this happens with carmel to sugar burnt to syrup.

In "Confections," the opening definition that looked like a metaphor is followed by a true metaphor (or is it?). *Chaos is a pinch of joy, a bit of screaming.* We take this as metaphor, but because we do, it brings us back to the first sentence. If sentence two is figurative, why isn't sentence one? And if sentence one is literal, why isn't sentence two? Both are structured exactly the same. Kasischke's poem exposes the slipperiness of language and syntax: how we use them and interpret them. The poem asks us to examine closely the line between imagination and reality and the role language plays in sorting them out, or not.

The next two metaphors are more imagistic that the previous: *An infant sleeping's / a milky sea. A star / is fire and flower*. While we couldn't "see" the abstraction *joy* and could only hear *screaming*, we certainly see a milky sea, and we certainly see a star flaring as fire, and flower. The parallel of fire and flower is interesting because they are so different. A flower would not survive if it were ablaze in flames. Yet, Kasischke's comparison between the star and fire and flower makes sense to us. It plays not on the science of heat, but on the images associated with fire and flowers: they both spread outward. So, we equate the shape and motion of a star with both fire and flower. Of course, like the comparison of caramel to sugar burnt to syrup, a star actually is a fire. Again, the poem engages our ability to hold two things in the mind at once—just as a metaphor does—only with the poem as a whole, these two things are the literal and symbolic nature of language.

Activity

Read the poem "Confections" and continue to discuss the effect of the figurative language. Explore the comparisons deeper: how is an infant a milky sea? How is chaos a pinch of joy, a bit of screaming? Explore how figurative language allows us to use concrete language to relate abstract ideas.

Video

Watch the video: *The Art of the Metaphor* by Jane Hirshfield, animation by Ben Pearce.





Video 6.10.1 : The Art of the Metaphor

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2.1.2.7.3: Metaphor and Metonymy

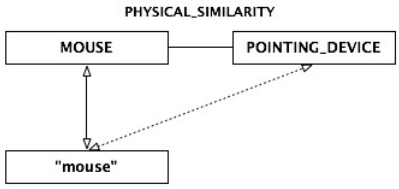
Metaphor

Exercise 2.1.2.7.3.1

Consider the use of the word *web* for the World-Wide Web and the use of the word *root* to mean 'source' (as in *the root of all evil*). What is the basis for these semantic extensions? What do they have in common?

So far we've looked at how the meanings of words can be extended, both by adult speakers and by babies learning the language, in ways that make them more or less general. In this section we'll consider two other general kinds of conceptual relations that permit word meanings to be extended: similarity and various kinds of close association.

First consider the situation that arose when computers were first outfitted with pointing devices to be manipulated in one hand by moving them across a pad and pushing one of their buttons. The noun that came to be used for these devices, *mouse*, was based on the resemblance of the devices to the animal: the general size and shape and the tail-like cable. Thus the meaning of the word *mouse* was extended on the basis of the physical similarity between one category (the animal) and another (the pointing device). Extension of a word's meaning on the basis of similarity is known as **metaphoric extension**. This figure illustrates the process.



Here is another computer-related example. When computer software started providing users with sets of choices that they could select from, the word that emerged for these lists was *menu*. The metaphoric extension was based on the similarity between a restaurant menu, a list of food and drink choices, and the list of choices that the computer user was to select from.

Metaphoric Extension from Concrete to Abstract

One frequent use of metaphor is the application of a word referring to an object category to a more abstract semantic category, something not physical at all. Consider the structure of taxonomies as in this example from the last section. If we turn the figure illustrating the taxonomy over, it resembles a tree, with the most general category as the root and the most specific categories the leaves. This is in fact how cognitive scientists refer to structures like this; *tree* is applied to the whole structure, *root* is applied to the point where all of the*branches* begin, and *leaf* is applied to the point beyond which there are no more branches. Note that a taxonomy is not a physical thing at all, so with metaphoric extension we have now taken common nouns such as *tree* and *leaf* outside of the realm of the physical entirely.

This example also illustrates how metaphor often operates on two entire domains, each with its own elements and internal structure. The **source domain** is the one that is being used to understand the (usually more complex) **target domain**. In this example, the source domain is tree, the target domain taxonomy. The metaphor is based on multiple similarities between the domains: correspondences (or **mappings**) between the elements (leaves and specific concepts, for example) and the relations between the elements (branches join the root to the leaves; generalization links join the most general concept to the more specific ones).

Metonymy

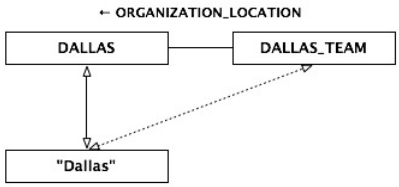
The word for 'language' may be related to other, less abstract words, for example, the word for 'tongue' (as in Spanish), the word for 'mouth' (as in Oromo), the word for 'voice' (as in Tzeltal). Assuming that the 'language' sense is an extension of the more basic sense in each case, what's the basis of this extension?

A somewhat more complicated possibility for extending a word meaning is based on a quite different conceptual relation, not similarity between the instances of the two categories but a strong association between them. This is referred to as metonymic extension. Consider the association between an organization (an abstract concept), such as a sports team or a government, and its

base location. While we can refer to the organization directly using its name, we often find it convenient to use the name of the location to refer to the organization.

1. ***Dallas*** *won yesterday's game.*
2. *No one is sure what* ***Moscow****'s response will be.*

This figure illustrates the first example of metonymy.



Another conceptual relation that permits metonymy is that between a document and the content of the document. Thus the word *book*refers to a physical object: a collection of sheets with printing or pictures on them that is bound together. But we can also use the word to refer to the informational content of the physical book. Compare the uses of the word in these two sentences.

3. *This* ***book*** *is almost too heavy to lift.*
4. *I don't understand this* ***book*** *at all.*

In the first example, the speaker is clearly referring to the physical object, in the second example to the information contained in the physical object. In a case like this, metonymic extension allows a noun referring to a physical object to refer to something more abstract.

Insulting with Metonymy

Metonymy may also be used in situations where an alternative to an existing noun is called for, perhaps as a very informal or insulting term. Examples are the use of *wheels* to mean 'car', *brain* to mean 'intelligent person', and *asshole* to mean 'person' in an insulting context. In these examples the relevant conceptual relation is between a whole and a part. (There is much more going on than just this, especially in the last example, because the choice of the particular part is obviously also relevant!)

Metonymy may also come into play "on the fly", when a speaker is using language creatively. Here's an example from Fauconnier (1985). One waitress in a restaurant is speaking to another.

5. *The* ***omelet*** *left without paying.*

Of course the speaker doesn't mean that some cooked eggs left the restaurant; she is referring to a customer. The conceptual relation that is the basis for the metonymic extension in this case is the relation between a customer and the customer's order. Note that *omelet* would only be expected to get this interpretation in the appropriate context; that same person would not normally be called *the omelet*.

Metonymy in Children's Nouns?

Finally we see apparent examples of metonymy in the speech of young children. Andrés, who was learning both English and Spanish, used the Spanish word *luna* ('moon' in adult Spanish) during his second year to refer not only to the moon and crescent shapes but also to the pens or pencils used to *draw* crescent shapes. It appears that he has extended the word on the basis of the relation between an image and the instrument used to produce the image. But, as always, we must be careful in interpreting children's utterances. Most of Andrés' utterances during this period consisted of a single word. When he said "luna" apparently referring to a pen, did he really mean something more like "use this to draw a crescent"? We have no simple way of knowing.

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2.1.2.7.4: Student Sample Student Paper- Alyce Hockers's "The Slavery Metaphor of Moby-Dick"

This final sample paper by Alyce examines the practice of whaling in Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* as a metaphor for and critique of African American slavery in the mid-nineteenth century.Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale* (1952; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Mel2Mob.html. The links that Alyce points out are perhaps less obvious than in other works about slavery, but the surprise of her argument is partly what makes it so successful. Many critics have discussed Melville's construction of race in *Moby-Dick*, and Alyce draws on those critical voices to make her case. By linking ideas of race in the novel with ideas about the whaling industry, however, Alyce connects the central activity of the novel (hunting for whales) to a central social and political issue of the day, slavery.

Your Process

1. As we've suggested throughout this text, these process papers will make more sense if you are familiar with the literary work under discussion. For this section, you should (ideally) read Herman Melville's 1852 novel, *Moby-Dick*. *Moby-Dick* is a long novel, however. For an initial reading, you might instead consider Robert A. diCurcio's "Nantucket's Tried-Out *Moby-Dick*," which provides a summary of the novel along with a selection of "core chapters" that will help you understand the broad strokes of the work. Before you get started, read diCurcio's "Note to the First Time Reader" (http://www.melville.org/diCurcio/bib.htm).Robert A. diCurcio, ed., *Nantucket's Tried-Out* Moby-Dick*: Robert A. diCurcio's Companion Reader to Melville's Masterpiece* (Nantucket, MA: Aeternium, 1996), http://www.melville.org/diCurcio/bib.htm.
2. Again, keep the previous three papers in mind as you read this final peer paper. What points of convergence and divergence do you see among the four?

Alyce Hockers

Professor Ryan Cordell

English 235: U.S. Literature 1

April 14, 2011

"The Slavery Metaphor of *Moby-Dick*"

"Who aint a slave? Tell me that … [H]owever the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way either in a physical or metaphysical point of view" (Melville 23–24). The issue of slavery, although not discussed explicitly in Herman Melville's Moby-Dick, is criticized subtly in a parallel of the industries of whaling and slavery. During the time that *Moby-Dick* was written, whaling and slavery were two of the biggest sources of economy in America, and it is therefore not surprising that the two had some striking commonalities. When readers of *Moby-Dick* in the mid-19th century picked up the novel, they were expecting a high-seas adventure tale about whaling. Instead they were subtly handed an interpretation of slavery, which was an incredibly debated topic, thanks in part to the recent publishing of the Fugitive Slave Laws, which was at the forefront of American minds during the period of the publishing of the novel. It is important for the modern reader to understand the subtle metaphor comparing slavery and whaling; not only does it help us grasp the history of both institutions, but it also helps us gain insight into the fact that Melville could very well have been against white supremacy. It was difficult to discuss views on the institution of slavery at the time period, so Melville may have been using his novel as a subtle message into his insights on the issues of the industry. Throughout the entirety of Melville's novel, the business of whaling is used as an extended metaphor of slavery and the pursuit, capture, and killing of runaway slaves to help readers understand the brutal and unethical nature of the institution of slavery.

The chasing of whales through the vast oceans is analogous to the chase of runaway slaves after they had escaped from their masters. The chase was about dehumanizing the hunted group; in this case: the whales or the slaves. Although the whale is already non-human, men treated them like they were an object rather than a life form. Both whales and slaves were not only hunted mercilessly, but also all for profit. Whaling was an incredibly profitable enterprise if you survived the journey to bring home the

spoils of the hunt. The hunting of slaves, albeit much less dangerous, was also profitable. Wealthy landowners gave extremely large sums of money (at least for the time period) in return for the capture and return of their runaways. Landowners needed their slaves, just as America needed sperm oil, and both enterprises would reward money to whomever could supply them with their means to their desired end. When looking for runaway slaves, wanted posters often gave descriptions of the runaways that included various scars and marks that were on the bodies as a means of identification. Fred Bernard comments that "[i]mportant to the capture of runaways were their various marks, some natural, others inflicted" (396). Slaves were scarred from many things, including various beatings by their masters. One advertisement said this in the description of a runaway slave: "has had the upper lid of his right eye torn, and a scar on his forehead" (Advertisement). The same can be said for whales. Many of the animals escaped after having been marked by whalers, but not entirely captured. "Not a few are captured having the deep scars of these encounters,—furrowed heads, broken teeth, scolloped fins; and in some instances, wrenched and dislocated mouths" (Melville 349). This effectively gave them scars that could be used to identify them, most notably seen when the book is discussing Moby Dick. Captain Ahab repeatedly remembers every scar on the white whale, including his deformed jaw, and uses those to identify the whale to other men during his search.

There are also strong parallels with whaling and slavery in direct regard to color. Other than Moby-Dick himself, who is part white (the implications of which will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph), most whales are entirely black. The narrator of Moby-Dick comments, "blackness was the rule amongst almost all whales" (Melville 139). And Captain Ahab is considered, by most interpreters, to be white, as were most whaling captains of the time. This vision of whites (whaling captains) chasing blacks (whales) immediately conjures up illusions of slavery. With such an obvious parallel, Melville's brashness with his views of slavery, during a time period in which the institution was highly debated, is quite surprising.

There is an obvious and glaring issue with the story of whaling as an extended metaphor for chasing slaves. Throughout this article, we have talked about whites chasing blacks. But in *Moby-Dick*, isn't the Pequod a black ship and Moby Dick, notably, a white whale? Why is this all turned around? Fred Bernard thinks that it is because Moby Dick serves to represent a black trying to pass as a white, which makes him all the more pursued because of it (392). During the time, whites tried to keep blacks as completely separate from them as possible. Mulattos were frowned upon and tortured even though they were part white. Moby Dick, although often portrayed as white, is actually only partly white. His hump is albino while the rest of his body is black, like the rest of the members of his species. I think, at the very least, that the discrepancy in the metaphor only serves as irony and makes the metaphor even more profound. Everything is the same between whaling and the chasing of slaves. The chase, the torture, the killing, and the aftermath all have strong parallels in both industries. The only difference is that the roles have been reversed. What if it were the blacks (the black ship) chasing the whites (the white whale)? The irony gives more food for thought and attacks the ethics of the institution of slavery. I think that the switching of the colors of the chaser and chasee in *Moby-Dick*, rather than being a reason against the story as a metaphor, actually supports it. The metaphor itself makes you think about slavery, but the switching of the roles makes you evaluate the ethics of it.

Both the whales portrayed in *Moby-Dick* and the slaves of America fought vehemently against whaling and slavery, respectively, although the fight was unfair and seemingly futile. The whales that the *Pequod* would harpoon would drag the boats across the ocean for hours before giving up to capture. In the chapter "Stubb Kills a Whale," the narrator comments that "whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight" (Melville 256). And the vast amount of slaves that did run away from their masters is a testament to their "resistance to servitude." Graham Russel comments of the implications of the wanted poster advertising runaway slaves: "First and foremost, runaway notices are evidence of slave resistance" (Russell xiii-xiv). There were steadfast rules regarding slavery and regarding whaling. The fast-fish, loose-fish rules were similar to the fugitive slave laws. If someone else caught a whale (or slave) that already belonged to someone else, they couldn't claim it for their own (Ellickson 89). But, if no one had laid claim to that particular whale yet, it was fair game for anyone. This is similar to how blacks were plucked from Africa and used as slaves when they hadn't been purchased yet. After a slave had already been purchased, though, another white man could not take the slave as his own. And even if the slave ran away, other whites were obligated to return them to their original master. "The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 mandated that states to which escaped slaves fled were obligated to return them to their masters upon their discovery and subjected persons who helped runaway slaves to criminal sanctions" ("Fugitive Slave Act"). Examples abound of court cases where slaves were awarded back to their masters after running away. Although whaling cases were usually settled out of court, the ideas were the same. An ironic intersection of the two industries occurred in April of 1851. Escaped slave Thomas Sims was brought to court and awarded back to

his master. The judge that handed down the decision just so happened to be Melville's father-in-law (Pisano 12–13). The relation between Melville and slavery at the time gives weight to the novel's interpretation as an epic metaphor.

Slaves and whales were also only known superficially to their chasers during the time period. At the time, whites treated blacks as if they were a different species. They could describe them physically, but they didn't know the true character of the race. The same can be said for the whaler's knowledge of whales. Ishmael goes into great detail describing how whales cannot be accurately described because they can't be taken out of their element without ruining what they really are. "The living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters; and afloat the vast bulk of him is out of sight … and out of that element it is a thing eternally impossible for mortal man to hoist him bodily into the air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and undulations" (Melville 239). Africans taken out of Africa and turned into slaves weren't the same beings as they were in their home country. They were out of their element and they had been changed, which is analogous to whales who are removed from their watery homes. Without water to hold them up, they are not the same and cannot be accurately understood or depicted. On the same note of the concept of foreign species, there was also a language barrier in both industries. There is the obvious language barrier between whales and humans, but blacks also spoke their own language, while it may still have been a version of English. We can see this notably when the cook, Fleece, gives his sermon to the whales using the slave dialogue of the time, which is in stark contrast to the tongue of the white man: "Cussed fellow-critters! Kick up de damndest row as ever you can; fill your dam bellies 'till dey bust—and den die!" (Melville 281). The communication barrier between the two allowed for hostility between the groups. Had the whales or the slaves been able to speak the same language as the whalemen or the white man, they may have been on more even playing fields and the group dynamics may have been less like predator and prey.

The ferocious capture and brutal killings of whales portrayed in Moby-Dick parallel the captures and killings of slaves during the 19th century before emancipation. In contrast to the aforementioned chasing being about dehumanizing the prey, the killing was about domination by the hunter. Although the exact details regarding whales and slaves aren't the same, seeing as they were happening on completely different terrains, the big picture is extremely similar. Just as whales were chained to the sides of boats after capture, so, too, were slaves chained after being apprehended. Moses Roper, a slave, writes in his autobiography that a white man "chained me down in a log-pen with a 40 lb. chain, and made me lie on the damp earth all night" (13). The white man also chained him to another slave and, Roper goes on, "He kept me chained to her during the week, and repeatedly flogged us both while thus chained together, and forced us to keep up with the other slaves, although retarded by the heavy weight of the log-chain" (15). This was either in preparation for death or to be brought back to their masters. Also, as described before, slaves were mercilessly whipped as punishment for anything, an action which sometimes led to death. Whales were continually stabbed with harpoons to capture them and kill them. The abuse continues after the killing of the first whale aboard the Pequod. Stubb orders a piece of the whale to be cut away and cooked for him for dinner. David Cope comments that this "displays a tyrannical streak directly connected to [Stubb's] role on the ship and indirectly to the assumption that, as a white man, he may abuse blacks without repercussion." This is paralleled further as the scene goes on. As Stubb is physically abusing the whale by eating his flesh, he is also verbally abusing Fleece, an African American. He mocks this black cook as he devours the whale, strongly showing a correlation of the abuse by white men of blacks and whales (Melville 264–65).

The aftermath of the killings wraps up the ongoing whaling metaphor of slavery during the 19th century. After killing whales, the whalemen tied them to the boat as a symbol of their accomplishments. They also beheaded them and skinned them. The whale's head was the most valuable piece of the creature's body, so it was often hung by beams from a whaling ship, like the Pequod, not only to harvest the profitable pieces but also as a symbol of the domination of the ship and the men on board. Fred Bernard discusses a reward poster reprinted by William Lloyd Garrison in the *Liberator*, an anti-slavery proponent of the time period, in which a sum of money is offered for the return of a slave, but even more money is offered for the slave's head. "Tying this analogue to Melville is the fact that these slave heads, like those of the sperm whale … were worth more than the mere bodies of the victims" (398). The head was a symbol of the creature's life force; the part that identified the animal and gave it its essence. The white man taking control of the head was like taking control of the core of the creature, which both industries were aiming to do. In the end, both industries led to near extinction. The hunting of whales led to dwindling numbers and near extinction of the creatures. The hunting of escaped blacks led to uproar in terms of ethics, which ultimately and eventually led to emancipation: the extinction of slavery.

A discrepancy lies in the economics of both industries. Although both industries involved killings, one industry got their profits from a dead animal, while the other got theirs from live ones. This anomaly, rather than discrediting the validity of the metaphor,

actually helps us understand the motivations of white hunters. Whales were more profitable dead than they were alive, but slaves were more profitable alive than they were dead. Indeed, an individual slave was more profitable living as a worker, but had slaves been allowed to get away with escaping from their owners, the industry would have quickly crumbled. Killing a runaway slave, although not initially a great monetary decision, sets an example for other slaves to keep their place.

Herman Melville's Moby-Dick acts as an extended metaphor to parallel the whaling industry with the institution of slavery and the chasing of escaped slaves. We may never know Melville's true views of slavery, but shouldn't we take a hint from the fact that Moby-Dick, analogous to a runaway slave, was the ultimate victor? During the 19th century, Melville's possible views against white supremacy would not have been well received by the masses, so Moby-Dick could have been a front to subtly portray his thoughts on slavery. Although not as racially motivated as some other books of the time, or even other books of Melville's, Moby-Dick has strong racial themes that, although not at first apparent, critique racial inequalities of the time and question the ethics of slavery.

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2.1.2.7.5: Symbolic ‘Lived Spaces’ in Ancient Greek Lyric and the Heterotopia of the Symposium

Jo Heirman

Introduction This paper looks at the presentation of space in ancient Greek lyric poetry of the seventh through the fifth century BCE and its ideological function in the cultural-historical context. This poetry, by authors including Sappho, Solon and Pindar, comes after the Homeric epics about Troy and Odysseus (eighth century BCE) and precedes the Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides (fifth century BCE). The first part of this paper, based on theories of ‘lived space’, will argue that space is foremost symbolically presented in the lyric poems. The second part will then explain the symbolism of space by embedding the poems in the cultural-historical performance context of the symposium, which will be defined in terms of Foucault’s heterotopia [1].

The Symbolic Presentation of ‘Lived Space’ in Ancient Greek Lyric

In literary theory, the role of space has often been confined to that of narrative setting, of a scenic backdrop against which the narrated events take place [2]. Setting is, of course, a basic role of space that can also be observed in ancient Greek lyric poetry, especially in mythological narratives of poems by the lyric poets Pindar and Bacchylides of the fifth century BCE. In these mythological narratives space often serves as the background setting against which the heroic deeds of the mythological heroes are recounted. These deeds in turn serve to glorify the addressee of their praising odes, that is to say the victor at an athletic contest. Examples include the city or plain of Troy as setting in stories related to the Trojan saga and the sea as setting in mythological stories about Theseus or the Argonauts [3]. However, space does not function only as setting in ancient lyric poems, but is above all symbolic, as this paper seeks to set out.

To discuss the symbolism of space in ancient Greek lyric I will draw on theories of ‘lived space’, in particular those by Herman Meyer (1975), Bruno Hillebrand (1971) and Gerard Hoffmann (1978) [4], which address the question how literary space is experienced and valued by the narrator or a character. In ancient Greek lyric, two types of space, in particular, are symbolically presented as ‘lived spaces’: the sea and the countryside.

The Sea as Space of Danger and Fear

The sea is above all a symbol of danger. This is illustrated by a fragment (105) of Archilochus, a poet from the seventh century BCE [5]:

Γλαῦχ’, ὅρα· βαθὺς γὰρ ἤδη κύμασιν ταράσσεται
πόντος, ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄκρα Γυρέων ὀρθὸν ἵσταται νέφος,
σῆμα χειμῶνος· κιχάνει δ’ ἐξ ἀελπτίης φόβος.

Translation:

Look, Glaucus! Waves are already disturbing the deep sea, and a cloud stands straight round about the heights of Gyrae, a sign of a storm. From the unexpected arises fear. (text and translation from Gerber 1999)

Through the imperative ‘Look!’ the speaker immediately urges a man called Glaucus to draw attention to the stormy sea scene. By bringing forth an image of the sea before an imminent storm the speaker evokes an atmosphere of impending danger. That the storm seems to be perceived from the ship rather than the coast is suggested by the contrast between the deep sea beneath and the clouds round over the heights of Gyrae above. The location reminds of the mythological story of Ajax, who was crushed by rocks from the heights of Gyrae on his return to Greece following the Trojan War, as told in the *Odyssey* (4.500-511) [6]. That a storm arises precisely around these heights strengthens its danger and explains why the speaker says that it causes fear. The connection between danger and fear makes relevant the theories of ‘lived space’: through its associations with danger the sea turns into a ‘lived space’, as it correlates with the emotions of fear by the human subjects at sea.

In some ancient lyric poems, a ship in a storm at sea is metaphorical for a particular group or a whole city troubled because of certain socio-political upheavals. A good example is a poem by Theognis of the fifth century BCE (lines 667-682), famous for his homoerotic and aristocratic-political poetry:

εἰ μὲν χρήματ' ἔχοιμι, Σιμωνίδη, οἷά περ ἤδη
οὐκ ἂν ἀνιώιμην τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσι συνών.
νῦν δέ με γινώσκοντα παρέρχεται, εἰμὶ δ' ἄφωνος
χρημοσύνηι, πολλῶν γνοὺς ἂν ἄμεινον ἔτι,
οὕνεκα νῦν φερόμεσθα καθ' ἱστία λευκὰ βαλόντες
Μηλίου ἐκ πόντου νύκτα διὰ δνοφερήν,
ἀντλεῖν δ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν, ὑπερβάλλει δὲ θάλασσα
ἀμφοτέρων τοίχων. ἦ μάλα τις χαλεπῶς
σώιζεται, οἳ' ἔρδουσι· κυβερνήτην μὲν ἔπαυσαν
ἐσθλόν, ὅτις φυλακὴν εἶχεν ἐπισταμένως·
χρήματα δ' ἁρπάζουσι βίηι, κόσμος δ' ἀπόλωλεν,
δασμὸς δ' οὐκέτ' ἴσος γίνεται ἐς τὸ μέσον·
φορτηγοὶ δ' ἄρχουσι, κακοὶ δ' ἀγαθῶν καθύπερθεν.
δειμαίνω, μή πως ναῦν κατὰ κῦμα πίηι.
ταῦτά μοι ἠινίχθω κεκρυμμένα τοῖς ἀγαθοῖσιν·
γινώσκοι δ' ἄν τις καὶ κακός, ἂν σοφὸς ἦι.

Translation:

If I had wealth, Simonides, such as I once had, I would not feel distressed in the company of the noble. But now I am aware that it passes me by, and I am voiceless because of need, although I may know still better than many that we are now being carried along with white sails lowered beyond the Melian sea through the dark night, and they refuse to bail, but the sea is washing over both sides. In very truth, anyone has much difficulty saving oneself, because they are doing such things: they have deposed the noble helmsman who skillfully kept watch; they seize possessions by force, and discipline is lost, no longer is there an equal distribution in the common interest; the merchants rule, and the base are above the noble. I am afraid that perhaps a wave will swallow the ship. Let these be my riddling words with hidden meaning for the noble; but even a base man, if he is wise, can recognise (their meaning). (text and translation from Gerber 1999)

The metaphorical nature of the image of the ship is made manifest in the final two lines, where the poem is said to be a riddle for the 'noble', the aristocrats to whom the speaker addresses his poems [7]. The socio-political overtones of the metaphor are brought to the foreground in the second part of the metaphor, i.e. the situation on board ship (lines 675- 679). The speaker, who is in the company of his fellow aristocrats (see line 668), is distressed because his companions have made an end to the orderly rule of the helmsman, who was probably some sort of tyrant [8]: this has provoked chaos and injustice on the ship, that is to say in the city, and has enabled the merchants, presumably the *nouveaux riches*, to gain power. The image of a ship in a storm in the first part of the metaphor (lines 671- 674) is then the result of the shift in power narrated in the second part. This reversed order reveals the socio-political content gradually and emphasises the immediate danger of the situation. A sense of danger is evoked by the particular way the storm is perceived by the speaker *at the moment it takes place*. Firstly, in lines 671-672 an image is evoked of sailors as passive victims of a storm, lacking control over their ship. The danger is reinforced by the time (the dark night makes it impossible for the sailors to view what is happening) and the place (out of the Melian Sea, around the treacherous Cape Malea with its high cliffs and powerful storms) [9]. Secondly, in lines 673-675 an image of bilge-water in the ship points to the mortal danger of a sinking ship. This is particularly poignant because it results from the sailors' unwillingness to bail it out, who represent the speaker's aristocratic companions, to whom the poem is directed. Finally, in line 680 another reference is made to the imminent risk of sinking with a description of a wave that is about to swallow the ship. At this point, the dangerous sea turns into a 'lived space', as it is connected to the emotions of fear the speaker experiences. These are, however, not shared by his companions: distancing himself from the other aristocrats, the speaker criticizes their behaviour and hopes that the metaphor he offers them will lead them to understand the calamity of the situation for which they are held responsible.

The Countryside as Erotic Space

The countryside has a symbolic-*erotic* value in ancient Greek lyric. Meadows and gardens have erotic associations, for instance in the literary motif of the 'meadow of love', which usually involves a young and innocent virgin being seduced by a man, and the *locus amoenus*, where a meadow or garden sometimes alongside with water, trees and shade forms the erotic place *par excellence*

[10]. Fields, too, have erotic associations, as is clear from a fragmentary poem by Sappho (fragment 96), a poetess of the sixth century BCE, famous for her homo-erotic poetry for a circle of girls:

Σαρδ.[..]
πόλ]λακι τυίδε [ν]ῶν ἔχοισα

ὠσπ.[...].ώομεν, .[...]..χ[..]-
σε θέαι σ' ἰκέλαν ἀρι-
γνώται, σᾶι δὲ μάλιστ' ἔχαιρε μόλπαι.

νῦν δὲ Λύδαισιν ἐμπρέπεται γυναί-
κεσσιν ὥς ποτ' ἀελίω
δύντος ἀ βροδοδάκτυλος σελάννα

πάντα περρέχοισ' ἄστρα· φάος δ' ἐπί-
σχει θάλασσαν ἐπ' ἀλμύραν
ἴσως καὶ πολυανθέμοις ἀρούραις·

ἀ δ' ἐέρσα κάλα κέχυται, τεθά-
λαισι δὲ βρόδα κἄπαλ' ἄν-
θρυσκα καὶ μελίλωτος ἀνθεμώδης·

πόλλα δὲ ζαφοίταισ', ἀγάνας ἐπι-
μνάσθεισ' Ἄτθιδος ἰμέρωι
λέπταν ποι φρένα κ[α]ρ[τέρω<ι>] βόρηται·

Translation:

Sardis…often turning her thoughts in this direction…(she honoured) you as being like a goddess for all to see, and she took most delight in your song. Now she stands out among the Lydian women like the rosy-fingered moon after sunset, surpassing all stars; and its light spreads out over the salty sea and the flowery fields alike. The dew is shed in beauty, and roses bloom and tender chervil and flowery melilot. Often as she goes to and fro, when remembering gentle Atthis doubtless her tender heart is consumed by strong desire… [11] (text and translation from Campbell 1982)

In this poem Sappho speaks to a girl called Atthis about a woman who has moved away from their circle to Lydia, but who deeply misses Atthis. A simile in which the beauty of the Lydian woman is compared with the brightness of the moon turns into a description of fields covered with dew and rich in flowers.

That these fields have erotic associations is suggested by the reference to dew and flowers. In Sappho's poetry, flowers are associated with female desire. This applies especially to roses because they are connected to the goddess of love Aphrodite. An example is Sappho 94, in which the speaker reminds a girl of the good times they spent together, putting garlands of flowers, roses included, around their necks and satisfying their desire. The sweet, seductive smell of the melilot, a subspecies of the lotus, might underscore the erotic associations the lotus has in early Greek poetry. These symbolic overtones are suggested by a scene in Homer's *Iliad* (14.348) in which lotus and other flowers spring up as a result of the erotic encounter between Zeus and Hera. Chervil is described by the adjective 'tender', which elsewhere in Sappho's poetry refers to (body parts of) women in an erotic atmosphere: in fragment 94 it describes a girl's neck around which garlands are placed, while desire is satisfied; in 82 a girl called Gyrinno, who is compared to the more shapely Mnasidica; in 126 the bosom of a female companion. Besides the flowers, dew, too, is erotically charged [12]: in Hesiod fragment 26 the virginal daughters of Porthaon find themselves amid dew and flowers that reflect their latent sexuality; in *Iliad* 14 dew appears as a result of the erotic activities of Zeus and Hera; in some (badly preserved) fragments of Sappho (23, 71 and 73) dew is mentioned in connection with love and female beauty.

The erotic symbolism of the flowers and dew indicate that the fields are presented as a place symbolic for the fulfilling of erotic desire, to the extent that the fields turn into a 'lived space', as they reflect female longing. The intriguing question is: whose desire? In the first place, it seems to be that of the Lydian woman for the girl Atthis, as the Lydian woman's heart is said to be consumed by strong desire in the stanza that follows the description of the fields. However, it could also be that of Atthis for the Lydian woman: since Sappho is the speaker who addresses the girl and describes the woman in erotic terms, she might project erotic desire for the woman onto the addressee. In any case, a sense of pain is established by their separation because it is impossible to fulfill the desire. This sense of painfulness ultimately shows that the poem is based on a tension between proximity and intimacy on the one

hand and separation and distance on the other, which is reinforced by the combination between second person and third person of Atthis [13]: while Atthis is consoled by the thought that the Lydian woman still remembers her and longs for her, at the same time an erotic union in the fields is impossible.

Another poem which demonstrates that fields are 'lived spaces' reflecting the erotic desire of females is a fragment by Anacreon (346) of the sixth century BCE, in which the speaker addresses a girl called Herotime throughout [14]:

οὐδε...[.]σ.φ..α..[...]..[
φοβερὰς δ' ἔχεις πρὸς ἄλλωι
φρένας, ὦ καλλιπρό[σ]ωπε παίδ[ων.

καί σε δοκεῖ μὲν ἐ[ν δ]όμοισι[ν
πυκινῶς ἔχουσα [μήτηρ
ἀτιτάλλειν. σ[.].[....]...[
τὰς ὑακιν[θίνας ἀρ]ούρας
ἴ]να Κύπρις ἐκ λεπάδνων
....]΄[.]α[ς κ]ατέδησεν ἵππους.

.....]δ' ἐν μέσωι κατῆ<ι>ξας
.....]ωι δι' ἄσσα πολλοὶ
πολ]ιητέων φρένας ἐπτοέαται·
λεωφ]όρε λεωφόρ' Ἡρο[τ]ίμη.

Translation:

…nor…but you have a timid heart as well, lovely-faced girl. And (your mother) thinks that she tends you (at home), keeping a firm hold on you. But you (long for?) the fields of hyacinth, where the Cyprian tethered her mares with yoke straps. And you darted down in the midst (of the throng?), so that many citizens find their hearts excited by passion; Herotime, public highway, public highway. (text and translation from Campbell 1988)

From line 6 onwards the scene shifts from the indoor space of the house, in which the girl's mother believes that she keeps a firm hold on her, to the outdoors space of the 'fields of hyacinths'. The reference to the hyacinth flowers endows the fields with erotic associations, for in early Greek poetry hyacinths are linked with Aphrodite, probably because of their seductive colour and smell: in Cypria fragment 4, Aphrodite is clothed in perfumed garments of flowers, including hyacinths; in *Iliad* 14.348 hyacinths spring up together with other flowers due to the erotic encounter between Zeus and Hera; in Alcaeus 196b, Aphrodite is present with youths garlanded with hyacinth; in Sappho 194, girls are led into the bridal room together with Aphrodite, whose hair is bound with hyacinths. In Anacreon's fragment, too, the hyacinths are connected with Aphrodite, who 'tethered the mares with yoke straps'. In lyric and tragic poetry similar images of taming and yoking mares are used as *metaphors* for the loss of virginity of girls: in another poem by Anacreon (417), the wish of a charioteer to put the bit on a filly, that is to say to tame her, represents the desire of the male speaker to deflower the girl; in Euripides' *Hippolytus*, 546-554 Aphrodite 'yokes' a girl called Iole, who was previously an 'unyoked filly', before her marriage with Herakles. In Anacreon 346, the image of tethering mares with yoke straps by Aphrodite seems to be metaphorical for the girls' loss of virginity [15] and might turn the hyacinth fields into a 'lived space', rendering it as as an imaginary space for Herotime's own desire of defloration; this would be further underscored if the verb lost in line 6b expressed her longing for the fields. In this way, the outdoors scene of the fields is paralleled to that in the city in the following stanza (lines 10-14), which conveys the *outer*, erotic *effect* of the girl on the citizens, many of whom are excited by passion as she darts in their midst. This leads the speaker to hyperbolically mock the girl by the use of the double vocative 'public highway' in juxtaposition to her lofty first name Hero-time ('honoured by the hero' or 'honour of the hero'), as it renders an image of a whore [16].

The Ideological Functions of 'Lived Space' and the Heterotopia of the Symposium

In the second part of my paper I wish to explain why space is most often presented as symbolic 'lived space' in ancient Greek lyric poetry, that is to say as a space of danger (sea) or an erotic space (countryside). The explanation I wish to suggest resides in the cultural-historical *performance* context of the lyric poems, which has received considerable attention in lyric scholarship since the past few decades [17].

Unlike modern lyric poetry, which is silently read, ancient Greek lyric poems were orally performed for various audiences of listeners and in different modes, from recitation to song with music and dance. The poems discussed in this paper were most likely performed in the symposium [18], an intimate and convivial after-dinner drinking party involving discussions, performances of lyric poetry, verbal and physical games and erotic activities [19]. To better understand the position of the symposium in ancient Greek society, we may consider it an 'other space' or *heterotopia* as defined by Michel Foucault in his famous essay 'Of Other Spaces', as it was a real space that formed part of society but was at the same time distinct from it, with its own norms of entertainment and its own rituals and drinking codes that were meant to reinforce the cohesion of the social group. In other words, the symposium constituted a micro-universe with its own norms of entertainment and its own rituals and drinking codes that were meant to reinforce the cohesion of the social group [20].

Considering the symposium a heterotopia may also give us a better understanding of the reason why symbolic 'lived spaces' are evoked in ancient lyric poems performed at symposia. As Foucault states, a *heterotopia* is particularly able to create other spaces (the so-called 'third principle'): applied to the symposium, this would mean that the drinking group disengages from the physical location of performance and imagines other worlds, created by the performance of lyric poetry and stimulated by the consumption of wine. This might explain why worlds of danger at sea and of love in the countryside are evoked in ancient lyric poems performed in the symposium. To begin with the sea, it is noteworthy that in ancient Greek literature, including lyric poetry, an image of a ship at sea was sometimes metaphorical for the sympotic group (see, e.g., Pindar fragment 124a and Dionysius Chalcus fragment 5). As Sean Corner (2010) argues, the metaphor served to reinforce the internal cohesion of the group, whose gathering and drinking together is represented as a collective 'sea journey' [21]. Sometimes the metaphor is playful, namely when the drunkenness of the sympotic group is represented as a shipwreck (see Choerilus fragment 9 and the story of Timaeus 566F149, told in Athenaeus 2.37b-d). This also applies to archaic Greek vase paintings that connect sympotic drinking with sailing at sea. For instance, the sixth-century Exekias vase (Munich 2044) depicts Dionysus reclining on board ship as if on a couch at the symposium, with dolphins beneath him and grape-vines around the ship's mast above him, and a sixth-century Attic vase (Boston 03.783) shows the *kottabos* game being played on a ship [22]. In other cases, the metaphor of the sympotic group as a ship at sea is politically charged, as is clear from its use in sympotic lyric poems of Theognis (lines 667-682, discussed above) and Alcaeus (fragments 6 and 208). Here the image of a ship in a storm at sea stands for the unity of the aristocratic, sympotic group being threatened by socio-political upheavals such as the rise of tyrants. The metaphor may shed light on the frequent evocation of danger at sea in sympotic lyric poetry: by imagining itself as a group of sailors at sea, facing danger on their journey, the sympotic group attempts to strengthen its internal cohesion in opposition to external forces that threaten it [23].

The erotic world in the countryside can also be explained by the heterotopic performance context of the symposium. In this respect, we need to bring in Foucault's opening definition of a *heterotopia* as a space in which 'all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted' (1984: 24). To connect this definition with the symposium, we need to take into account that the symposium was an erotic space: symposiasts were involved in all sorts of erotic activities and erotic games, such as the *kottabos*, i.e. the flinging of wine lees at targets while calling the name of the beloved and receiving a kiss of the beloved when successful [24]. Thus, the symposium had its own erotic *mores* which revealed a high degree of sexual permissiveness. This might explain why, as Eva Stehle (1997: 250-257) observed, lyric poetry performed in symposia often depicts erotic activities other than those related to marriage or the begetting of children, i.e. beyond the communal interests of the *polis* (city-community): while the communal interests of the city are marriage and procreation, the symposium creates a space where erotic actions which go against the normative demands of the city-community are envisaged. If we relate this to my observation that these erotic situations are envisaged in the countryside, we may say that erotic activities beyond the communal interests are projected on a space outside the *polis*, i.e. on fields, meadows, and gardens.

Conclusion

In this paper, I looked at the presentation of space in ancient Greek lyric poetry. I showed that space is above all symbolically presented, based on literary theories of 'lived space'. While the sea is a symbol of danger, reflecting the fear of the human subjects at sea, the countryside is an erotic symbol, often mirroring someone's desire. In the next step, I tried to explain the symbolism of space by drawing a connection with the performance context of the poems, i.e. the symposium. Defining the symposium in terms of Foucault's *heterotopia*, I argued that the world of danger at sea could serve to reinforce the cohesion of the sympotic group, while the erotic world in the countryside could reflect the erotic fantasies of the sympotic group, which went beyond the norms of the city.

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Notes

1. This paper is a modified version of that published in *Comparative Literature and Culture Web* (Heirman 2012), which also focuses on space in ancient Greek lyric in relation to the *heterotopia* of the symposium, but discusses other poems and does not make use of theories of 'lived space'. I would like to thank Jacqueline Klooster, Irene de Jong and the anonymous reviewers for valuable comments on the content of this paper.

2. E.g. Chatman (1978: 138-139); Bal (1997: 133-141); Ronen (1986); Buchholz-Jahn (2005).

3. See, for instance, Bacchylides 13 (Trojan War), Bacchylides 17 (Theseus), Pindar's *Pythian* 4 (Argonauts). All these poems are discussed in Heirman (2012).

4. See also the introduction to this volume.

5. The poem has been cited by Heraclitus (*Homeric Allegories* 5.2, first century AD) as an allegory for war, but nothing in the fragment we possess refers to war. It could be that there was a sequel to the fragment that dealt with war, but this is mere conjecture.

6. See Clay (1986).

7. For metaphor as riddle see Aristotle's *Rhetorica* 1405b4-5 (and 1458a26).

8. I owe this interpretation to André Lardinois. It goes counter to the common opinion (e.g. Van Groningen 1966: *ad loc*.) that considers the helmsman to represent the aristocrats. The problems with this opinion are that the aristocrats are already represented by the 'noble men' who accompany the speaker on board ship and that is implausible that one helmsman would represent a group of aristocrats.

9. See Odyssey 3.286-90; 4.514-8; 9.79-81; 19.186-7.

10. For the meadow of love see Anacreon 417 and Archilochus' Cologne Epode (the motif is discussed in detail in Motte (1971: 38-48 and 208-213), Calame (1999: 165-74)). For the *locus amoenus*, see Ibycus 286, Sappho 2 and Theognis 1249-52 (discussed in Heirman [forthcoming]). For the motif in general see Schönbeck (1962) and Hass (1998).

11. The fragment continues for another ten lines, but these scattered remains are hardly legible.

12. See Boedeker (1994: 54-60).

13. Cf. Sappho 94, with the discussion in Greene (1994: 44-50).

14. Cf. e.g. Serrao (1968: 43-51) and Rosenmeyer (2003: 173-177). Some scholars (e.g. Campbell 1988: *ad loc.*) believe that the speaker addresses a boy in line 3 and that the address to Herotime in line 13 marks the beginning of a new poem. This belief has been rejected because the noun in line 3 does not necessarily refer to a boy. In epic poetry (e.g. *Iliad* 1.20 and 443; 3.175) and archaic lyric poetry (e.g. Anacreon 348.2, of Artemis; Sappho 132.1, of Cleïs) the noun refers to a girl, and the only other time the noun is combined with the epithet 'lovely-faced' is in reference to a girl (Philoxenus 8, of Galatea).

15. Most scholars, e.g. Serrao (1968: 43) and Calame (1999: 165) believe that lines 8-9 are about horses ranging free, conveying a sense of promiscuity. However, this does not explain the tethering of the horse.

16. The image of the whore seems to contradict the statement at the beginning of the fragment that the girl has a timid heart. Two suggestions have been put forward to solve this problem: one holds that the fragment presents a sequence of events in the life of Herotime in which she changes from timid girl to public whore (Serrao 1968: 43-51; Rosenmeyer 2003: 173- 177), and the other that two girls, a timid girl (tentatively called Smerdeis, a girl mentioned in Anacreon 366) and a whore (Gentili 1958: 181 and 193-194), are set in opposition to each other. The former is unlikely in light of the use of present tenses at the beginning and end of the fragment, and the latter because there is no clear indication of an addressee shift. In my view, the contradiction can only be solved if we consider the beginning ironic in light of what follows and the end hyperbolic.

17. For the performative turn cf. Budelmann (2009: 15); for performance of ancient Greek lyric see especially Gentili (1988); Herington (1985); Stehle (1997).

18. Sappho's poetry was probably performed in a female variant of the predominantly male symposium: see e.g. Stigers (1981) and Stehle (1997: 262-318). The latter refutes the hypothesis of Lardinois (1994) and (1996) that Sappho's erotic poetry was performed for a larger audience than that of her circle.

19. The symposium in ancient Greece has been amply discussed (on the basis of ancient Greek lyric poetry and vase paintings); among the most important contributions are the papers collected in Vetta (1983) and in Murray (1990).

20. For the symposium as a micro-universe see, for instance, Murray (1990) (introduction) and Pellizer (1990).

21. Slater (1976) and Davies (1978), on the other hand, interpret the image in terms of an escape of the sympotic group from everyday life.

22. On the vase paintings see especially Lissarrague (1987: 104-118).

23. Lesky (1947: 188-214) suggested that the danger of the sea reflects the poets' fear that they or their relatives would suffer misfortune at sea because many of them were islanders (e.g., Archilochus of Paros, Semonides of Amorgos, Alcaeus of Lesbos). However, lyric poems do not necessarily or directly render the poet's own emotions or thoughts. Moreover, his hypothesis is undermined by the remarkable progress in technological innovations in shipping in archaic Greece, as faster and safer ships were produced which enabled Greeks to sail across the Mediterranean Sea and build up commercial contacts with East and West (Morris 2000: 259).

This page titled 2.1.2.7.5: Symbolic 'Lived Spaces' in Ancient Greek Lyric and the Heterotopia of the Symposium is shared under a CC BY-NC license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Jo Heirman and Jacqueline Klooster (Academia Press) .

2.1.2.7A: "Does the Sun Rise? A Study of Metaphors in Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises" (Day)

Bill Day English 1102 Does the Sun Rise? A Study of Metaphors in Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises Although Hemingway's novel The Sun Also Rises begins with an epigraph from the biblical book of Ecclesiastes that suggests the constantly renewing cycles of the earth and of human generations, the author's use of metaphors in this story raises the question of whether we will always be able to recover from our own destructive behavior. If it is true that humans and the earth are resilient and that no force can disrupt the cycle of rebirth and regeneration, the novel should leave readers feeling optimistic. However, it does not end on a positive note. Instead, it ends with confirmation that even though Brett Ashley likes to imagine a happy life with protagonist Jake Barnes, they are too damaged to have one. Jake's cynical response to Brett's fantasy reminds us of this point: "Isn't it pretty to think so?" Jake's difficulty coping with his injury, his tendency to self-medicate with alcohol, his inability to pray, and his failure to sustain an intimate relationship with another person all exemplify the irreversible destruction inflicted by World War I. Specifically through the metaphors of Jake's wound and the tainted Pamplona fiesta, the novel conveys the possibility that if we are not careful, we can dangerously disrupt the cycle of renewal. Jake's service as an American soldier in World War I has left him with an unusual wound: he took a hit to the groin and his sexual organs were damaged. Not only does this wound affect him physically, preventing him from being able to have sex and to reproduce, but it also affects him psychologically, robbing him of masculine confidence and of the chance for an intimate relationship with the woman he loves, Brett Ashley. Jake's response to the injury as he looks in the mirror reveals how powerfully the scar affects him: "I looked at myself in the mirror of the big armoire beside the bed….Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny" (38). Although Jake tries to laugh off the injury, 107 The Truths of Fiction he suffers from the constant effort to cope with it and the general effects of his war experience: "I lay awake thinking and my mind jumping around. Then I couldn't keep away from it, and I started to think about Brett and all the rest of it went away. I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry" (39). The wound is a constant reminder to Jake that his life is different now. Yet it also serves as a general metaphor for the psychological wounds he and all his friends are coping with. Like Jake's genital scar, his friends' pain is kept well-covered. They almost never speak of the war. When Robert Cohn asks Mike Campbell if he was in the war, Mike answers, "Was I not?" And then the subject shifts to a funny story about Mike's stealing medals earned by someone else so Mike could wear them to a formal dinner. Although he seems fun-loving, ready to laugh and party with his companions, Mike drinks and spends money indiscriminately in order to cope with his pain. We see the characters' dysfunctional behavior throughout the novel as the group constantly drinks and engages in distractions to cope with their own psychological wounds. The worst effects of these injuries are their inability to find hope in anything, even God, and to enjoy close and healthy relationships with each other. Another metaphor employed effectively in the novel to suggest irreversible destruction is the ruined bull fights. Jake has been an aficionado of the bull fights for many years. He considers them almost sacred. He shares this feeling with his friend Montoya, at whose hotel he stays when he comes to Pamplona for the fiesta. "I had stopped at the Montoya for several years. We never talked for very long at a time. It was simply the pleasure of discovering what we each felt." (137). Even though Jake's mind wanders when he goes to church now, he has been able to maintain this special experience of the bull fights. The way he describes this "art" reveals that he sees something pure in it—a chance to confront one's fears with dignity, courage, and grace and then destroy those fears: "Romero's bull-fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his 108 Writing and Literature: Composition as Inquiry, Learning, Thinking, and Communication movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time" (171). Since the events recur each year during fiesta, there is a sense of renewal associated with it. However, when Brett initiates Romero into manhood through a brief sexual affair, it not only compromises Romero's innocence and purity as an artist, but it spoils the experience of fiesta for Jake. Montoya, his fellow aficionado blames Jake and his friends for not respecting Romero and the bull fight, and the loss of this friendship hurts Jake. Just before the group leaves town, Jake says, "We had lunch and paid the bill. Montoya did not come near us" (232). Montoya's previous regard for Jake will not likely be regained, since the aficion, or passion, they shared was very rare, and the affair has spoiled their bond. Like Jake and his friends' faith in anything transcending ordinary mundane life, Jake's experience of the bull fight has been tainted now by the dysfunctional actions of him and the rest of the group. This metaphor suggests that some kinds of destruction are permanent. As the novel concludes, the reader wants to believe that Jake will survive and find some kind of happiness. Yet, the metaphors of Jake's wound and the tainted bull fights suggest that some kinds of damage cannot be undone. The novel implies that, as a result of one of the most destructive wars in human history, these characters will simply have to learn to live with their injuries and cope with their lost hopes. Their hardship

serves as a warning that humans should think carefully before waging war against each other. Work Cited Hemingway, Ernest. The Sun Also Rises. Scribner, 1926.

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2.1.2.8: Narrative Theory (Walter Fisher)

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2.1.2.8.1: Introduction

Catherine Ramsdell

Green Eggs and Ham was the story of my life. I wouldn't eat a thing when I was a kid, but Dr. Seuss inspired me to try cauliflower!
—Jim Carrey

It's all storytelling, you know. That's what journalism is all about.
—Tom Brokaw

People have forgotten how to tell a story. Stories don't have a middle or an end any more. They usually have a beginning that never stops beginning.
—Steven Spielberg

Introduction

Are stories just a form of entertainment—like movies, television shows, books, and video games?* Or are they something more? This chapter takes the stance that stories are a fundamental and primary form of communication, and without them, we would lose an important way to teach our children, to train our employees, to sell our products, and to make information memorable to those of any age.

Consider a Jewish story Annette Simmons references in her book *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling*:

> Truth, naked and cold, had been turned away from every door in the village. Her nakedness frightened the people. When Parable found her she was huddled in a corner, shivering and hungry. Taking pity on her, Parable gathered her up and took her home. There, she dressed Truth in story, warmed her and sent her out again. Clothed in story, Truth knocked again at the doors and was readily welcomed into the villagers' houses. They invited her to eat at their tables and warm herself by their fires. (27)

Certainly stories can be a form of entertainment—a book to curl up with on a cold rainy afternoon, a movie to share with a best friend, a video game to conquer—but stories can also be much more and, as will be discussed at the end of the chapter, today stories can be found just about anywhere. Furthermore, because stories can be found anywhere from a movie theatre to a corporate boardroom, everyone should know how to tell a good story.

In her book, *The Story Factor: Inspiration, Influence, and Persuasion Through the Art of Storytelling*, Simmons talks about seven different kinds of stories everyone should learn how to tell. One of them is the "Who I Am" story. Simply put, a Who I Am story shows something about its author, and this type of story fits into the genre of memoir or creative nonfiction. Here is an example from Simmons' book:

> Skip looked into the sea of suspicious stockholders and wondered what might convince them to follow his leadership. He was 35, looked 13 and was third generation rich. He could tell they assumed he would be an unholy disaster as a leader. He decided to tell them a story. "My first job was drawing the electrical engineering plans for a boat building company. The drawings had to be perfect because if the wires were not accurately placed *before* the fiberglass form was poured, a mistake might cost a million dollars, easy. At 25, I already had two masters' degrees. I had been on boats all my life and frankly,

I found drawing these plans a bit . . . mindless. One morning I got a call *at home* from a $6/hour worker asking me 'are you sure this is right?' I was incensed. Of course I was *sure*—'just pour the damn thing.' When his supervisor called me an hour later and woke me up *again* and asked 'are you sure this is right?' I had even less patience. 'I said I was sure an hour ago and I'm still sure.'

It was the phone call from the president of the company that finally got me out of bed and down to the site. If I had to hold these guys by the hand, so be it. I sought out the worker who had called me first. He sat looking at my plans with his head cocked to one side. With exaggerated patience I began to explain the drawing. But after a few words my voice got weaker and my head started to cock to the side as well. It seems that I had (being left-handed) transposed starboard and port so that the drawing was an exact mirror image of what it should have been. *Thank God* this $6/hour worker had caught my mistake before it was too late. The next day I found this box on my desk. The crew bought me a remedial pair of tennis shoes for future reference. Just in case I got mixed up again—a red left shoe for port, and a green right one for starboard. These shoes don't just help me remember port and starboard. They help me remember to listen even when I think I know what's going on." As he held up the shoebox with one red and one green shoe, there were smiles and smirks. The stockholders relaxed a bit. If this young upstart had already learned this lesson about arrogance, then he might have learned a few things about running companies, too. (1–2)

This example shows some of the reasons why people tell Who I Am stories. Chances are that if Skip had gone into this meeting and said "Look, I know I'm young, but I've got a lot of experience, I know what I'm doing, I've learned a lot from my mistakes. Just trust me," he would not have won over his audience.

Please keep this example and the basic definition of the Who I Am story in mind while reading through the next section, which provides a little background and theory about the fine art of narration and storytelling.

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2.1.2.8.2: Narrative Theory

Roland Barthes was arguably one of the most important literary theorists of the twentieth century. To begin, we'll look at his thoughts on narrative:

> The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed amongst different substances—as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. Able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances; narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think Carpaccio's *Saint Ursula*), stained-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite discovery of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different even opposing, cultural backgrounds. Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (qtd. in Abbott 1–2)

In the forty-five years since Barthes penned this passage, nearly every book on storytelling or narrative theory has referenced this quote. Even if this quote is not referenced directly, often authors simply make a similar statement in their own words. For example, twenty-one years after Barthes voiced his thoughts on narrative, Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck, authors of *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*, stated:

> No single period or society can do without narratives. And, a good number of contemporary thinkers hasten to add, whatever you say and think about a certain time or place becomes a narrative in its own right. From the oldest myths and legends to postmodern fabulation, narration has always been central. Postmodern philosophers . . . also contend that everything amounts to a narrative, including the world and the self. If that is correct, then the study of narrative . . . unveils fundamental culture-specific opinions about reality and humankind, which are narrativized in stories and novels. (1)

Whether authors quote Barthes directly or voice the same sentiment in their own words, one of the few things almost all authors, scholars, and critics can agree on is that narrative is part of humankind, it always has been, and it always will be.

Of course, what Barthes and Herman call narration, many, myself included, call story. H. Porter Abbott notes in *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, "Many speakers of English grow up using story to mean what we [Abbott and Barthes among others] are referring to here as a narrative" (16). Technically, however, there are some differences between the words "story" and "narrative." In his book *The Classical Plot and Invention of Western Narrative*, N. J. Lowe talks about these differences using the terms *fabula* and *sjuzhet*:

> This distinction is a cornerstone of modern narrative theory, even though there has been huge disagreement over the precise definition of the two terms and the boundary between them, and scarcely less over how to present them in English. *Fabula*

(in English, usually ‘story’) is the series of events the work recounts,
but imagined stripped of all the artifices of storytelling:
a series of actual events in their natural order, in what merely
happens to be a fictional world. In contrast, *sjuzhet* is the account
of those same events that we actually get, reordered and
reshaped in the process of telling to reach and affect the audience
or reader in a particular and deliberate way. (5)

As Lowe mentions, scholars and writers have disagreed over the exact meaning of words like story and narrative. Abbot, for example, talks about “three distinctions: narrative is the representation of events consisting of story and narrative discourse; story is the event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events as represented” (16). In this chapter, we’ll use these definitions: a story (or *fabula*) encompasses the events or action in the story, and narrative discourse (or *sjuzhet*) is the way these events or actions are related. For example, all stylistic choices or organizational strategies, such as flashback, are part of the narrative discourse. Narrative discourse can encompass numerous things, but story almost always includes two primary parts: events and characters. After all, what story does not have these two characteristics? A story by its very nature includes events, and as Abbott contends, “what are events but the actions or reactions of [characters]?” (17).

Characters and events (or actions) may seem inextricably linked, but which is more important has been debated since Aristotle’s time. Aristotle took the stance that action was most important. In *Poetics*, he states: “Now character determines men’s qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or reverse. Dramatic action, therefore, is not with a view to the representation of Character: character comes in as a subsidiary to the actions” (62–63). Still, character was important to Aristotle; he believed it was the second most important element in a drama and that character brought morality to a text (64). In the twentieth century, however, many authors started to think character was more important. For example, as author Andrew Horton notes, “Flannery O’Conner says ‘it is the character’s personality that creates the action of the story’ and not the other way around.” Horton goes on to state that usually the characters connect an audience emotionally to a story (2).

Because the purpose of a Who I Am story is to illustrate something about oneself, some might assume that character is the most important aspect of the Who I Am story, but in truth, as novelist Henry James asserts, both character and action are important in this type of story. James believes: “What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? . . . It is an incident for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on the table and look out at you in a certain way; or if it be not an incident I think it will be hard to say what it is. At the same time it is the expression of character” (qtd. in Abbott 124).

Granted, thinking of the people in a Who I Am story as characters may seem odd because most likely they will be real people. However, consider Theodore A. Rees Cheney’s thoughts:

> Traditional nonfiction, particularly journalistic nonfiction,
> never concerned itself with developing characters. Fiction
> writers worked at characterization; nonfiction writers concentrated
> on events. Creative nonfiction writers say that because
> so many events occur as the result of human interactions, the
> event cannot be fully understood without also understanding
> something of the people (characters) surrounding it. (134)

So while thinking of yourself, friends, or family as characters may not feel completely natural, remember some similarities do exist between characters and real people in that the people/characters in a Who I Am story need to be developed, interesting, and understandable, just like characters in a fiction work. Of course, some differences exist as well. Since the characters in a Who I Am story are real people, you will not be creating characters, as a fiction writer does; instead, as Cheney notes, you will be revealing them:

When I write about character development, I’m talking about
how the writer goes about revealing a person’s character . .
. The creative nonfiction writer does not ‘create’ characters;
rather, he or she reveals them to the reader as honestly and accurately
as possible. Like most contemporary fiction writers,

creative nonfiction writers reveal character much as it happens
in real life—bit by bit. (134)

Generally speaking, authors reveal their characters in two ways: direct and indirect characterization. With direct characterization, the author simply tells the audience something about a character. The line “He was 35, looked 13 and was third generation rich” from the Who I Am story at the beginning of this chapter is an example of direct characterization. With indirect characterization, the audience learns about characters by watching or listening to them. Indirect characterization can also include descriptions of characters. The Who I Am story at the start of this chapter primarily utilizes indirect characterization. The entire story Skip tells about his first job, the mindless drawing, being upset about an hourly worker calling him at home—all indirect characterization. Since indirect characterization shows what a character does, indirect characterization often directly relates to the sequence of actions, again showing how character and action can intertwine.

Another important piece of a story and narrative discourse is the difference between real time and narrative time. Consider the following passage:

> Amy dropped a mug of coffee. It shattered on the kitchen
> floor. Coffee and shattered glass were everywhere. Amy got a
> towel and began cleaning up the mess.

This is real time, but if a few details are added, we get narrative time:

> Amy dropped a mug of coffee. It shattered with a loud crash
> onto the kitchen floor. She felt the hot liquid burn through
> her socks into her feet. Coffee and shattered glass were everywhere.
> Amy sighed; there was no more coffee in the pot,
> and she had really needed a caffeine burst. Moving carefully
> through the mess, Amy grabbed an old towel out of the drawer
> and began cleaning up the remains of her breakfast.

Abbott explains the difference between real (or clock) time and narrative time:

> Clock time . . . always relates back to itself, so that one speaks
> in terms of numbers or seconds or their multiples (minutes,
> hours) and fractions (nanoseconds). Narrative time, in contrast,
> relates to events or incidents. And while clock time is
> necessarily marked off by regular intervals of a certain length,
> narrative time is not necessarily any length at all. (4–5)

Abbott adds that writers can slow the “whole sequence down by simply adding details” and “conversely, we can make narrative time go like the wind” by using phrases like “in the following months” or “a few weeks later” (5).

The universality of narrative, *fabula* and *sjuzhet*, character and action, indirect and direct representation, real time and narrative time are just a few aspects of narrative theory, but these terms and this information will provide a solid foundation as we begin thinking more specifically about the Who I Am story.

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2.1.2.8.3: Reading Skills- Analyzing Narrative

What Does Narrative Mean?

Narrative means storytelling. The story can be fact (real), or it can be fiction (made up).

Questions to Ask

When you read a narrative account, think about the following elements of the story.

The setting

(a) Time

- When does the story take place? Is it past, present, or future?
- Are the events told in chronological order (they order in which they occur), or are there flashbacks?

(b) Place

- Where does the story take place? Is the place significant to the story?

The characters

- How would you describe the main characters? Think about age, job, appearance, personality, and any other information you have.
- What is their relationship with other people in the story?
- Do any of the characters change as the story progresses? Does anyone learn anything?

The plot

- Is there a conflict in the story? A problem to be solved? A decision to be made?
- Where is the climax (the most important piece of action, or the turning point)?
- How does the story end? Is the ending satisfactory to everyone?

The meaning and purpose

- What can be learned from the story?
- Why did the storyteller tell this story?

Your personal reaction

- How did the story make you feel? What emotions did it inspire in you?
- Does the story remind you of anything else you have read or heard about?

You Try It!

The analysis of narrative does not apply only to stories and books. You can use the same approach to look at TV shows, movies, plays, and even songs that tell a story.

You are going to watch a short film called *For Angela*, produced by the National Film Board of Canada. The film is from 1993, but its message is still relevant today. This 20-minute film tells the true story of Angela, a young girl in Winnipeg, and how her mother, Rhonda, stands up to the racism they encounter on a local bus.



b'For Angela ', b'Nancy Trites' b'Botkin' & b'Daniel' b'Prouty', provided by the National Film Board of Canada

Films like For Angela *serve to educate Canadians about issues such as racism and prejudice.*

After you watch the film, think about the questions on the previous page. Take notes on the elements of the story.

The setting

_____

_____

_____

The characters

_____

_____

_____

The plot

_____

_____

_____

The meaning and purpose

_____

_____

_____

Your personal reaction

_____

_____

_____

Now retell the story in your own words. Use the space below.

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2.1.2.8.4: Reading- The Children with One Eye, A Canadian Folk Tale

Before You Read

In *For Angela*, Rhonda asks, "What makes a good story?" Does a good story have an interesting plot? Likeable characters? Some drama or suspense? A moral? A happy ending? Write your thoughts about this question in the space below.

The Reading

Read the following story carefully. The paragraphs are in the wrong order. Read each paragraph and decide on the correct order. The first is done for you.

Paragraph 1

Two little children, a boy and a girl, lived long ago with their widowed mother in the Canadian forest. The woman was very poor, for her husband had long been dead and she had to work very hard to provide food for herself and her children. Often she had to go far from home in search of fish and game, and at times she was absent for many days. When she went on these long journeys she left her children behind her, and thus they were allowed to grow up with very little oversight or discipline or care. They soon became very unruly because they were so often left to have their own way, and when their mother returned from her hunting trips she frequently found that they would not obey her, and that they did pretty much as they pleased. As they grew older they became more headstrong and disobedient, and their mother could do very little to control them. And she said, "Some day they will suffer for their waywardness."

Paragraph _____

When she had finished making the basket the boy said, "I must finish cutting up the meat. Give me the eye." So she brought him the eye, and he proceeded to chop up the meat and to put it in the basket. Then he said, "Why can we not have a meal here? I am very hungry." His sister agreed that this was a good idea, and he said, "You cook the meal while I pack the meat." The girl made a fire, but she was afraid she would burn the meat, so she said, "I cannot see to cook. I must have the eye." By this time her brother had finished packing the meat into the basket, and he brought her the eye and she went on with her cooking. The fire was low and she said, "I must have some dry wood. Bring me some dry pine." The boy wandered off into the forest in search of wood, but he had not gone far when he stumbled over a log and fell to the ground. He called to his sister in anger, saying, "You always want the eye for yourself. How can I gather dry pine when I cannot see? Give me the eye at once."

Paragraph _____

One day the woman went to visit a neighbour not far away. She left a large pot of bear fat boiling on the fire. And she said to the children, "Do not meddle with the pot while I am gone, for the fat may harm you if it catches fire." But she was not gone long

when the boy said to the girl as they played around the pot, “Let us see if the fat will burn.” So they took a burning stick of wood and dropped it into the fat, and stood looking into the large pot to see what would happen. The fat sputtered for an instant; then there was a sudden flash, and a tongue of flame shot upwards from the pot into the faces of the children. Their hair was burned to a crisp and their faces were scorched, and they ran from the house crying with pain. But when they reached the outer air, they found that they could not see, for the fire had blinded their eyes. So they stumbled around in darkness, crying loudly for help. But no help came.

Paragraph _____

His sister ran to him and helped him up and gave him the eye. She found her way back to the fire, but as she reached it she smelled the meat burning on the spit. She shouted, “The meat is burning and our dinner will be spoiled. Give me the eye at once, so that I may see if the meat is cooked.” The boy was some distance away, and in his anger, he threw the eye to her, saying, “Find it. I am not going to walk to you with it if you are too lazy to come and get it.” The eye fell to the ground between them, and neither of them knew where it lay. They groped for it among the dead leaves, but as they searched for it, a woodpecker, watching from a branch of a tree nearby, swooped suddenly down and gobbled it up and flew away.

Paragraph _____

One day, when their mother was far away hunting in the forest, an old woman came along and asked the children for food. And they brought good food to her as she sat before the door. After she had eaten, she said, “You are blind, but I can help you, for I am from the Land of the Little People. I cannot give you four eyes, but I will give you one eye between you. You can each use it at different times, and it will be better than no sight at all. But handle it with great care and do not leave it lying on the ground.” Then she gave them an eye which she took from her pocket, and disappeared. So they used the one eye between them, and when the boy had the eye and the girl wished to see anything, she would say, “Give me the eye,” and her brother would carefully pass it to her. When their mother came home she was very glad when she found that they had now some means of sight.

Paragraph _____

As they were still searching for it, the old woman who had given it to them came along. She had been hiding among the trees, and she had seen the woodpecker flying away with her gift. She said, “Where is the eye I gave you?” “It dropped from my head,” answered the boy, “and I cannot find it in the grass.” “Yes,” said the girl, “it dropped from his head, and we cannot find it.” “You have lied to me,” said the old woman, “and you have disobeyed, and for that I shall punish you.” And with her magic power she changed the boy into a mole and the girl into a bat, and said, “Now live blind upon the earth, with only your sense of sound to guide you.” At once the boy and the girl were changed. And so the Mole and the Bat appeared upon the earth.

Paragraph _____

When their mother came home she tried every remedy she thought might restore their sight. But all her medicine was unavailing, and she said, “You will always be blind. That is the punishment for your disobedience.” So the children lived in darkness for a long time. But they were no longer headstrong and unruly, and although they could no longer see, they were less trouble to their mother than they were when they had their sight, for they did not now refuse to do her bidding.

Paragraph _____

One day when their mother was away again, the boy went into the forest with his bow and arrows. He carried the eye with him. He had not gone far when he saw a fat young deer, which he killed. The deer was too heavy for him to carry home alone. So he said, “I will go and get my sister, and we shall cut it up and put it in a basket and carry it home together.” He went home and told his sister of his good fortune, and he led her to where the deer lay, and they began to cut up the body. But they had forgotten to bring a basket or a bag. He called to his sister saying, “You must weave a basket into which we can put the meat to carry it home.” And his sister said, “How can I make a basket when I cannot see? If I am to weave a basket, I must have the eye.” The boy brought the eye to her and she made a large basket from green twigs.

Source: https://www.worldoftales.com/Native_American_folktales/Native_American_Folktale_68.html

Questions

A. Check Your Understanding

Choose the correct answer for the following questions. Try not to look back at the story.

1. What is NOT true about the young children?

a) Their mother was a widow.

b) They had many neighbours.

c) They had very little money.

d) They were disobedient.

2. How did the children lose their sight?

a) They were attacked by a bear.

b) Their house burned down.

c) They were hurt with a stick of wood.

d) A pot of fat caught fire.

3. How did the children's behaviour change after going blind?

a) They became calmer and more obedient.

b) They refused to do as their mother wished.

c) They did not leave their house again.

d) They spent more time in the forest.

4. What did the old woman tell the children?

a) She could give them four new eyes.

b) She could give them two eyes.

c) She could give them one eye.

d) She could not help them to see again.

5. What did the boy do in the forest?

a) He killed a bear.

b) He killed a deer.

c) He made a basket.

d) He cooked dinner.

6. Why were the boy and girl frustrated with each other?

a) They were afraid the dinner would be burned.

b) They couldn't carry the deer back home.

c) They couldn't find any firewood.

d) They both needed the eye to do their jobs.

7. How did the eye get lost?

a) The girl dropped it into the fire.

b) The boy lost it in the forest.

c) The boy threw it to his sister.

d) A squirrel ate it.

8. How did the old woman feel when she saw the children?

a) Disappointed

b) Surprised

c) Confused

d) Overjoyed

B. Think about It

Think about the following questions. Write your thoughts.

1. Write notes on the following aspects of the story:

a) The setting

_____

_____

b) The characters (the children, their mother, the old woman)

_____

_____

c) The climax

_____

_____

d) The ending

_____

_____

2. What is the moral (message) of this story?

_____

_____

_____

3. What do you think is the purpose of stories like this?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you remember stories from your childhood? Which was your favourite? Why do you think you liked that story in particular?

5. Can you think of any other examples of stories that explain the origin or creation of something? Write your story briefly in the space below.

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2.1.2.8.5: Article- The Hero's Journey



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Before You Read

Discuss the following questions with a classmate.

1. What makes someone a hero?
2. What do heroes do in movies?
3. Why do people love stories about heroes?
4. What are some stories you can think of that have a hero?
5. Skim the next reading. What do you think is the author's purpose of the text: to inform, entertain, or to persuade? How will that affect the way you take notes on the reading?

Vocabulary in Context

This article has a lot of useful vocabulary for reading the rest of the chapter and for use in your next essay. Try to guess the vocabulary in **bold**.

1. Chances are this kind of story has been told for **millennia**, and yet people still love them.
2. Many stories that humans have loved throughout time have some interesting patterns, and that there's a good reason why these kinds of stories **strike a chord** in us.
3. Superhero movies epitomize the hero's journey and are becoming bigger and bigger **blockbusters** each year. Even George Lucas himself, the creator of the **groundbreaking** Star Wars movie series, noted that Joseph Campbell's book was very influential to him.
4. This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and **venturing** into an unknown and dangerous **realm** where the rules and limits are unknown.
5. The hero may need to fight against **foes** who are guarding the gate or border of the realm to prevent the hero from coming in.

6. While on their way towards their task, the hero might meet some friends, **allies**, or people willing to help them.
7. In between facing **ordeals**, the hero gets to see more of the fantastic land they are in.
8. Not long after she begins her **trek** on the yellow brick road, Dorothy meets others that will help her on her quest.
9. Numerous times she **traverses** back and forth from Kansas and the land of Oz and other neighboring fantasy lands filled with interesting characters.
10. The real reason why ordinary humans like ourselves love these kinds of outlandish storylines is that we want to **strive** to be heroes ourselves.

Vocabulary Building

Find the word in the paragraph given. Use the synonyms and definition to help.

1. P1: surpass, exceed (v.): _____
2. P2: a preset pattern (n.): _____
3. P4: to be a perfect example of (v.): _____
4. P5: clearly, in full detail (adv.): _____
5. P12: a complete and thorough change (n.): _____
6. P14: gentle, kind (adj.): _____
7. P17: although (conj.): _____
8. P18: equipped (v.): _____
9. P19: a magical or medicinal potion (n.): _____
10. P20: great happiness (n.): _____
11. P20: extremely interested (adj.): _____
12. P27: strange, unfamiliar (adj.): _____
13. P28: involve (v.): _____

The Hero's Journey

Written by Charity Davenport with material from the Wikipedia article "Monomyth", $\ccbysa$

Illustrations by W.W. Denslow for L. Frank Baum's book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, $\ccpd$*

Think about one of your favorite movies or stories. Chances are the story has a strong hero that you empathize with and aspire to become. And chances are this kind of story has been told for millennia, and yet people still love them. These stories transcend time and culture.

In narratology and comparative mythology, the monomyth, or the hero's journey, is the common template of a broad category of tales that involve a hero who goes on an adventure, and in a critical crisis wins a victory, and then comes home changed or transformed.

The study of hero myth narratives started in 1871 with anthropologist Edward Taylor's observations of common patterns in plots of heroes' journeys. Later on, hero myth pattern studies were popularized by Joseph Campbell in his 1949 book The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Campbell and other scholars describe narratives of Gautama Buddha, Moses, and Jesus Christ in terms of the monomyth, and notice that many stories that humans have loved throughout time have some interesting patterns, and that there's a good reason why these kinds of stories strike a chord in us.

The stages of the hero's journey can be found in all kinds of literature and movies, from thousands of years ago to now. Superhero movies epitomize the hero's journey and are becoming bigger and bigger blockbusters each year. Even George Lucas himself, the creator of the groundbreaking Star Wars movie series, noted that Joseph Campbell's book was very influential to him. The hero's journey can be found in books like Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, The Chronicles of Narnia, and most other fantasy sci-fi books, legends, fairy tales, and comic book series like Spiderman and Batman. Many video games like The Legend of Zelda, Skyrim, the Final Fantasy and even the Pokémon series carry many elements of the hero's journey. But fantasies aren't real. Why do we love these stories so much? Because the monsters might not be real, the witches might not be real, and the magical objects and fantastic settings might not be real. But the struggle is.

But before we talk about that, we need to dive deeper into the different stages of Campbell's hero's journey. The following list of stages also describes stages mentioned by other writers, like David Adams Leeming, who wrote a similar book inspired by Campbell's book in 1981 called Mythology: The Voyage of the Hero, and Christopher Vogler who published The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers in 2007. As you read, think about examples from stories, movies, or books you have read that might fit these stages. You'll be surprised. As an example, the story of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, America's most well-known mythology written in 1900 by L. Frank Baum, will be used to help explain the stages. There are many stages–not all monomyths necessarily contain all stages explicitly; some myths may focus on only one of the stages, while others may deal with the stages in a somewhat different order. The stages are divided into three parts–departure, initiation, and return.

Part 1: Departure

1: Unusual Birth

The hero may have an unusual birth or is born with unique powers. They may be born into a royal family but sent off to live with someone with a more ordinary existence. No matter their birth, something is different about them that lies unknown to others and themselves. They may be isolated by others due to this difference.

2: The Ordinary World / Humble Upbringing

Oftentimes, the story starts out in a world not too different from our own, and in contrast to stage 1, the hero might just be your everyday neighbor down the street. In the case of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, the main character Dorothy is just a normal American girl living on a farm in Kansas.

3: The Call to Adventure



Dorothy and her dog Toto being taken away by the tornado

Suddenly something happens, and the hero is requested to do a task and /or is taken to a new world. For Dorothy, suddenly a tornado comes, but she is unable to get to the underground shelter in time and so runs into the house. The house is taken away into the sky and later lands in a beautifully colored land of tiny people named the Munchkins. The hero may often find themselves in a fantasy land much different from their home at one point or another.

4: Refusal of and Acceptance of the Call

Often when the call is given, the future hero first refuses to heed it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances. Someone may come to help convince the hero that they are the only ones who can do the task, or they are the best person for the job. Eventually, the hero learns that they must be responsible to complete the task at hand.

5: Supernatural Aid / Mentor & Talisman



Dorothy and the witch's shoes

Once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his or her guide and magical helper appears or becomes known. More often than not, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid the hero later in their quest. In The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, after Dorothy finds herself in a magically colorful land filled with strange little people, the good witch Glinda comes to help Dorothy find her way to the Wizard of Oz, who can help her get home. Glinda gives Dorothy a pair of magical silver shoes (ruby slippers in the 1939 movie version)–shoes from the feet of her evil witch sister that has just been crushed by Dorothy's house falling on her. Glinda appears every so often during the movie version to help Dorothy along the way.

6: Entering the Unknown: Crossing the Threshold

This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and venturing into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are unknown. Although Dorothy has already entered a strange land, she is instructed to follow a yellow brick road in order to reach the Wizard of Oz. At this point, she is only following her mentor Glinda's orders but doesn't know what she might find along the road, good or bad.

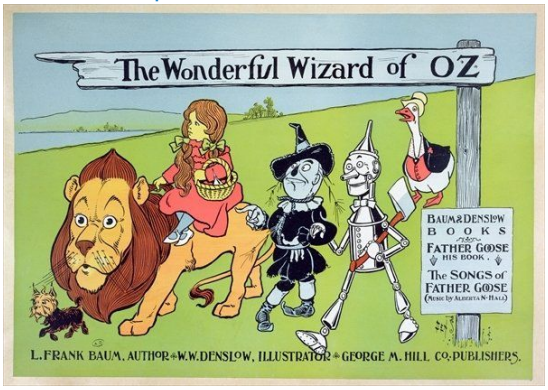
7: First Battle: Threshold Guardian



The kalidahs

This may be the first battle they have, usually shortly after crossing the threshold into the other realm. The hero may need to fight against foes who are guarding the gate or border of the realm to prevent the hero from coming in. The first battle represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, the person shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis. When first entering the stage, the hero may encounter a minor danger or set back. For Dorothy, it was meeting with the Kalidahs, monsters with bodies like bears and heads like tigers–but at least she had some help.

8: Allies / Helpers



Dorothy and her allies

While on their way towards their task, the hero might meet some friends, allies, or people willing to help them. Not long after she begins her trek on the yellow brick road, one by Dorothy she meets a scarecrow, tin man, and cowardly lion, all of whom would also like to seek help from the wizard. Here we can see an example of how the stages should not be considered perfect–because Dorothy's first battle with the Kalidahs happens after this stage, after she meets her allies.

Part 2: Initiation

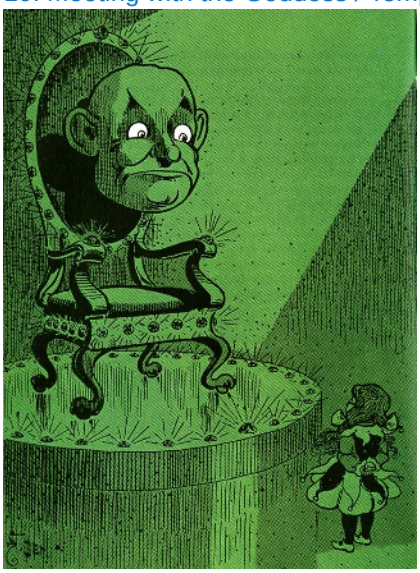
9: Road of Trials



Dorothy and the field mice

The road of trials is a series of tests that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes. This is usually where the most action lies in the story, with the hero coming upon obstacle after obstacle, maybe winning them all or may suffer a few losses. In between facing ordeals, the hero gets to see more of the fantastic land they are in. In The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Dorothy and her three allies face many barriers on their way to the wizard–one of which is a field of poppies that makes some of them fall asleep. Campbell writes, "The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper whom he met before his entrance into this region. Or it may be that he here discovers for the first time that there is a benign power everywhere supporting him in his superhuman passage." Through many of Dorothy's obstacles, she is helped by the people in the different lands she travels through. A giant group of mice helps bring sleeping Dorothy and the lion out of the poppy field to safety.

10: Meeting with the Goddess / Temptress



Dorothy meets the Wizard of Oz

Along the way, the hero may meet a woman who helps him or may also tempt him to wander away from his path. The meeting with the goddess does not need to be female nor a goddess, but it sometimes involves a romantic relationship with the hero. It could be anyone who helps the hero or gives items to him that will help him in the future. In Dorothy's case, the goddess here is the wizard. Finally, Dorothy and her crew reach the land of Oz where the wizard lives to ask of him what they desire, with Dorothy's wish to simply go back home to Kansas. But instead, the wizard will only help her if she agrees to kill the wicked witch of the West and bring back her broomstick.

The woman as temptress has the opposite effect. In this step, the hero faces temptations, often of a physical or pleasurable nature, that may lead him or her to abandon or wander from his or her quest, which does not necessarily have to be represented by a woman. Woman is a metaphor for the physical or material temptations of life, since the hero-knight was often tempted by lust from his spiritual journey.

11: Brother / Father Battle: The Final Showdown



The wicked witch is killed

In this step, the person must finally face whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life, usually the villain or antagonist of the story. In many myths and stories, this is the father or a father figure who has life and death power. This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving into this place, and it's usually the ultimate goal of the hero, and all that follow will move out from it. Although this step is most frequently symbolized by an encounter with a male, it does not have to be a male; just someone or thing with incredible power. In Dorothy's case, this is meeting with the wicked witch of the West, who Dorothy successfully (albeit accidentally) kills and takes her broomstick.

12: Apotheosis

This is the point of realization in which a greater understanding is achieved. Armed with this new knowledge and perception, the hero is resolved and ready for the more difficult part of the adventure, which for Dorothy is simply going home. In this stage, the hero is also finally recognized as a hero by the people of the realm they are in and the people of their homeland. They may even be immortalized as a god towards the end of the story. Having killed two evil witches that enslaved the beings of their realms, there are many in the magical land that see Dorothy as a powerful hero.

Part 3: Return

13: The Ultimate Reward

The ultimate reward is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare the person for this step, since in many myths the reward is something that has supernatural powers, like an elixir of life, or a plant that makes one immortal, or the holy grail. Sometimes it's the completion of the quest, like killing a monster that has been attacking the town. Unfortunately for little Dorothy, she doesn't get what she wanted after fulfilling the wizard's request because they learn that the wizard doesn't have any magical powers to help them. Once again they must journey, this time to her mentor Glinda, to find out how to get home again.

14: Refusal to Return

Having found bliss and enlightenment in the other world, the hero may not want to return to the ordinary world to present the reward onto his fellow man. Although a while ago the hero was entering an unknown world, it has become familiar to them, they have made many friends and accomplishments, and thus they may not want to leave to go back home. This is definitely the case for Dorothy, who although frightened yet intrigued by this strange magical land, made lots of new friends, met interesting and helpful strangers, and learned that "home is where the heart is."

15: Magical Flight / Rescue from Without



Dorothy wearing the magic cap of the flying monkeys

Sometimes the hero must escape with the reward, especially if it is something that the gods have been jealously guarding. It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it. This can also be another adventure the hero must complete just to escape the magical land. Now that Dorothy has a new quest to find Glinda, she once again finds ordeals blocking the way and monsters to fight. Dorothy uses the power of a magic cap to call flying monkeys to take her to certain places.

Just as the hero may need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, often he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.

16: The Return Threshold: Home Again



Dorothy meets the good witch Glinda

The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world. Once Dorothy finally accomplishes her new goal of finding Glinda, Glinda tells Dorothy that what she needed to return home was with her all along–the magical silver (or ruby) shoes on her feet. The others also learned that everything they desire was within them all along. Dorothy learns that home is always where you want it to be.

17: Master of Two Worlds / Restoring the World

This step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds. For the Dorothy in the Oz novels, numerous times she traverses back and forth from Kansas and the land of Oz and other neighboring fantasy lands filled with interesting characters.

18: Freedom to Live

Mastery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past. Essentially, this is the hero's "happily ever after." Now the hero has returned home and probably faces a triumphant crowd cheering their return. Now they can rest and enjoy their life, until next time…

Were you thinking of a movie or a story while reading the three stages? Which stages could you easily point out in the story? Which were missing? And how does that affect the story's plot? It's just as important to point out the differences in stories as it is to see the patterns found in Campbell's monomyth. You should do the same for the rest of the stories in this unit. As you read the stories, try to see which stages are represented and which aren't.

The Monomyth: Not Just for Mythology

Earlier we mentioned that the popularity of the monomyth is not so much in the fantastical aspects. The real reason why ordinary humans like ourselves love these kinds of outlandish storylines is that we want to strive to be heroes ourselves. We might not be slaying monsters, but human life involves facing and defeating obstacles all around us. We sympathize with a hero in trouble, suffering, doubting his abilities, because we know this kind of struggle personally. We are the heroes in the story of our lives. Think of yourself– as an international student, as an immigrant in a strange land, the struggles, the victories, the obstacles, the sacrifices, the losses you have experienced, how all of those experiences have transformed you, and the ultimate goal you are working towards.

Not only has the monomyth inspired stories for generations, but it has inspired other fields. Some self-help books encourage people to look at their own hero's journey as a kind of therapy and encouragement. The stages of the hero's journey have been used to encourage entrepreneurs starting their own businesses–the risks it might entail, and what to do when facing difficult situations.

There is even a hero's journey fitness program to help people lose weight and gain confidence, and a book for teachers–the heroes of strange lands called "the classroom." Not only is the monomyth an interesting theory behind some of the most popular adventure stories on Earth, it is the story of life itself.

Comprehension Questions

-

Answer the following questions based on the article about the hero's journey.

1. Give a short paragraph summary (no more than 5 sentences) of the hero's journey.
2. Why has the monomyth stayed popular for thousands of years?

This chart will be used often to focus on how each of the adventure stories we read follows Campbell's idea of the "hero's journey". Summarize the steps in the hero's journey in the chart below.

Step in the hero's journey	summary of step
1. Special birth/humble upbringing	
2. Ordinary world	
3. Call to adventure	
4. Refusal of the call	
5. Supernatural aid/mentor & Talisman	
6. Crossing the threshold	
7. 1st battle: threshold guardians	
8. Allies	
9. Road of trials	
10. Meeting with the goddess/temptress	
11. Father/brother battle	
12. Apotheosis	
13. The ultimate reward	
14. Refusal to return	
15. Magical Flight / Rescue from without	
16. Crossing the return threshold	
17. Master of two worlds	
18. Freedom to live	

CEFR Level: CEF Level B2

Click here for additional resources related to this reading!

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2.1.2.8.6: Putting It Together

This section began by defining formalism, which is an analytical way of looking at artwork and describing how its elements and principles of design work together to as a composition. It's also a way of discussing how the visual effects of composition can contribute to our understanding or interpretation of artwork.

Point, line, shape, space, color, and value are all elements of design. These basic building blocks of form are arranged using the principles of design. Principles act on elements as the various ways of organizing them in a composition.

Formalism allows anyone a way into an artwork without any prior knowledge of the artist or knowledge of deeper contexts that impacted how and why it was created.

Take another look at Picasso's *Guernica*.

With the knowledge of formalism you gained in this section, let's reconsider the question of how formalism can be applied to understanding its composition? First let's start with elements. What elements feel like they are strongly represented? Likely your answer is shape and value, and possibly implied line as well as space.

Which principles of design feel strongly engaged in this composition? It is an asymmetrical composition with considerable movement created by the repetition of directional triangular shapes. These bold shapes point and pull the viewer's eye around the composition.

What about the type of representation? Picasso at this point is engaged in semi-abstraction. Now that we have analyzed form through elements, principles, and type of representation, let's focus on how these contribute to interpreting meaning or feelings produced by these compositional choices. Visually the space is very active, almost to the point of visual discomfort. This combined with the subject matter affects how we feel, and ultimately the meaning we take away from experiencing the painting.

Visit the Museo Reina Sofia in Spain to learn more about the interpretations of Guernica and consider how these interpretations correlate with the formalist reading of its composition above.

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2.1.2.8.7: How to Analyze a Film

Characteristics

Films are similar to novels or short stories in that they tell a story. They include the same genres: romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction. However, films may also include sub-groups such as: action, comedy, tragedy, westerns and war. The methods you use to analyze a film are closely related to those used to analyze literature; nevertheless, films are multimedial. They are visual media made for viewers. Films take command of more of our senses to create special atmospheres, feelings or to bring out emotions.

Along with the literary elements such as plot, setting, characterization, structure, and theme, which make up the text or screenplay, there are many different film techniques used to tell the story or narrative. Attention is paid to sound, music, lighting, camera angles, and editing. What is important is to focus on how all the elements are used together in making a good film.

Below is a list of elements and questions to help you when analyzing films.

Film Contents

Film Facts

- Title of film
- Year film was produced
- Nationality
- Names of the actors
- Name of director

Genre

- What main genre does the film fall under? – romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction.
- What sub-grouping does the film fall under? – action, comedy, tragedy, war and westerns.

Setting

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place.

- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- What aspects of setting are we made aware of? – Geography, weather conditions, physical environment, time of day.
- Where are we in the opening scene?

Plot and structure

- What are the most important sequences?
- How is the plot structured?
- Is it linear, chronological or is it presented through flashbacks??
- Are there several plots running parallel?
- How is suspense built up?
- Do any events foreshadow what is to come?

Conflict

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the film and is related to the main characters.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
  - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
  - is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters are described.

- through dialogue?

- by the way they speak?
- physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?
- interaction – the way they act towards other characters?
- Are they static characters who do not change?
- Do they develop by the end of the story?
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Narrator and point of view

The *narrator* is the person telling the story.

- Is there a narrator in the film? Who?
- Point of view means through whose eyes the story is being told.
- Through whose eyes does the story unfold?
- Is the story told in the first person "I" point of view?
- Is the story told through an off-screen narrator?

Imagery

In films imagery are the elements used to create pictures in our minds. They may include:

- Symbols – when something stands not only for itself (a literal meaning), but also stands for something else (a figurative meaning) e.g. The feather in the film *Forrest Gump* symbolizes his destiny.
- What images are used in the film? e.g. color, objects etc.
- Can you find any symbols?

Theme

- What are the universal ideas that shine through in the film (in other words, what is it about, in general)?

Cinematic Effects

Soundtrack

- includes both dialogue and music, as well as all the other sounds in a film.
- enhances the atmosphere of the film (what effect does the choice of music have? Does it suit the theme?)
- Are any particular sounds accentuated?

Use of the camera

- A camera shot is based on the camera's distance from the object.
- The four basic shots used in films are:
  - a close-up – a very close shot where the camera lens focuses on some detail or the actor's face.
  - medium shot – a shot where the camera lens picks up some background or upper half of the actor.
  - full shot – a shot where the camera lens has full view of the actor.
  - long shot – shot taken at a distance from an object.
- What camera shots can you identify in the film? How are they used?
- A camera angle is how the camera is tilted while filming.
  - straight-on angle – The camera is at the same height as the object.
  - high angle – The camera is filming from above the object.
  - low angle – The camera is looking up at the object.
  - oblique angle – The camera is tilted sideways.
- Does the way in which the camera is held say anything about the character?

Lighting

- Lighting focuses the audience's attention on the main character or object in a film.
- It also sets the mood or atmosphere.
- While high-key lighting is bright and illuminating, low-key lighting is darker with a lot of shadows.
- What special lighting effects are used during the most important scenes?
- Filters are often used to soften and reduce harsh contrasts. They can also be used to eliminate haze, ultraviolet light or glare from water when shooting outside.
- Using color like red or orange can be used to enhance the feeling of a sunset.
- Can you find any examples where a filter has been used in the film?
- What effect did using a filter have on the scene?
- What colors are most dominant?

Editing

Editing is the way in which a film editor together with the director cuts and assembles the scenes. The way the scenes are joined together creates the rhythm of the motion picture. Scenes can be long and drawn out or short and choppy.

- Can you see a pattern to how the scenes are cut?
- How would you describe the pace/tempo of the film?

Conclusion

When analyzing films for school work or projects, you may be asked to use some or all of the characteristics above. Link those elements together that seem most logical. Try to think of the film as a whole and how the elements mentioned above work together to bring out the main message of the film.

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2.1.2.8.8: How to Analyze a Novel

Setting

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place.

- What aspects make up the setting?
  - Geography, weather, time of day, social conditions?
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?
- Study the time period which is also part of the setting
- When was the story written?
  - Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
  - How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the novel?

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters are described.

- through dialogue?
- by the way they speak?
- physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?
- interaction – the way they act towards other characters?
- Are they static characters who do not change?
- Do they develop by the end of the story?
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

The *plot* is the main sequence of events that make up the story.

- What are the most important events?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move back and forth?
- Are there turning points, a climax and/or an anticlimax?
- Is the plot believable?

Narrator and Point of view

The *narrator* is the person telling the story.
Point of view: whose eyes the story is being told through.

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Is the narrator the main character?
- Does the author speak through one of the characters?
- Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person “he/she” point of view?
- Is the story written in an “all-knowing” 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the novel and is related to the main character.

- How would you describe the main conflict?

- How would you describe the main conflict?
  - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
  - is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Theme

The *theme* is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel. It is usually an abstract, universal idea about the human condition, society or life, to name a few.

- How does the theme shine through in the story?
- Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?
- What other themes are there?

Style

The author's style has to do with the author's vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with his attitude towards the subject. In some novels the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is the text full of figurative language?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors, similes?
  An example of a metaphor is when someone says, "My love, you *are* a rose". An example of a simile is "My darling, you are *like* a rose."
- What images are used?

Your literary analysis of a novel will often be in the form of an essay or book report where you will be asked to give your opinions of the novel at the end. To conclude, choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments. Try to view the novel as a whole and try to give a balanced analysis.

Contributors and Attributions

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2.1.2.8.9: What is Good Music?

It seems as if one of the objectives of this book should be to reveal what the difference is between “good” music and “bad” music. However, if you have read this entire book and still have no idea, don’t worry—the authors don’t know either. Or, at least, we are not able to make any generalizations about what is good and what is not, even if we are adept at identifying quality in specific instances. This is because music is so diverse in its forms and objectives that there cannot be a single standard of quality. When we ask, “Is this music good?,” what are we asking? Although this particular question is vague and unhelpful, asking questions can help us to judge the quality of a specific composition or performance.

First, we should think about the purpose behind a given composition. Is it supposed to make people dance? Is it supposed to provoke an emotional reaction? Is it supposed to make listeners feel patriotic? Is it supposed to incite rebellion? Is it supposed to be intellectually engaging? Then we should ask the question, “Is this piece of music successful at achieving its objective?” This way we can avoid pointless comparisons between pieces of music that serve completely different functions. There is no value in saying that a symphony by Beethoven is “better” than an Appalachian fiddle tune.

Second, we can measure a composition against others of its type. While it is misguided to compare a Bach cantata to a hip-hop track, we can argue that Bach wrote better cantatas than other 18th-century German church composers, or that Ice-T is a better rapper than Vanilla Ice. To do so, we need to agree on some specific criteria used to determine quality. This is very difficult. Most classical musicians agree that Bach is the greatest composer of his era, if not of all time. They will argue that his music is better than that of his contemporaries because it is more complex, or more expressive. But who decided that complexity and expressivity were desirable qualities? Bach was not highly regarded in his own time, when listeners preferred a more restrained approach to composition. Should that matter to us today? There’s a further problem. Although Bach’s music was not widely studied or performed until eighty years after his death, it now forms the bedrock of the classical music industry and educational system. Can those of us who grew up playing and listening to Bach’s music judge its quality, when that same music has been used to define and teach “goodness” in classical music? Or are we only able to judge less familiar composers in comparison to Bach?

Third, we might compare a piece of music to others of its kind by considering originality. When we find a pop song or a string quartet or a gamelan composition that we really love, we are probably attracted to it because, while representative of its type, it is somehow different in an appealing way. All songs played on Top 40 radio have a great deal in common, but a “good” song is likely to have something special that sets it apart from the others. All string quartets composed in the 18th century will share formal and stylistic features, but a “good” one will stand out as unique. What it means to be original and how innovations might be received will depend on the type of music.

Fourth, we can consider the skill of the composer or performer. Certain types of music—four-voice fugues, for example—are objectively difficult to craft, and we can empirically judge their quality. However, this is often not the case, as this type of evaluation requires strict criteria. We can also judge the skill with which music is performed. In the classical tradition, we tend to separate the quality of a performance from the quality of the music being performed. In other traditions, however, such is often not the case. The music of John Coltrane is “good” not because he wrote exceptional tunes but because his recordings are extraordinary. If he had spent his career publishing printed music, no-one would have noticed. Because he worked with a team of highly-skilled musicians to record and release groundbreaking performances, however, we hold his music in high esteem. And how do we know that his recordings are “good”? This again requires some level of agreement between members of the jazz community concerning the goals of their music.

Finally, we can take into account the impact that music has on listeners and society. We can argue that “good” music is important to someone, or plays a role in the development of art or culture. It has certainly been argued that the music of Wagner is “good” because it heavily influenced the next generation of composers. It has also been argued that Wagner is a “good” composer because many people love his operas. However, influence and popularity are often determined by factors that are independent of the music itself. Wagner happened to be a German male (which allowed him to be taken seriously) with a royal patron (which allowed him to focus on his work and to stage lavish productions of his most ambitious operas). These circumstances contributed significantly to his legacy. If Wagner had written all of the same operas, but they had never been staged and were forgotten today, would those operas still be “good”? Were there other composers writing at the same time who, due to less fortunate circumstances, have been forgotten, but who’s music was just as “good” or “better”? Is it even possible to know? To turn to another example, young people are often criticized for listening to “bad” (that is, popular and ephemeral) music. This has been going on for many generations, but

no amount of criticism can stop anyone from listening to music that they love and that has meaning for them. Does the fact that a piece of music is important to someone make it “good”?

As these questions reveal, it is no easy task to determine whether a piece of music is “good” or not. It is tempting to paraphrase the words of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who famously declined to define pornography in a 1964 decision but instead stated “I know it when I see it.” Many of us would like to say of good music, “I know it when I hear it”—and sometimes we do. However, we should never forget the limitations of our individual perspectives, and we should keep our ears open to all of the good music that is waiting to be discovered.

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2.1.2.8.10: Elements of Design

Identify and define the five elements of design

Learning Activities

The learning activities for this section include:

- Reading: Artistic Elements
- Videos: Elements of Art

Take time to review and reflect on each of these activities in order to improve your performance on the assessment for this section.

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2.1.2.8.11: Principles of Design

Identify and distinguish how the principles of design are used to visually organize the elements of design

Learning Activities

The learning activities for this section include:

- Reading: Artistic Principles

Take time to review and reflect on each of these activities in order to improve your performance on the assessment for this section.

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2.1.2.8.12: Close Reading Strategies - A Process Approach

To review, New Criticism provides us with concrete strategies to use when we read and interpret works of literature. Such reading and interpreting, however, never happens after just a first reading; in fact, all critics—New Critics and the others we examine later in this text—reread works multiple times before venturing an interpretation. You can see, then, the connection between reading and writing: as Chapter 1 indicates, writers create multiple drafts before settling for a finished product (writing is never adequately "finished"); the writing process, in turn, is dependent on the multiple rereadings the writer has performed to gather evidence for the paper. It's important that you integrate the reading and writing process together. As a model, use the following ten-step plan as you write using New Critical theory:

1. Carefully *read the work* you will analyze.
2. *Formulate a general question* after your initial reading that identifies a problem—a tension—that is fruitful for discussion.
3. *Reread the work*, paying particular attention to the question you posed. *Take notes*, which should be focused on your central question. *Write an exploratory journal entry* or *blog post* that allows you to play with ideas.
4. *Construct a working thesis* that makes a claim about the work and accounts for the following:
    1. What does the work mean?
    2. How does the work artistically demonstrate the theme you've identified?
    3. "So what" is significant about the work? That is, why is it important for you to write about this work? What will readers learn from reading your interpretation?
5. *Reread the text to gather textual evidence* for support. What literary devices are used to achieve theme?
6. *Construct an informal outline* that demonstrates how you will support your interpretation.
7. *Write a first draft.*
8. *Receive feedback* from peers and your instructor via *peer review* and *conferencing* with your instructor (if possible).
9. *Revise the paper*, which will include revising your original thesis statement and restructuring your paper to best support the thesis. Note: You probably will revise many times, so it is important to receive feedback at every draft stage if possible.
10. *Edit and proofread* for correctness, clarity, and style.

We recommend that you follow this process for every paper that you write from this textbook. Of course, these steps can be modified to fit your writing process, but the plan does ensure that you will engage in a thorough reading of the text as you work through the writing process, which demands that you allow plenty of time for reading, reflecting, writing, reviewing, and revising.

Peer Reviewing

A central stage in the writing process is the feedback stage, in which you receive revision suggestions from classmates and your instructor. By receiving feedback on your paper, you will be able to make more intelligent revision decisions. Furthermore, by reading and responding to your peers' papers, you become a more astute reader, which will help when you revise your own papers. In Chapter 10, you will find peer-review sheets for each chapter.

Your Process

1. Have you partaken in peer review before? Describe this experience.
2. Do you regularly get feedback from others on your writing (no matter for which class)? Why or why not?

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2.1.2.9: Neo-Aristotelian Criticism (Aristotle)

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2.1.2.9.1: The Role of Philosophy (Categories)

15 The Role of Philosophy (Categories)

Aristotle's Categories**: Section 1, Parts 1-4**[26]

Part 1

Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. For should any one define in what sense each is an animal, his definition in the one case will be appropriate to that case only.

On the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named, inasmuch as not only the name, but also the definition, is the same in both cases: for if a man should state in what sense each is an animal, the statement in the one case would be identical with that in the other.

Things are said to be named 'derivatively', which derive their name from some other name, but differ from it in termination. Thus the grammarian derives his name from the word 'grammar', and the courageous man from the word 'courage'.

Part 2

Forms of speech are either simple or composite. Examples of the latter are such expressions as 'the man runs', 'the man wins'; of the former 'man', 'ox', 'runs', 'wins'.

Of things themselves some are predicable of a subject, and are never present in a subject. Thus 'man' is predicable of the individual man, and is never present in a subject.

By being 'present in a subject' I do not mean present as parts are present in a whole, but being incapable of existence apart from the said subject.

Some things, again, are present in a subject, but are never predicable of a subject. For instance, a certain point of grammatical knowledge is present in the mind, but is not predicable of any subject; or again, a certain whiteness may be present in the body (for colour requires a material basis), yet it is never predicable of anything.

Other things, again, are both predicable of a subject and present in a subject. Thus while knowledge is present in the human mind, it is predicable of grammar.

There is, lastly, a class of things which are neither present in a subject nor predicable of a subject, such as the individual man or the individual horse. But, to speak more generally, that which is individual and has the character of a unit is never predicable of a subject. Yet in some cases there is nothing to prevent such being present in a subject. Thus a certain point of grammatical knowledge is present in a subject.

Part 3

When one thing is predicated of another, all that which is predicable of the predicate will be predicable also of the subject. Thus, 'man' is predicated of the individual man; but 'animal' is predicated of 'man'; it will, therefore, be predicable of the individual man also: for the individual man is both 'man' and 'animal'.

If genera are different and co-ordinate, their differentiae are themselves different in kind. Take as an instance the genus 'animal' and the genus 'knowledge'. 'With feet', 'two-footed', 'winged', 'aquatic', are differentiae of 'animal'; the species of knowledge are not distinguished by the same differentiae. One species of knowledge does not differ from another in being 'two-footed'.

But where one genus is subordinate to another, there is nothing to prevent their having the same differentiae: for the greater class is predicated of the lesser, so that all the differentiae of the predicate will be differentiae also of the subject.

Part 4

Expressions which are in no way composite signify substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, or affection. To sketch my meaning roughly, examples of substance are 'man' or 'the horse', of quantity, such terms as 'two cubits long' or 'three cubits long', of quality, such attributes as 'white', 'grammatical'. 'Double', 'half', 'greater', fall under the category of relation; 'in a the market place', 'in the Lyceum', under that of place; 'yesterday', 'last year', under that of time. 'Lying', 'sitting', are terms indicating position, 'shod', 'armed', state; 'to lance', 'to cauterize', action; 'to be lanced', 'to be cauterized', affection.

No one of these terms, in and by itself, involves an affirmation; it is by the combination of such terms that positive or negative statements arise. For every assertion must, as is admitted, be either true or false, whereas expressions which are not in any way composite such as 'man', 'white', 'runs', 'wins', cannot be either true or false.

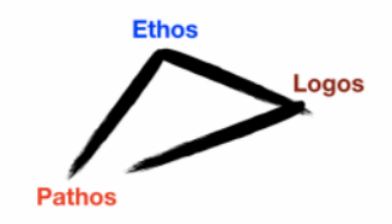
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2.1.2.9.2: The Rhetorical Process

Aristotle believed that through the use of the rhetorical process

- Truth and justice may be guarded against falsehood and wrong.
- Debate may be conducted on subjects in the absence of absolute truth.
- Both sides of a claim may be presented.
- Proof to establish the probability of a position may be developed.



8.3.1: "Logos, Ethos and Pathos" by J. Marteney is licensed under CC BY 4.0

These four aspects of the rhetorical process described by Aristotle are still in use today. Aristotle's persuasion involves the use of three elements of proof: **logos, pathos, and ethos**.

Logos Means logic and is the use of reason to support a decision. Logical appeals essentially present the situation, the alternatives, and the set of probabilities involved in the decision-making process. Such appeals are directed to our mind's reasoning capabilities.

Pathos Means emotion and is the use of emotional and motivational appeals to support a decision. Emotional appeals are directed to the wishes, wants, desires, goals, and needs of the person, whose acceptance is desired. Such appeals are directed to the heart.

Ethos Refers to the use of source credibility to support a conclusion. Aristotle perceived ethos as a powerful proof supplied by the source himself, and through which judgments could be made about his character, wisdom, and goodwill. The argument is accepted due to the character of the person arguing. Aristotle wrote,

> *"Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character where the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others; this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided. This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak."* [1]

Ethos is thus the image of the source held in the mind(s) of the audience. Source credibility can be developed in two ways:

The first type is called **initial ethos**. This ethos is based on the arguer's credentials, status, and reputation, as known to the audience before they hear or read the content of the message. Advertisers have increasingly turned to “positive image makers” to sell their clients' products. The idea is if you like them, you will be favorably disposed toward the product they are endorsing.

The second type is called **derived ethos**. This is the speaker’s credibility that is created during the message. You may not know much about the presenter, but as you listen to the argument you find yourself more and more impressed with him or her. Derived ethos is created from both the content of the presentation and the style of the speaker. In a job interview, you want to create a positive derived ethos as you make your “argument” that you should be hired.

A minimal level of positive ethos is necessary for logical and emotional proofs to achieve effectiveness. Low credibility sources cannot use high levels of emotional appeals effectively, because the audience doesn’t believe in the source in the first place. Likewise, lacking a certain minimal ethos, logical proof will be ignored, because the source is not perceived as a person who is trustworthy.

Reference

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2.1.2.10: Social Movement Study

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2.1.2.10.1: Social Movements

Social movements are purposeful, organized groups that strive to work toward a common social goal. While most of us learned about social movements in history classes, we tend to take for granted the fundamental changes they caused —and we may be completely unfamiliar with the trend toward global social movements. But from the antitobacco movement that has worked to outlaw smoking in public buildings and raise the cost of cigarettes, to political uprisings throughout the Arab world, movements are creating social change on a global scale.

Levels of Social Movements

Movements happen in our towns, in our nation, and around the world. Let's take a look at examples of social movements, from local to global. No doubt you can think of others on all of these levels, especially since modern technology has allowed us a near-constant stream of information about the quest for social change around the world.

Local

Chicago is a city of highs and lows, from corrupt politicians and failing schools to innovative education programs and a thriving arts scene. Not surprisingly, it has been home to a number of social movements over time. Currently, AREA Chicago is a social movement focused on "building a socially just city" (AREA Chicago 2011). The organization seeks to "create relationships and sustain community through art, research, education, and activism" (AREA Chicago 2011). The movement offers online tools like the Radicalendar—a calendar for getting radical and connected—and events such as an alternative to the traditional Independence Day picnic. Through its offerings, AREA Chicago gives local residents a chance to engage in a movement to help build a socially just city.

State



Texas Secede! is an organization which would like Texas to secede from the United States. (Photo courtesy of Tim Pearce/flickr)

At the other end of the political spectrum from AREA Chicago is the Texas Secede! social movement in Texas. This statewide organization promotes the idea that Texas can and should secede from the United States to become an independent republic. The organization, which as of 2014 has over 6,000 "likes" on Facebook, references both Texas and national history in promoting secession. The movement encourages Texans to return to their rugged and individualistic roots, and to stand up to what proponents believe is the theft of their rights and property by the U.S. government (Texas Secede! 2009).

National

A polarizing national issue that has helped spawn many activist groups is gay marriage. While the legal battle is being played out state by state, the issue is a national one.

The Human Rights Campaign, a nationwide organization that advocates for LGBT civil rights, has been active for over thirty years and claims more than a million members. One focus of the organization is its Americans for Marriage Equality campaign. Using

public celebrities such as athletes, musicians, and political figures, it seeks to engage the public in the issue of equal rights under the law. The campaign raises awareness of the over 1,100 different rights, benefits, and protections provided on the basis of marital status under federal law and seeks to educate the public about why these protections should be available to all committed couples regardless of gender (Human Rights Campaign 2014).

A movement on the opposite end is the National Organization for Marriage, an organization that funds campaigns to stop same-sex marriage (National Organization for Marriage 2014). Both these organizations work on the national stage and seek to engage people through grassroots efforts to push their message. In February 2011, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder released a statement saying President Barack Obama had concluded that "due to a number of factors, including a documented history of discrimination, classification based on sexual orientation should be subject to a more heightened standard of scrutiny." The statement said, "Section 3 of DOMA [the Defense of Marriage Act of 1993], as applied to legally married same-sex couples, fails to meet that standard and is therefore unconstitutional." With that the Department was instructed not to defend the statute in such cases (Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs 2011; AP/Huffington Post 2011).



At the time of this writing, more than thirty states and the District of Columbia allow marriage for same-sex couples. State constitutional bans are more difficult to overturn than mere state bans because of the higher threshold of votes required to change a constitution. Now that the Supreme Court has stricken a key part of the Defense of Marriage Act, same-sex couples married in states that allow it are now entitled to federal benefits afforded to heterosexual couples (CNN 2014). (Photo courtesy of Jose Antonio Navas/flickr).

Global

Social organizations worldwide take stands on such general areas of concern as poverty, sex trafficking, and the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are sometimes formed to support such movements, such as the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (FOAM). Global efforts to reduce poverty are represented by the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), among others. The Fair Trade movement exists to protect and support food producers in developing countries. Occupy Wall Street, although initially a local movement, also went global throughout Europe and, as the chapter's introductory photo shows, the Middle East.

Types of Social Movements

We know that social movements can occur on the local, national, or even global stage. Are there other patterns or classifications that can help us understand them? Sociologist David Aberle (1966) addresses this question by developing categories that distinguish among social movements based on what they want to change and how much change they want. Reform movementsseek to change something specific about the social structure. Examples include antinuclear groups, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Dreamers movement for immigration reform, and the Human Rights Campaign's advocacy for Marriage Equality. Revolutionary movements seek to completely change every aspect of society. These include the 1960s counterculture movement, including the revolutionary group The Weather Underground, as well as anarchist collectives. Texas Secede! is a revolutionary movement. Religious/Redemptive movements are "meaning seeking," and their goal is to provoke inner change or spiritual growth in individuals. Organizations pushing these movements include Heaven's Gate or the Branch Davidians. The latter is still in existence despite government involvement that led to the deaths of numerous Branch Davidian members in 1993.Alternative

movements are focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behavior. These include trends like transcendental meditation or a macrobiotic diet. Resistance movements seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure. The Ku Klux Klan, the Minutemen, and pro-life movements fall into this category.

Stages of Social Movements

Later sociologists studied the lifecycle of social movements—how they emerge, grow, and in some cases, die out. Blumer (1969) and Tilly (1978) outline a four-stage process. In the *preliminary stage*, people become aware of an issue, and leaders emerge. This is followed by the *coalescence stage* when people join together and organize in order to publicize the issue and raise awareness. In the *institutionalization stage*, the movement no longer requires grassroots volunteerism: it is an established organization, typically with a paid staff. When people fall away and adopt a new movement, the movement successfully brings about the change it sought, or when people no longer take the issue seriously, the movement falls into the *decline stage*. Each social movement discussed earlier belongs in one of these four stages. Where would you put them on the list?

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL CHANGE: A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN



In 2008, Obama's campaign used social media to tweet, like, and friend its way to victory. (Photo courtesy of bradleyolin/flickr)

Chances are you have been asked to tweet, friend, like, or donate online for a cause. Maybe you were one of the many people who, in 2010, helped raise over $3 million in relief efforts for Haiti through cell phone text donations. Or maybe you follow presidential candidates on Twitter and retweet their messages to your followers. Perhaps you have "liked" a local nonprofit on Facebook, prompted by one of your neighbors or friends liking it too. Nowadays, social movements are woven throughout our social media activities. After all, social movements start by activating people.

Referring to the ideal type stages discussed above, you can see that social media has the potential to dramatically transform how people get involved. Look at stage one, the *preliminary stage*: people become aware of an issue, and leaders emerge. Imagine how social media speeds up this step. Suddenly, a shrewd user of Twitter can alert his thousands of followers about an emerging cause or an issue on his mind. Issue awareness can spread at the speed of a click, with thousands of people across the globe becoming informed at the same time. In a similar vein, those who are savvy and engaged with social media emerge as leaders. Suddenly, you don't need to be a powerful public speaker. You don't even need to leave your house. You can build an audience through social media without ever meeting the people you are inspiring.

At the next stage, the *coalescence stage*, social media also is transformative. Coalescence is the point when people join together to publicize the issue and get organized. President Obama's 2008 campaign was a case study in organizing through social media. Using Twitter and other online tools, the campaign engaged volunteers who had typically not bothered with politics and empowered those who were more active to generate still more activity. It is no coincidence that Obama's earlier work experience included grassroots community organizing. What is the difference between his campaign and the work he did in Chicago neighborhoods decades earlier? The ability to organize without regard to geographical boundaries by using social media. In 2009, when student protests erupted in Tehran, social media was considered so important to the organizing effort that the U.S. State Department actually asked Twitter to suspend scheduled maintenance so that a vital tool would not be disabled during the demonstrations.

So what is the real impact of this technology on the world? Did Twitter bring down Mubarak in Egypt? Author Malcolm Gladwell (2010) doesn't think so. In an article in *New Yorker* magazine, Gladwell tackles what he considers the myth that social media gets people more engaged. He points out that most of the tweets relating to the Iran protests were in English and sent from Western

accounts (instead of people on the ground). Rather than increasing engagement, he contends that social media only increases participation; after all, the cost of participation is so much lower than the cost of engagement. Instead of risking being arrested, shot with rubber bullets, or sprayed with fire hoses, social media activists can click “like” or retweet a message from the comfort and safety of their desk (Gladwell 2010).

There are, though, good cases to be made for the power of social media in propelling social movements. In the article, “Parrhesia and Democracy: Truth-telling, WikiLeaks and the Arab Spring,” Theresa Sauter and Gavin Kendall (2011) describe the importance of social media in the Arab Spring uprisings. Parrhesia means “the practice of truth-telling,” which describes the protestors’ use of social media to make up for the lack of coverage and even misrepresentation of events by state-controlled media. The Tunisian blogger Lina Ben Mhenni posted photographs and videos on Facebook and Twitter of events exposing the violence committed by the government. In Egypt the journalist Asmaa Mahfouz used Facebook to gather large numbers of people in Tahrir Square in the capital city of Cairo. Sauter and Kendall maintain that it was the use of Web 2.0 technologies that allowed activists not only to share events with the world but also to organize the actions.

When the Egyptian government shut down the Internet to stop the use of social media, the group Anonymous, a hacking organization noted for online acts of civil disobedience initiated "Operation Egypt" and sent thousands of faxes to keep the public informed of their government's activities (CBS Interactive Inc. 2014) as well as attacking the government's web site (Wagensiel 2011). In its Facebook press release the group stated the following: "Anonymous wants you to offer free access to uncensored media in your entire country. When you ignore this message, not only will we attack your government websites, Anonymous will also make sure that the international media sees the horrid reality you impose upon your people."

Sociologists have identified high-risk activism, such as the civil rights movement, as a “strong-tie” phenomenon, meaning that people are far more likely to stay engaged and not run home to safety if they have close friends who are also engaged. The people who dropped out of the movement—who went home after the danger got too great—did not display any less ideological commitment. But they lacked the strong-tie connection to other people who were staying. Social media, by its very makeup, is “weak-tie” (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). People follow or friend people they have never met. But while these online acquaintances are a source of information and inspiration, the lack of engaged personal contact limits the level of risk we’ll take on their behalf.



After a devastating earthquake in 2010, Twitter and the Red Cross raised millions for Haiti relief efforts through phone donations alone. (Photo courtesy of Cambodia4KidsOrg/flickr)

Theoretical Perspectives on Social Movements

Most theories of social movements are called collective action theories, indicating the purposeful nature of this form of collective behavior. The following three theories are but a few of the many classic and modern theories developed by social scientists.

Resource Mobilization

McCarthy and Zald (1977) conceptualize resource mobilization theory as a way to explain movement success in terms of the ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals. Resources are primarily time and money, and the more of both, the greater the power of organized movements. Numbers of social movement organizations (SMOs), which are single social movement groups, with the

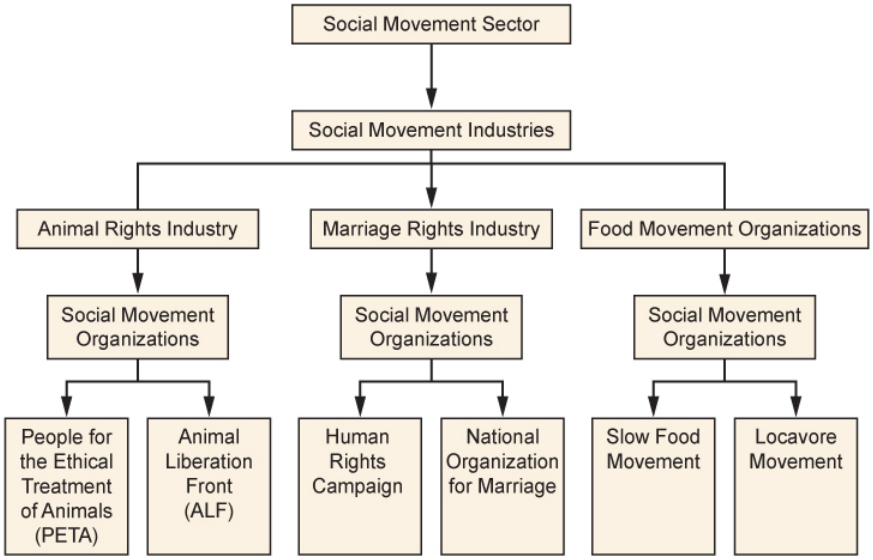
same goals constitute a social movement industry (SMI). Together they create what McCarthy and Zald (1977) refer to as "the sum of all social movements in a society."

Resource Mobilization and the Civil Rights Movement

An example of resource mobilization theory is activity of the civil rights movement in the decade between the mid 1950s and the mid 1960s. Social movements had existed before, notably the Women's Suffrage Movement and a long line of labor movements, thus constituting an existing social movement sector, which is the multiple social movement industries in a society, even if they have widely varying constituents and goals. The civil rights movement had also existed well before Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white man. Less known is that Parks was a member of the NAACP and trained in leadership (A&E Television Networks, LLC. 2014). But her action that day was spontaneous and unplanned (Schmitz 2014). Her arrest triggered a public outcry that led to the famous Montgomery bus boycott, turning the movement into what we now think of as the "civil rights movement" (Schmitz 2014).

Mobilization had to begin immediately. Boycotting the bus made other means of transportation necessary, which was provided through car pools. Churches and their ministers joined the struggle, and the protest organization In Friendship was formed as well as The Friendly Club and the Club From Nowhere. A social movement industry, which is the collection of the social movement organizations that are striving toward similar goals, was growing.

Martin Luther King Jr. emerged during these events to become the charismatic leader of the movement, gained respect from elites in the federal government, and aided by even more emerging SMOs such as the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), among others. Several still exist today. Although the movement in that period was an overall success, and laws were changed (even if not attitudes), the "movement" continues. So do struggles to keep the gains that were made, even as the U.S. Supreme Court has recently weakened the Voter Rights Act of 1965, once again making it more difficult for black Americans and other minorities to vote.



Multiple social movement organizations concerned about the same issue form a social movement industry. A society's many social movement industries comprise its social movement sector. With so many options, to whom will you give your time and money?

Framing/Frame Analysis

Over the past several decades, sociologists have developed the concept of frames to explain how individuals identify and understand social events and which norms they should follow in any given situation (Goffman 1974; Snow et al. 1986; Benford and Snow 2000). Imagine entering a restaurant. Your "frame" immediately provides you with a behavior template. It probably does not occur to you to wear pajamas to a fine-dining establishment, throw food at other patrons, or spit your drink onto the table. However, eating food at a sleepover pizza party provides you with an entirely different behavior template. It might be perfectly acceptable to eat in your pajamas and maybe even throw popcorn at others or guzzle drinks from cans.

Successful social movements use three kinds of frames (Snow and Benford 1988) to further their goals. The first type,diagnostic framing, states the problem in a clear, easily understood way. When applying diagnostic frames, there are no shades of gray: instead, there is the belief that what "they" do is wrong and this is how "we" will fix it. The anti-gay marriage movement is an example of diagnostic framing with its uncompromising insistence that marriage is only between a man and a woman. Prognostic framing, the second type, offers a solution and states how it will be implemented. Some examples of this frame, when looking at the issue of marriage equality as framed by the anti-gay marriage movement, include the plan to restrict marriage to "one man/one woman" or to allow only "civil unions" instead of marriages. As you can see, there may be many competing prognostic frames even within social movements adhering to similar diagnostic frames. Finally, motivational framingis the call to action: what should you do once you agree with the diagnostic frame and believe in the prognostic frame? These frames are action-oriented. In the gay marriage movement, a call to action might encourage you to vote "no" on Proposition 8 in California (a move to limit marriage to male-female couples), or conversely, to contact your local congressperson to express your viewpoint that marriage should be restricted to male-female couples.

With so many similar diagnostic frames, some groups find it best to join together to maximize their impact. When social movements link their goals to the goals of other social movements and merge into a single group, a frame alignment process(Snow et al. 1986) occurs—an ongoing and intentional means of recruiting participants to the movement.

This frame alignment process has four aspects: bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation. *Bridging* describes a "bridge" that connects uninvolved individuals and unorganized or ineffective groups with social movements that, though structurally unconnected, nonetheless share similar interests or goals. These organizations join together to create a new, stronger social movement organization. Can you think of examples of different organizations with a similar goal that have banded together?

In the *amplification* model, organizations seek to expand their core ideas to gain a wider, more universal appeal. By expanding their ideas to include a broader range, they can mobilize more people for their cause. For example, the Slow Food movement extends its arguments in support of local food to encompass reduced energy consumption, pollution, obesity from eating more healthfully, and more.

In *extension*, social movements agree to mutually promote each other, even when the two social movement organization's goals don't necessarily relate to each other's immediate goals. This often occurs when organizations are sympathetic to each others' causes, even if they are not directly aligned, such as women's equal rights and the civil rights movement.



Extension occurs when social movements have sympathetic causes. Women's rights, racial equality, and LGBT advocacy are all human rights issues. (Photos (a) and (b) courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; Photo (c) courtesy of Charlie Nguyen/flickr)

Transformation means a complete revision of goals. Once a movement has succeeded, it risks losing relevance. If it wants to remain active, the movement has to change with the transformation or risk becoming obsolete. For instance, when the women's suffrage movement gained women the right to vote, members turned their attention to advocating equal rights and campaigning to elect women to office. In short, transformation is an evolution in the existing diagnostic or prognostic frames that generally achieves a total conversion of the movement.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory, a development of European social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to explain the proliferation of postindustrial and postmodern movements that are difficult to analyze using traditional social movement theories. Rather than being one specific theory, it is more of a perspective that revolves around understanding movements as they relate to politics, identity, culture, and social change. Some of these more complex interrelated movements include ecofeminism, which focuses on the patriarchal society as the source of environmental problems, and the transgender rights movement. Sociologist Steven Buechler (2000) suggests that we should be looking at the bigger picture in which these movements arise—shifting to a macro-level, global analysis of social movements.

The Movement to Legalize Marijuana

The early history of marijuana in the United States includes its use as an over-the-counter medicine as well as various industrial applications. Its recreational use eventually became a focus of regulatory concern. Public opinion, swayed by a powerful propaganda campaign by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in the 1930s, remained firmly opposed to the use of marijuana for decades. In the 1936 church-financed propaganda film "Reefer Madness," marijuana was portrayed as a dangerous drug that caused insanity and violent behavior.

One reason for the recent shift in public attitudes about marijuana, and the social movement pushing for its decriminalization, is a more-informed understanding of its effects that largely contradict its earlier characterization. The public has also become aware that penalties for possession have been significantly disproportionate along racial lines. U.S. Census and FBI data reveal that blacks in the United States are between two to eight times more likely than whites to be arrested for possession of marijuana (Urbina 2013; Matthews 2013). Further, the resulting incarceration costs and prison overcrowding are causing states to look closely at decriminalization and legalization.

In 2012, marijuana was legalized for recreational purposes in Washington and Colorado through ballot initiatives approved by voters. While it remains a Schedule One controlled substance under federal law, the federal government has indicated that it will not intervene in state decisions to ease marijuana laws.

Summary

Social movements are purposeful, organized groups, either with the goal of pushing toward change, giving political voice to those without it, or gathering for some other common purpose. Social movements intersect with environmental changes, technological innovations, and other external factors to create social change. There are a myriad of catalysts that create social movements, and the reasons that people join are as varied as the participants themselves. Sociologists look at both the macro- and microanalytical reasons that social movements occur, take root, and ultimately succeed or fail.

Section Quiz

If we divide social movements according to their positions among all social movements in a society, we are using the _____ theory to understand social movements.

1. framing
2. new social movement
3. resource mobilization
4. value-added

Answer

C

While PETA is a social movement organization, taken together, the animal rights social movement organizations PETA, ALF, and Greenpeace are a _____.

1. social movement industry
2. social movement sector
3. social movement party
4. social industry

Answer

A

Social movements are:

1. disruptive and chaotic challenges to the government
2. ineffective mass movements

3. the collective action of individuals working together in an attempt to establish new norms beliefs, or values
4. the singular activities of a collection of groups working to challenge the status quo

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Answer

C

When the League of Women Voters successfully achieved its goal of women being allowed to vote, they had to undergo frame _____, a means of completely changing their goals to ensure continuing relevance.

1. extension
2. amplification
3. bridging
4. transformation

Answer

D

If a movement claims that the best way to reverse climate change is to reduce carbon emissions by outlawing privately owned cars, "outlawing cars" is the _____.

1. prognostic framing
2. diagnostic framing
3. motivational framing
4. frame transformation

Answer

A

Short Answer

Think about a social movement industry dealing with a cause that is important to you. How do the different social movement organizations of this industry seek to engage you? Which techniques do you respond to? Why?

Do you think social media is an important tool in creating social change? Why, or why not? Defend your opinion.

Describe a social movement in the decline stage. What is its issue? Why has it reached this stage?

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Glossary

alternative movements

social movements that limit themselves to self-improvement changes in individuals

diagnostic framing

a the social problem that is stated in a clear, easily understood manner

frame alignment process

using bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation as an ongoing and intentional means of recruiting participants to a movement

motivational framing
a call to action

new social movement theory
a theory that attempts to explain the proliferation of postindustrial and postmodern movements that are difficult to understand using traditional social movement theories

NGO
nongovernmental organizations working globally for numerous humanitarian and environmental causes

prognostic framing
social movements that state a clear solution and a means of implementation

reform movements
movements that seek to change something specific about the social structure

religious/redemptive movements
movements that work to promote inner change or spiritual growth in individuals

resistance movements
those who seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure

resource mobilization theory
a theory that explains social movements' success in terms of their ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals

revolutionary movements
movements that seek to completely change every aspect of society

social movement industry
the collection of the social movement organizations that are striving toward similar goals

social movement organization
a single social movement group

social movement sector
the multiple social movement industries in a society, even if they have widely varying constituents and goals

social movement
a purposeful organized group hoping to work toward a common social goal

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2.1.2.11: Other Theoretical Models

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SECTION OVERVIEW

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2.1.2.11.1.1: What Is Literary Theory?

When you hear the word “theory,” you might think first of the natural sciences, rather than of literature. In the sciences, theories are systems for understanding how an aspect of the world works: they can be used to explain past phenomena and predict future behavior. Thus we hear about the theory of evolution or the search for the unified theory of the universe.

Theory doesn’t mean exactly the same thing in literature. However, literary scholars do understand their subject through **literary theories**, which are intellectual models that seek to answer a number of fundamental interpretive questions about literature. In *How to Do Theory*, literary critic Wolfgang Iser suggests that the natural sciences (and the social sciences to a large part) operate under **hard-core** theories, whereas the humanities use **soft-core** theories.Wolfgang Iser, *How to Do Theory*(Maiden, MA: Blackwell, 2006). Simply put, hard-core theories lead to problem solving and are governed by general laws and rules; they predict and rely on objective fact. Soft-core theories, on the other hand, do not problem solve but predict—they map ideas and are not necessarily governed by laws but by metaphors and images.

Thus literary scholars use theories that are more descriptive of ideas—which map ideas more than quantify them. Such scholars are guided by questions that may include the following:

1. What exactly do we mean by “literature”? What counts as literature, and what does not?
2. Can (and should) we determine the value or worth of literary works? If so, how should we go about this task? If not, why not?
3. To what extent does a given text reflect its author and/or the historical moment of its composition?
4. What are the political and social ramifications of literary texts and of the ways we study them?

These are very broad versions of the questions that literary scholars ask in their work, but you can probably already see that different scholars are likely to have very different answers to many of them. Thus we often talk about different “schools” of literary theory. Each school prioritizes certain concerns for talking about literature while deemphasizing others. Thus one critic might focus on the representation of women within a given story or poem (feminist theory), while another critic might concentrate on representations of unconscious desire in that same text (psychoanalytical theory). Though they’re studying the same text, these two critics may come to very different conclusions about what is most interesting in that text and why.

This book will walk you through many of the primary schools that have shaped literary theory over the past century. Each chapter aims not to simply define a given theory but to show what it looks like in practice. In order to teach you how to employ literary theories, in each chapter we walk you through a sample student paper that demonstrates how other undergraduates have used a given theory to better understand a particular story, poem, play, or other literary work.

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2.1.2.11.1.2: How to Read Like a Writer

In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber.* The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London's famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a threehour performance of the musical Les Miserables. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

My job (in addition to wearing a red tuxedo jacket) was to sit inside the dark theater with the patrons and make sure nothing went wrong. It didn't seem to matter to my supervisor that I had no training in security and no idea where we kept the fire extinguishers. I was pretty sure that if there was any trouble I'd be running down the back stairs, leaving the patrons to fend for themselves. I had no intention of dying in a bright red tuxedo.

There was a Red Coat stationed on each of the theater's four floors, and we all passed the time by sitting quietly in the back, reading books with tiny flashlights. It's not easy trying to read in the dim light of a theatre—flashlight or no flashlight—and it's even tougher with shrieks and shouts and gunshots coming from the stage. I had to focus intently on each and every word, often rereading a single sentence several times. Sometimes I got distracted and had to re-read entire paragraphs. As I struggled to read in this environment, I began to realize that the way I was reading—one word at a time—was exactly the same way that the author had written the text. I realized writing is a word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence process. The intense concentration required to read in the theater helped me recognize some of the interesting ways that authors string words into phrases into paragraphs into entire books.

I came to realize that all writing consists of a series of choices.

I was an English major in college, but I don't think I ever thought much about reading. I read all the time. I read for my classes and on the computer and sometimes for fun, but I never really thought about the important connections between reading and writing, and how reading in a particular way could also make me a better writer.

What Does It Mean to Read Like a Writer?

When you Read Like a Writer (RLW) you work to identify some of the choices the author made so that you can better understand how such choices might arise in your own writing. The idea is to carefully examine the things you read, looking at the writerly techniques in the text in order to decide if you might want to adopt similar (or the same) techniques in your writing.

You are reading to learn about writing.

Instead of reading for content or to better understand the ideas in the writing (which you will automatically do to some degree anyway), you are trying to understand how the piece of writing was put together by the author and what you can learn about writing by reading a particular text. As you read in this way, you think about how the choices the author made and the techniques that he/she used are influencing your own responses as a reader. What is it about the way this text is written that makes you feel and respond the way you do?

The goal as you read like a writer is to locate what you believe are the most important writerly choices represented in the text—choices as large as the overall structure or as small as a single word used only once—to consider the effect of those choices on potential readers (including yourself). Then you can go one step further and imagine what different choices the author might have made instead, and what effect those different choices would have on readers.

Say you're reading an essay in class that begins with a short quote from President Barack Obama about the war in Iraq. As a writer, what do you think of this technique? Do you think it is effective to begin the essay with a quote? What if the essay began with a quote from someone else? What if it was a much longer quote from President Obama, or a quote from the President about something other than the war?

And here is where we get to the most important part: Would you want to try this technique in your own writing?

Would you want to start your own essay with a quote? Do you think it would be effective to begin your essay with a quote from President Obama? What about a quote from someone else?

You could make yourself a list. What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote? What about the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from the President? How would other readers respond to this technique? Would certain

readers (say Democrats or liberals) appreciate an essay that started with a quote from President Obama better than other readers (say Republicans or conservatives)? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of starting with a quote from a less divisive person? What about starting with a quote from someone more divisive?

The goal is to carefully consider the choices the author made and the techniques that he or she used, and then decide whether you want to make those same choices or use those same techniques in your own writing. Author and professor Wendy Bishop explains how her reading process changed when she began to read like a writer:

> It wasn't until I claimed the sentence as my area of desire, interest, and expertise—until I wanted to be a writer writing better—that I had to look underneath my initial readings . . . I started asking, how—how did the writer get me to feel, how did the writer say something so that it remains in my memory when many other things too easily fall out, how did the writer communicate his/her intentions about genre, about irony? (119–20)

Bishop moved from simply reporting her personal reactions to the things she read to attempting to uncover how the author led her (and other readers) to have those reactions. This effort to uncover how authors build texts is what makes Reading Like a Writer so useful for student writers.

How Is RLW Different from "Normal" Reading?

Most of the time we read for information. We read a recipe to learn how to bake lasagna. We read the sports page to see if our school won the game, Facebook to see who has commented on our status update, a history book to learn about the Vietnam War, and the syllabus to see when the next writing assignment is due. Reading Like a Writer asks for something very different.

In 1940, a famous poet and critic named Allen Tate discussed two different ways of reading:

> There are many ways to read, but generally speaking there are two ways. They correspond to the two ways in which we may be interested in a piece of architecture. If the building has Corinthian columns, we can trace the origin and development of Corinthian columns; we are interested as historians. But if we are interested as architects, we may or may not know about the history of the Corinthian style; we must, however, know all about the construction of the building, down to the last nail or peg in the beams. We have got to know this if we are going to put up buildings ourselves. (506)

While I don't know anything about Corinthian columns (and doubt that I will ever want to know anything about Corinthian columns), Allen Tate's metaphor of reading as if you were an architect is a great way to think about RLW. When you read like a writer, you are trying to figure out how the text you are reading was constructed so that you learn how to "build" one for yourself. Author David Jauss makes a similar comparison when he writes that "reading won't help you much unless you learn to read like a writer. You must look at a book the way a carpenter looks at a house someone else built, examining the details in order to see how it was made" (64).

Perhaps I should change the name and call this Reading Like an Architect, or Reading Like a Carpenter. In a way those names make perfect sense. You are reading to see how something was constructed so that you can construct something similar yourself.

Why Learn to Read Like a Writer?

For most college students RLW is a new way to read, and it can be difficult to learn at first. Making things even more difficult is that your college writing instructor may expect you to read this way for class but never actually teach you how to do it. He or she may not even tell you that you're supposed to read this way. This is because most writing instructors are so focused on teaching writing that they forget to show students how they want them to read.

That's what this essay is for.

In addition to the fact that your college writing instructor may expect you to read like a writer, this kind of reading is also one of the very best ways to learn how to write well. Reading like a writer can help you understand how the process of writing is a series of making choices, and in doing so, can help you recognize important decisions you might face and techniques you might want to use when working on your own writing. Reading this way becomes an opportunity to think and learn about writing.

Charles Moran, a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, urges us to read like writers because:

> When we read like writers we understand and participate in the writing. We see the choices the writer has made, and we see how the writer has coped with the consequences of those choices . . . We "see" what the writer is doing because we read as

> writers; we see because we have written ourselves and know the territory, know the feel of it, know some of the moves ourselves. (61)

You are already an author, and that means you have a built-in advantage when reading like a writer. All of your previous writing experiences—inside the classroom and out—can contribute to your success with RLW. Because you "have written" things yourself, just as Moran suggests, you are better able to "see" the choices that the author is making in the texts that you read. This in turn helps you to think about whether you want to make some of those same choices in your own writing, and what the consequences might be for your readers if you do.

What Are Some Questions to Ask Before You Start Reading?

As I sat down to work on this essay, I contacted a few of my former students to ask what advice they would give to college students regarding how to read effectively in the writing classroom and also to get their thoughts on RLW. Throughout the rest of the essay I'd like to share some of their insights and suggestions; after all, who is better qualified to help you learn what you need to know about reading in college writing courses than students who recently took those courses themselves?

One of the things that several students mentioned to do first, before you even start reading, is to consider the context surrounding both the assignment and the text you're reading. As one former student, Alison, states: "The reading I did in college asked me to go above and beyond, not only in breadth of subject matter, but in depth, with regards to informed analysis and background information on context." Alison was asked to think about some of the factors that went into the creation of the text, as well as some of the factors influencing her own experience of reading—taken together these constitute the context of reading. Another former student, Jamie, suggests that students "learn about the historical context of the writings" they will read for class. Writing professor Richard Straub puts it this way: "You're not going to just read a text. You're going to read a text within a certain context, a set of circumstances . . . It's one kind of writing or another, designed for one audience and purpose or another" (138).

Among the contextual factors you'll want to consider before you even start reading are:

• Do you know the author's purpose for this piece of writing?

• Do you know who the intended audience is for this piece of writing?

It may be that you need to start reading before you can answer these first two questions, but it's worth trying to answer them before you start. For example, if you know at the outset that the author is trying to reach a very specific group of readers, then his or her writerly techniques may seem more or less effective than if he/she was trying to reach a more general audience. Similarly—returning to our earlier example of beginning an essay with a quote from President Obama about the war in Iraq—if you know that the author's purpose is to address some of the dangers and drawbacks of warfare, this may be a very effective opening. If the purpose is to encourage Americans to wear sunscreen while at the beach this opening makes no sense at all. One former student, Lola, explained that most of her reading assignments in college writing classes were designed "to provoke analysis and criticisms into the style, structure, and purpose of the writing itself."

In What Genre Is This Written?

Another important thing to consider before reading is the genre of the text. Genre means a few different things in college English classes, but it's most often used to indicate the type of writing: a poem, a newspaper article, an essay, a short story, a novel, a legal brief, an instruction manual, etc. Because the conventions for each genre can be very different (who ever heard of a 900-page newspaper article?), techniques that are effective for one genre may not work well in another. Many readers expect poems and pop songs to rhyme, for example, but might react negatively to a legal brief or instruction manual that did so.

Another former student, Mike, comments on how important the genre of the text can be for reading:

> I think a lot of the way I read, of course, depends on the type of text I'm reading. If I'm reading philosophy, I always look for signaling words (however, therefore, furthermore, despite) indicating the direction of the argument . . . when I read fiction or creative nonfiction, I look for how the author inserts dialogue or character sketches within narration or environmental observation. After reading To the Lighthouse [sic] last semester, I have noticed how much more attentive I've become to the types of narration (omniscient, impersonal, psychological, realistic, etc.), and how these different approaches are utilized to achieve an author's overall effect.

Although Mike specifically mentions what he looked for while reading a published novel, one of the great things about RLW is that it can be used equally well with either published or student-produced writing.

Is This a Published or a Student-Produced Piece of Writing?

As you read both kinds of texts you can locate the choices the author made and imagine the different decisions that he/she might have made.

While it might seem a little weird at first to imagine how published texts could be written differently—after all, they were good enough to be published—remember that all writing can be improved. Scholar Nancy Walker believes that it's important for students to read published work using RLW because "the work ceases to be a mere artifact, a stone tablet, and becomes instead a living utterance with immediacy and texture. It could have been better or worse than it is had the author made different choices" (36). As Walker suggests, it's worth thinking about how the published text would be different—maybe even better—if the author had made different choices in the writing because you may be faced with similar choices in your own work.

Is This the Kind of Writing You Will Be Assigned to Write Yourself?

Knowing ahead of time what kind of writing assignments you will be asked to complete can really help you to read like a writer. It's probably impossible (and definitely too time consuming) to identify all of the choices the author made and all techniques an author used, so it's important to prioritize while reading. Knowing what you'll be writing yourself can help you prioritize. It may be the case that your instructor has assigned the text you're reading to serve as model for the kind of writing you'll be doing later. Jessie, a former student, writes, "In college writing classes, we knew we were reading for a purpose—to influence or inspire our own work. The reading that I have done in college writing courses has always been really specific to a certain type of writing, and it allows me to focus and experiment on that specific style in depth and without distraction."

If the text you're reading is a model of a particular style of writing—for example, highly-emotional or humorous—RLW is particularly helpful because you can look at a piece you're reading and think about whether you want to adopt a similar style in your own writing. You might realize that the author is trying to arouse sympathy in readers and examine what techniques he/she uses to do this; then you can decide whether these techniques might work well in your own writing. You might notice that the author keeps including jokes or funny stories and think about whether you want to include them in your writing—what would the impact be on your potential readers?

What Are Questions to Ask As You Are Reading?

It is helpful to continue to ask yourself questions as you read like a writer. As you're first learning to read in this new way, you may want to have a set of questions written or typed out in front of you that you can refer to while reading. Eventually—after plenty of practice—you will start to ask certain questions and locate certain things in the text almost automatically. Remember, for most students this is a new way of reading, and you'll have to train yourself to do it well. Also keep in mind that you're reading to understand how the text was written— how the house was built—more than you're trying to determine the meaning of the things you read or assess whether the texts are good or bad.

First, return to two of the same questions I suggested that you consider before reading:

• What is the author's purpose for this piece of writing?

• Who is the intended audience?

Think about these two questions again as you read. It may be that you couldn't really answer them before, or that your ideas will change while reading. Knowing why the piece was written and who it's for can help explain why the author might have made certain choices or used particular techniques in the writing, and you can assess those choices and techniques based in part on how effective they are in fulfilling that purpose and/or reaching the intended audience.

Beyond these initial two questions, there is an almost endless list of questions you might ask regarding writing choices and techniques. Here are some of the questions that one former student, Clare, asks herself:

> When reading I tend to be asking myself a million questions. If I were writing this, where would I go with the story? If the author goes in a different direction (as they so often do) from what I am thinking, I will ask myself, why did they do this? What are they telling me?

Clare tries to figure out why the author might have made a move in the writing that she hadn't anticipated, but even more importantly, she asks herself what she would do if she were the author. Reading the text becomes an opportunity for Clare to think about her own role as an author.

Here are some additional examples of the kinds of questions you might ask yourself as you read:

• How effective is the language the author uses? Is it too formal? Too informal? Perfectly appropriate?

Depending on the subject matter and the intended audience, it may make sense to be more or less formal in terms of language. As you begin reading, you can ask yourself whether the word choice and tone/ language of the writing seem appropriate.

• What kinds of evidence does the author use to support his/her claims? Does he/she use statistics? Quotes from famous people? Personal anecdotes or personal stories? Does he/she cite books or articles?

• How appropriate or effective is this evidence? Would a different type of evidence, or some combination of evidence, be more effective?

To some extent the kinds of questions you ask should be determined by the genre of writing you are reading. For example, it's probably worth examining the evidence that the author uses to support his/ her claims if you're reading an opinion column, but less important if you're reading a short story. An opinion column is often intended to convince readers of something, so the kinds of evidence used are often very important. A short story may be intended to convince readers of something, sometimes, but probably not in the same way. A short story rarely includes claims or evidence in the way that we usually think about them.

• Are there places in the writing that you find confusing? What about the writing in those places makes it unclear or confusing?

It's pretty normal to get confused in places while reading, especially while reading for class, so it can be helpful to look closely at the writing to try and get a sense of exactly what tripped you up. This way you can learn to avoid those same problems in your own writing.

• How does the author move from one idea to another in the writing? Are the transitions between the ideas effective? How else might he/she have transitioned between ideas instead?

Notice that in these questions I am encouraging you to question whether aspects of the writing are appropriate and effective in addition to deciding whether you liked or disliked them. You want to imagine how other readers might respond to the writing and the techniques you've identified. Deciding whether you liked or disliked something is only about you; considering whether a technique is appropriate or effective lets you contemplate what the author might have been trying to do and to decide whether a majority of readers would find the move successful. This is important because it's the same thing you should be thinking about while you are writing: how will readers respond to this technique I am using, to this sentence, to this word? As you read, ask yourself what the author is doing at each step of the way, and then consider whether the same choice or technique might work in your own writing.

What Should You Be Writing As You Are Reading?

The most common suggestion made by former students—mentioned by every single one of them—was to mark up the text, make comments in the margins, and write yourself notes and summaries both during and after reading. Often the notes students took while reading became ideas or material for the students to use in their own papers. It's important to read with a pen or highlighter in your hand so that you can mark—right on the text—all those spots where you identify an interesting choice the author has made or a writerly technique you might want to use. One thing that I like to do is to highlight and underline the passage in the text itself, and then try to answer the following three questions on my notepad:

• What is the technique the author is using here?

• Is this technique effective?

• What would be the advantages and disadvantages if I tried this same technique in my writing?

By utilizing this same process of highlighting and note taking, you'll end up with a useful list of specific techniques to have at your disposal when it comes time to begin your own writing.

What Does RLW Look Like in Action?

Let's go back to the opening paragraph of this essay and spend some time reading like writers as a way to get more comfortable with the process:

> In 1997, I was a recent college graduate living in London for six months and working at the Palace Theatre owned by Andrew Lloyd Webber. The Palace was a beautiful red brick, four-story theatre in the heart of London's famous West End, and eight times a week it housed a three-hour performance of the musical Les Miserables. Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

Let's begin with those questions I encouraged you to try to answer before you start reading. (I realize we're cheating a little bit in this case since you've already read most of this essay, but this is just practice. When doing this on your own, you should attempt to answer these questions before reading, and then return to them as you read to further develop your answers.)

• Do you know the author's purpose for this piece of writing? I hope the purpose is clear by now; if it isn't, I'm doing a pretty lousy job of explaining how and why you might read like a writer.

• Do you know who the intended audience is? Again, I hope that you know this one by now.

• What about the genre? Is this an essay? An article? What would you call it?

• You know that it's published and not student writing. How does this influence your expectations for what you will read?

• Are you going to be asked to write something like this yourself? Probably not in your college writing class, but you can still use RLW to learn about writerly techniques that you might want to use in whatever you do end up writing.

Now ask yourself questions as you read.

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Since this paragraph is the very first one, it makes sense to think about how it introduces readers to the essay. What technique(s) does the author use to begin the text? This is a personal story about his time working in London. What else do you notice as you read over this passage? Is the passage vague or specific about where he worked? You know that the author worked in a famous part of London in a beautiful theater owned by a well-known composer. Are these details important? How different would this opening be if instead I had written:

> In 1997, I was living in London and working at a theatre that showed Les Miserables.

This is certainly shorter, and some of you may prefer this version. It's quick. To the point. But what (if anything) is lost by eliminating so much of the detail? I chose to include each of the details that the revised sentence omits, so it's worth considering why. Why did I mention where the theater was located? Why did I explain that I was living in London right after finishing college? Does it matter that it was after college? What effect might I have hoped the inclusion of these details would have on readers? Is this reference to college an attempt to connect with my audience of college students? Am I trying to establish my credibility as an author by announcing that I went to college? Why might I want the readers to know that this was a theater owned by Andrew Lloyd Weber? Do you think I am just trying to mention a famous name that readers will recognize? Will Andrew Lloyd Weber figure prominently in the rest of the essay?

These are all reasonable questions to ask. They are not necessarily the right questions to ask because there are no right questions. They certainly aren't the only questions you could ask, either. The goal is to train yourself to formulate questions as you read based on whatever you notice in the text. Your own reactions to what you're reading will help determine the kinds of questions to ask.

Now take a broader perspective. I begin this essay—an essay about reading—by talking about my job in a theater in London. Why? Doesn't this seem like an odd way to begin an essay about reading? If you read on a little further (feel free to scan back up at the top of this essay) you learn in the third full paragraph what the connection is between working in the theater and reading like a writer, but why include this information at all? What does this story add to the essay? Is it worth the space it takes up?

Think about what effect presenting this personal information might have on readers. Does it make it feel like a real person, some "ordinary guy," is talking to you? Does it draw you into the essay and make you want to keep reading?

What about the language I use? Is it formal or more informal? This is a time when you can really narrow your focus and look at particular words:

> Because of antiquated fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of staff members inside watching the performance in case of an emergency.

What is the effect of using the word "antiquated" to describe the firesafety laws? It certainly projects a negative impression; if the laws are described as antiquated it means I view them as old-fashioned or obsolete. This is a fairly uncommon word, so it stands out, drawing attention to my choice in using it. The word also sounds quite formal. Am I formal in the rest of this sentence?

I use the word "performance" when I just as easily could have written "show." For that matter, I could have written "old" instead of "antiquated." You can proceed like this throughout the sentence, thinking about alternative choices I could have made and what the effect would be. Instead of "staff members" I could have written "employees" or just "workers." Notice the difference if the sentence had been written:

> Because of old fire-safety laws, every theatre in the city was required to have a certain number of workers inside watching the show in case of an emergency.

Which version is more likely to appeal to readers? You can try to answer this question by thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of using formal language. When would you want to use formal language in your writing and when would it make more sense to be more conversational?

As you can see from discussing just this one paragraph, you could ask questions about the text forever. Luckily, you don't have to. As you continue reading like a writer, you'll learn to notice techniques that seem new and pay less attention to the ones you've thought about before. The more you practice the quicker the process becomes until you're reading like a writer almost automatically.

I want to end this essay by sharing one more set of comments by my former student, Lola, this time about what it means to her to read like a writer:

> Reading as a writer would compel me to question what might have brought the author to make these decisions, and then decide what worked and what didn't. What could have made that chapter better or easier to understand? How can I make sure I include some of the good attributes of this writing style into my own? How can I take aspects that I feel the writer failed at and make sure not to make the same mistakes in my writing?

Questioning why the author made certain decisions. Considering what techniques could have made the text better. Deciding how to include the best attributes of what you read in your own writing. This is what Reading Like a Writer is all about.

Are you ready to start reading?

Discussion

1. How is "Reading Like a Writer" similar to and/or different from the way(s) you read for other classes?

2. What kinds of choices do you make as a writer that readers might identify in your written work?

3. Is there anything you notice in this essay that you might like to try in your own writing? What is that technique or strategy? When do you plan to try using it?

4. What are some of the different ways that you can learn about the context of a text before you begin reading it?

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2.1.2.11.1.3: Literary Criticism

By reading and discussing literature, we expand our imagination, our sense of what is possible, and our ability to empathize with others. Improve your ability to read critically and interpret texts while gaining appreciation for different literary genres and theories of interpretation. Read samples of literary interpretation. Write a critique of a literary work.

Texts that interpret literary works are usually persuasive texts. Literary critics may conduct a close reading of a literary work, critique a literary work from the stance of a particular literary theory, or debate the soundness of other critics' interpretations. The work of literary critics is similar to the work of authors writing evaluative texts. For example, the skills required to critique films, interpret laws, or evaluate artistic trends are similar to those skills required by literary critics.

Why Write Literary Criticism?

People have been telling stories and sharing responses to stories since the beginning of time. By reading and discussing literature, we expand our imagination, our sense of what is possible, and our ability to empathize with others. Reading and discussing literature can enhance our ability to write. It can sharpen our critical faculties, enabling us to assess works and better understand why literature can have such a powerful effect on our lives.

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"Literary texts" include works of fiction and poetry. In school, English instructors ask students to critique literary texts, or works. Literary criticism refers to a genre of writing whereby an author critiques a literary text, either a work of fiction, a play, or poetry. Alternatively, some works of literary criticism address how a particular theory of interpretation informs a reading of a work or refutes some other critics' reading of a work.

Diverse Rhetorical Situations

The genre of literary interpretation is more specialized than most of the other genres addressed in this section, as suggested by the table below. People may discuss their reactions to literary works informally (at coffee houses, book clubs, or the gym) but the lion's share of literary criticism takes place more formally: in college classrooms, professional journals, academic magazines, and Web sites.

Students interpret literary works for English instructors or for students enrolled in English classes. In their interpretations, students may argue for a particular interpretation or they may dispute other critics' interpretations. Alternatively, students may read a text with a particular literary theory in mind, using the theory to explicate a particular point of view. For example, writers could critique The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin from a feminist theoretical perspective. Thanks to the Internet, some English classes are now publishing students' interpretations on Web sites. In turn, some students and English faculty publish their work in academic literary criticism journals.

Over the years, literary critics have argued about the best ways to interpret literature. Accordingly, many "schools" or "theories of criticism" have emerged. As you can imagine–given that they were developed by sophisticated specialists–some of these theoretical approaches are quite sophisticated and abstract.

Below is a summary of some of the more popular literary theories. Because it is a summary, the following tends to oversimplify the theories. In any case, unless you are enrolled in a literary criticism course, you won't need to learn the particulars of all of these approaches. Instead, your teacher may ask you to take an eclectic approach, pulling interpretative questions from multiple literary theories.

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2.1.2.11.1.4: Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism

Introduction

A very basic way of thinking about literary theory is that these ideas act as different lenses critics use to view and talk about art, literature, and even culture. These different lenses allow critics to consider works of art based on certain assumptions within that school of theory. The different lenses also allow critics to focus on particular aspects of a work they consider important.

For example, if a critic is working with certain Marxist theories, s/he might focus on how the characters in a story interact based on their economic situation. If a critic is working with post-colonial theories, s/he might consider the same story but look at how characters from colonial powers (Britain, France, and even America) treat characters from, say, Africa or the Caribbean. Hopefully, after reading through and working with the resources in this area of the OWL, literary theory will become a little easier to understand and use.

Disclaimer

Please note that the schools of literary criticism and their explanations included here are by no means the only ways of distinguishing these separate areas of theory. Indeed, many critics use tools from two or more schools in their work. Some would define differently or greatly expand the (very) general statements given here. Our explanations are meant only as starting places for your own investigation into literary theory. We encourage you to use the list of scholars and works provided for each school to further your understanding of these theories.

We also recommend the following secondary sources for study of literary theory:

- *The Critical Tradition: Classical Texts and Contemporary Trends*, 1998, edited by David H. Richter
- *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, 1999, by Lois Tyson
- *Beginning Theory*, 2002, by Peter Barry

Although philosophers, critics, educators and authors have been writing about writing since ancient times, contemporary schools of literary theory have cohered from these discussions and now influence how scholars look at and write about literature. The following sections overview these movements in critical theory. Though the timeline below roughly follows a chronological order, we have placed some schools closer together because they are so closely aligned.

Timeline (most of these overlap)

- Moral Criticism, Dramatic Construction (~360 BC-present)
- Formalism, New Criticism, Neo-Aristotelian Criticism (1930s-present)
- Psychoanalytic Criticism, Jungian Criticism(1930s-present)
- Marxist Criticism (1930s-present)
- Reader-Response Criticism (1960s-present)
- Structuralism/Semiotics (1920s-present)
- Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction (1966-present)
- New Historicism/Cultural Studies (1980s-present)
- Post-Colonial Criticism (1990s-present)
- Feminist Criticism (1960s-present)
- Gender/Queer Studies (1970s-present)
- Critical Race Theory (1970s-present)

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Note: If you are interested in learning more about these theories, review either Skylar Hamilton Burris' Literary Criticism: An Overview of Approaches or Dino F. Felluga's Undergraduate Guide to Critical Theory

- Schools of Literary Criticism
- New Criticism: Focuses on "objectively" evaluating the text, identifying its underlying form. May study, for example, a text's use of imagery, metaphor, or symbolism. Isn't concerned with matters outside the text, such as biographical or contextual information. Online Examples: A Formalist Reading of Sandra Cisneros's "Woman Hollering Creek" , Sound in William Shakespeare's The Tempest by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Reader-Respons: Criticism Focuses on each reader's personal reactions to a text, assuming meaning is created by a reader's or interpretive community's personal interaction with a text. Assumes no single, correct, universal meaning exists because meaning resides in the minds of readers. Online Examples:Theodore Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz": A Reader's Response (PDF)
- Feminism: Criticism Focuses on understanding ways gender roles are reflected or contradicted by texts, how dominance and submission play out in texts, and how gender roles evolve in texts. Online Example: "The Yellow Wall-Paper": A Twist on Conventional Symbols, Subverting the French Androcentric Influence by Jane Le Marquand
- New Historicism Focuses on understanding texts by viewing texts in the context of other texts. Seeks to understand economic, social, and political influences on texts. Tend to broadly define the term "text," so, for example, the Catholic Church could be defined as a "text." May adopt the perspectives of other interpretive communities–particularly reader-response criticism, feminist criticism, and Marxist approaches–to interpret texts. Online Example Monstrous Acts by Jonathan Lethem
- Media Criticism Focuses on writers' use of multimedia and hypertexts. Online Examples The Electronic Labyrinth by Christopher Keep, Tim McLaughlin, and Robin Parmar
- Psychoanalytical Criticism Focuses on psychological dimensions of the work. Online Examples: A Freudian Approach to Erin McGraw's "A Thief" by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Marxist Criticism Focuses on ways texts reflect, reinforce, or challenge the effects of class, power relations, and social roles. Online Example: A Reading of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" by Peter Kosenko
- Archetypal Criticism Focuses on identifying the underlying myths in stories and archetypes, which reflect what the psychologist Carl Jung called the "collective unconsciousness." Online Example: A Catalogue of Symbols in The Awakening by Kate Chopin by Skylar Hamilton Burris
- Postcolonial Criticism Focuses on how Western culture's (mis)representation of third-world countries and peoples in stories, myths, and stereotypical images encourages repression and domination. Online Example: Other Voices
- Structuralism/Semiotics Focuses on literature as a system of signs where meaning is constructed in a context, where words are inscribed with meaning by being compared to other words and structures. Online Example: Applied Semiotics [Online journal with many samples]
- Post-Structuralism/Deconstruction Focuses, along with Structuralism, on viewing literature as a system of signs, yet rejects the Structuralist view that a critic can identify the inherent meaning of a text, suggesting, instead that literature has no center, no single interpretation, that literary language is inherently ambiguous

Powerful works of literature invoke multiple readings. In other words, we can all read the same story or poem (or watch the same movie or listen to the same song) and come up with different, even conflicting, interpretations about what the work means. Who we are reflects how we read texts. Our experiences inspire us to relate to and sympathize with characters and difficult situations. Have we read similar stories? Have we actually faced some of the same challenges the characters in the story face?

In addition, literary theories have unique ways to develop and substantiate arguments. Some theories draw extensively on the work of other critics, while others concentrate on the reader's thoughts and feelings. Some theories analyze a work from an historical perspective, while others focus solely on a close reading of a text.

Accordingly, as with other genres, the following key features need to be read as points of departure as opposed to a comprehensive blueprint:

Focus

Examine a subject from a rhetorical perspective. Identify the intended audience, purpose, context, media, voice, tone, and persona.Distinguish between summarizing the literary work and presenting your argument. Many students fall into the trap of spending too much time summarizing the literature being analyzed as opposed to critiquing it. As a result, it would be wise to check with your teacher regarding how much plot summary is expected. As you approach this project, remember to keep your eye on the ball: What, exactly (in one sentence) is the gist of your interpretation?

Development

You can develop your ideas by researching the work of other literary critics. How do other critics evaluate an author's work? What literary theories do literary critics use to interpret texts or particular moments in history? Reading sample proposals can help you find and adopt an appropriate voice and persona. By reading samples, you can learn how others have prioritized particular criteria.

Below are some of the questions invoked by popular literary theories. Consider these questions as you read a work, perhaps taking notes on your thoughts as you reread. You may focus on using one theory to "read and interpret" text or, more commonly, you may compare the critical concerns of different theories.

New Criticism/Formalism

- Character: How does the character evolve during the story? What is unique or interesting about a character? Is the character a stereotypical action hero, a patriarchal father figure, or Madonna? How does a character interact with other characters?
- Setting: How does the setting enhance tension within the work? Do any elements in the setting foreshadow the conclusion of the piece?
- Plot:What is the conflict? How do scenes lead to a suspenseful resolution? What scenes make the plot unusual, unexpected, suspenseful?
- Point of View: Who is telling the story? Is the narrator omniscient (all knowing) or does the narrator have limited understanding?

Reader-Response Criticism

How does the text make you feel? What memories or experiences come to mind when you read? If you were the central protagonist, would you have behaved differently? Why? What values or ethics do you believe are suggested by the story? As your reading of a text progresses, what surprises you, inspires you?

Feminist Criticism

How does the story re-inscribe or contradict traditional gender roles? For example, are the male characters in "power positions" while the women are "dominated"? Are the men prone to action, decisiveness, and leadership while the female characters are passive, subordinate? Do gender roles create tension within the story? Do characters' gender roles evolve over the course of the narrative?

New Historicism Cristicism

How does the story reflect the aspirations and conditions of the lower classes or upper classes? Is tension created by juxtaposing privileged, powerful positions to subordinated, dominated positions? What information about the historical context of the story helps explain the character's motivations? Who benefits from the outcome of the story or from a given character's motivation?

Media Criticism

How does the medium alter readers' interactions with the text? Has the reader employed multimedia or hypertext? What traditions from print and page design have shaped the structure of the text? In what ways has the author deviated from traditional, deductively organized linear texts?

Cite from the Work

Literary criticism involves close reading of a literary work, regardless of whether you are arguing about a particular interpretation, comparing stories or poems, or using a theory to interpret literature.Do not summarize the story. The purpose of the document is

not to inform the readers, but to argue a particular interpretation. You only need to cite parts of the work that support or relate to your argument and follow the citation format required by your instructor (see Using and Citing Sources).

Below is an example from Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction, Professor Matthew Hurt. Note how the writer uses block quotes to highlight key elements and paraphrase and summarizes the original works, using quotation marks where necessary.

…Twain offers a long descriptive passage of Huck and Jim's life on the raft that seems, at first glance, to celebrate the idyllic freedom symbolized by the river and nature. . . A close reading of this passage, however, shows that the river is not a privileged natural space outside of and uncontaminated by society, but is inextricably linked to the social world on the shore, which itself has positive value for Huck. Instead of seeking to escape society, Huck wants to escape the dull routines of life.

The passage abounds with lyrical descriptions of the river's natural beauty. For example, Huck's long description of the sunrise over the river captures the peaceful stillness and the visual beauty of the scene:

The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line — that was the woods on t'other side — you couldn't make nothing else out; then a pale place in the sky; then more paleness, spreading around; then the river softened up, away off, and warn't black any more, but gray; . . . sometimes you could hear a sweep screaking; or jumbled up voices, it was so still, and sounds come so far; and by-and-by you could see a streak on the water which you know by the look of the streak that there's a snag there in the swift current which breaks on it and makes the streak look that way; and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and the river, and you make out a log cabin in the edge of the woods, away on the bank on t'other side of the river, . . . then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh, and sweet to smell, on account of the woods and the flowers; . . . and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the song-birds just going at it! (129-130)

Here Huck celebrates the beauty of the natural world coming to life at the beginning of a new day. The "paleness" gradually spreading across the sky makes new objects visible which he describes in loving detail for the reader. The "nice breeze" is "cool and fresh" and "sweet to smell," and the world seems to be "smiling in the sun" as the song-birds welcome the new day.

However, Huck includes a number of details within this passage that would seem to work against the language of natural beauty. After describing the gradually brightening sky, Huck notes that "you could see little dark spots drifting along, ever so far away — trading scows, and such things; and long black streaks — rafts." The sun rise reveals not only natural objects (the brightening sky, the "snag," the "mist"), but also brings into view man-made objects ("trading scows" and "rafts") that signify human society's presence in this natural environment. Similarly, Huck speculates that the picturesque "log cabin" on the distant shore is a "woodyard, likely, and piled by them cheats so you can throw a dog through it anywheres." Here the marker of human society takes on a sinister tone of corruption as Huck describes how unscrupulous wood sellers stack wood loosely to cheat their customers. Finally, although the breeze is "sweet to smell," Huck assures the reader that this isn't always the case: "but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish laying around, gars, and such, and they do get pretty rank."

These signs of society's presence on the river are largely negative. The woodyard is "piled by cheats" and the stacked fish pollute the "sweet" smell of the breeze. At this point, the opposition between "good nature" and "bad society" remains intact. The signs of human presence suggest a corruption of nature's beauty. In the paragraphs that follow, however, this opposition is subtly reversed. After Huck's account of the sunrise over the river, he describes how he and Jim watch the steamboats "coughing along up stream." But when there are no steamboats or rafts to watch, he describes the scene as "solid lonesomeness" (130). No songbirds, no sweet breezes. Without human activities to watch, the scene suddenly becomes empty and "lonesome," and nothing captures Huck's attention until more rafts and boats pass by and he can watch them chopping wood or listen to them beating pans in the fog.

Cite Other Critics' Interpretations of the Work

Criticism written by advanced English majors, graduate students, and literary critics may be more about what other critics have said than about the actual text. Indeed, many critics spend more time reading criticism and arguing about critical approaches than actually reading original works. However, unless you are enrolled in a literary theory course, your instructor probably wants you to focus more on interpreting the work than discussing other critical interpretations. This does not mean, however, that you should write about a literary work "blindly." Instead, you are wise to find out what other students and critics have said about the work.

Below is a sample passage that illustrates how other critics' works can inspire an author and guide him or her in constructing a counter argument, support an author's interpretation, and provide helpful biographical information.

In her critical biography of Shirley Jackson, Lenemaja Friedman notes that when Shirley Jackson's story "The Lottery" was published in the June 28, 1948 issue of the New Yorker it received a response that "no New Yorker story had ever received": hundreds of letters poured in that were characterized by "bewilderment, speculation, and old-fashioned abuse."1 It is not hard to account for this response: Jackson's story portrays an "average" New England village with "average" citizens engaged in a deadly rite, the annual selection of a sacrificial victim by means of a public lottery, and does so quite deviously: not until well along in the story do we suspect that the "winner" will be stoned to death by the rest of the villagers.

Organization

The format for literary critiques is fairly standard:

- State your claim(s).
- Forecast your organization.
- Marshal evidence for your claim.
- Reiterate argument and elaborate on its significance.

In English classes, you may be able to assume that your readers are familiar with the work you are critiquing. Perhaps, for example, the entire class is responding to one particular work after some class discussions about it. However, if your instructor asks you to address a broader audience, you may need to provide bibliographical information for the work. In other words, you may need to cite the title, publisher, date, and pages of the work (see Citing Sources).

Literary critiques are arguments. As such, your instructors expect you to state a claim in your introduction and then provide quotes and paraphrased statements from the text to serve as evidence for your claim. Ideally, your critique will be insightful and interesting. You'll want to come up with an interpretation that isn't immediately obvious. Below are some examples of "thesis statements" or "claims" from literary critiques:

- In "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the protagonist is oppressed and represents the effect of the oppression of women in society. This effect is created by the use of complex symbols such as the house, the window, and the wall-paper which facilitate her oppression as well as her self expression. ["'The Yellow Wall-Paper': A Twist on Conventional Symbols" by Liselle Sant]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Gilman is a sad story of the repression that women face in the days of the late 1800's as well as being representative of the turmoil that women face today. [Critique of "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Brandi Mahon]
- "The Yellow Wallpaper," written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is a story of a woman, her psychological difficulties and her husband's so called therapeutic treatment of her aliments during the late 1800s. . . Gilman does well throughout the story to show with descriptive phrases just how easily and effectively the man "seemingly" wields his "maleness" to control the woman. But, with further interpretation and insight I believe Gilman succeeds in nothing more than showing the weakness of women, of the day, as active persons in their own as well as society's decision making processes instead of the strength of men as women dominating machines. "The View from the Inside" by Timothy J. Decker
- In Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain creates a strong opposition between the freedom of Huck and Jim's life on the raft drifting down the Mississippi River, which represents "nature," and the confining and restrictive life on the shore, which represents "society." ["'All I wanted was a change': Positive Images of Nature and Society in Chapter 19 of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" from Professor Matthew Hurt's "Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction"]
- In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings," an unexpected visitor comes down from the sky, and seems to test the faith of a community. The villagers have a difficult time figuring out just how the very old man with enormous wings fits into their lives. Because this character does not agree with their conception of what an angel should look like, they try to determine if the aged man could actually be an angel. In trying to prove the origin of their visitor, the villagers lose faith in the possibility of him being an angel because he does not adhere to their ordered world. Marquez keeps the identity of the very old man with enormous wings ambiguous to critique the villagers and, more generally, organized religion for having a lack of faith to believe in miracles that do not comply with their master narrative. ["Prove It: A Critique of the Villagers' Faith in 'A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings'" from Sample Essays for English 103: Introduction to Fiction, Professor Matthew Hurt]

Style

Literary criticism is a fairly specialized kind of writing. Instead of writing to a general lay audience, you are writing to members of a literary community who have read a work and who developed opinions about the work–as well as a vocabulary of interpretation.

Following are some common words used by literary critics. More specialized terms can be learned by reading criticism or by referring to a good encyclopedia for criticism or writing, including the Writer's Encyclopedia:

- Protagonist: The protagonist is the major character of the story; typically the character must overcome significant challenges.
- Antagonist: The protagonist's chief nemesis; in other words, the character whom the protagonist must overcome.
- Symbols: Metaphoric language; see A Catalogue of Symbols in The Awakening by Kate Chopin
- Viewpoint: Stories are told either in the first person or third person point of view. The first person is limited to a single character, although dialog can let you guess at other characters' intentions. The third person allows readers inside the character's mind so you know what the character feels and thinks.Viewpoint can be "limited," where the character knows less than the reader, or "omniscient," where the reader can hear the thoughts and feelings of all characters. Occasionally writers will use multiple character viewpoint, which takes you from one character's perspective to another.
- Plot: Plots are a series of scenes, typically moving from a conflict situation to a resolution. To surprise readers, authors will foreshadow "false plants," which lead readers to anticipate other resolutions. The term "denouement" refers to the unraveling of the plot in the conclusion.

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2.1.2.11.2: The Psychoanalytic Tradition

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2.1.2.11.2.1: Literary Snapshot- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass

Most readers are at least familiar with Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Let's continue our journey with Alice in this chapter as we explore psychoanalytic literary criticism. We'll provide the links to Carroll's text, just in case:

Link one

Link two

When Alice tumbles down the rabbit-hole in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), she enters a fantasy realm that is quite different from her world of the here-and-now:

Down, down, down. There was nothing else to do, so Alice soon began talking again. "Dinah'll miss me very much to-night, I should think!" (Dinah was the cat.) "I hope they'll remember her saucer of milk at tea-time. Dinah, my dear, I wish you were down here with me! There are no mice in the air, I'm afraid, but you might catch a bat, and that's very like a mouse, you know. But do cats eat bats, I wonder?" And here Alice began to get rather sleepy, and went on saying to herself, in a dreamy sort of way, "Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?" and sometimes, "Do bats eat cats?" for, you see, as she couldn't answer either question, it didn't much matter which way she put it. She felt that she was dozing off, and had just begun to dream that she was walking hand in hand with Dinah, and saying to her very earnestly, "Now, Dinah, tell me the truth: did you ever eat a bat?" when suddenly, thump! thump! down she came upon a heap of dry leaves, and the fall was over.Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 1.

Her adventures are described as a dream, and she exclaims after the fall that it was all "Curiouser and curiouser!"

In *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872), Alice, after entering Looking-Glass Land via a magic mirror, encounters two odd brothers, Tweedledee and Tweedledum. Alice and the brothers come upon the Red King, who is snoring:

"It's only the Red King snoring," said Tweedledee.

"Come and look at him!" the brothers cried, and they each took one of Alice's hands, and led her up to where the King was sleeping.

"Isn't he a *lovely* sight?" said Tweedledum. Alice couldn't say honestly that he was. He had a tall red night-cap on, with a tassel, and he was lying crumpled up into a sort of untidy heap, and snoring loud—"fit to snore his head off!" as Tweedledum remarked.

"I'm afraid he'll catch cold with lying on the damp grass," said Alice, who was a very thoughtful little girl.

"He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee: "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"

Alice said, "Nobody can guess that."

"Why, about *you*!" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"

"Where I am now, of course," said Alice.

"Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!"

"If that there King was to wake," added Tweedledum, "you'd go out—bang!—just like a candle!"

"I shouldn't!" Alice exclaimed indignantly. "Besides, if *I'm* only a sort of thing in his dream, what are *you*, *I* should like to know?"

"Ditto," said Tweedledum.

"Ditto, ditto!" cried Tweedledee.

He shouted this so loud that Alice couldn't help saying, "Hush! You'll be waking him, I'm afraid, if you make so much noise."

"Well, it's no use *your* talking about waking him," said Tweedledum, "when you're only one of the things in his dream. You know very well you're not real."

"I *am* real!" said Alice, and began to cry.

"You won't make yourself a bit realer by crying," Tweedledee remarked: "there's nothing to cry about."Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (New York: Macmillan, 1899; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1993), chap. 4.

The dream in Looking-Glass Land seems more a nightmare for Alice, for she is scared that she is merely a figment of someone's dream, their imagination—that's an idea that might bring us all to tears!

We all have dreams, and we recognize that dreams often mirror the oddness and nonsense that Alice encounters in Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land. Dreams, in fact, are central to psychoanalytic literary criticism and have become the stuff of popular psychology, where dream interpretation continues to be a lucrative industry, as seen at Dream-Books.net.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, famously defines dreams as the "road to the unconsciousness" in his monumental work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899).Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

So let's enter the wacky and wonderful world of psychoanalytic literary criticism with a few more excerpts from literature:

We are such stuff

As dreams are made on, and our little life

Is rounded with a sleep.William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Globe ed., ed. William George Clark and William Aldis Wright (1866; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998).

—William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Is *all* that we see or seem

But a dream within a dream?Edgar Allan Poe, "A Dream within a Dream," PoemHunter.org.

—Edgar Allan Poe, "A Dream within a Dream"

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale," in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919; Bartleby.com, 1999).

—John Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale"

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2.1.2.11.2.2: Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism- An Overview

1. Keep a dream journal for a least one week, jotting down those dreams that you can remember most vividly.
2. Take one of your dreams and analyze it like a story: What is the plot? Who are the characters? What symbols seem to be operating in the dream-story?
3. Now try to understand your dream: What might be the theme of your dream-story?

Psychoanalytical literary criticism, on one level, concerns itself with dreams, for dreams are a reflection of the unconscious psychological states of dreamers. Freud, for example, contends that dreams are "the guardians of sleep" where they become "disguised fulfillments of repressed wishes."Sigmund Freud. *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay, (New York: Norton, 1989). To Freud, dreams are the "royal road" to the personal unconscious of the dreamer and have a direct relation to literature, which often has the structure of a dream. Jacques Lacan, a disciple of Freud, was influenced by Freud's psychoanalytical theories and contended that dreams mirrored our unconscious and reflected the way we use language; dreams, therefore, operate like language, having their own rhetorical qualities. Another Freud disciple, Carl Jung, eventually rejected Freud's theory that dreams are manifestations of the personal unconsciousness, claiming, instead, that they reflect archetypes that tap into the "collective unconsciousness" of all humanity.Sigmund Freud. *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay, (New York: Norton, 1989).

In this chapter, we explore three popular psychoanalytical approaches for interpreting literature—Freudian, Lacanian, and Jungian. In general, there are four ways to focus a psychoanalytical interpretation:

1. You can analyze the author's life.
2. You can analyze the thematic content of the work, especially the motivations of characters and the narrator(s).
3. You can analyze the artistic construction of a text.
4. You can analyze yourself or the reader of the literary work using reader-response theory, which we examine in detail in Chapter 6.

Here is a quick overview of some psychoanalytical interpretations that demonstrate these approaches.

Analyze the Author's Life

In *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (1933), Marie Bonaparte psychoanalyzes Poe, concluding that his fiction and poetry are driven by his desire to be reunited with his dead mother (she died when he was three).Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (London: Image Publishing, 1949). This desire leaves him symbolically castrated, unable to have normal relationships with others (primarily women). Bonaparte analyzes Poe's stories from this perspective, reading them as dreams reflecting Poe's repressed desires for his mother. While such an interpretation is fascinating—and can be quite useful—you probably won't attempt to get into the mind of the author for a short paper. But you will find, however, that examining the life of an author can be a fruitful enterprise, for there may be details from an author's life that might become useful evidence in your paper.

You can find out about Poe at the Poe Museum's website.

Analyze the Thematic Content: The Motivations of Characters and the Narrator(s)

An example showing a psychoanalytic focus on literary characters is Frederick Crews's reading in *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* (1966).Frederick Crews, *The Sins of the Fathers: Hawthorne's Psychological Themes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Crews first provides a psychoanalytical reading of Nathaniel Hawthorne's life: he sees reflected in Hawthorne's characters a thwarted Oedipus complex (no worries, we'll define that a bit later), which creates repression. Furthermore, Hawthorne's ties to the Puritan past engenders his work with a profound sense of guilt, further repressing characters. Crews reads "The Birthmark," for example, as a tale of sexual repression. Crews's study is a model for psychoanalyzing characters in fiction and remains a powerful and persuasive interpretation.

You can read "The Birthmark," in *The Complete Novels and Selected Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, Modern Library ed., ed. Norman Holmes Pearson (New York: Random House, 1937; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1996).

Analyze the Artistic Construction

Jacques Lacan shows us how a psychoanalytical reading can focus on the formal, artistic construction of a literary text. In other words, Lacan believes that our unconscious is “structured like a language” and that a literary text mirrors this sense of the unconscious. In “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter’” (you can access the essay here), Lacan argues that Edgar Allan Poe’s tale is not necessarily about the meaning of the message in the stolen letter; rather, the tale is about who controls the letter, who has power over the language contained in the letter. Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter." You can read “The Purloined Letter” in *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (London: J. M. Dent, 1912; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1994).

Finally, a psychoanalytical reading can examine the reader and how a literary work is interpreted according to the psychological needs of the reader. We examine this approach in detail in reader-response criticism.

1. Choose three authors and/or literary works that you think might be fruitful for applying the first three psychoanalytical approaches (remember, we’ll learn about the fourth approach in reader-response theory).
2. Now jot down two reasons why you think your author and/or work might work well with these theories.
3. Keep this material, for you may have already developed an idea for your paper, which you’ll be ready to write after reading the rest of this chapter.

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2.1.2.11.2.3: Focus on Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)- Unconscious Repressed Desire

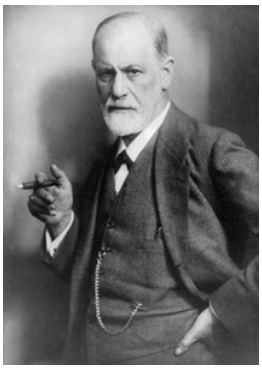


Photo by Max Halberstadt, 1922.

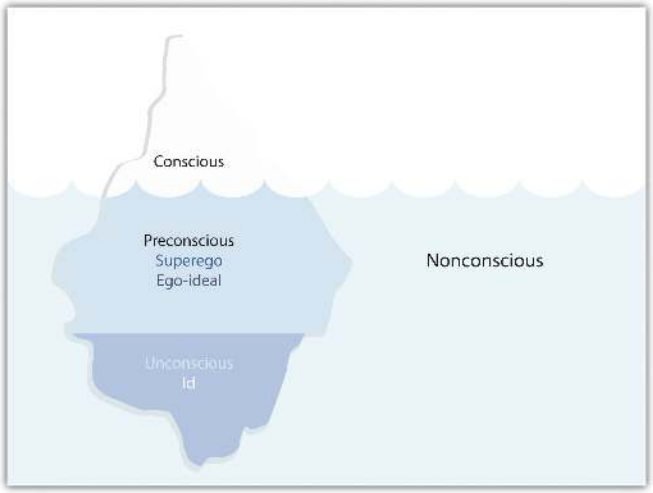
"Freud is inescapable. It may be a commonplace by now that we all speak Freud whether we know it or not, but the commonplace remains both true and important. Freud's terminology and his essential ideas pervade contemporary ways of thinking about human feelings and conduct." So writes Peter Gay, a recent biographer of Freud, in his introduction to *The Freud Reader* (1989).Peter Gay, "Introduction" in *The Freud Reader*, (New York: Norton, 1989) pg. xiii.

Gay is certainly correct: Freud is part of our everyday vocabulary: the "Oedipal complex" and "slips-of-the-tongue" are two Freudian concepts with which you are probably familiar already.

Freud's legacy resides in his theory of human sexual development. He believes humans are driven by the **pleasure principle**, where sexual desires and aggressive behavior are controlled by the **reality principle**, the so-called restrictions we follow to conform to proper behavior. Consequently, our drive for unbridled pleasure is repressed by the reality principle and becomes sublimated or buried in the **unconscious**. Initially, Freud categorized the mind according to three levels: the conscious (what we remember), the preconscious (what we can easily retrieve from our memory), and the unconscious (what cannot be retrieved into consciousness). Freud's map of the mind focuses on the tension between the conscious and the unconscious.

Ultimately, much of Freudian psychoanalysis concerns itself with how the unconsciousness attempts to break through the repression barrier and enter consciousness. A popular way to view the tension between the conscious and the unconscious is to imagine an iceberg:

Figure 3.1 Freud's Conception of the Human Psyche



**Note: Ego is free-floating in all three levels.*

In *The Ego and the Id* (1923), Freud further defines his conception of the mind. He theorizes that the mind contains the **id**, the **ego**, and the **superego** (or the **ego-ideal**).Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Freud Reader*, (New York: Norton, 1989) p. 630–638. The id (the "it") is the center of our instincts, our libido, which naturally seeks gratification, and is driven by the pleasure principle; the id is primarily sexual and aggressive in nature, purely biological. In turn, the superego (the "above me") is the moral conscience—the "law"—that tells us what is right or wrong, permissible or not permissible. The superego is constructed from parental authority, societal law, religious prohibitions, and so on; is societal; and is driven by the reality principle. It follows, then, that the ego (the "I") is the moderator of the id (pleasure) and the superego (moral conscience). In other words, the ego is the compromise of the id and the superego, a delicate balance of the mind.

Freud posits that mental illnesses result from a faulty ego, one unable to accept the id-superego push and pull. If the mind is unable to release those repressed desires through some outlet, then a person can develop a mental illness—various neuroses like psychosis, paranoia, and schizophrenia. The goal of this chapter is not to provide you with an overview of Freudian psychoanalysis as it relates to treating mental illness; instead, our goal is to show you how to apply Freud's theories to the interpretation of literature.

Central to Freud's schematic of the mind is the **Oedipal or Oedipus complex** (OC), for it is the OC that ultimately forms the ego. To Freud, all humans pass through three stages of sexual development. During the **oral stage**, a child is one with its libido, its sexual desire satisfied by oral sucking, particularly

of the mother's breast. Continued thumb-sucking during childhood, for example, represents a child not completely through the oral stage of development. Next, the child passes through the **anal stage**, whereby it experiences the mastery of its own bodily functions, gaining pleasure from the ability to control bodily functions. Freud believes the anal stage is primarily aggressive and leads to the desire for mastery over others. Those who have read William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) will recognize that the stranded children are stuck in the anal stage without any authority to control them, especially after the breaking of the conch shell.William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (New York: Penguin, 1984). Finally, the child enters the **phallic stage**, where the child's sexual desire is concentrated on the genitals, which become an erogenous zone that fulfills pleasure. In effect, the oral, anal, and phallic stages reflect libidinal sexual desires central to the pleasure principle.

Enter the father. Enter the reality principle. Enter the OC. The OC comes directly from Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex*, a tragedy about the hero Oedipus, who learns from the Delphic oracle that he will kill his father and marry his mother; he tries to avoid the prophecy, only to fall victim to patricide and incest.Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea, 2007). Unknowingly, Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother. After learning what he has done, Oedipus blinds himself in penance of his horrific deeds. Now that's a twisted tale! Freud's OC approximates the tragedy of *Oedipus Rex*: the boy, as Freud tells us, has a desire for the mother and begins to see the father as a threat to this desire. Thus the boy wishes to rid himself of his father and possess the mother. The father, symbolic of the law or lawgiver, steps in and, with the threat of castration or emasculation, turns the boy away from the mother. The boy then represses his desire for his mother (and his desire to be rid of the father) into the unconscious. In a sense, the father represents the superego, the authority. By successfully negotiating the OC, the boy is gendered; he learns how to direct his sexual desire to appropriate objects and usually grows into a healthy sexual human being.

What of the girl, you ask? Well, you probably shouldn't ask. Freud's OC is highly sexist. At one point in his career Freud referred to women as the "dark continent," and he is known most for his rhetorical question: "What does a woman want?" Indeed, Freud did not have an answer, and many feminists would argue that he didn't even have a clue! He does not provide an adequate explanation for the girl's journey through the process; in fact, Freud claims that the girl has an easier route through the OC since she accepts the notion of castration because she doesn't have the male appendage. In other words, the girl, already symbolically castrated, does not fear the father; instead, she turns toward the father for the missing phallus, her completion, and thus rivals the mother for the father's affection. You can probably see why nearly all of Freud's critics have recognized the limitations of his claims about women.

At this point you may be shaking your head in skeptical amazement, for Freud's theories do tax the imagination. One major critique of Freud is that we cannot verify his theories empirically. In other words, we are asked to believe Freud because he tells us to believe him. For literary critics, however, this theory—or story—that Freud creates, one that he develop from reading literature (*Oedipus Rex*), has tantalizing possibilities for literary interpretation.

There's a bit more to Freud that we'll want to examine—dreams—but let's look at another use of the Freudian OC in literary analysis. Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment* (1975) provides a provocative—and controversial—case for a Freudian interpretation of literature, in this case fairy tales.Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage, 1976). Bettelheim contends that fairy tales often depict Oedipal tensions. Let's look at one example, "Jack and the Beanstalk," which you can read at wikisource.org.

This tale exemplifies a child's journey through the OC. The beanstalk, symbolizing the phallus, is a metaphor for fatherly authority. Jack's stealing of the goose that lays the golden egg from the giant and subsequent cutting down of the beanstalk, which leads to the giant's demise, symbolizes Jack's freedom from the fear of the fatherly authority as he becomes his own person, his own man. By chopping down the beanstalk, then, Jack symbolically castrates the giant and is able to give up his pleasurable desire for the land of plenty on top of the beanstalk and live in the world of reality. Of course, it helps to have that goose. If fairy tales suggest Freudian designs, as Bettelheim tells us, then it seems reasonable other literature may reflect Oedipal desires. Thus a psychoanalytic reading of a text may lead to some illuminating conclusions. As with any Freudian readings, there are those who will reject Freud's very premises, and this is true with Bettelheim, for many fairy-tale scholars have looked at the limits of his claims. Yet they are still powerful.



Illustration by Herbert Cole for Ernest Rhys's Fairy Gold: A Book of Old English Fairy Tales(London: J. M. Dent, 1906).

We must add another dimension to Freud's theory to complete its frame, which will come full circle and connect us to Alice's concern that she is a dream of the Red King. To summarize Freudian theory so far, the human mind is structured around the id-ego-superego triad that represents the tension between the pleasure and the reality principle; the ego is the moderator between pleasure and reality and is formed by entering the OC. The ego balances the id and superego by repressing those id desires that are not socially acceptable—which includes the desire for the mother—into the unconscious. To remain psychologically healthy, according to Freud, the human mind must be able to let those repressed desires escape. Slips of the tongue and jokes are two outlets. Think of dirty jokes. By telling a dirty joke or laughing at one, we are able to alleviate our fears or laugh at something that is normally not permissible. Think of a slip of the tongue, where you are repressing some desire that unconsciously slips out in normal conversation. A clever definition of such a slip is as follows: *It's when you say one thing, but mean a mother.* Get it?

Yet there is one other outlet that is vital to Freud: dreams. They are the primary outlets for these repressed desires, the "royal road," as Freud expressed it, to the unconscious.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the importance of dreams to psychoanalytic literary criticism. And Freud's theory of dreams may be his most important contribution to literary analysis. Freud defines dreams as hidden ways of accessing repressed wishes or desires. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) is Freud's masterwork on dream interpretation. If dreams are fulfillments of repressed wishes and desires, then dreams provide a means for the pleasure principle—the id—to have a convenient outlet. Freud identifies the **dreamwork** as constructed of the **latent content**, the **manifest content**, and the **secondary revision**. The latent content is like a bubbling cauldron of desire, so deep and seething that it appears unintelligible. To bring some meaning to this cauldron, the dreamwork operates by allowing the manifest content to provide a structure for the latent content; the manifest content orders and arranges the dream into a story that uses images and symbols to convey meaning. To continue with our analogy, as the dreamer looks into the bubbling cauldron of the latent content, he or she takes a ladle and dips into the cauldron and pours latent content into a bowl, the bowl representing the manifest content, a smaller and more structured container. Literal food for thought!

The primary recipe for such symbolization and image making is a dash of **condensation**(compression of information) and a tablespoon of **displacement** (placing desire onto a safe/other object). Condensation operates by taking two or more images and compressing them into a composite picture (i.e., a dream where a person looks like an amalgam of other people you know). Displacement, on the other hand, operates by substituting one thing or image for another (i.e., Freud once interpreted a car to represent the autoeroticism of the dreamer). Secondary revision, finally, is the dream the dreamer remembers and attempts to interpret (or have someone else interpret); during the secondary revision, any gaps or illogicalities of the dream from the manifest content is filled in and smoothed over —the dreamer revises the story to make it more literary, to imbue it with more sense. Another way to see secondary revision is to view it as interpretation: as we interpret a dream, we interpret a piece of literature. If a dream has a narrative structure, then it follows that it requires reading and interpreting, making a dream similar to a poem, play, short story, or novel.

In *On Dreams* (1914), Freud provides some strategies for reading dreams by discussing various symbols that work by condensation and displacement and become dramatized or put into a story form.Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams* (New York: Cosimo, 2010). A central dream symbol, one that is essential to the OC, is the **phallic symbol**—guns, knives, swords, pens, even a banana. Related to the phallic symbol is the **yonic symbol**, any round object or object of fecundity that may symbolize female fertility—symbols of the womb. Some symbols become more universal: agricultural images represent fertilization, as do spring and summer. Be forewarned: not everything in a text is a phallic or yonic symbol. Freudian symbol hunting can at times be a dangerous occupation, for every pen—say the one you are probably holding in your hand right now—is not necessarily a phallic symbol, even if as some Freudians pun: "Pen-is power"! Freud once said that sometimes

a cigar is just a cigar, but that leaves open the possibility that sometimes that cigar might mean something else.

Freud also suggests that the dream symbolism of condensation and displacement also operates through various defense mechanisms or coping strategies that we use every day. **Repression**(forgetting or refusing to think about something that was unpleasant or traumatic); **sublimation**(channeling one's emotions into a socially acceptable outlet); **projection** (assigning one's own feelings to someone else); **reaction formation** (expressing the opposite of what one really feels); and **rationalization** (trying to justify something, to explain it away) are other ways for the mind to grapple with unconscious desires that haunt the psyche. And Freud contends that as the mind is split between the unconscious and the conscious, this schism is a product of the two great motivating factors—**Eros** (desire, sexual intimacy, love) and **Thanatos** (death, the fear and attraction of death). That our desire for life will ultimately be defeated by the inevitable reality of death is a central concern that leads to repression.

Freud's psychoanalytic theories have been extremely influential to literary criticism. Dreams are, after all, like literature in need of interpretation. In fact, argues Freud, literature operates like a dream. In "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming" (1908), Freud specifically connects psychoanalysis to literature and literary interpretation.Sigmund Freud, "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming," in *On Freud's "Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming,"* ed. Peter Fonagy, Ethel Spector Person, and Servulo A. Figueira (London: Karnac, 1995). A writer is a dreamer, finding outlets for his or her unconscious, repressed desires. As reader and interpreter of a literary work, then, you gain pleasure from reading. We see in Chapter 6 that reader-response interpretation approximates Freud's reader "wish-fulfillment" as a textual strategy.

In general, Freudian literary criticism is a powerful critical lens to use when viewing much literature. You have at your disposal a wide array of literary tools to use: repression of the conscious mind into the unconscious, pleasure versus reality principles, the id-ego-superego connection, the Oedipal complex, dreams and dream symbolism, and the various defense mechanisms. Often, a psychoanalytical reading will open up the text dramatically. We can now examine the theories of Jacques Lacan, who makes Freud even more applicable to literary interpretation.

Questions of a Freudian Media Analysis

1. How does repression influence the text?
2. What Oedipal relationships (or other family relationships) are evident in the text?
3. How can characters' behaviors be explained in terms of psychoanalytic concepts (obsession with sex or sexuality; fascination with death; yearning for reconciliation)?
4. What does the work suggest about the author's psychological state?
5. What might a given interpretation of a text tell you about the psychological motives of the interpreter?
6. Are there motifs (repeated words, phrases, images, etc.) that could have different interpretations or hidden meanings?

1. What aspect(s) of Freud's theory most interests you?
2. How could you take that interest in Freud and apply it to a work of literature?
3. What can you envision as the benefits of such an application?
4. Are there any concerns you might have about your approach?

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2.1.2.11.2.4: Focus on Jacques Lacan (1901–81)- Repressed Desire and the Limits of Language

Jacques Lacan, in many ways, is more popular than Freud in literary analysis, though Freud is certainly more famous across disciplines. And the fact remains that Lacan is a Freudian—his theory is dependent on Freud. When Lacan writes that "the unconscious is structured like a language," he moves Freud from the biological realm into the realm of language.Dor, Joël. Introduction to the Reading of Lacan: The Unconscious Structured Like a Language. (New York: Other Press, 1998) pg. 244. Freudian literary criticism is primarily external to a work of art: we read and interpret according to Freud's theories, applying, for example, the id-ego-superego triad to Hawthorne's short story "The Birthmark," as a student example demonstrates later in the chapter. Lacanian psychoanalytic criticism, on the other hand, can be seen as internal to the work, for it focuses on the actual language of the literary work. In other words, the text becomes alive, having its own mind, its own psyche. Lacanian psychoanalysis is textual, part of the artistic, formal construction of the literary work.

As you remember, Freud posits that the mind is divided between the conscious and unconscious, the dividing line between the two states representing the repression barrier. Lacan positions language in this dichotomy by modifying the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued that words (or signs) work within a system of other signs (our language). However, Saussure believes a sign is only an arbitrary marker between the **signifier** (the form the sign takes—a sound, a symbol, or a word) and its **signified** (the concept the sign represents). Lacan, who felt that the signifier (the word) dominated the signified (the actual "thing" the word represents), represents the sign system as follows:

Thus to say a cat is a *cat* is to say the following:

This "bonding" between the signifier and signified is arbitrary, argues Saussure, for we could have easily labeled the "essence of the cat" a *trilgy* and been hollering for years, "Here, trilgy…trilgy…trilgy." But Saussure contends that once an arbitrary sign is constructed, it remains bonded together and unchangeable, like two sides to a piece of paper. Language, consequently, is a system of signs, where words take on their meaning only in relationship to other words. Lacan revises Saussure by suggesting that signs are *not* stable, but in fact are continually shifting; words are a mere approximation of meaning, thus Lacan's emphasis on the word over the actual "thing" the word represents.

Lacan, then, views words, the signifiers, the marks of letters on a page, as central to the creation of meaning (or the essence of the signified). Words bring meaning *to* the object; the signified is meaningless without the signifier. Language, consequently, throws a person into a sign system that never captures meaning, the human thrust into the language of desire. Or to put it plainly, if you like cats, then having the word *cat* nicely printed in your lap is not as fulfilling as having that actual furry creature purring in your lap.

To a degree, the sign, split between the signifier and the signified, acts like a repression barrier: Freud's unconscious becomes the Lacanian signified—meaning—which can never be fulfilled since language—the signifier—approximates meaning. If Lacan is correct (and, of course, this is a pretty big "if"), then our unconscious is "structured like a language," and it follows that the human subject is divided between our name (for us, John Pennington and Ryan Cordell) and our signified (for us, the essence of "John Pennington" and "Ryan Cordell"). Lacan distinguishes the dual self by labeling the ***moi*** (the image the person has of himself or herself) and the ***je*** (the speaking subject that positions the person in language) as parts of the self:

Another way of comprehending the moi/je dichotomy is to understand how a pronoun operates in a conversation. If *you* say to a friend—"I would love to go to a movie tonight, wouldn't you?"—*I = You*and the *You = Your friend*. When your friend responds—"You have a good idea; I'd sure like to go"—the *I = Your Friend* and *You = You*. Lacan claims that language creates our identity and places us within the system of language, which, as we remember, is arbitrary and approximate. Language, as Lacan defines it, represents "the unconscious [that] is structured like a language," yet this language "is the discourse of the Other," the Other being language.Dor, Joël. Introduction to the Reading of Lacan: The Unconscious Structured Like a Language. (New York: Other Press, 1998) pg. 244.

Central to Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the Oedipal complex, and Lacan modifies the complex by making it a product of language acquisition. He argues that a child passes through the **Imaginary**and the **Symbolic** and strives to attain the **Real**, roughly equivalent to the anal, oral, and phallic stages. The Imaginary stage is prelinguistic, similar to the id with its chaotic collection of desire. During the Imaginary stage, the child has no clearly defined sense of self; instead, it is a mass of fluid desire, Lacan's image for this is an *omelet* or *egg*, a human Humpty Dumpty so-to-speak. In this amorphous Imaginary state, the child has no boundaries

since it has no self. However, the child passes through the **Mirror stage**, where it sees itself reflected in the mirror, and this reflection provides the child with an image of itself, one at first of ideal completeness. The child identifies with the reflection in the mirror. Yet this image of completeness is quickly shattered, for the child must misread itself, for it simultaneously sees itself as unified and as an object, an Other. Thus the beginning of the split subject. It is important to note that during the Mirror stage the child begins to acquire language, learning immediately that what is desired and the words used to identify that object of desire are not the same. Language in the Mirror stage fragments the myth of the unified self contained in the Imaginary stage.

During the Imaginary and Mirror stages, the child is subject to the **desire-of-the-mother**, whereby the child has complete desire for the mother and believes the mother in turn exists solely for the child's pleasure. Again, a division occurs as the self misreads itself in terms of the image the self projects into the mirror (or interprets from the reflection). Mother is both self and other, as is the child's identity. Enter the father—again. By this time, the child is cast into the Symbolic stage by being thrust into the language of differences. Since language is based on the signifier | signified, it follows that once a child is inserted into language it sees that its desire—the naming of objects—is never fulfilled by the object itself, for language is arbitrary and empty. Furthermore, the child is thrown into a world of differences, for words only take on meaning in relation to other words, primarily the differences between words: male/female; father/son; mother/daughter; *moi*/*je*.

Consequently, the child, now split from itself, seeks fulfillment in other objects, the ***objet petit a***, loosely translated as "little object 'a.'" The *objet petit a* is a product of language, so it cannot really be found. Lacan contends that language operates as to preclude the child's fulfillment of finding an *objet petit a*. The mirror reflection becomes an apt metaphor: you are the reflection in the mirror, yet that reflection only "reflects" you (it truly isn't you). The distance between the mirror and where you are standing symbolizes the gap or gulf between words and a person's identity. That Alice is able to cross through the mirror into Looking-Glass Land, for example, represents her desire—she is in an imaginary realm (her mind?) where she can attempt to satiate her desire.

Lacan insists then language is a source of our desire but that language becomes the source of frustrated desire since words can never capture desire or the essence of meaning. Think about what happens when you stumble across a word you don't know: you look it up in a dictionary, only to find that the word is defined by other words, which have their own meanings, which you could look up in a dictionary, which…and we are in an endless, infinite loop. Take the word *liminal*. What does it mean? The *Merriam-Webster Online* dictionary defines *liminal* as a "sensory threshold," as something "barely perceptible," and as an "intermediate state, phase, or condition" that might exist between *life*and *death*.*Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. "liminal," http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liminal. Now do you know what the word really means? Or are you a bit frustrated? One thing we do know for sure is that Alice travels to liminal spaces when she tumbles to Wonderland and when she crosses over to Looking-Glass Land.

Let's place all this in a tighter format. Remember, Freud claims that the dreamwork uses displacement and condensation to create the manifest content of the dream. For Lacan the dreamwork is a manifestation of language—displacement resides in **metonymy** and condensation in **metaphor**:

Wondering what *metonymy* and *metaphor* are? In *A Handbook to Literature*, C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon provide excellent definitions of these literary devices. *Metonymy* is "the substitution of the name of an object closely associated with a word for the word itself. We commonly speak of the monarch as 'the crown,' an object closely associated with royalty thus being made to stand for it."C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, eds., *A Handbook to Literature* (Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson, 2009). *Metaphor* is "an analogy identifying one object with another and ascribing to the first object one or more or the qualities of the second."C. Hugh Holman and William Harmon, eds., *A Handbook to Literature* (Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson, 2009).

In effect, metonymy works by displacement, residing on a horizontal axis that reflects the displacement; thus, "a" is displaced by "b," which is displaced by "c," and so on. Metaphor, in turn, operates by substitution, and can be placed on a vertical axis where one thing stands in completely for another: "a" = "b."

You can now see how Lacan's theory begins to come together. Metonymy, being displacement, is a result of the Mirror stage where the child recognizes its reflection first as a complete substitution for itself (a metaphor), but it soon realizes that the reflection is of an Other, a displacement of the self (a metonym). Thus, since language is split between signifier | signified, it primarily operates as metonymy. Language as metonymy always leaves a gap or **absence or lack**, since no complete meaning can be attained. Language, consequently, is like the unconscious, which strives to fulfill repressed desire. Another way of understanding language as a gap is to open a dictionary to find a meaning of a word, as we have discussed earlier. Cast into a language of desire, humans are unable to

find stable meaning, for language cannot satisfy desire; we continually search for an *objet petit a* that will fulfill us, but that *objet* is based on a lack, for it is simply a product of language.

If Lacan subscribes to Freud's Oedipal complex, then the father must become a significant player in the development drama of the individual. Lacan argues that the desire-of-the-mother, a product of the Imaginary stage, is replaced by the **name-of-the-father**, the **phallus**, which represents law and authority and brings some boundary to the self. The phallus or name-of-the-father is not the sexual organ itself, but a symbolic representation that is similar to the superego. The phallus is another *objet petit a*, but it operates as an anchoring point along the horizontal axis of metonymy. As the human subject floats through language on the metonymic plane, it searches for the phallus and temporarily finds the phallus as a metaphor on the vertical plane. Thus the phallus becomes the privileged signifier, for it helps the split subject achieve temporary meaning in the endless journey through the language of desire. However, the phallus can never be secured, for it too resides in language and quickly slips away. Thus the search for the phallus or name-of-the-father is a frustrated desire since it is a product of language.

Finally, Lacan constructs the ideal realm called the Real, the ultimate place where the Imaginary and Symbolic stages can meet. To Lacan, though, the Real is only symbolic and beyond the reach of language—it represents the unattainable; it represents desire. The Imaginary and Symbolic are like two sides of a sheet of paper, similar to the signifier and signified; the Real is like a Möbius strip constructed from strands of paper where the Imaginary and Symbolic become entangled and lost in the web between the Imaginary and the Symbolic.

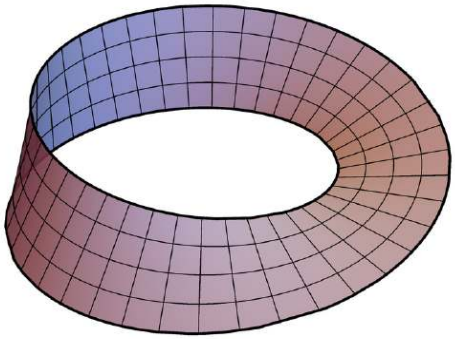


Figure **2.1.2.11.2.4.2**: Diagram of Möbius strip. (CC BY-SA 4.0; Stevvers via Wikipedia)

Lacan's theory is complex and at times confusing, yet like Freud's it is intriguing. His revising of Freud's concepts "into" language makes his theory particularly applicable to literary interpretation, for literature is based on language, which is structured like the unconscious. Whereas Freud suggests the literary work is structured like an author's dream in need of interpretation, Lacan proposes that language itself is a dream of condensation and displacement; therefore, Lacan's theory is centered more in actual language and less in the peculiar workings of each individual author and reader. Literary interpretation based on language, then, attempts to find meaning in a work that will elude us because language slides away from us. Our desire for interpretation, in a sense, can only be temporarily reached via an anchoring point (a written paper), but that point will be undercut with subsequent papers and interpretations.

Furthermore, Lacan's Imaginary, prelinguistic stage is appealing to feminist critics, for the Imaginary seems a maternal stage of unity that does not rely on a girl's symbolic castration to enter into the realm of the Symbolic, for both male and female are immersed into language, which casts each into a world of differences. In Freud's theory, a girl is defined by lacking—she desires the male organ that she does not have. Lacan, however, situates all this in language, revealing that women are marginalized not biologically but linguistically, for the privileged signifier is the phallus, or patriarchy.

Your Process

1. What aspect of Lacan's theory most interests you?
2. How could you take that interest in Lacan and apply it to a work of literature?
3. What can you envision as the benefits of such an application?
4. Are there any concerns you might have about your approach?

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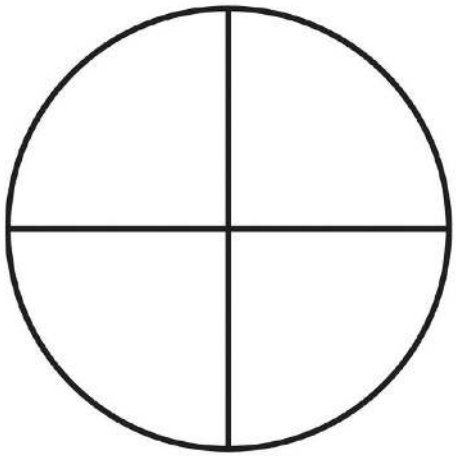
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2.1.2.11.2.5: Focus on Carl Jung (1875–1961) - The Archetypal Collective Unconsciousness

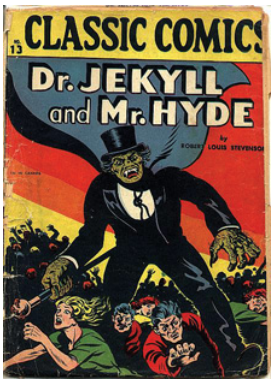
Carl Jung, like Lacan, was a disciple of Freud's, but unlike Lacan, Jung eventually split from Freud, believing that Freud focused too heavily on the importance of sexual desire and the repression that that desire causes. Jung felt that Freud's theories were, simply, too vague and could be manipulated to fit any scheme. Jung's complaint seems justified, for Freudian analysis can become reductive as a reader finds phallic symbolism in every knife and fork and yonic symbolism in the soup bowl. Freud's claim that the unconscious is a result of a person's repressed desire (which of course is sexual, libidinal), is challenged by Jung, who argues that the mind is constructed of multiple layers of consciousness, the unconscious composing only one of those layers. Jung's map of the mind is like a house with several stories: on one level lives the conscious, on another the personal unconscious (similar to Freud's unconscious), on another the **collective unconscious**, which represents a universal storehouse of images that are common to all humanity. Jung clearly separates himself from Freud, for the collective unconscious is much larger than the unconscious, suggesting that a commonality is shared by all humans—including the importance of myth, ritual, and religion.

The collective unconscious can be accessed through various **archetypes** that represent for a particular culture a variation of the collective unconscious. Archetypes are like universal Tupperware containers; a particular culture, society, or individual fills that container with its more "personal" symbol-mixture that is molded by the archetype container yet maintains its individual flavor. Thus an archetype is simultaneously universal and particular. Archetypes are those "big dreams" of a culture.

The overriding archetype for Jung is the **Self**, the image of wholeness or individuation. Jung's graphic depiction of the Self is the **mandala**, a circle containing four harmonious parts.



The mandala is beginning and end, perfectly balanced by the four chambers, which composes the unification of the whole Self. Jung's concept of the collective Self, as you can see, is diametrically opposed to Freud's and Lacan's fractured and split individual self. According to Jung each person wears an outward face to the world, a **mask or persona**, while the inward face contains the **shadow** and the anima/animus. The shadow is the dark side of the Self that we all hope to hide; it is also the "moral problem" that the Self must grapple with on its way to wholeness. The Self must eventually recognize its shadow as part of its nature. The *doppelgänger* is the German literary term for the double, and it captures the dark side of the human. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) is a prototypical story of the double; it focuses on the experiences of the mannered Dr. Henry Jekyll and his alter ego, the beastly Mr. Hyde.Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886; Project Gutenberg, 2011), http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/42/pg42.html. Stevenson's novel famously suggests that the shadow resides naturally in the Self, though the Self wears a mask to hide that shadow side to the world and to the Self.



Classics Illustrated cover for Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1943).

Furthermore, every Self has its own masculine or feminine counterpart to the personality: the **anima**is the female part of the male; the **animus** is the masculine part of the female. The anima embodies Eros—desire—a maternal archetype that is both positive (the nurturing mother) and negative (the devouring witch). Anima archetypes include the Great Mother, the Tempting Whore, and the Destroying Crone. Conversely, the animus embodies Logos—reason—and is paternal, symbolized by the Great Father, the Wise Old Man, the Lover, and the Destroying Angel archetypes. Both anima and animus have positive and negative dimensions. As the shadow side of the Self is usually hidden or repressed inside, the anima or animus side of the Self is also internalized and hidden, for the Self is unwilling to recognize its feminine or masculine side. That is why the Self will project its opposite onto others, which explains erotic heterosexual love: the male and female are united, finding their anima or animus completed by their partner. Jung falls into the same trap as Freud to a degree—they both make essentialist assumptions about gender.

Since the goal of the Self is harmony, as seen in the mandala, the Self undertakes the archetypal quest to achieve **syzygy**, the fulfillment of unity, of balance. Jung fathoms that the **myths** of a culture highlight the Self's quest for completeness, symbolized by the mandala, and the quaternion Christ is the ideal unified Self, containing Father, Son, Holy Ghost, and Mary (thus balancing the anima and animus). Unlike Freud, who saw no value in religion, Jung's theory is cemented in religion, with the Self a reflection of God. The quest to find the Self, consequently, is a quest for God within the Self, symbolized by Christ, the purest archetype of the God-in-the-human-self. The quest for the Holy Grail in Arthurian legend, for example, symbolizes search for the unity of Self and God. Such a quest becomes the foundation for a culture's archetype, this archetype being a variation of the "big dream" of the collective unconscious, the grand archetype.

But how can you apply Jung to literary criticism? In "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry" (1922), Jung explains how literature and the writer operate under the archetype.Carl Jung, "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry," in *Twentieth Century Theories of Art*, ed. James M. Thompson (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1999), 151–67. Literature is not necessarily based on the personal unconscious of the writer, but on the unconscious mythology that is part of the collective unconsciousness. A writer, then, draws from the collective unconscious for the archetype. Literature is a powerful tool that operates like myth, ritual, and religion.

Other critics have adapted Jungian ideas. Sir James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890–1915), an anthropological compendium of cross-cultural myths, complements Jung's theories of myth.Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (1922; Project Gutenberg, 2003), http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/3623. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*(1949) positions Jung in his definition of the monomyth—the departure, initiation, and return of the hero who finds completeness and wholeness during the quest.Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 3rd ed. (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008). George Lucas, for example, wrote the original *Star Wars Trilogy* as a modern myth that exemplifies Campbell's archetypal patterns. Darth Vader, the dark side of the Self, must be confronted, while the need for balance and control and harmony is found in Ben Kenobi's "force," which Luke Skywalker must master in order to confront his dark side, his Self, his father.*Star Wars Trilogy: Episode IV, A New Hope*; *Episode V, The Empire Strikes Back*; and *Episode VI, Return of the Jedi*, directed by George Lucas (1980; Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century Fox, 2004), DVD. The most recent example of this myth is seen in Harry Potter's confrontation with Voldemort.

Jungian criticism is often applied to literature that is considered more mythic—fairy tales, fantasy, and medieval romances. In *Fairy Tales: Allegories of Inner Life* (1983), J. C. Cooper argues that "Jack and the Beanstalk" depicts common archetypes of the Fool and Trickster, as Jack moves from the fool (for buying "magic" beans) to the trickster (who can outwit the giant).J. C. Cooper,

Fairy Tales: Allegories of Inner Life (London: Aquarian, 1983). To Cooper, the fairy tale is about the universal pattern where goodness triumphs over evil, where ingenuity and innocence defeat brutality. Cooper's reading is far different than Bettelheim's.

While Jungian criticism is often applied to texts that privilege fantasy over realistic narrative, the theory can find uses in all forms of contemporary literature, as seen in John Neary's recent *Shadows and Illuminations: Literature as Spiritual Journey* (2011), in which he examines the work of writers as diverse as Jonathan Safran Foer, Yann Martel, Toni Morrison, to Jane Hamilton.John Neary, *Shadows and Illuminations: Literature as Spiritual Journey* (Eastbourne, UK: Sussex Academic Press, 2011).

Your Process

1. What aspect of Jung's theory most interests you?
2. How could you take that interest in Jung and apply it to a work of literature?
3. What can you envision as the benefits of such an application?
4. Are there any concerns you might have about your approach?

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2.1.2.11.2.6: Reading Keats's "Urn" through the Psychoanalytic Lens

THOU still unravish'd bride of quietness,

Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:

Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave

Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearièd,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy love!

For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,

For ever panting, and for ever young;

All breathing human passion far above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,

A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,

And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?

What little town by river or sea-shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,

Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede

Of marble men and maidens overwrought,

With forest branches and the trodden weed;

Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

CLASS PROCESS

1. Have your class read Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn."John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919; Bartleby.com, 1999), http://www.bartleby.com/101/625.html.
2. Break up into at least three groups.
3. Assign each group one critic: Freud, Lacan, or Jung.
4. Have them discuss ways to apply their theory to the poem.
5. Have them develop a claim about the poem that uses the theory.
6. Bring the class back together and have groups present their theories.
7. Engage in a larger group discussion about psychoanalytic literary criticism.
8. Now look at the following overview and compare with your class discussion.

Keats's "Urn," as you have discovered, lends itself well to the psychoanalytic perspective. Compare the classroom discussion with some critical applications of psychoanalytic theory to Keats's poem. Leon Waldoff in *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (1985), for example, demonstrates how Keats's loss of family members creates "feelings of separation anxiety," especially the loss of his mother and brother Tom.Leon Waldoff, *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985). This loss becomes manifest in "an unconscious determinant" that creates key symbols in Keats's odes, the Grecian urn being an example.Leon Waldoff, *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985). The urn symbolizes, argues Waldoff, an "undying longing for permanence" that symbolizes an "unending quest conducted at the deepest levels of the mind by the silent work of the imagination, which repeatedly seeks to heal an insistent sense of loss and to deal with its more conscious complement—a penetrating awareness of the transience of human life and a concern with philosophical questions raised by that awareness."Leon Waldoff, *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985).The urn, like the other artifacts in Keats's odes (nightingale, autumn, melancholy), shows "the fundamental impossibility of controlling imagination and the desire impelling it toward a finer conception of its object."Leon Waldoff, *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985). Waldoff contends Keats's melancholia that results from familial loss "provides a structure or context within which the unconscious processes evident in the poetry may be seen to work with cohesion and unity of purpose in the direction they give to the imagination."Leon Waldoff, *Keats and the Silent Work of Imagination* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985). Keats's life, then, is the key subtext that is the foundation of the odes.

A Lacanian reading could extend Waldoff's argument: the poet, unable to regain the lost past, attempts through poetry to fulfill this desire for his mother and brothers. The urn is an object of desire—*objet petit a*—that acts as a temporary anchoring point for the poet. However, since the poem generates meaning through language, and since language cannot fulfill desire, the urn image ultimately fails to fulfill; it is a "Cold Pastoral." Keats's repetition of the word *happy* in stanza three—"More happy love! more happy, happy love"; "Ah, happy, happy boughs"; "And happy melodist"—reflects the emptiness of language that tries to capture true desire. *Happy* can only approximate "happiness," the signified that the poet wishes to convey. In a sense, Keats's poem attempts to reach the Real to satiate the longing to move from the Symbolic realm that continually frustrates fulfillment.

Finally, in *The Nightingale and the Hawk: A Psychological Study of Keats's Odes* (1964), Katharine M. Wilson provides a Jungian interpretation of the odes. She argues that Keats's odes are attempts to tap into the archetypal collective unconsciousness, for poetry works by "images…which come from the deeper layers of the poet's psyche, rather than from his superficial observation, or from his personal unconscious."Katharine M. Wilson, *The Nightingale and the Hawk: A Psychological Study of Keats's Odes* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964). The odes are Keats's "quest for the Self." In "Urn," in particular, "beauty for Keats was entangled with intimation of the Self"; thus beauty's "permanence lies in the realm of the psyche." "The urn is like a frozen archetype," argues Wilson. "It is a permanent object passed from generation to generation of sorrowing humanity, but has fixed on its objects of beauty."Katharine M. Wilson, *The Nightingale and the Hawk: A Psychological Study of Keats's Odes*(London: Allen and Unwin, 1964). The urn, consequently, as frozen archetype epitomizes truth and beauty that resides in the Self, that Self tapping the larger collective unconscious for its images.

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2.1.2.11.2.7: Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism- A Process Approach

When you write a critical paper using a psychoanalytic approach, you need to determine the focus you will use. Will you focus on the author? On the characters or the narrator? On the formal construction of the text? Often, a reading will draw from all three levels (as does Waldoff's interpretation of Keats). Since psychoanalyzing an author requires considerable biographical research, many students opt to focus on character, theme, or text. You should also be guided by the following:

1. You must clearly define your psychoanalytic approach to the work—Freudian, Lacanian, Jungian, or some combination. You could explore ideas in a journal entry to help you focus on your critical approach. You should then construct a working thesis that will be your guide. Ask yourself the following: How does my psychoanalytic approach help my reader better understand the work I am interpreting? Is my application of psychoanalytic theory too reductive or forced onto the literary work?
2. You then need to reread the text through the psychoanalytic lens, taking notes and jotting down quotations that can be used for support in your paper. At this stage you should be amassing evidence to support your working thesis.
3. You should then construct a more concrete working thesis and informal organizational plan that will guide you as you write your draft. Remember, your paper must be organized around a clear focus/thesis.
4. You should finally get some feedback on your paper by sharing your draft with your instructor and classmates. Use this feedback for revision.

Peer Reviewing

After you have written a first draft, you should get some feedback from classmates. Use the relevant peer-review guide found in Chapter 10.

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2.1.2.11.3: The Semiotic Tradition

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2.1.2.11.3.1: Semiotics

Introduction



Ferdinand de Saussure; Image source Wikimedia Commons

Semiotics is the study of signs and their meaning in society. A sign is something which can stand for something else – in other words, a sign is anything that can convey meaning. So words can be signs, drawings can be signs, photographs can be signs, even street signs can be signs. Modes of dress and style, the type of bag you have, or even where you live can also be considered signs, in that they convey meaning. This chapter will introduce the idea of signs, how they function within systems and as tools of communication, and situate signs within codes.

Signs and Signifiers

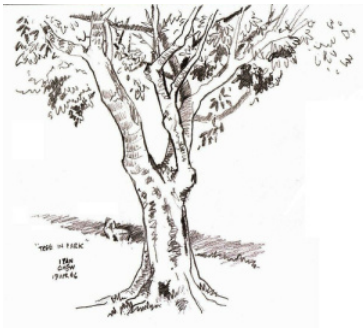
- Sign Systems
- Semiotics and Communication Processes
- Codes

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2.1.2.11.3.2: Signs and Signifiers

Let's start with a really simple example. Take a look at these three things:



by Ivan Chew is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Singapore License.



by Axel Boldt wiki commons



Source: Library of Congress US

These signs all 'stand in' for the idea of a tree. But they do so in different ways. We generally categorize signs into three types:

1. **Iconic signs** – icons are signs where meaning is based on similarity of appearance. So our drawing of our tree stands in for the notion of 'tree' based on a crude similarity of appearance.
2. **Indexical signs** – Indexical signs have a cause-and-effect relationship between the sign and the meaning of the sign. There is a direct link between the two. So a leaf might be an indexical sign.
3. **Symbolic signs** – these signs have an arbitrary or conventional link. The word tree, t-r-e-e only comes to stand in for the notion of tree because of the conventions of our language. In another convention, the symbolic sign for tree might be 'arbor' (German) or '木' (Japanese)

In each case, the sign can be broken into two parts, the *signifier* and the *signified*. The signifier is the thing, item, or code that we 'read' – so, a drawing, a word, a photo. Each signifier has a signified, the idea or meaning being expressed by that signifier. Only together do they form a sign. There is often no intrinsic or direct relationship between a signifier and a signified – no signifier-signified system is 'better' than another. Language is flexible, constructed, and changeable. de Saussure uses the word 'arbitrariness' to describe this relationship.

A good example is the word 'cool.' If we take the spoken word 'cool' as a signifier, what might be the signified? In one context or situation, cool might refer to temperature. But in another, it might refer to something as 'stylish' or 'popular'. The relationship between signifier and signified can change over time and in different contexts.

This is important, because signs are understood and encoded in context. As with the words ‘’cool,’ the relationship between signifier and signified is made meaningful in context. This area starts by looking at signs in isolation, but as you become more confident with semiotics, you will start to look at signs as part of a sign system.

Discussion

1. What is the relationship between a signifier and the signified?
2. What might be an example of an iconic, indexical and symbolic sign for the idea of your pet?

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2.1.2.11.3.3: Sign Systems

We can look at signs and sign systems in three ways:

1. **Semantics** – this is the 'how' of semiotics, and is concerned with this relationship between a signified and signifier – the sign and what it stands in for.
2. **Syntactics** – this refers to structural relations. One structural relation in language is grammar, but syntactics in semiotics refers to the formal relationship between signs that lets them build into sign systems.
3. **Pragmatics** – pragmatics, according to Morris (Morris, 1938), is the relationship of sign to the person reading or understanding that sign.

To explore this, lets look at a very familiar yet very arbitrary sign system – traffic lights.



LED Traffic Lights from Wikimedia Commons, Petey21

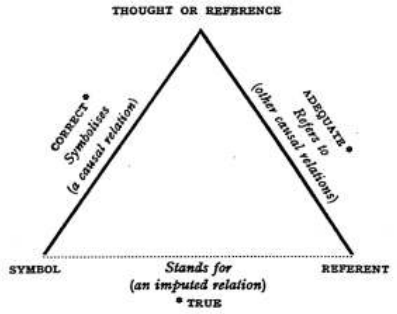
If **semantics** is the 'how' of semiotics, concerned with the relationship between signifier and signified, how might we read semantically the traffic light? We might read red as stop, and green as go.

If **syntactics** is the formal relationship between signs in a sign system, then how might we read the syntax of traffic lights? We might see the relationships between red, amber, and green as three parts of a sign system that also refer to other sign systems (such as white lines on the road, or the shape of a stop sign). These sign relationship then make the structure of traffic lights as a sign system.

And finally, if **pragmatics** is the relationship between sign and reader, how might we pragmatically read the traffic light? If the light is red, for example, we know to stop.

The last useful concept from basic semiotics that is worth mentioning is the idea of syntactic indeterminacy (Messaris, 1994). Syntactics is the formal relationship between signs and sign systems. But as we've noted, sign systems are constantly changing and evolving, with the arbitrariness of the relationship between signifier and signified creating a kind of 'wriggle room' for meaning to change and evolve within context. This flexibility in meaning creates space where a sign that means one thing to me might mean something slightly or significantly different to you. Very savvy advertisers often exploit this syntactic indeterminacy to encourage audiences to draw their own meanings from a number of possible interpretations, or to imply rather than overtly state a message (which may turn off the ad's target audience), as this classic Volkswagen ad demonstrates.

We each develop different interpretations of advertisements, or any set of signs, based on our own experience, interpretation and frame of reference. One way to think about the interplay of these factors when looking at signs is to use a semiotic triangle (Ogden and Richards, 1923).



Ogden and Richards (1923) The Meaning of Meaning

There are a number of different versions of this triangle, and you will sometimes see different labels used at each of the points of the triangle (though they might be a different points, they are the same in relation to each other). But generally speaking, there are three main points to the triangle. The first point is the *reference*, the second is the *sign* (or sometimes the expression), and the third is the *concept*. Some versions also put in the center of the triangle the actor or agent who makes these connections through experience.

This leads us to thinking about semiotics as part of the process of communication.

2.1.2.11.3.3.1 Discussion

1. Can you apply the semiotic triangle to the Volkswagon ad linked to above?
2. What is the **reference, symbol** and **thought** presented within the sign system of this advert and how do they relate to each other?

2.1.2.11.3.3.2 References

Messaris, P. Visual Literacy: Image, mind, and reality, Westview Press, 1994.

Morris, C. Foundations of the Theory of Signs, University of Chicago Press, 1938.

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2.1.2.11.3.4: Semiotics and Communication Processes

At this point, it is worth thinking about the two fundamental views of communication, the transmission and the ritual view, and consider how ideas of the sign play out in each.

The transmission view, which was about the functional exchange of information from sender to receiver across space, can utilize signs as a vessel for the exchange of such information. The panoply of signs that surround us are all signifiers, and thus can be seen to at least be attempting to communicate or convey information.

In a ritual view of communication, which is about the idea of culture being developed over time, ideas are seen to be circulating a culture, and again through the use of signs to facilitate the exchange of meaning. What a sign 'means' is often determined and refined by culture, even for indexical signs. What meanings are dominant, what symbols correlate to what ideas, is constructed by culture. Again, think of the word 'cool' as an example of this in action.

This brings us to the concept of **codes**. In all the communication you have participated and been exposed to, we have had to 'read' and deconstruct the signs presented in context. We all bring to bear on the act of meaning-making our understanding of that context, and prior experiences with those signs to help make sense of the message being transmitted. To continue the example of this Wrangler advertisement, we read that ad referring back to our own personal experiences of exam situations, as well as other media texts that have presented similar or parallel narratives.

Signs are not presented in isolation, one at a time. We can try and isolate them to study them, but we cannot fully make sense of them without taking into account the context. Signs, how they operate and how they relate signifier to signified, take place within systems that we call codes.

2.1.2.11.3.4.1 Discussion Questions

1. Take this Wrangler ad from 2002 as an example, and think about the **codes** — the prior texts and experiences and meanings — you as the reader need to bring to bear to understand the message it intends to convey.

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2.1.2.11.3.5: Codes

Codes are so important to the understanding of semiotics that, if a sign does not appear to conform to a code, there is doubt that it is even a sign at all. All codes are systems, but not all systems are codes. These codes are used by both encoders and decoders of signs to help ensure that the message intended is approximate to the message received. We often use contextual cues to let us know what kinds of codes are expected or to expect – for example, an academic textbook uses words and pictures differently than a children's storybook. They both use signs in the form of words and drawings, but how we approach understanding these signs is quite different.

Some codes, we are quite aware of. For example, iambic pentameter is a form of poetry, which is a code system in which there are certain expectations about the arrangement of word-signs in regards to both their signified/meaning (imagery) and their signifier/structure (rhythm).

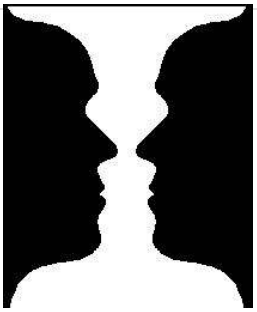
Other codes are a little more subtle, and we apply them almost without being aware of it. For example, what is this?



GNU Free Documentation License by Andrew Bossi @ wikimedia commons

Most people say it is Washington D.C., but it is more accurate to say that it is a photograph of Washington D.C.. Photography is itself a codification of iconic and indexical symbols, but carries with it its own system of meaning making – two dimensions stand in for three, movement is frozen, time stands still. Photography is said to be a perceptual code, but one that we are so familiar with that we tend to forget it is a code and a set of signs at all.

Part of perceptual coding involves what is foregrounded and what is backgrounded (part of the coding of perception). Chandler provides us with this classic example of foreground coding. What do you see here?



http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Facevase.png

If you are most familiar with Western visual codification systems, you may not at first see the two faces. This is because, in Western culture familiar with still images, our codification system for such images tends to code darker areas as background in relation to lighter areas (with a few exceptions, related to symmetry and balance). This is how a lot of optical illusions are made, they actually exploit a learned code for visual perception. But such codes exist to account for every type of sign there is.

So in summary, semiotics is a powerful tool for helping to understand and interpret how meaning is constructed and deconstructed in messages. It is now worth stepping back and looking at how semiotics fits into the wider social patterns and ideologies.

2.1.2.11.3.5.1 Discussion

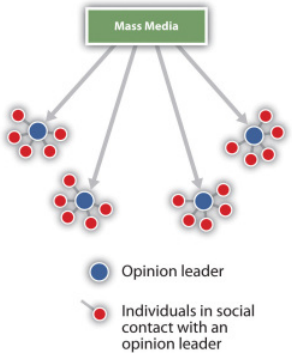
1. Semiotics is the study of signs, and how these signs 'stand in' for anything else. These signs are interpreted and read by readers who utilize their past experience with similar signs and codes. These codes are cultural, and are learned over time and through experience, and therefore can change over time. For example, take a look at these covers and contents from classic issues of New Zealand Woman's Weekly. What different experiences and codes do the editors expect their readers to bring to bear reading these texts? How are they different to the codes used in the modern editions of the magazine?

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2.1.2.11.3.6: Two-step flow of communication

Towards the end of the Second World War, sociologist Paul Lazarfeld added to the media effects research frame the social aspect of human agency. Rejecting the direct influence of the hypodermic needle or **Magic Bullet Theory**, he introduced an intermediary between the sender of a message and the audience. This intermediary, dubbed an "opinion leader", was usually a person of influence with greater access to information. They would be seen as an authority able to filter, interpret and explain media messages. It is the credibility of the weatherman that persuades the individual to bring along an umbrella, rather than the factual data from the meteorological department themselves. And it would be the community or religious leader expounding on the messages released by politicians that actually hold sway over the masses. The two-step flow of information paved the way for research into multi-step models.



Paletz,D.; Owen, D.;Cook, T. 21 century American Government and Politics, Chapter 7, adapted from Katz, E., Lazarsfeld, P. Personal influence (New York: The Free Press, 1995)

Another great example to explain the influence of opinion leaders is the world of fashion. Magazines play an important role in showing the trends of the coming season by passing on information from big fashion brands to a wider audience. The reader's knowledge of next seasons fashions and trends is filtered by the magazines. While this describes a classic two-step flow of communication new technologies have changed the role of the media.

Again in the example of fashion, the magazines provide the audience with a chance to describe their likes and needs through participation in the discussion. Information is flowing in many directions through different media channels and filtering through new opinion leaders, such as fashion bloggers. Clicking through the Australian fashion blog breakfastwithaudrey and its links to other influential bloggers demonstrates how connected they are. Such referencing of each other builds a strong network of opinion leaders for the reader audience to follow.



Magazines and blogs: opinion leaders in today’s fashion industry CC-BY-SA

Interlinking might also occur between different brands, magazines and other bloggers which makes the process more complex and the flow of information more challenging to follow, especially to understand in terms of influence and power. A single user can be influenced by different sources or opinion leaders when following the trends of the season. The shaping of the user’s opinion follows a more complex pattern and flow.

Discussion

1. Pick a point of interest (other than fashion) and create a flow chart of the various sources, pathways and intermediaries that provide or filter information to any interested party. Identify any direct, two-flow and multi-flow conduits of knowledge as well as any other interesting features.

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2.1.2.11.4: The Critical Traditions

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2.1.2.11.4.1: Critical Perspectives

Forming your perspective on a poem, story, or play might be easier if you understand some of the approaches commonly taken toward interpreting literature's meaning. Literary studies have been around long enough that like-minded readers and scholars have gravitated toward basic common positions as they engage in dialogue with each other. As a result, there are a number of widely-recognized critical approaches to literature, from formalists (who focus on how an author employs strategies and devices for a particular effect) to psychoanalytical critics (who explore texts to better understand humans' psychological structure and their typical responses to particular experiences). As you consider a poem or story, you might choose one of these approaches as the general lens through which to examine that work. What follows is a list of some of the most common critical perspectives. Consider them and make a note of any that strikes you as particularly interesting. You may find that one or several of these reflect your own way of looking at the world.

Biographical Criticism

This approach examines the life and attitudes of an author as the key to understanding the writer's work. You should probably avoid heavy dependence on this approach, however, as you write essays for this class. Commonly used in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it has now been largely discounted as a reliable way to understand the meaning of a text.

Formalism (also referred to as "New Criticism")

Rising to prominence in the 1920s, this approach considers a literary work as an entity separate from its author and its historical context. The formalist explores a poem as a mechanic would explore an engine. The mechanic would assume that the engine's parts and function can be studied without any understanding of the maker's life and/or the history of the period in which the engine exists. Similarly, to assess a poem's impact and understand its meaning, a scholar might "take it apart," considering its separate elements—the form, line length, rhythm, rhyme scheme, figurative language, and diction—and how those pieces make up the effect of and shape the meaning of the whole.

Psychoanalytical Criticism

Based on the theories of Freud and others, this approach examines a text for signs and symbols of the subconscious processes, both of the characters and of humans in general. Revelatory symbols in a work might include water (the womb or the subconscious), a phallus (patriarchal power or sexual desire), a vessel such as a vase or pitcher (the vagina or sexual desire), and dark passageways (the feared subconscious where we store our unacceptable impulses and desires, and in which we are afraid we might get lost from the ordered, visible world).

Archetypal Criticism

Springing from psychoanalytical criticism, this approach focuses on common figures and story-lines that reveal patterns in human behavior and psychology. Well-known archetypal characters are the hero, the scapegoat, the Earth mother, the temptress, the mentor, and the devil figure. Some common archetypal storylines are the journey, the quest, the fall, and death and rebirth. Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell, key figures in the development of this approach, found that in the many stories they collected from cultures all over the world, these figures and storylines emerged over and over again. Their conclusion was that these figures and storylines are etched into the human psyche (or subconscious), and as we recreate them in our stories, our audiences recognize them as symbolic of their own experience.

Feminist Criticism

Using this approach, one examines a literary work for insight into why and how women are subjected to oppression and, sometimes, how they subvert the forces that oppress them.

Gender Theory

Expanding on feminist criticism, gender studies explore literature for increased understanding of socially defined gender identity and behavior and its impact on the individual and on society. It includes study of sexual orientation and how non-heterosexual identities are treated by mainstream ideology, a dynamic sometimes reflected in, sometimes critiqued by, literary works.

Marxist Criticism

This approach to literature examines how class and economic forces shape human dynamics. It is important to note that Marxist criticism is not a promotion of socialist government, but rather a close study of how invisible economic forces underpin, and often undermine, authentic human relationships.

Historical Criticism

This approach seeks to illuminate a text's original meaning by uncovering details of the text's historical context.

New Historicism

Modifying the historical approach described above, the new historicist assumes that material factors interact with each other, thus while this approach seeks to understand a text through its cultural context, it also attempts to discover through the literary work insight into intellectual history. For example, a new historicist might consider Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass as a product shaped not only by Douglass's experience as a U.S. slave, but also by Douglass's challenge of finding a publisher (most of whom were white), and by his primarily Christian readership. These factors, according to the new historicist, would interact to shape the text and its meanings.

In finding a perspective that interests you, consider these common ways of approaching literary study and interpretation and how those approaches might intersect with your own passions and values. Scholarly study should be objective, in that academic arguments should be supported by credible and substantial evidence, but scholarly argument is valuable when it aids us in better understanding our world and realizing our goals as humans, communities, and societies. Connecting to these objectives as a writer will help you find your reason for writing and the most effective rhetorical methods for reaching your goals.

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2.1.2.11.4.2: Introduction to Critical Theory

The practice of literary theory became a profession in the 20th century, but it has historical roots as far back as ancient Greece (Aristotle's *Poetics* is an often cited early example), ancient India (Bharata Muni's *Natya Shastra*), ancient Rome (Longinus's *On the Sublime*) and medieval Iraq (Al-Jahiz's *al-Bayan wa-'l-tabyin*and *al-Hayawan*, and ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Kitab al-Badi*). The aesthetic theories of philosophers from ancient philosophy through the 18th and 19th centuries are important influences on current literary study. The theory and criticism of literature are, of course, also closely tied to the history of literature.



The modern sense of "literary theory," however, dates only to approximately the 1950s, when the structuralist linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure began strongly to influence English language literary criticism. The New Critics and various European-influenced formalists (particularly the Russian Formalists) had described some of their more abstract efforts as "theoretical" as well. But it was not until the broad impact of structuralism began to be felt in the English-speaking academic world that "literary theory" was thought of as a unified domain.

In the academic world of the United Kingdom and the United States, literary theory was at its most popular from the late 1960s (when its influence was beginning to spread outward from elite universities like Johns Hopkins, Yale, and Cornell) through the 1980s (by which time it was taught nearly everywhere in some form).

By the early 1990s, the popularity of "theory" as a subject of interest by itself was declining slightly even as the texts of literary theory were incorporated into the study of almost all literature.

About

One of the fundamental questions of literary theory is "what is literature?" – although many contemporary theorists and literary scholars believe either that "literature" cannot be defined or that it can refer to any use of language. Specific theories are distinguished not only by their methods and conclusions, but even by how they define a "text."

There are many types of literary theory, which take different approaches to texts. Even among those listed below, combine methods from more than one of these approaches (for instance, the deconstructive approach of Paul de Man drew on a long tradition of close reading pioneered by the New Critics, and de Man was trained in the European hermeneutic tradition).

Broad schools of theory that have historically been important include historical and biographical criticism, New Criticism, formalism, Russian formalism, and structuralism, post-structuralism, Marxism, feminism and French feminism, post-colonialism, new historicism, deconstruction, reader-response criticism, and psychoanalytic criticism.

Schools of Literary Theory

Listed below are some of the most commonly identified schools of literary theory, along with their major authors. In many cases, such as those of the historian and philosopher Michel Foucault and the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, the authors were not primarily literary critics, but their work has been broadly influential in literary theory.

- Aestheticism – often associated with Romanticism, a philosophy defining aesthetic value as the primary goal in understanding literature. This includes both literary critics who have tried to understand and/or identify aesthetic values and those like Oscar Wilde who have stressed art for art's sake.
  - Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, Harold Bloom
- American pragmatism and other American approaches

  - Harold Bloom, Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty
- Cognitive Cultural Studies – applies research in cognitive neuroscience, cognitive evolutionary psychology and anthropology, and philosophy of mind to the study of literature and culture
  - Frederick Luis Aldama, Mary Thomas Crane, Nancy Easterlin, William Flesch, David Herman, Suzanne Keen, Patrick Colm Hogan, Alan Richardson, Ellen Spolsky, Blakey Vermeule, Lisa Zunshine
- Cultural studies – emphasizes the role of literature in everyday life
  - Raymond Williams, Dick Hebdige, and Stuart Hall (British Cultural Studies); Max Horkheimer andTheodor Adorno; Michel de Certeau; also Paul Gilroy, John Guillory
- Darwinian literary studies – situates literature in the context of evolution and natural selection
- Deconstruction – a strategy of "close" reading that elicits the ways that key terms and concepts may be paradoxical or self-undermining, rendering their meaning undecidable
  - Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Gayatri Spivak, Avital Ronell
- Gender (see feminist literary criticism) – which emphasizes themes of gender relations
  - Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler, Hélène Cixous, Elaine Showalter
- Formalism – a school of literary criticism and literary theory having mainly to do with structural purposes of a particular text
- German hermeneutics and philology
  - Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Erich Auerbach, René Wellek
- Marxism (see Marxist literary criticism) – which emphasizes themes of class conflict
  - Georg Lukács, Valentin Voloshinov, Raymond Williams, Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin
- Modernism
- New Criticism – looks at literary works on the basis of what is written, and not at the goals of the author or biographical issues
  - W. K. Wimsatt, F. R. Leavis, John Crowe Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, Robert Penn Warren
- New Historicism – which examines the work through its historical context and seeks to understand cultural and intellectual history through literature
  - Stephen Greenblatt, Louis Montrose, Jonathan Goldberg, H. Aram Veeser
- Postcolonialism – focuses on the influences of colonialism in literature, especially regarding the historical conflict resulting from the exploitation of less developed countries and indigenous peoples by Western nations
  - Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Declan Kiberd
- Postmodernism – criticism of the conditions present in the twentieth century, often with concern for those viewed as social deviants or the Other
  - Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and Maurice Blanchot
- Post-structuralism – a catch-all term for various theoretical approaches (such as deconstruction) that criticize or go beyond Structuralism's aspirations to create a rational science of culture by extrapolating the model of linguistics to other discursive and aesthetic formations
  - Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva
- Psychoanalysis (see psychoanalytic literary criticism) – explores the role of consciousnesses and the unconscious in literature including that of the author, reader, and characters in the text
  - Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Harold Bloom, Slavoj Žižek, Viktor Tausk
- Queer theory – examines, questions, and criticizes the role of gender identity and sexuality in literature
  - Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Michel Foucault
- Reader-response criticism – focuses upon the active response of the reader to a text
  - Louise Rosenblatt, Wolfgang Iser, Norman Holland, Hans-Robert Jauss, Stuart Hall
- Russian formalism

    - Victor Shklovsky, Vladimir Propp
- Structuralism and semiotics (see semiotic literary criticism) – examines the universal underlying structures in a text, the linguistic units in a text and how the author conveys meaning through any structures
    - Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bakhtin, Yurii Lotman, Umberto Eco, Jacques Ehrmann, Northrop Frye and morphology of folklore
- Eco-criticism – explores cultural connections and human relationships to the natural world
- Other theorists: Robert Graves, Alamgir Hashmi, John Sutherland, Leslie Fiedler, Kenneth Burke, Paul Bénichou, Barbara Johnson, Blanca de Lizaur, Dr Seuss

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2.1.2.11.4.3: Formalism

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2.1.2.11.4.3.1: The Foundations of New Criticism- An Overview

John Donne (1572–1631), the great metaphysical poet, provides a metaphor that is useful for close reading. In “The Canonization” (1633) he writes:

We’ll build sonnets pretty rooms;

As well a well-wrought urn becomes

The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,

And by these hymns, all shall approve

Us canonized for Love.John Donne, “The Canonization,” Poetry Foundation, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173353.

Another poet returns to the same metaphor 118 years later. Thomas Gray, in “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751), writes:

Can storied urn or animated bust

Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Courtyard,” Poetry Foundation, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/173564.

Both Donne and Gray use the image of the urn in their poetry. An *urn*, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), is “an earthenware or metal vessel or vase of a rounded or ovaloid form and with a circular base, used by various peoples especially in former times…to preserve the ashes of the dead. Hence vaguely used (esp. *poet.*) for ‘a tomb or sepulchre, the grave.’”*Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “urn.” Donne and Gray use the urn poetically, or metaphorically, for the urn is an image, a container to hold poetic meaning. To Donne, the poet can “build sonnets pretty rooms; / As well a well-wrought urn becomes”; to Gray the urn becomes “storied” or an “animated bust” capable of containing stories and meaning. As an image, then, the urn becomes symbolic: poets argue that a poem is like an urn, a container for artistic meaning.

Let’s add one final component to our *urn* image. Jump ahead another sixty-nine years from Gray’s poem and read John Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1820). At the end of this poem, Keats writes:

When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say’st,

‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.’John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” in *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, ed. Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919; Bartleby.com, 1999), http://www.bartleby.com/101/625.html.

Donne’s “**well-wrought urn**” became the title of a book by Cleanth Brooks—*The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947)Cleanth Brooks, *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1956).—a central manifesto of the New Criticism. New Criticism is synonymous with close reading, so the urn becomes an important symbol for the New Critics: the urn as artistic container of beauty and meaning represents the New Critical enterprise. A poem, a play, a novel, a short story is like a “storied urn” or “well-wrought urn,” capable of conveying poetic beauty and truth. Even if the poem is “Jabberwocky”!

In all likelihood, you have already practiced **New Criticism**, the close reading of a poem, short story, or longer narrative that focuses on the unity of that work. When you examine a short story for its character development, a drama for its plot construction, or a poem for its imagery, you are reading as a New Critic, looking at the literary work through the lens of close reading. In a sense, New Critical close reading is at the heart of every form of literary analysis you do, regardless of the theoretical approach taken. Thus it becomes essential that you become proficient in close readings of texts, for this skill is the foundation of all forms of literary criticism. If you cannot read a text closely and analyze it, you will have difficulty reading from any critical perspective.

Your Process

1. List the papers, if any, you have written in high school or college using the close reading approach.
2. Describe your experience writing such papers.
3. What challenges or questions do you remember having as you were working on these papers?
4. On which literary work have you decided to write your paper?
5. What are the fundamental questions you have about this work?

Focus on New Critical Strategies

The New Critics, as we discussed, regard a literary work as an *urn*—a well-wrought, storied urn, or a Grecian urn. As Keats writes, this urn contains not only beauty but also truth: a work of literature has some objective meaning that is integral to its artistic design. In other words, literature is the art of conveying truth about the world. Thus the New Critics view the study of literature as an inherently valuable enterprise; literary criticism, it follows, is fruitful because it clarifies art by assigning a truth value to this art. To quote the nineteenth-century poet and critic Matthew Arnold, as he writes in *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1865), literature reflects "the best that is known and thought in the world."Matthew Arnold, *Function of Criticism in the Present Time* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2010) . To the New Critics, as you can see, literature—in particular the analysis of it—was a profound activity.

A central concern of the New Critics is to understand how meaning and form interweave into a total artistic effect, the well-wrought urn. A New Critical reading assumes that the literary work has an organic structure that leads to unity or harmony in the work. An important concern for New Critics, consequently, is to show how meaning is achieved or dependent on the organic structure—the form—of the work. A New Critical reading, then, focuses on the various elements of literature that complement and create the theme.

Basic Philosophy of Close Reading

A New Critic's toolbox will hold those elements of literature that allow for the discussion of form and technique as it applies to meaning. Since New Critics perform a close reading of the text to illustrate how structure and theme are inseparable, they are eager to tell us both how to read and how *not* to read. They identify various fallacies of reading that must be avoided:

The Intentional Fallacy

The **intentional fallacy** occurs when readers claim to understand an author's intended meaning for a work of literature. The New Critics believed that a literary work belongs to the readers, to the public, which suggests that we should read the work isolated from what the author may have said about the work. In other words, the critic never knows specifically what the author intended. Indeed, an author may have conveyed meanings he or she did not intend at all, but those meanings are still present in their work. The literary critic, then, must concentrate solely on the extrinsic formal qualities of the poem, play, short story, or novel.

The Biographical Fallacy

Related to the intentional fallacy is the **biographical fallacy**, which, as you might suspect, is committed when you use an author's life as a frame of reference to interpret a work of art. The New Critics took painstaking measures to keep the focus on the work of art itself.

The Affective Fallacy

The **affective fallacy** is produced when the critic brings in his or her personal feelings about how a literary work moves them. While New Critics were aware that many readers found meaning in the emotional impact of literature, they were careful to distinguish between subjective emotional responses and objective critical statements about a literary work. Critics, then, should stick closely to the work of art, eliminating the author's intention from consideration, and they should also eliminate their emotional involvement in the reading experience. We discover later in our study that many critical theories—psychoanalytic and reader-response theories, in particular—are diametrically opposed to New Criticism: both psychoanalytic and reader-response theories highlight the way a literary work affects a reader's emotional and intellectual responses.

The Heresy of Paraphrase

Finally, the New Critics warned against the **heresy of paraphrase**, which happens when readers artificially separate meaning from structure or form. You have probably fallen into this trap once or twice when you concentrated on summarizing a work's plot rather than analyzing its meaning. New Criticism teaches us not to assign a meaning to a literary work *unless* that meaning can be supported by a close examination of the artistic elements of the text. To say that Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" is about the death of a migrant worker fails to acknowledge that the poem does not support such a reading. Humpty Dumpty, in fact, could be accused of the heresy of paraphrase, as Amy Chisnell explores in her student paper later in the chapter.

In review, a close reading, as defined by the New Critics, focuses narrowly on the literary work as a well-wrought urn. All we need for our interpretation is the literary work itself, where we examine how the artistry of the work leads to a larger theme that reflects the truth value of the work. Easy to state, more difficult to do! So let's now turn to see how a close reading can be connected to the writing process itself.

Your Process

1. How do you react to such rules that define the philosophy of New Critical close reading?
2. What do you see as the strengths to such an approach?
3. What do you see as some of the limits to this approach?

The Writing Process and the Protocols of Close Reading

If New Critics provide us with so many strategies for *not* reading a text, they should present us with strategies *for* reading texts. And they do. They suggest protocols of reading that are the heart of traditional close readings of texts. In a nutshell, a close reading exposes a problem or issue that needs examination to bring unity to the work; a close reading demonstrates how a literary work's meaning is unified, balanced, and harmonized by its aesthetic—or literary—structure. Your close reading, then, often identifies a **tension** or **ambiguity**—the issue or problem—that can be resolved by showing that the literary work achieves unity even in the apparent tension or ambiguity. Consequently, the critic can often examine how language creates tension through **paradox** or **irony**. Paradox (when something appears contradictory or discordant, but finally proves to be actually true) and irony (when a perceived meaning or intention is eventually found not to be accurate) are a result of a writer's use of language in a *metaphorical* way.

Your Process

1. Read Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (http://www.bartleby.com/101/625.html).
2. Examine the last two lines of the poem (49–50).
3. Do you think the urn is speaking the lines at the end? Does it matter?
4. Read Cleanth Brooks's interpretation of the ending lines (www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html).
5. Then read the following overview.

There is no more famous example of a professional critical reading than Cleanth Brooks's "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes."Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html. You can access the essay at www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html.

Brooks's reading of Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" begins by disagreeing with T. S. Eliot, who believed the concluding lines of the poem—"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—constituted a major flaw in the poem, for, as Brooks relates, "the troubling assertion is apparently an intrusion upon the poem—does not grow out of it—is not dramatically accommodated to it."Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html. Eliot feels the urn's speech doesn't make much sense—and that the statement simply isn't true. Brooks sets out to counter Eliot and prove that the poem is unified around the central paradox of the poem: "What is the relation of the beauty (the goodness, the perfection) of a poem to the truth or falsity of what it seems to assert?"

Brooks contends that the poem is "a parable on the nature of poetry, and of art in general" and that the concluding lines must be taken in the "total context of the poem."Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html. When read in this manner, the urn's speech was "'in character,' was dramatically

appropriate, [and] was properly prepared for."Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html. To support his contention, Brooks provides a stanza-by-stanza close reading in which he suggests that the paradox of the speaking urn is naturally part of each stanza and related to a key thematic concept: the poem highlights the tension between bustling life depicted on the urn and the frozen vignettes of the "Cold Pastoral." Brooks concludes, "If the urn has been properly dramatized, if we have followed the development of the metaphors, if we have been alive to the paradoxes which work throughout the poem, perhaps then, we shall be prepared for the enigmatic, final paradox which the 'silent form' utters.'"Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html. In concluding his essay, Brooks warns readers not to fall into the trap of paraphrase, for we must ultimately focus on "the world-view, or 'philosophy,' or 'truth' of the *poem as a whole* in terms of its dramatic wholeness" (Brooks's emphasis).Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes," Mr. Bauld's English, www.mrbauld.com/keatsurn.html.

Brooks's reading of Keats's ode is an exemplar of New Critical reading. Remember, a close reading will examine a literary work and find some objective meaning (a theme) that is harmonized with structure, thus balancing theme and form.

Implementing the Reading Protocols: A Strategy

To perform a close reading, use the following strategy:

1. Identify a tension or ambiguity in the literary work, the "problem" that needs to be solved by a close reading. In other words, your interpretation will highlight a theme or meaning that resides in the work.
2. Demonstrate how the work sustains or achieves this meaning through its artistic "principle of composition," which might include an examination of the following:
    - imagery
    - character
    - plot
    - symbol
    - setting
    - point of view
    - language use (i.e., denotation, connotation, metaphor, simile, personification, rhythm)

    Of course, the principle of composition is determined by the literary genre you are analyzing (i.e., short story, poetry, drama, novel). By showing that #1 is dependent on #2, you present a New Critical interpretation reflecting how meaning is integral to theme.

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2.1.2.11.4.3.2: New Criticism

New Criticism was a formalist movement in literary theory that dominated American literary criticism in the middle decades of the 20th century. It emphasized close reading, particularly of poetry, to discover how a work of literature functioned as a self-contained, self-referential aesthetic object. The movement derived its name from John Crowe Ransom's 1941 book *The New Criticism*. Also very influential were the critical essays of T. S. Eliot, such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Hamlet and His Problems," in which Eliot developed his notion of the "objective correlative." Eliot's evaluative judgments, such as his condemnation of Milton and Shelley, his liking for the so-called metaphysical poets and his insistence that poetry must be impersonal, greatly influenced the formation of the New Critical canon.



New Criticism developed as a reaction to the older philological and literary history schools of the US North, which, influenced by nineteenth-century German scholarship, focused on the history and meaning of individual words and their relation to foreign and ancient languages, comparative sources, and the biographical circumstances of the authors. These approaches, it was felt, tended to distract from the text and meaning of a poem and entirely neglect its aesthetic qualities in favor of teaching about external factors. On the other hand, the literary appreciation school, which limited itself to pointing out the "beauties" and morally elevating qualities of the text, was disparaged by the New Critics as too subjective and emotional. Condemning this as a version of Romanticism, they aimed for newer, systematic and objective method.[1]

New Critics believed the structure and meaning of the text were intimately connected and should not be analyzed separately. In order to bring the focus of literary studies back to analysis of the texts, they aimed to exclude the reader's response, the author's intention, historical and cultural contexts, and moralistic bias from their analysis.

The hey-day of the New Criticism in American high schools and colleges was the Cold War decades between 1950 and the mid-seventies, doubtless because it offered a relatively straightforward and politically uncontroversial approach to the teaching of literature. Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry*and *Understanding Fiction* both became staples during this era.

Studying a passage of prose or poetry in New Critical style required careful, exacting scrutiny of the passage itself. Formal elements such as rhyme, meter, setting, characterization, and plot were used to identify the theme of the text. In addition to the theme, the New Critics also looked for paradox, ambiguity,irony, and tension to help establish the single best and most unified interpretation of the text.

Although the New Criticism is no longer a dominant theoretical model in American universities, some of its methods (like close reading) are still fundamental tools of literary criticism, underpinning a number of subsequent theoretic approaches to literature including poststructuralism, deconstruction theory, and reader-response theory.

1. For an overview, see Gerald Graff, Professing Literature, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987. ↵

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2.1.2.11.4.3.3: Reading- Formalism and Content

This is an overview of some important terms related to writing about and discussing art. The term *formalism* comes from critical art theory, which resembles "aesthetics discussion." *Content* is one aspect of the artwork. This will also touch on point of view (POV), which is an important factor as we look at and discuss artworks.

Viewing Art

Personal Level

When we are looking at art, when we find or "run into" an artwork or exhibition, we typically have an initial response or impression. This response to what we see (or hear, etc.) is formed by a lifetime of knowledge and experience and the culture and time in which we live. The expression "Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder" gets at the subjective and personal nature of perception—and of the "first impression," in particular. There's nothing wrong with one's first impression or response—it is, after all, a personal response. It's *your* point of view.

Formal Analysis

Formal analysis is a close and analytical way of looking at and discussing a work of art. It includes describing the work in terms of various design elements, such as color, shape, texture, line, lighting, mass, and space, as well as a discussion of how those elements have been used (the design principles). Formal analysis moves *beyond*description of the artwork and its content by linking the elements of the work to the effects that they have on the viewer. This is discussion of the artwork from the point of view of "here is the artwork, and this is what I see and can make sense of . . ." Formal analysis uses art terminology to consider the effects of an artwork the viewer (you), and it's a process that enables us to think about and consider the overall meaning of the artwork.

NOTE: Formal analysis does not use or require research and is based on your POV. The more informed you are, the deeper your analysis will go—but that depth depends on experience and knowledge, not on research.

Content

Content is simply the the subject matter of an artwork. It's the images you see—like the trees in a painting of a forest, or the town, the sky, and the moon in Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Content can play a role in formal analysis, but the content aspect is less important than the "artwork" aspect.

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SECTION OVERVIEW

2.1.2.11.4.4: Reader-Response Theory

Learning Objectives

- Understand the theory of reader response, which focuses on the reader's reading experience.
- Apply the reader-response methodology to works of literature.
- Engage in the writing process of a peer writer, including peer review.
- Review and evaluate a variety of reader-response papers by peer writers.
- Draft and revise a reader-response paper on a literary work.

2.1.2.11.4.4.1: Reader-Response Criticism

2.1.2.11.4.4.2: Literary Snapshot- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

2.1.2.11.4.4.3: Reader-Response Theory- An Overview

2.1.2.11.4.4.4: Focus on Reader-Response Strategies

2.1.2.11.4.4.5: Reader Response- A Process Approach

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2.1.2.11.4.4.1: Reader-Response Criticism

Summary

We have examined many schools of literary criticism. Here you will find an in-depth look at one of them: Reader-Response.

The Purpose of Reader-Response

Reader-response suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a text, for only in the reading experience does the literary work come alive. For example, in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the monster doesn't exist, so to speak, until the reader reads *Frankenstein* and reanimates it to life, becoming a co-creator of the text. Thus, the purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text. Your critical reading of a text asks you to explore:

- why you like or dislike the text;
- explain whether you agree or disagree with the author;
- identify the text's purpose; and
- critique the text.

There is no right or wrong answer to a reading response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions. Do not use the standard approach of just writing: *"I liked this text because it is so cool and the ending made me feel happy," or "I hated it because it was stupid, and had nothing at all to do with my life, and was too negative and boring."* In writing a response you may assume the reader has already read the text. Thus, do not summarize the contents of the text at length. Instead, take a systematic, analytical approach to the text.

Write as a Scholar

When writing a reader-response write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars. As a beginning scholar, if you write that something has nothing to do with you or does not pass *your* "Who cares?" test, but many other people think that it is important and great, readers will probably *not* agree with you that the *text* is dull or boring. Instead, they may conclude that *you* are dull and boring, that you are too immature or uneducated to understand what important things the author wrote.

Criticize with Examples

If you did not like a text, that is fine, but criticize it either from:

- *principle*, for example:
  - Is the text racist?
  - Does the text unreasonably puts down things, such as religion, or groups of people, such as women or adolescents, conservatives or democrats, etc?
  - Does the text include factual errors or outright lies? It is too dark and despairing? Is it falsely positive?
- *form*, for example:
  - Is the text poorly written?
  - Does it contain too much verbal "fat"?
  - Is it too emotional or too childish?
  - Does it have too many facts and figures?
  - Are there typos or other errors in the text?
  - Do the ideas wander around without making a point?

In each of these cases, do not simply criticize, but give examples. As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as "confusing" or "crazy," since readers might simply conclude that *you* are too ignorant or slow to understand and appreciate it.

The Structure of a Reader-Response Essay

Choosing a text to study is the first step in writing a reader-response essay. Once you have chosen the text, your challenge is to connect with it and have a "conversation" with the text. In the beginning paragraph of your reader-response essay, be sure to mention the following:

- title of the work to which you are responding;
- the author; and
- the main thesis of the text.

Then, do your best to answer the questions below. Remember, however, that you are writing an essay, not filling out a short-answer worksheet. You do not need to work through these questions in order, one by one, in your essay. Rather, your paper as a whole should be sure to address these questions in some way.

- *What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?* It is not acceptable to write that the text has NOTHING to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human.
- *How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?* Use several quotes as examples of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use quotes and examples to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.
- *What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all? Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not?* Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write "I agree with everything the author wrote," since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.
- *How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world? How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the "Who cares?" test?* Use quotes from the text to illustrate.
- *What can you praise about the text?What problems did you have with it?* Reading and writing "critically" does not mean the same thing as "criticizing," in everyday language (complaining or griping, fault-finding, nit-picking). Your "critique" can and should be positive and praise the text if possible, as well as pointing out problems, disagreements and shortcomings.
- *How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?* Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art: a news report or textbook, for instance, may be neither entertaining or artistic, but may still be important and successful.

For the conclusion, you might want to discuss:

- your overall reaction to the text;
- whether you would read something else like this in the future;
- whether you would read something else by this author; and
- if would you recommend read this text to someone else and why.

Key Takeaways

- In reader-response, the reader is essential to the meaning of a text for they bring the text to life.
- The purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text.
- When writing a reader-response, write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars.
- As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as "boring," "crazy," or "dull." If you do criticize, base your criticism on the principles and form of the text itself.
- The challenge of a reader-response is to show how you connected with the text.

Examples

Reader-Response Essay Example

To Misread or to Rebel: A Woman's Reading of "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"

At its simplest, reading is "an activity that is guided by the text; this must be processed by the reader who is then, in turn, affected by what he has processed" (Iser 63). The text is the compass and map, the reader is the explorer. However, the explorer cannot disregard those unexpected boulders in the path which he or she encounters along the journey that are not written on the map. Likewise, the woman reader does not come to the text without outside influences. She comes with her experiences as a woman—a professional woman, a divorcée, a single mother. Her reading, then, is influenced by her experiences. So when she reads a piece of literature like "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" by James Thurber, which paints a highly negative picture of Mitty's wife, the

woman reader is forced to either misread the story and accept Mrs. Mitty as a domineering, mothering wife, or rebel against that picture and become angry at the society which sees her that way.

Due to pre-existing sociosexual standards, women see characters, family structures, even societal structures from the bottom as an oppressed group rather than from a powerful position on the top, as men do. As Louise Rosenblatt states: a reader's "tendency toward identification [with characters or events] will certainly be guided by our preoccupations at the time we read. Our problems and needs may lead us to focus on those characters and situations through which we may achieve the satisfactions, the balanced vision, or perhaps merely the unequivocal motives unattained in our own lives" (38). A woman reader who feels chained by her role as a housewife is more likely to identify with an individual who is oppressed or feels trapped than the reader's executive husband is. Likewise, a woman who is unable to have children might respond to a story of a child's death more emotionally than a woman who does not want children. However, if the perspective of a woman does not match that of the male author whose work she is reading, a woman reader who has been shaped by a male-dominated society is forced to misread the text, reacting to the "words on the page in one way rather than another because she operates according to the same set of rules that the author used to generate them" (Tompkins xvii). By accepting the author's perspective and reading the text as he intended, the woman reader is forced to disregard her own, female perspective. This, in turn, leads to a concept called "asymmetrical contingency," described by Iser as that which occurs "when Partner A gives up trying to implement his own behavioral plan and without resistance follows that of Partner B. He adapts himself to and is absorbed by the behavioral strategy of B" (164). Using this argument, it becomes clear that a woman reader (Partner A) when faced with a text written by a man (Partner B) will most likely succumb to the perspective of the writer and she is thus forced to misread the text. Or, she could rebel against the text and raise an angry, feminist voice in protest.

James Thurber, in the eyes of most literary critics, is one of the foremost American humorists of the 20th century, and his short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" is believed to have "ushered in a major [literary] period … where the individual can maintain his self … an appropriate way of assaulting rigid forms" (Elias 432). The rigid form in Thurber's story is Mrs. Mitty, the main character's wife. She is portrayed by Walter Mitty as a horrible, mothering nag. As a way of escaping her constant griping, he imagines fantastic daydreams which carry him away from Mrs. Mitty's voice. Yet she repeatedly interrupts his reveries and Mitty responds to her as though she is "grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in the crowd" (286). Not only is his wife annoying to him, but she is also distant and removed from what he cares about, like a stranger. When she does speak to him, it seems reflective of the way a mother would speak to a child. For example, Mrs. Mitty asks, "'Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?' Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again" (286). Mrs. Mitty's care for her husband's health is seen as nagging to Walter Mitty, and the audience is amused that he responds like a child and does the opposite of what Mrs. Mitty asked of him. Finally, the clearest way in which Mrs. Mitty is portrayed as a burdensome wife is at the end of the piece when Walter, waiting for his wife to exit the store, imagines that he is facing "the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last" (289). Not only is Mrs. Mitty portrayed as a mothering, bothersome hen, but she is ultimately described as that which will be the death of Walter Mitty.

Mrs. Mitty is a direct literary descendant of the first woman to be stereotyped as a nagging wife, Dame Van Winkle, the creation of the American writer, Washington Irving. Likewise, Walter Mitty is a reflection of his dreaming predecessor, Rip Van Winkle, who falls into a deep sleep for a hundred years and awakes to the relief of finding out that his nagging wife has died. Judith Fetterley explains in her book, The Resisting Reader, how such a portrayal of women forces a woman who reads "Rip Van Winkle" and other such stories "to find herself excluded from the experience of the story" so that she "cannot read the story without being assaulted by the negative images of women it presents" (10). The result, it seems, is for a woman reader of a story like "Rip Van Winkle" or "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" to either be excluded from the text, or accept the negative images of women the story puts forth. As Fetterley points out, "The consequence for the female reader is a divided self. She is asked to identify with Rip and against herself, to scorn the amiable sex and act just like it, to laugh at Dame Van Winkle and accept that she represents 'woman,' to be at once both repressor and repressed, and ultimately to realize that she is neither" (11). Thus, a woman is forced to misread the text and accept "woman as villain." as Fetterley names it, or rebel against both the story and its message.

So how does a woman reader respond to this portrayal of Mrs. Mitty? If she were to follow Iser's claim, she would defer to the male point of view presented by the author. She would sympathize with Mitty, as Thurber wants us to do, and see domineering women in her own life that resemble Mrs. Mitty. She may see her mother and remember all the times that she nagged her about zipping up her coat against the bitter winter wind. Or the female reader might identify Mrs. Mitty with her controlling mother-in-

law and chuckle at Mitty's attempts to escape her control, just as her husband tries to escape the criticism and control of his own mother. Iser's ideal female reader would undoubtedly look at her own position as mother and wife and would vow to never become such a domineering person. This reader would probably also agree with a critic who says that "Mitty has a wife who embodies the authority of a society in which the husband cannot function" (Lindner 440). She could see the faults in a relationship that is too controlled by a woman and recognize that a man needs to feel important and dominant in his relationship with his wife. It could be said that the female reader would agree completely with Thurber's portrayal of the domineering wife. The female reader could simply misread the text.

Or, the female reader could rebel against the text. She could see Mrs. Mitty as a woman who is trying to do her best to keep her husband well and cared for. She could see Walter as a man with a fleeting grip on reality who daydreams that he is a fighter pilot, a brilliant surgeon, a gun expert, or a military hero, when he actually is a poor driver with a slow reaction time to a green traffic light. The female reader could read critics of Thurber who say that by allowing his wife to dominate him, Mitty becomes a "non-hero in a civilization in which women are winning the battle of the sexes" (Hasley 533) and become angry that a woman's fight for equality is seen merely as a battle between the sexes. She could read Walter's daydreams as his attempt to dominate his wife, since all of his fantasies center on him in traditional roles of power. This, for most women, would cause anger at Mitty (and indirectly Thurber) for creating and promoting a society which believes that women need to stay subservient to men. From a male point of view, it becomes a battle of the sexes. In a woman's eyes, her reading is simply a struggle for equality within the text and in the world outside that the text reflects.

It is certain that women misread "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty." I did. I found myself initially wishing that Mrs. Mitty would just let Walter daydream in peace. But after reading the story again and paying attention to the portrayal of Mrs. Mitty, I realized that it is imperative that women rebel against the texts that would oppress them. By misreading a text, the woman reader understands it in a way that is conventional and acceptable to the literary world. But in so doing, she is also distancing herself from the text, not fully embracing it or its meaning in her life. By rebelling against the text, the female reader not only has to understand the point of view of the author and the male audience, but she also has to formulate her own opinions and create a sort of dialogue between the text and herself. Rebelling against the text and the stereotypes encourages an active dialogue between the woman and the text which, in turn, guarantees an active and (most likely) angry reader response. I became a resisting reader.

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2.1.2.11.4.4.2: Literary Snapshot- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Lewis Carroll, as we found out in previous chapters, is most famous for two books: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). These books follow the adventures of the 7–year-old, Alice, who tumbles down a rabbit hole (*Wonderland*) and enters a magic mirror (*Looking-Glass*), entering a nonsensical world of the imagination. If you have not already read these classic books—or wish to reread them—you can access them at the following links:

http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html

etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/CarGlas.html

Alice finds herself challenged to make sense of a seemingly absurd world inhabited by odd creatures. Throughout her adventures, Alice attempts to apply logic to her experiences; in other words, Alice tries to interpret and find meaning in Wonderland and Looking-Glass Land.

Alice acts like a literary critic. In previous chapters, you became like Alice—that is, you learned about a literary theory and applied that theory as you analyzed a work of literature. This chapter asks you to reimagine your role as a literary critic: you will be asked to analyze not only the text but also the role of the reader in constructing meaning. In a sense, you will be asked to be a lot like Alice, trying to figure out your reading experience as you immerse yourself in a literary creation.

Our scene comes from chapter 10, "The Lobster-Quadrille" in *Wonderland*:

"Stand up and repeat "'*'Tis the voice of the sluggard,*'" said the Gryphon.

"How the creatures order one about, and make one repeat lessons!" thought Alice; "I might as well be at school at once." However, she got up, and began to repeat it, but her head was so full of the Lobster Quadrille, that she hardly knew what she was saying, and the words came very queer indeed:—

"'Tis the voice of the Lobster; I heard him declare,

'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.'

As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose

Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes.

When the sands are all dry, he is gay as a lark,

And will talk in contemptuous tones of the Shark:

But, when the tide rises and sharks are around,

His voice has a timid and tremulous sound."

"That's different from what I used to say when I was a child," said the Gryphon.

"Well, I never heard it before," said the Mock Turtle; "but it sounds uncommon nonsense."

Alice said nothing; she had sat down with her face in her hands, wondering if anything would *ever*happen in a natural way again.

"I should like to have it explained," said the Mock Turtle.

"She can't explain it," said the Gryphon hastily. "Go on with the next verse."

"But about his toes?" the Mock Turtle persisted. "How *could* he turn them out with his nose, you know?"

"It's the first position in dancing." Alice said; but was dreadfully puzzled by the whole thing, and longed to change the subject.

"Go on with the next verse," the Gryphon repeated impatiently: "it begins '*I passed by his garden.*'"

Alice did not dare to disobey, though she felt sure it would all come wrong, and she went on in a trembling voice:—

"I passed by his garden, and marked, with one eye,

How the Owl and the Panther were sharing a pie:

The Panther took pie-crust, and gravy, and meat,

While the Owl had the dish as its share of the treat.

When the pie was all finished, the Owl, as a boon,

Was kindly permitted to pocket the spoon:

While the Panther received knife and fork with a growl,

And concluded the banquet—"

"What *is* the use of repeating all that stuff," the Mock Turtle interrupted, "if you don't explain it as you go on? It's by far the most confusing thing I ever heard!"

"Yes, I think you'd better leave off," said the Gryphon: and Alice was only too glad to do so.Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. With Forty-Two Illustrations by John Tenniel* (New York: D. Appleton, 1927; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1998), chap. 10, http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/CarAlic.html.

Alice finds herself reciting a poem about a Lobster and then continuing with a poem about an Owl and a Panther. Not only is Alice creating—that is, she makes up these poems—but she also requires the reader to finish the second poem:

While the Panther received knife and fork with a growl,

And concluded the banquet—

By eating the Owl!

"By eating the Owl!" The poem nudges the reader to complete the line by filling in the final ending to the poem: we know that the Panther will eat the Owl. Of course, a reader might complete the poem by writing, "by throwing in the towel," or "by picking up a trowel," "by running down the hall," or even "with an even greater howl." In any case, you, as the reader, have activated the text.

You have engaged in the theory of reader response.



Illustration by Sir John Tenniel for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

Reader-response theory suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a literary text, for only in the reading experience does the literary work come alive. *Frankenstein* (1818) doesn't exist, so to speak, until the reader reads *Frankenstein* and reanimates it to life, becoming a cocreator of the text.Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1831; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1994), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/SheFran.html.

Wallace Stevens's "Anecdote of the Jar."

I placed a jar in Tennessee,

And round it was, upon a hill.

It made the slovenly wilderness

Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,

And sprawled around, no longer wild.

The jar was round upon the ground

And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion every where.

The jar was gray and bare.

It did not give of bird or bush,

Like nothing else in Tennessee.

CLASS PROCESS

1. Read Wallace Stevens's "Anecdote of the Jar."Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of a Jar," University of Pennsylvania, http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/stevens-ancedote.html.
2. Write down your reading experience: What went on in your mind while you were reading the poem? Did you like the poem? Dislike it? Were you confused by the poem?
3. Jot down what you think the poem is about—the theme of the poem.
4. Break into groups of three or four. Compare your experiences with each other. Then compare your interpretations.
5. List the student-group interpretations on the blackboard, whiteboard, or other high- or low-tech medium into two categories: Experiences While Reading and Interpretation of the Poem.
6. Discuss the differences between the reading experience and the ways the students interpreted the poem.

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2.1.2.11.4.4.3: Reader-Response Theory- An Overview

Let's begin with the famous opening from Jane Austen's *Emma* (1816):"Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her."Jane Austen, *Emma* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2011).

Oh, that Emma Woodhouse. "Handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition," certainly, but also vain, proud, and a mischievous-matchmaker in those things related to love. Not much of a character to base a novel on, the reader might muse. Austen was nervous about her creation of Emma, for as she wrote in a letter: "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." Yet Austen does exactly this: in *Emma*, she creates a character that taxes the reader's patience, one the author recognizes that readers may not like.

Austen's comments on Emma point to the fact that readers identify with characters in a novel. And we can extrapolate further: readers like or dislike what they read; readers are moved to joy, anger, sadness, and so on by a literary work; and readers read literature from a personal level. For an author, this "reader response" is of utmost importance, as Austen most certainly realizes. If readers do not like Emma, do not empathize with her on some emotional level, then they will dislike the novel.

CLASS PROCESS

1. List the literary works that you were told were great or important but that you actually disliked. Your instructor should also share his or her dislikes. This should lead to a lively discussion.

You will see that "likes" and "dislikes" are important markers in reader-response theory. Here's an example: in *Letters to Alice on First Reading Jane Austen* (1984), the author, Fay Weldon, writes to her niece Alice, trying to convince her of the importance of Austen. "You tell me in passing," writes Weldon, "that you are doing a college course in English Literature, and are obliged to read Jane Austen; that you find her boring, petty and irrelevant and, that as the world is in crisis, and the future catastrophic, you cannot imagine what purpose there can be in your reading her."Fay Weldon, *Letters to Alice on First Reading Jane Austen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2011), 11. Weldon responds, "*Emma* opens with a paragraph which sends shivers of pleasure down my spine: it glitters with sheer competence: with the animation of the writer who has discovered power: who is at ease in the pathways of the City of Invention. Here is Emma, exciting envy in the heart of the reader and also, one suspects, the writer—and now, she declares, Emma will be undone; and I, the writer, and you, the reader, will share in this experience."Fay Weldon, *Letters to Alice on First Reading Jane Austen*(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2011), 96. Weldon, of course, is responding to Austen on a very personal level—on the gut level we should say—which can make one have "shivers of pleasure" or "exciting envy" or "share in this [reading] experience." What Weldon does to Austen and *Emma* is perform a reader-response interpretation.

Reader-response literary criticism recognizes the simple fact that readers respond to literature on an emotional level and that such responses are important to the understanding of the work. Long ago, even Aristotle recognized how important an audience's reaction is to tragedy, for a key to tragedy is **catharsis**, the purging of the audience's emotions. If you recall from Chapter 1, the concept of the *affective fallacy* was central to the New Critical methodology—a reader was never to confuse the interpretation of the literary work with the "feeling" she or he had while reading. These New Critics warned the reader that affective responses lead only to subjectivity; thus New Critics suggested that the reader pay close attention to the intricacies of the text under observation for meaning, for the text as a well-wrought urn contains meaning.

Reader-response critics, on the other hand, embrace the affective fallacy (what reader-response critic Stanley Fish has called the "**affective fallacy fallacy**"), for they believe that a reader's affective response is importance to criticism.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Instead of focusing on literature as a well-wrought urn, reader-response critics focus on the reader, who "completes" or "activates" the text as he or she reads. In a sense, the reader becomes the most important element in the reading process, supplanting even the author.

When you think about it, reader-response criticism makes perfect sense. How many times have you become so immersed in a work that you are oblivious to the world around you? If you like fantasy literature, you might still recall the first time you read the Harry Potter series—you were transported out of your Muggle world into the magical Hogwarts, where Harry and his friends battle the dark forces of the one we should not name. How many of you stood in line to get your copy of the latest Harry Potter novel at midnight? Or camped out at the theater to be one of the first to see the final installment of *The Deathly Hallows*? There may even

be a few of you who are not Potter fans, but be warned—don't share those thoughts too readily! A case point: one of the editors of this textbook, John Pennington, found this out quite clearly. He teaches a general-education course called Science Fiction and Fantasy, which attracts die-hard fans of these popular forms of fiction. When the first volume of the Harry Potter series came out, he was approached by a student, who told him that this was the best fantasy literature since J. R. R. Tolkien, maybe even better. Quite a claim, and one that came from a very intelligent student who clearly was excited about *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*! However, Pennington found that he did not enjoy the novel as much as his student had. So he read the next volume, and the next, and…you get the picture. To put it bluntly, he wasn't that impressed with the Harry Potter series. He eventually published an article in *The Lion and the Unicorn*, a critical journal that focuses on children's literature. In that article, he critiques the Harry Potter series as ineffective—shall we say, "failed"—fantasy literature.John Pennington, "From Elfland to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter," *The Lion and the Unicorn* 26, no. 1 (2002): 78–97, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lion_and_the_unicorn/toc/uni26.1.html.

Over the years, he has received emails from students who are doing research papers on Harry Potter. To demonstrate that literature is often read with passion, read the following e-mail to John Pennington, which he received from a student who was doing such a research paper:

Hello, Professor Pennington. My name is Emily. I'm a senior English major at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX.

For my honors thesis, I have been doing research on fantasy literature (I'm making a comparison of magical and fantastic creatures in American and British literature) and in my search, I stumbled across your piece "From Elfland to Hogwarts, or the Aesthetic Trouble with Harry Potter." I won't lie to you, I am an avid Harry Potter fan. I am the president of the St. Mary's Harry Potter club, called Dumbledore's Army.

Mary's Harry Potter club, called Dumbledore's Army. I was just wondering if your feelings about certain aspects of the Harry Potter series have changed now that all the books have been released? I definitely agreed with some of your opinions and arguments (even as a little girl reading the books I made the connection between Tolkien/Rowling and Lewis/Rowling), but there are also instances in which I feel you were being too harsh. For instance, you said that while Voldemort was clearly the representation of the archetype for evil, there was none for good. I disagree. I don't believe that the figure for good needs to be a person or being at all. Instead, in the case of the Harry Potter, the symbol of the good archetype is love. Although, arguably, good and love could be seen as synonyms in some cases (through the right analytic lens), I think that love's manifestations in the Harry Potter series are what truly combats Voldemort (rather than Harry's attempts at battle—another aspect I, and indeed Harry, agree with you on: all he had was luck) and therefore become the figure of good.

I did find your piece helpful for my research and I do plan to read more of your published works in the future.

One other question: Do you often get e-mails from people who are disgruntled by your criticism of the Potter series? I would imagine the answer is yes.

Thank you for your time.

—Emily Bryant-Mundschau

One should not do battle with Dumbledore's Army! In a follow-up email, where John admited to Emily that his critical views of Harry Potter had not really changed, he also added that he was a little disappointed that Rowling had indicated in an interview about her first novel for adults—The Casual Vacancy (2012)—that she didn't see herself as a role model for children. Emily responded: "If it hadn't been for getting a copy of The Sorcerer's Stone in the 3rd grade, I may not be an English major now. I think a lot of the English majors of my generation are proof that she is a role model for children. Also, I think she must be intentionally ignoring the fact that there is a Harry Potter amusement park…how could kids not adore her?" Emily and John, interestingly, were acting as both critic and fan (or nonfan in John's case). In other words, readers are to a degree torn between the role of being an objective critic and a subjective fan, a tension that reader-response theory can help explain. Some publishers, in fact, concentrate on critical works on Harry Potter, creating a critical industry that extolls the virtues of the Harry Potter series. Winged Lion/Zossima Press is just one example, and the titles highlight how scholarly investigation becomes fused with personal enthusiasm for the books.



Book covers courtesy of Winged Lion/Zossima Press.

But there's a flip side to the "positive" reading experience, too. How many times have you become so irritated by a work—or by a piece of criticism!—that you failed to finish it or dreaded every second while you were between the pages? Some may never develop a "taste" for Henry James, for example. And as much as you might admire *Moby-Dick* (1851) by Herman Melville, you must admit that the so-called cetological center does tax a reader's patience.

Your Process

1. List your three favorite works of literature and write a short paragraph for each explaining why you like them so much.
2. Now do the same for your three least favorite works. Why do you dislike them?
3. Do you notice any patterns in the works you like and dislike? Why do you suppose you feel the way you do about these works?
4. Are there any works that you disliked upon initial reading but grew to like later? Or works you initially loved but now find tiring? Explain.
5. Choose either one of the likes or dislikes and consider using the work as the text for your reader-response paper. The following are some key guiding questions you can ask after reading the overview of the types of reader-response theory: Why do I like or dislike this work so much? How do I read this work in a way that might explain my attitude toward the work? Does the work touch on—or challenge—my identity theme? Does my reading connect to an interpretive community? Does my gender, race, class, sexual orientation, or another aspect of my identity have anything to do with my response?

CLASS PROCESS

1. List your favorite literary works that you read primarily as a fan.
2. Does this fan favorite hold up to critical scrutiny? Why or why not?
3. How do you negotiate this tension between being a fan and a critic?

4. Have your instructor list these fan favorites on the board.
5. Discuss the tension between fan and critic using these examples.
6. Choose either one of the likes or dislikes you listed and consider using the work as the text for your reader-response essay. The following are some key guiding questions you can ask after reading the overview of the types of reader-response theory: Why do I like or dislike this work so much? How do I read this work in a way that may explain my attitude toward the work? Does the work touch on—or challenge—my identity theme? Does my reading connect to an interpretive community? Does my gender, race, class, sexual orientation, or another aspect of my identity have anything to do with my response?

Now that we have acknowledged the fact that personal responses are an important component to the reading process—and to all literary discussion—we can begin learning about the variety of reader responses. As a New Critic, you remember, you scrutinized the text carefully; as a reader-response critic you will discover how your personal likes and dislikes shape your interpretation of a work.

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2.1.2.11.4.4.4: Focus on Reader-Response Strategies

Reader-response strategies can be categorized, according to Richard Beach in *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* (1993), into five types: **textual**, **experiential**, **psychological**, **social**, and **cultural**.Richard Beach, *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993). Let's review those categories.

Textual Reader-Response Strategies

Performing a close reading of a text teaches you to look "closely" at the way a text operates and to glean some meaning from the workings of the text. In other words, your interpretation is primarily directed by the text. Textual reader-response approaches admit to the fact that the text does influence the way readers read and construct meaning. Thus the reader and text interact in the process of formulating a meaning of the text. Imagine a text as a painting in an art gallery: your interpretation of the painting will be based on whether you like it or not, but this reaction will be directed by the painting itself. Or consider a literary text as a musical composition; as a listener, you are moved by the music, but you must relate the music to some experience to make it work emotionally on you. Another metaphor: a text is like an unfinished sculpture; the reader must bring the finished form to the work. Thus to textual reader-response critics, the text directs interpretation as the reader directs the text to interpretation.

Literature as Transaction: Gap Filling and Ghost Chapters

A pioneer in reader-response criticism is Louise Rosenblatt, whose *Literature as Exploration* (5th ed., 1995) provided an alternative theory to the persistent New Critical approaches that gained such popularity. Rosenblatt contends that literature must become personal for it to have its full impact on the reader;Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 5th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1995). in fact, New Criticism's affective fallacy prevents the reader from engaging the text on any personal level. Rosenblatt's approach, like the New Critical reading methods, provides a classroom strategy; however, whereas the New Critics centered on the literary text, Rosenblatt centers on the reader.

Rosenblatt believes readers transact with the text by bringing in their past life experiences to help interpret the text.Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 5th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1995). Reading literature becomes an event—the reader activates the work through reading. Rosenblatt argues that any literary text allows for an **efferent reading**, which is what the reader believes should be retained after the reading; the **aesthetic reading**, on the other hand, is what the reader experiences while reading.Louise Rosenblatt, *Literature as Exploration*, 5th ed. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1995). The aesthetic reading accounts for the changes in a reader's attitude toward a literary work. Rosenblatt's theory provides for a process of reading that leads to discussion and interpretation: a reader transacts with a literary text during the reading process, focusing on the aesthetic response while reading. After reading, then, the reader reflects on the aesthetic response and compares it to the textual evidence and other interpretations. In a way, literary interpretation is more focused on the transaction—the process of reading—than on an interpretation of a particular work.

Another important reader-response theorist is Wolfgang Iser, who complements Rosenblatt. Iser believes that a literary work has meaning once a reader engages in the text.Wolfgang Iser, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Text*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979).According to Iser, every literary work is balanced by two poles, the **artistic** and the **esthetic poles**, roughly corresponding to Rosenblatt's efferent and aesthetic readings. For Iser, the artistic pole is that created by the author; the esthetic pole is that realized or completed by the reader.Wolfgang Iser, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Text*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979). Since a literary work is caught between these two poles, its meaning resides in the gap between these poles; the primary quality of a text is its indeterminacy. A textual critic, Iser recognizes that the text—the artistic pole—guides the reader who resides in the esthetic pole. He distinguishes between the **implied reader**, one the text creates for itself, and the **actual reader**, the reader who brings "things" to the text.Wolfgang Iser, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Text*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979). Consequently, there exists a gap between the implied and actual reader, and between the artistic and esthetic poles. The reader, then, must perform gap filling to concretize the text. Umberto Eco, another reader-response critic, takes gap filling even further, arguing that readers write ghost chapters for texts as a way to understand the transaction that happens between the text and reader.Umberto Eco, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach." in *Reader-Response Criticism from Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. ed by Jane P. Tompkins. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980) pgs. 50–69.

As you can see, Iser's textual reader-response criticism is based on his contention that the reader concretizes the text—gives it meaning—while the text necessarily guides this concretization. Consequently, a literary text operates by indeterminacy; it has gaps that the reader attempts to fill.

Transaction: The Rhetoric of Fiction

Another pioneer in reader-response criticism is Wayne Booth, who in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961; revised edition 1983) analyzes the way literature engages us through its language, or rhetoric.Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Booth shows readers how authors manipulate them into seeing things they have never seen before. Booth's most important contributions to reader-response criticism (and literary criticism in general) are his concepts of the implied author (or narrator) and the unreliable narrator, and how these force us to confront reading as an ethical act.

The **implied author**—the narrative voice the author creates in a work—is the most important artistic effect: in a sense, the implied author directs the reader's reaction to the literary work, guiding—or sometimes forcing—the reader to react on an emotional level since the implied author brings his or her ethical principles to the text. By directing the reader's interpretation, the implied author limits the reader's response while forcing the reader to react to the implied author.

For example, Booth contends that the implied author in *Emma* recognizes that the reader must be able to empathize and like Emma; if not, the novel will fail.Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). Thus Austen creates an implied author—the narrator—who controls our perception of Emma by creating a character the reader can empathize with, laugh at when appropriate, and condemn when needed. Since the implied author becomes like a friend and guide, we as readers can rely on the narrative voice to guide us.

Booth recognizes that while a text's implied author may be reliable, the work may still have an **unreliable narrator**. The narrator in Jonathan Swift's "Modest Proposal" seems perfectly reliable and in control until we realize that his proposal to alleviate the poverty of the Ireland is to raise babies as edible delicacies!Jonathan Swift, "Modest Proposal" (London: 1729; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 2004), etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/SwiMode.html. Or think of the first-person narrators of Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) or J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951).J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (London: Little, Brown, 1951). An unreliable narrator requires the author and reader to engage in a special bond whereby they acknowledge that the narrator cannot be trusted; in a way, then, the reader and author engage in a transaction by recognizing the limited view of the unreliable implied author. The unreliable narrator, ultimately, forces the reader to respond on some moral plane.

By appealing to the moral qualities of the reader, Booth provides a framework for an **ethics of reading** that he defines in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988). Using Rosenblatt's distinction between the efferent and aesthetic reading, Booth argues that the reader must carry over the efferent reading into the aesthetic, for the efferent reading requires us to compare our personal experience and moral beliefs with the narrative.Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Since a literary work takes us over for the duration of the reading experience, an ethics of reading will require the reader to eventually judge the ethical dimension to a work. **Nonce beliefs** are the beliefs the narrator and reader embrace only during the reading. **Fixed norms** are the beliefs on which the entire literary work depends for effect but also are applicable to the real world. As an example, Booth uses Aesop's fables, for a talking animal relates to our nonce beliefs—the talking animal is acknowledged as essential to the narrative—when the fixed norms will entail the moral that concludes the fable. Thus the nonce and fixed beliefs require a transaction between reader and work. Booth suggests that an ethics of reading becomes a two-stage process: (1) the reader must surrender fully to the reading experience and then (2) the reader must contemplate the reading experience from an ethical perspective (which depends on the reader's own moral stance).Wayne Booth, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). In other words, we should keep company with the literary work and maintain an open mind until we conclude that the work might be harmful to us—or be in conflict with our moral beliefs. As you can see, Booth's ethics of reading is determined by the reader's moral makeup, which is dependent on a specific time and reading experience. It is open to change.

Kate Chopin's "The Storm" (1898) is a good example of this."Kate Chopin 'The Storm,'" The Kate Chopin International Society, http://www.katechopin.org/the-storm.shtml. In the story, a married woman has a passionate affair one afternoon with an acquaintance who by chance comes to her house to escape a storm. Their relationship is set up in an earlier story, "At the Cadian Ball" (1892), Chopin presents the affair as a natural impulse; the ending of the story tells us that both parties are happy and

content.Kate Chopin, “At the ’Cadian Ball,” in *The Awakening, and Selected Stories*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert (New York: Penguin, 1984). While in the company of “The Storm,” you will respond to the story itself as it occupies you, yet after your reading you will complete the reading by bringing your ethics into play: do you reject the story because it does not condemn adultery? Do you embrace the story because of its honest depiction of sexual passion?

Booth’s brand of textual reader-response criticism is a valuable tool for readers since he provides a textual model of reading—the implied author who is reliable and unreliable—that embraces the ethical dimension of the reader, who must transact with the literary work.

Textual reader-response criticism, as exemplified by Rosenblatt, Booth, and Iser, is a powerful literary critical tool to use when analyzing texts. Using some conventions of New Criticism, these critics are able to show how text and reader can simultaneously be active during the reading process.

Your Process

1. Read the following fable by Aesop:

THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. “I have never yet been beaten,” said he, “when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me.”

The Tortoise said quietly, “I accept your challenge.”

“That is a good joke,” said the Hare; “I could dance round you all the way.”

“Keep your boasting till you’ve beaten,” answered the Tortoise. “Shall we race?”

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap. The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then said the Tortoise: “Plodding wins the race.”Aesop, “The Hare and the Tortoise,” *Aesop’s Fables*, http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk/aesop-fable-the-hare-and-the-tortoise.htm.

2. Use Booth’s notions of fixed and nonce beliefs to examine how you will respond to the moral of the fable. Does plodding win the race in your value system?
3. Are there gaps in the narrative that you filled in to make sense of the narrative? What were they? Can you apply Rosenblatt’s and Iser’s notions of how readers complete the text?

Experiential Reader Response

Experiential reader-response critics like Stanley Fish are unlike the textual reader-response critics in one very important aspect—they emphasize the reader’s reading process over the literary work. Fish calls this kind of reader response **affective stylistics**, reminding us of the “affect” that literature has on us and of the New Critical affective fallacy that rejected any emotional response a reader might have to a literary work.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). To Fish, then, affective stylistics is the experience the reader has while reading, which he defines as a three-fold process:

1. Readers surrender themselves to the text, letting the text wash over them; in fact, at this stage, readers should not be concerned with trying to understand what the work is about.
2. Readers next concentrate on their reading responses while reading, seeing how each word, each sentence, each paragraph elicits a response.
3. Finally, readers should describe the reading experience by structuring their reading responses, which may be in conflict with the common interpretation of a work.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Fish’s thesis is seductive, for when we read, we are constantly reacting to our reading, connecting it to our personal lives, to other literary works we have read, and to our reading experience at that particular reading moment. Sometimes we will love to read;

other times we dread it. In *Surprised by Sin*, Fish examines how the reader is affected by a reading of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), that epic poem that describes the fall of Adam and Eve.John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/MilPL67.html.Fish argues that the reading experience of *Paradise Lost* mirrors the actual Fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

As intriguing as Fish's affective stylistics may be, the reality is that readers often agree on meaning; that is, they tend to see similar things in the same text. A textual reader-response critic would argue that the text—through its transaction with the reader—leads to such common interpretation, but Fish is interested in another possibility—that we are trained to find similar meanings. He calls this idea **interpretive communities**. To Fish, then, a reader of an interpretive community brings a meaning *to* the text because he or she is trained to.Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). A student in a modernist poetry class, for example, would interpret Wallace Stevens's "Anecdote of the Jar" in terms of modernism and the poetic movements in modernism and be at ease making claims about the poem's meaning. Literary theory, which you are learning as you work your way through this text, also demonstrates the interpretive community. If you are intrigued by Freudian psychoanalytic criticism, you will find Freudian meanings in the works that you are reading; likewise, a feminist critic will find gender issues when reading. Another way to understand interpretive communities is to note that the American legal system has embraced the idea of interpretive communities in jury selection: for example, if a defense attorney who is representing a college student in an underage drinking case can get members on the jury who agree that the drinking age should be lowered to nineteen, then the jury may have already interpreted the evidence in light of their beliefs and will find the student not guilty.

Experiential reader response acknowledges that reading is a subjective process and attempts to understand how to analyze such subjective responses.

Sonnet 127

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slandered with a bastard shame:
For since each hand hath put on Nature's power,
Fairing the foul with Art's false borrowed face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' eyes are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Sland'ring creation with a false esteem:
Yet so they mourn becoming of their woe,
That every tongue says beauty should look so.

Your Process

1. Read the Sonnet 127 from Shakespeare.William Shakespeare, "Sonnet 127," in *Sonnets* (1609; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1992), etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/mo...c/ShaSonQ.html. As you read, jot down what is going on in your mind. Do you try to make sense of the poem while reading? Do you become frustrated while reading? Do certain words evoke feelings?
2. Have you read other sonnets by Shakespeare? If so, what do you remember about them? Did you bring your knowledge of the sonnets to the reading of this one? Did you read the poem coming from a particular interpretive community?

3. How did your interpretive community shape your interpretation of the poem? What ideas from your community did you bring in interpreting the poem?

Psychological Reader Response

When we read, we are continually connecting the text to our lives, almost as if the literary work is speaking to us personally. Psychological reader response helps us better understand this phenomenon.

Subjective Analysis

Often called **subjective criticism**, this form of reader-response criticism is championed by David Bleich, who believes that a reader's response becomes the text itself, ripe for analysis (or psychoanalysis). To Bleich, a literary text comprises a real entity—the text, the words on the page, which is a concrete object—and our interpretation of the concrete text, which can be seen as a symbolic object. We "resymbolize" the text through our perceptions and beliefs. Meaning, then, is negotiated: our reading response (highly personal) is often brought to a larger body (communal) to discuss the meaning of a piece of literature. The classroom is a perfect example: you are assigned to read something, you read it and develop a personal interpretation, and then you share that interpretation with the class; ultimately, the class creates a more communal interpretation. In subjective criticism, knowledge is seen as socially constructed from the interaction of all readers; thus, interpretation is seen as personal, yet communal, the common element being that reading is subjective. The transaction that happens in subjective criticism is between the personal reader-oriented response statement and the more public-oriented response statement, which reflects the themes in the text.

Subjective criticism focuses on the negotiation for meaning—your view is not wrong if it is based on some objective reading of the text.

Identity Analysis

Norman Holland's approach to reader response follows in the footsteps of subjective criticism. According to Holland, people deal with texts the same way they deal with life. Holland would say that we gravitate toward particular literary works because they speak to our inner—our psychological—needs. In other words, each reader has an identity that we can analyze, which will open up the literary text to personal interpretation based on a reader's identity. Thus we use the term "**identity analysis**" to describe the form of psychological reader-response criticism that suggests that we are drawn to literary works that speak to our psychological needs—conversely, we are repelled or troubled by works that do not meet our needs.

These identity needs are often repressed in the unconscious and are in need of an outlet, which is provided by reading. When reading, then, we can engage our repressed desires or needs. Why do we read fantasy literature? Romance literature? Thrillers? Self-help books? Science fiction? Reading becomes a personal way to cope with life.

This coping process is interpretation, for literature exposes more about the reader than about the text itself. Holland believes that each reader has an "**identity theme**," a pattern of defense that he or she brings to a text. In turn, we gravitate to texts that tend to reinforce our identity themes and our needs. The contrary is also true: we will avoid texts that challenge our identity or threaten our psychological needs. When we read a text, we see ourselves reflected back at us. Holland calls this transactional process **DEFT**: we read in **d**efense (a coping strategy that aligns with our **e**xpectations) that leads to **f**antasy (our ability to find gratification) and finally to **t**ransformation (that leads to a total unifying effect for the reader).

Your Process

1. List the literary works that you have read multiple times.
2. Why do you return to these works?
3. Do they reflect issues that connect to your life? Can you venture to define your identity theme?
4. Are there literary works you dislike? Why? Do these dislikes have anything to do with your identity theme?

Social Reader Response

Often referred to as "reception theory," social reader response is interested in how a literary work is received over time. In fact, the status of a literary work is dependent on the reader's reception of the work. Hans Robert Jauss, a key figure in "reception theory," argues that the history of the reader is as important as the history of the literary work; in fact, the reader's evolving interpretation is

at the heart of the changing literary status.Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic Reception*. Tans. Timothy Baht. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). To Jauss, every literary work continually evolves as the reader's reception modifies according to the reader's needs.

A classic example from nineteenth-century American literature is *Moby-Dick* (1851), now considered one of the greatest—if not the greatest—American novel ever written.Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale* (1952; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Mel2Mob.html. Andrew Delbanco titles the first chapter of his book *Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now* (1997) "Melville's Sacramental Style," which brings an almost religious fervor to the importance of Melville generally and *Moby-Dick* specifically.Andrew Delbanco, *Required Reading: Why Our American Classics Matter Now* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1997). But this has not always been the case. Contemporary reviews of *Moby-Dick* were mixed, but many were quite unfavorable; these tainted Melville's reputation and made it difficult for him to continue as a successful author. Melville.org has compiled a collection of contemporary reviews, one of which we reprint here:

Thrice unlucky Herman Melville!…

This is an odd book, professing to be a novel; wantonly eccentric; outrageously bombastic; in places charmingly and vividly descriptive. The author has read up laboriously to make a show of cetalogical [*sic*] learning…Herman Melville is wise in this sort of wisdom. He uses it as stuffing to fill out his skeleton story. Bad stuffing it makes, serving only to try the patience of his readers, and to tempt them to wish both him and his whales at the bottom of an unfathomable sea…

The story of this novel scarcely deserves the name…Mr. Melville cannot do without savages so he makes half of his *dramatis personae* wild Indians, Malays, and other untamed humanities… What the author's original intention in spinning his preposterous yarn was, it is impossible to guess; evidently, when we compare the first and third volumes, it was never carried out…

Having said so much that may be interpreted as a censure, it is right that we should add a word of praise where deserved. There are sketches of scenes at sea, of whaling adventures, storms, and ship-life, equal to any we have ever met with…

Mr. Herman Melville has earned a deservedly high reputation for his performances in descriptive fiction. He has gathered his own materials, and travelled along fresh and untrodden literary paths, exhibiting powers of no common order, and great originality. The more careful, therefore, should he be to maintain the fame he so rapidly acquired, and not waste his strength on such purposeless and unequal doings as these rambling volumes about spermaceti whales. [ellipses in original]"Contemporary Criticism and Reviews," The Life and Works of Herman Melville, http://www.melville.org/hmmoby.htm#Contemporary.

—*London Literary Gazette*, December 6, 1851

Many critics felt that *Moby-Dick* was a falling off of Melville's talent, and that view remained for the rest of Melville's life.

Why the change in reputation? Critics started reassessing *Moby-Dick*, scholars tell us, in 1919, and by 1930 the novel was frequently taught in college classrooms, thus cementing its critical reputation. In 1941 F. O. Mathiessen, in *American Renaissance*, placed Melville as a central writer in the nineteenth century.F. O. Mathieson, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941). In addition, the rise of literary theory that focused on race, class, and gender led to new revisionist readings of Melville; more recently, queer theory has argued that *Moby-Dick* is a central text in gay and lesbian literature.

Another example is Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998). Hurston was a popular author in America, but contemporary writers like Richard Wright and Langston Hughes were critical of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* because it seemed far away from the "protest fiction" other African American writers (mainly men) were publishing. Here is an excerpt from Richard Wright:

Miss Hurston seems to have no desire whatever to move in the direction of serious fiction… [ellipses in original]

Their Eyes Were Watching God is the story of Zora Neale Hurston's Janie who, at sixteen, married a grubbing farmer at the anxious instigation of her slave-born grandmother. The romantic Janie, in the highly-charged language of Miss Hurston, longed to be a pear tree in blossom and have a "dust-bearing bee sink into the sanctum of a bloom; the thousand sister-calyxes arch to meet the love embrace." Restless, she fled from her farmer husband and married Jody, an up-and-coming Negro business man who, in the end, proved to be no better than her first husband. After twenty years of clerking for her self-made Jody, Janie found herself a frustrated

widow of forty with a small fortune on her hands. Tea Cake, “from in and through Georgia,” drifted along and, despite his youth, Janie took him. For more than two years they lived happily; but Tea Cake was bitten by a mad dog and was infected with rabies. One night in a canine rage Tea Cake tried to murder Janie, thereby forcing her to shoot the only man she had ever loved.

Miss Hurston can write, but her prose is cloaked in that facile sensuality that has dogged Negro expression since the days of Phillis Wheatley. Her dialogue manages to catch the psychological movements of the Negro folk-mind in their pure simplicity, but that’s as far as it goes.

Miss Hurston *voluntarily* continues in her novel the tradition which was *forced* upon the Negro in the theatre, that is, the minstrel technique that makes the “white folks” laugh. Her characters eat and laugh and cry and work and kill; they swing like a pendulum eternally in that safe and narrow orbit in which America likes to see the Negro live: between laughter and tears.“Their Eyes Are Watching Their Eyes Were Watching God,” University of Virginia, http://people.virginia.edu/~sfr/enam854/summer/hurston.html.

Thanks to these unfavorable reviews, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* became a forgotten text, and it remained so until Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple* and many other works, wrote an essay in *Ms. Magazine*, “In Search of Zora Neale Hurston,” that recounts her search for Hurston’s grave in Eatonville, Florida. Walker eventually bought a grave marker for Hurston’s grave, which reflects the beginning of Hurston’s reputation as a great American novelist.Alice Walker, “Finding Zora,” *Ms. Magazine*, March 1975, 74–75. Now *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Hurston are featured in Delbanco’s study on the American classics.

CLASS PROJECT: RECEPTION REVIEW

1. Choose a popular literary text. *The New York Times Best Seller List* is a great place to start.
2. Find three reviews of that work. You can find reviews by using a search engine—Google, for example—and if your library has *Book Review Digest* or *Book Review Index*, these are important databases.
3. Write a short paper that briefly summarizes each review and then comment on the reviews. Do the reviewers agree on the book in their reviews? If not, explore the differences.

Cultural Reader Response

Cultural reader response acknowledges that readers will bring their personal background to the reading of a text. What is that background? A variety of markers, including gender, race, sexual orientation, even political affiliation compose someone’s background. In other words, as readers we may interpret a literary work in light of where we are situated in society.

For example, gender is key to the way that readers respond to a literary work. See Amy Ferdinandt’s response to James Thurber’s “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” later in the chapter. Do men and women read differently? Some may say, “Yes.” An important text to highlight women’s reading experiences is Janice Radway’s *Reading the Romance* (1984).Jane Radway, *Reading the Romance*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). Radway examines why women readers gravitate to the romance novel. Radway’s ideas, for example, could be applied to Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* series, a romance series about a young woman, Bella Swan, who falls in love with a vampire, Edward Cullen, but who is also attracted to a werewolf, Jacob Black.Stephenie Meyer, *The Twilight Saga Collection* (London: Little, Brown, 2009). The target audience for *Twilight* is adolescent girls, and it is unusual for boys to read *Twilight*. Why? *Harry Potter*, on the other hand, appeals to both male and female readers, as does Suzanne Collins’s *Hunger Games* trilogy.Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games Trilogy* (New York: Scholastic, 2010). Another useful text to look at is *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts and Contexts* (1986), edited by Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart.Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocinio P. Schweickart, eds., *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

Another example to highlight culture and reading can be seen in Alan Gribben’s NewSouth edition of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn* (2011). This controversial edition replaces the “n-word” in *Huckleberry Finn* with the word *slave*; in *Tom Sawyer*, Gribben eliminates any derogatory language that refers to Native Americans and replaces Twain’s use of “half-breed” to, as Gribben writes, “‘half-blood,’ which is less disrespectful and has even taken on a degree of panache since J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2005).”Mark Twain, *Mark Twain’s Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn: The NewSouth Edition*, ed. Alan Gribben (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth, 2011); J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (New York: Scholastic, 2005). Gribben acknowledges that Twain’s language can be seen as derogatory toward ethnic groups, which might preclude them from reading the texts.Mark Twain, *Mark Twain’s Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn: The NewSouth Edition*, ed. Alan Gribben (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth, 2011). Critics argue that changing one word for another, as in

Huckleberry Finn, doesn't address the complexity of race issues in Twain. For a fascinating discussion of race regarding Twain, see the Bedford's Case Study in Critical Controversy edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*(second ed., 2004), edited by Gerald Graff and James Phelan. In the unit on race, the editors provide a variety of interpretations of Twain's use of the "n-word," which highlights the complexity of race in reading.Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, 2nd ed., ed. Gerald Graff and James Phelan (Boston: Bedford, 2003).

As you can see, cultural reader response takes seriously how a literary work might evoke a particular response from a reader based on his or her gender, race, class status, sexual orientation, and so forth, and how a reader might bring a reading strategy based on his or her identity.

Your Process

1. Write a journal or blog entry that explores your cultural position as a reader.
2. Does your gender, race, religion, politics, sexual orientation, and/or another cultural marker partly determine what you read and how you read literary works? Give at least two concrete examples.

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2.1.2.11.4.4.5: Reader Response- A Process Approach

Reader response is a powerful literary method that is refreshing since it allows you to concentrate on yourself as a reader specifically or on readers generally.

1. Carefully *read the work* you will analyze.
2. *Formulate a general question* after your initial reading that identifies a problem—a tension—that is fruitful for discussion and that.
3. *Reread the work*, paying particular attention to the question you posed. *Take notes*, which should be focused on your central question. *Write an exploratory journal entry* or *blog post* that allows you to play with ideas.
4. *Construct a working thesis* that makes a claim about the work and accounts for the following:
    1. What does the work mean?
    2. How does reader-response theory add meaning?
    3. "So what" is significant about the work? That is, why is it important for you to write about this work? What will readers learn from reading your interpretation?
5. *Reread the text to gather textual evidence* for support. What literary devices are used to achieve the theme?
6. *Construct an informal outline* that demonstrates how you will support your interpretation.
7. *Write a first draft.*
8. *Receive feedback* from peers and your instructor via *peer review* and *conferencing* with your instructor (if possible).
9. *Revise the paper*, which will include revising your original thesis statement and restructuring your paper to best support the thesis. Note: You probably will revise many times, so it is important to receive feedback at every draft stage if possible.
10. *Edit and proofread* for correctness, clarity, and style.

We recommend that you follow this process for every paper that you write from this textbook. Of course, these steps can be modified to fit your writing process, but the plan does ensure that you will engage in a thorough reading of the text as you work through the writing process, which demands that you allow plenty of time for reading, reflecting, writing, reviewing, and revising.

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2.1.2.11.4.5: Postmodernism

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2.2: Qualitative Methods

Qualitative research methodologies draw much of their approach from the social sciences, particularly the fields of Anthropology, Sociology, and Social-Psychology. If you've ever wished you could truly capture and describe the essence of an experience you have had, you understand the goal of qualitative research methods. Rather than statistically analyzing data, or evaluating and critiquing messages, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the subjective lived-experience of those they study. In other words, how can we come to a more rich understanding of how people communicate?

Steps for Doing Qualitative Research

Qualitative approaches break from traditional research ideals developed in the physical sciences. As a result, the steps for conducting qualitative research vary from the seven basic steps outlined above.



1. Planning is the first step for qualitative research. (Lindlof 176). You might want to study the communication of registered nurses. Obviously, the topic "the communication of registered nurses" is too large so careful planning in regards to who should be the focus of study, in what context, what research questions should be asked, etc. are all part of the initial planning of research.
2. Getting in is the second step of qualitative research (Lindlof). Because qualitative research usually focuses on human communication in real-world settings, researchers must gain access to the people and contexts they wish to study. For example, would you want an audio or video recording of your interaction with a physician as you tell him/her your medical problems (DiMatteo, Robinson, Heritage, Tabbarah, & Fox; Barry)?
3. Observing and learning make up the third step of qualitative research. For example, researchers must decide whether or not to reveal themselves to those they are studying. A researcher may choose to conduct interviews, look at communication artifacts, observe communication as it occurs, write field-notes, and/or audio or video record communication. Each of these choices has an impact on the outcomes of the research.
4. Analyze what you have observed. There are exhaustive methods for examining and analyzing qualitative data. Issues of right versus wrong ways of analysis can be addressed by recognizing that the goal of qualitative research is not to generalize findings to everyone, but to share the lived experiences of those who are researched.
5. Share conclusions of the research. Again, research should be shared with others so they can gain a greater understanding of the lived-experience of those researched.

In an attempt to define qualitative methods Thomas Lindlof states that qualitative research examines the "form and content of human behavior…to analyze its qualities, rather than subject it to mathematical or other formal transformations" (21). Anderson and Meyer state that qualitative methods, "do not rest their evidence on the logic of mathematics, the principle of numbers, or the methods of statistical analysis" (247). Dabbs says that qualitative research looks at the quality of phenomena while quantitative methods measure quantities and/or amounts. In qualitative research researchers are interested in the, "what, how, when, and where of a thing….[looking for] the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things" (Berg 2-3). Data collection comes in the form of words or pictures (Neuman 28). As Kaplan provides a very simple way of defining qualitative research when he says, "if you can measure it, that ain't it" (206).

Types of Qualitative Methods

While qualitative research sounds simple, it can be a "messy" process because things do not always go as planned. One way to make qualitative research "cleaner" is to be familiar with, and follow, the various established qualitative methods available for studying human communication.

- **Ethnography**. Ethnography is arguably the most recognized and common method of qualitative research in Communication. Ethnography "places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study. From this vantage, researchers can examine various phenomena as perceived by participants and represent these observations" to others (Berg 148). Ethnographers try to understand the communicative acts of people as they occur in their actual communicative environments. One way to think of this is the idea of learning about a new culture by immersing oneself in that culture. While there are many strategies for conducting ethnography, the idea is that a researcher must enter the environment of those under study to observe and understand their communication.
- **Focus Group Interviewing**. Researchers who use focus group interviewing meet with groups of people to understand their communication characteristics. (Berg). These interviews foster an environment for participants to discuss particular topics of interest to the group and/or researcher. While we are all familiar with the numbers that we encounter in political polls, every so often television news organizations will conduct focus group interviews to find out how particular groups actually feel about, and experience, the political process as a citizen. This is an applied version of focus group research techniques and provides insight into the ways various groups understand and enact their realities.
- **Action Research**. A qualitative method whose intended outcome is social change is action research. Action research seeks to create positive social change through "a highly reflective, experiential, and participatory mode of research in which all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subject alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research enterprise" (Berg 196; Wadsworth). The goal of action research is to provide information that is useful to a particular group of people that will empower the members of that group to create change as a result of the research (Berg). An example of action research might be when researchers study the teaching strategies of teachers in the classroom. Typically, teachers involve themselves in the research and then use the findings to improve their teaching methods. If you've ever had a professor who had unique styles of teaching, it is likely that he/she may have been involved in research that examined new approaches to teaching students.



- **Unobtrusive Research**. Another method for conducting qualitative research is unobtrusive research. As Berg points out, “to some extent, all the unobtrusive strategies amount to examining and assessing human traces” (209). We can learn a great deal about the behavior of others by examining the traces humans leave behind as they live their lives. In a research class offered at our university, for instance, students investigated the content of graffiti written in university bathrooms. Because our campus has an environmentally conscious culture, much of the graffiti in bathrooms reflects this culture with slogans written on paper towel dispensers that read, “Paper towels=trees.” The students who conducted this research were using unobtrusive strategies to determine dimensions of student culture in the graffiti that was left behind in bathrooms.
- **Historiography**. Historiography is a method of qualitative research “for discovering, from records and accounts, what happened during some past period” (Berg 233). Rather than simply putting together a series of facts, research from this perspective seeks to gain an understanding of the communication in a past social group or context. For example, the timelines in the history chapter of this text are an attempt to chronologically put together the story of the discipline of Communication. While there is no “true” story, your authors have tried to piece together, from their own research, the important pieces that make up what we believe is the story of the formation of Communication study.
- **Case Studies**. Case studies involve gathering significant information about particular people, contexts, or phenomena to understand a particular case under investigation. This approach uses many methods for data collection but focuses on a particular case to gain “holistic description and explanation” (Berg 251). Those who use case study approaches may look at organizations, groups within those organizations, specific people, etc. The idea is to gain a broad understanding of the phenomena and draw conclusions from them. For example, a case study may examine a specific teaching method as a possible solution to increase graduation rates while improving student information retention (Foss et al.). Examining specific cases may help some teachers rethink their current teaching method and offer some alternatives to the standardized teaching paradigms.

While there are other qualitative research methodologies, the methods one chooses to examine communication are most often decided by the researcher’s intended outcomes, resources available, and the research question(s) of focus. There are no hard rules for qualitative research. Instead, researchers must make many choices as they engage in this process.

Outcomes of Qualitative Methodologies

What can we learn by using qualitative research methods for studying communication? Qualitative Communication researchers often believe that quantitative methods do not capture the essence of our lived experience. In other words, it is difficult to quantify everything about our lives and therefore, we need different strategies for understanding our world. Think of the various ways you experience and communicate in your relationships? It’s highly unlikely that you spend the bulk of your communication quantifying your daily experiences. However, through methods like observation, interviewing, journaling, etc., we might be able to get a better understanding of the ways people experience and communicate their feelings.

Communication Research and You

Qualitative Methods In Actions

Developing the ability to perform research is becoming a necessary skill in both the world of academia as well as in today’s competitive workforce. With the move from the industrial age to the information age, many jobs center around the creation and dissemination of information. With so many online options for retrieving information, it is more important to have skills in gathering information rather than memorizing facts and data. As it is vital to be able to access proper information when needed, many universities require a specific amount of research hours for both undergraduate and masters degree programs. A variety of career opportunities require research experience such as marketing agencies or health industries.

Another value of qualitative research is that it resonates with readers who are able to identify with the lived-experiences represented in the research (Neuman). Statistical studies often seem detached from how we experience life. However, qualitative studies contain “rich description, colorful detail, and unusual characters; they give the reader a feel for social settings (Neuman 317). This rich description allows us to identify with the communication experiences of others, and learn through this identification.

Over the years, female scholars have demonstrated a greater frequency in the use of qualitative approaches (Grant, Ward & Rong; Ward & Grant), producing significant contributions to our understanding of human communication using these methods. From understanding to social change, feminist scholars demonstrate the importance of qualitative inquiry for strengthening the body of scholarship in our discipline. While researchers who use quantitative approaches tend to value prediction and control as potential outcomes of their research, those who use qualitative approaches seek greater understanding of human communication phenomena, or evaluate current pragmatic uses of human communication to help identify and change oppressive power structures.

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2.3: Process Analysis (Interaction Analysis)

Learning Objectives

- Determine the purpose and structure of the process analysis essay.
- Understand how to write a process analysis essay.

THE PURPOSE OF PROCESS ANALYSIS IN WRITING

The purpose of a process analysis essay is to explain how to do something or how something works. In either case, the formula for a process analysis essay remains the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

Almost everything we do involves following a step-by-step process. From riding a bike as children to learning various jobs as adults, we initially needed instructions to effectively execute the task. Likewise, we have likely had to instruct others, so we know how important good directions are—and how frustrating it is when they are poorly put together.

WRITING AT WORK

The next time you have to explain a process to someone at work, be mindful of how clearly you articulate each step. Strong communication skills are critical for workplace satisfaction and advancement. Effective process analysis plays a critical role in developing that skill set.

Exercise 2.3.1

On a separate sheet of paper, make a bulleted list of all the steps that you feel would be required to clearly illustrate three of the following four processes:

- Tying a shoelace
- Parallel parking
- Planning a successful first date
- Being an effective communicator

THE STRUCTURE OF A PROCESS ANALYSIS ESSAY

The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the goal of the process.

The organization of a process analysis essay typically follows chronological order. The steps of the process are conveyed in the order in which they usually occur. Body paragraphs will be constructed based on these steps. If a particular step is complicated and needs a lot of explaining, then it will likely take up a paragraph on its own. But if a series of simple steps is easier to understand, then the steps can be grouped into a single paragraph.

The time transition phrases covered in the Narration and Illustration sections are also helpful in organizing process analysis essays (see Table 10.1 “Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time” and Table 10.2 “Phrases of Illustration”). Words such as first, second, third, next, and finally are helpful cues to orient reader and organize the content of essay.

tip

Always have someone else read your process analysis to make sure it makes sense. Once we get too close to a subject, it is difficult to determine how clearly an idea is coming across. Having a friend or coworker read it over will serve as a good way to troubleshoot any confusing spots.

Exercise 2.3.2

Choose two of the lists you created in Exercise 1 and start writing out the processes in paragraph form. Try to construct paragraphs based on the complexity of each step. For complicated steps, dedicate an entire paragraph. If less complicated steps fall in succession, group them into a single paragraph.

WRITING A PROCESS ANALYSIS ESSAY

Choose a topic that is interesting, is relatively complex, and can be explained in a series of steps. As with other rhetorical writing modes, choose a process that you know well so that you can more easily describe the finer details about each step in the process. Your thesis statement should come at the end of your introduction, and it should state the final outcome of the process you are describing.

Body paragraphs are composed of the steps in the process. Each step should be expressed using strong details and clear examples. Use time transition phrases to help organize steps in the process and to orient readers. The conclusion should thoroughly describe the result of the process described in the body paragraphs.

Exercise 2.3.3

Choose one of the expanded lists from Exercise 2. Construct a full process analysis essay from the work you have already done. That means adding an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, time transition phrases, body paragraphs, and a solid conclusion.

key takeaways

- A process analysis essay explains how to do something, how something works, or both.
- The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the outcome of the process.
- The organization of a process analysis essay typically follows a chronological sequence.
- Time transition phrases are particularly helpful in process analysis essays to organize steps and orient reader.

References

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2.4: Performance Studies

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2.4.1: Introduction to Performance Art

When Art Intersects With Life

Many people associate performance art with highly publicized controversies over government funding of the arts, censorship, and standards of public decency. Indeed, at its worst, performance art can seem gratuitous, boring or just plain weird. But, at its best, it taps into our most basic shared instincts: our physical and psychological needs for food, shelter, sex, and human interaction; our individual fears and self-consciousness; our concerns about life, the future, and the world we live in. It often forces us to think about issues in a way that can be disturbing and uncomfortable, but it can also make us laugh by calling attention to the absurdities in life and the idiosyncrasies of human behavior.

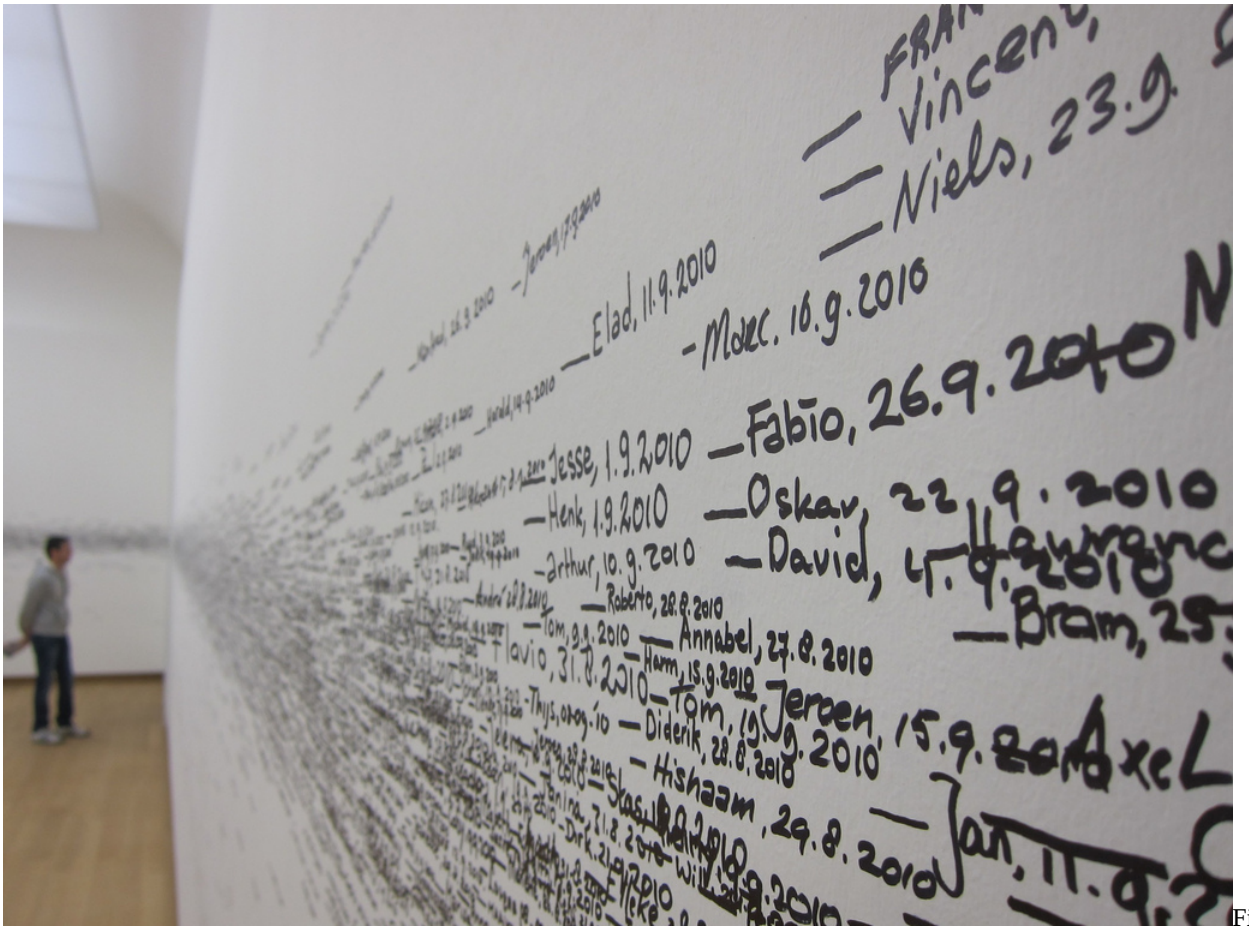


Figure **2.4.1.1**. Roman Ondák, *Measuring the Universe*, 2007, shown enacted at MoMA, 2009

Performance art differs from traditional theater in its rejection of a clear narrative, use of random or chance-based structures, and direct appeal to the audience. The art historian RoseLee Goldberg writes:

Historically, performance art has been a medium that challenges and violates borders between disciplines and genders, between private and public, and between everyday life and art, and that follows no rules.[1]

Although the term encompasses a broad range of artistic practices that involve bodily experience and live action, its radical connotations derive from this challenge to conventional social mores and artistic values of the past.

Historical Sources

While performance art is a relatively new area of art history, it has roots in experimental art of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Echoing utopian ideas of the period's avant-garde, these earliest examples found influences in theatrical and music performance, art, poetry, burlesque and other popular entertainment. Modern artists used live events to promote extremist beliefs,

often through deliberate provocation and attempts to offend bourgeois tastes or expectations. In Italy, the anarchist group of Futurist artists insulted and hurled profanity at their middle-class audiences in hopes of inciting political action.

Following World War II, performance emerged as a useful way for artists to explore philosophical and psychological questions about human existence. For this generation, who had witnessed destruction caused by the Holocaust and atomic bomb, the body offered a powerful medium to communicate shared physical and emotional experience. Whereas painting and sculpture relied on expressive form and content to convey meaning, performance art forced viewers to engage with a real person who could feel cold and hunger, fear and pain, excitement and embarrassment—just like them.

Action & Contingency

Some artists, inspired largely by Abstract Expressionism, used performance to emphasize the body's role in artistic production. Working before a live audience, Kazuo Shiraga of the Japanese Gutai Group made sculpture by crawling through a pile of mud. Georges Mathieu staged similar performances in Paris where he violently threw paint at his canvas. These performative approaches to making art built on philosophical interpretations of Abstract Expressionism, which held the gestural markings of action painters as visible evidence of the artist's own existence. Bolstered by Hans Namuth's photographs of Jackson Pollock in his studio, moving dance-like around a canvas on the floor, artists like Shiraga and Mathieu began to see the artist's creative act as equally important, if not more so, to the artwork produced. In this light, Pollock's distinctive drips, spills and splatters appeared as a mere remnant, a visible trace left over from the moment of creation.

Shifting attention from the art object to the artist's action further suggested that art existed in real space and real time. In New York, visual artists combined their interest in action painting with ideas of the avant-garde composer John Cage to blur the line between art and life. Cage employed chance procedures to create musical compositions such as 4′33″. In this (in)famous piece, Cage used the time frame specified in the title to bracket ambient noises that occurred randomly during the performance. By effectively calling attention to the hum of fluorescent lights, people moving in their seats, coughs, whispers, and other ordinary sounds, Cage transformed them into a unique musical composition.

The Private Made Political

Drawing on these influences, new artistic formats emerged in the late 1950s. Environments and Happenings physically placed viewers in commonplace surroundings, often forcing them to participate in a series of loosely structured actions. Fluxus artists, poets, and musicians likewise challenged viewers by presenting the most mundane events—brushing teeth, making a salad, exiting the theater—as forms of art. A well-known example is the "bed-in" that Fluxus artist Yoko Ono staged in 1969 in Amsterdam with her husband John Lennon. Typical of much performance art, Ono and Lennon made ordinary human activity a public spectacle, which demanded personal interaction and raised popular awareness of their pacifist beliefs.

In the politicized environment of the 1960s, many artists employed performance to address emerging social concerns. For feminist artists in particular, using their body in live performance proved effective in challenging historical representations of women, made mostly by male artists for male patrons. In keeping with past tradition, artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke and Valie Export displayed their nude bodies for the viewer's gaze; but, they resisted the idealized notion of women as passive objects of beauty and desire. Through their words and actions, they confronted their audiences and raised issues about the relationship of female experience to cultural beliefs and institutions, physical appearance, and bodily functions including menstruation and childbearing. Their ground-breaking work paved the way for male and female artists in the 1980s and 1990s, who similarly used body and performance art to explore issues of gender, race and sexual identity.

Where Is It?

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, performance has been closely tied to the search for alternatives to established art forms, which many artists felt had become fetishized as objects of economic and cultural value. Because performance art emphasized the artist's action and the viewer's experience in real space and time, it rarely yielded a final object to be sold, collected, or exhibited. Artists of the 1960s and 1970s also experimented with other "dematerialized" formats including Earthworks and Conceptual Art that resisted commodification and traditional modes of museum display. The simultaneous rise of photography and video, however, offered artists a viable way to document and widely distribute this new work.

Performance art's acceptance into the mainstream over the past 30 years has led to new trends in its practice and understanding. Ironically, the need to position performance within art's history has led museums and scholars to focus heavily on photographs and videos that were intended only as documents of live events. In this context, such archival materials assume the art status of the original performance. This practice runs counter to the goal of many artists, who first turned to performance as an alternative to object-based forms of art. Alternatively, some artists and institutions now stage re-enactments of earlier performances in order to recapture the experience of a live event. In a 2010 retrospective exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, for example, performers in the galleries staged live reenactments of works by the pioneering performance artist Marina Abramovic, alongside photographs and video documentation of the original performances.

Don't Try This At Home

New strategies, variously described as situations, relational aesthetics, and interventionist art, have recently begun to appear. Interested in the social role of the artist, Rirkrit Tiravanija stages performances that encourage interpersonal exchange and shared conversation among individuals who might not otherwise meet. His performances have included cooking traditional Thai dinners in museums for viewers to share, and relocating the entire contents of a gallery's offices and storage rooms, including the director at his desk, into public areas used to exhibit art. Similar to performance art of the past, such approaches engage the viewer and encourage their active participation in artistic production; however, they also speak to a cultural shift toward interactive modes of communication and social exchange that characterize the twenty-first century.

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1. RoseLee Goldberg. *Performance: Live art since the 60s*, New York: Thames & Hudson, 1998, page 20. ↵

Contributors

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2.4.2: Style as Cultural Performance

Teaching Style as Cultural Performance

Chris Holcomb and M. Jimmie Killingsworth

Texas A&M University

Definitions of style generally come in two versions—one narrow, the other broad. The narrow version identifies style with verbal style and considers a writer's choices at the level of word, phrase, and clause, although more recently it has come increasingly to include features beyond the sentence, including point of view, discourse structure, and genre. The other version defines style more broadly as "ways of doing" and takes within its purview virtually any artifact or practice that has communicative potential: fashion, music, electronic and digital media, deportment, food, and so on. The narrow definition of style, despite its recent revival in some quarters, is often associated with the outmoded formalism of New Criticism (literary studies) or with the product-oriented pedagogy of Current-Traditional Rhetoric (composition). Meanwhile, the broader definition is more positively received in English studies because it opens wider vistas onto social and cultural criticism. Apart from a few notable exceptions, these two conceptions of style rarely overlap. Scholars working with verbal style, although they might consider stylistic features in their immediate contexts, often stop short of fully considering style's cultural dimensions. Reciprocally, those working within the broader conception of style seem eager to leave verbal form behind in order to get on to the supposedly more serious and exciting business of analyzing fashion, music, and so on, and to protect themselves from the accusation of formalism and lack of theoretical depth.

While the narrow and broad definitions of style influence the way we think about and teach style, the distinctions upon which they are based are ultimately artificial, products of disciplinary interests and specializations rather than a viable description of style's nature and operation. In questioning the dichotomy, this essay emphasizes the continuity between the two versions of style, and in doing so, it answers Keith Rhodes's call (delivered earlier in this volume) to connect scholarship and classroom work on style to broader cultural practices. Toward these ends, we offer two frameworks for teaching students to explore relationships between verbal style and culture.1

The first framework encourages students to begin with the particularities of verbal form and, from there, explore broader meanings and functions in terms of three "arenas" of interaction: the textual, social, and cultural. Here we focus primarily on the cultural arena, arguing that words and especially patterns of words are cultural forms just as surely as elements of fashion, music, architecture, and food are. Seeing them as such invites students to consider how their verbal styles (whether in written academic work or everyday interactions) work in concert with these other cultural elements to perform various identities.

The second framework turns the approach around and begins with cultural forms in matters like fashion and food as an entrée into the study of principles such as convention and deviation, which apply as surely to "broader" cultural practices as they do to a "narrow" interest in sentence-level matters of prose style. The suggestion is that, whichever framework the study of style employs, the important thing is to bridge the study of language and the study of the wider cultural context, or better yet, to teach students that language is one cultural practice among many, all of which can be approached together with the right conceptual tools. The frameworks, in other words, are temporary and provisional. They momentarily accept the artificial distinction of language and culture on the way to dismantling it. Before examining those frameworks more closely, we first situate them in other discussions of verbal style and culture.

Style and Culture

Connections between verbal form and performative culture run throughout treatments of style in ancient rhetorics. Their doing so suggests just how thoroughly interdependent style and culture were in ancient rhetorical thought. Aristotle, for instance, had no technical terms, such as "figure of speech" (Kennedy, 1991, p. 242), for grouping stylistic devices or characteristics, so he improvised ones by borrowing terms either describing cultural phenomenon or carrying powerful cultural resonances. Metaphor, antithesis, and energeia (or vivid expression) he grouped under the more general term asteia or "things of the town" (Aristotle, trans. 1991, p. 244), a word that identifies these verbal forms with the elegance and refinement of the cultural center in contrast to the rusticity of geographic and cultural backwaters. Cultural resonances are also conveyed by those four qualities of style that are typically translated into English as "clarity, correctness, ornamentation, and propriety." What are their cultural associations? The tipoff is the term under which Aristotle (and his imitators) gathered them: the aretai or "virtues" of style. By classifying them as such, Aristotle suggests that the "virtues" do not simply describe the technical merits of a completed oration, but are instead guides

to performance and action, prodding the orator to fashion his stylistic behaviors in ways that match (or at least aspire toward) criteria defining cultural excellence. The virtue of correctness is particularly revealing. The term "correctness" is a poor translation of the original Greek and Latin terms, Hellenizen and Latinitas, because it neutralizes the cultural resonances the original terms carried. Better translations—or at least, more historically accurate translations—might be "good Greek" and "good Latin." Translated as such, these phrases reveal the cultural stakes involved—that is, pitting one culture's language against those of all outsiders, incursions of which were labeled as the ultimate stylistic "vice": babarismos or "barbarism."

Cultural and stylistic categories also mix and overlap in the rhetorics of Cicero and Quintilian. For instance, in their discussions of jests (many of which secure their effects through stylistic devices), both authors insist again and again that the orator only use forms of joking that "befit" a liberalis or gentleman and avoid the gross humor of the stage clown and lowly street entertainer.2 Their advice suggests that certain verbal forms (such as irony and oblique punning) were part of a gentleman's repertoire for expressing his social and cultural identity, while other forms (such as obscenities or overly aggressive jokes) bespoke a more lowly status. With such advice, Cicero and Quintilian present verbal style as a medium for cultural performance. Elsewhere, they use non-verbal elements of culture as metaphors for thinking about style. Quintilian, for instance, draws on several cultural practices and artifacts and, through a series of analogies, uses them to mark a difference between a natural verbal style and an overly affected one. The natural style is like a healthy body that, through wholesome exercise and training, acquires grace through such physical adornments as a "healthy complexion, firm flesh and shapely thews" (Quintilian, trans. 1972, 8.Pr.19). The affected style, however, is like a man who "attempts to enhance these physical graces" by the use of "depilatories and cosmetics" or through "effeminate and luxurious apparel" (Quintilian, trans. 1972, 8.Pr.19-20). Notice how Quintilian discusses the virtue of naturalness in verbal style by calling upon another area of culture—in this case the care of the body through exercise versus artificial beauty created via cosmetics and dress (an analogy which echoes Socrates' famous dismissal of rhetoric as cosmetics and cookery in Plato's Gorgias) —thus suggesting that language is one cultural practice among many, joined together by general principles of style (such as naturalness).

In more recent discussions of style in rhetorical and composition studies, this intimate relation between style and culture is often either ignored or underappreciated. In A Rhetoric of Style, for instance, Barry Brummett is primarily concerned with the role that style plays in the formation and reproduction of cultures, but he has very little to say, beyond a few generalizations, about how verbal style participates in these processes. Instead, he adopts what we characterized earlier as the broad definition of style and focuses, not on verbal style, but on clothing, music, cosmetics, visual media, deportment, and so on. In fact, he makes it clear early in his study that he wants to move beyond "limited view[s] of style" (2008, p. 2)—including those which identify it with "linguistic style" (2008, p. 1)—to other modes of stylistic expression: "I want to think of style as socially held sign systems composed of a wide range of signs beyond only language, systems that are used to accomplish rhetorical purposes across the cultural spectrum" (2008, p. 3, emphasis added). We agree that style should encompass the full "cultural spectrum," but we suspect that Brummett underestimates the importance of language and, more specifically, "linguistic style" as a force in cultural production. As the passage above suggests (particularly the modifiers "limited" and "only"), the role language plays within Brummett's conception of style is a minor one. In the book's middle chapters, that role becomes even more marginal. In other words, language ceases to be part of style altogether and, instead, serves as a metaphor (or simile) for style. Again and again, we come upon formulations like the following:

- "Style … is like a language" (2008, p. 33);
- "Style … is a kind of language" (2008, p. 45);
- "[S]tyle … functions as does a language" (2008, p. 32);
- "A fruitful way to think of style [is] as a language …" (2008, p. 99).

We understand what Brummett is doing here: he's taking a page from the playbook of structuralism and making a case for examining clothing, music, visual images, etc., as a system of relations (just as language is). But for those of us who study verbal style, the formulation style is like a language sounds profoundly odd because it suggests that the only meaningful link between style and language is, at best, a metaphorical or analogical one.

Towards the book's end, in a chapter devoted to American "gun-culture style," Brummett does consider verbal form in his discussion of the speaking style of American gun enthusiasts. But the analytical vocabulary he deploys to describe this style seems too general and impressionistic. For instance, he characterizes the speech of those who frequent gun shows and firing ranges as "plain," "reserved," and "direct and pointed" (2008, p. 159), but apart from noting that a word like "aesthetics" would be out of

place in gun culture talk and that the honorifics “sir” and “ma’am” serve as markers of politeness (2008, pp. 159-160), he fails to specify what it is about their language that suggests such qualities or effects. He also fails to quote samples of their speech so that readers can either confirm or challenge his general characterization of it as “plain,” “reserved,” and “direct and pointed.” Shortly after delivering this characterization, Brummett does include a sentence-long sample of gun talk, but it actually undercuts his previous claims about gun talk’s general characteristics. The sample comes from a poster at rec.guns who is chiding another newsgroup member for taking offense from someone who was carrying a handgun. That poster writes, “you might have been a little too curious for his temperament” (Brummett, 2008, p. 160). Given its understated, euphemistic, and Latinate diction, this comment is hardly “plain” and “direct.” Rather, it’s a model of indirection. It’s as if Brummett’s earlier claims about the limits of linguistic style and about style being like a language were self-fulfilling prophesies. For the analysis here stops short of moving beyond its impressionistic labels to specific verbal features, and if it fails to do that, then it cannot identify connections between those features and their cultural uses and meanings.

A more promising approach to exploring relations between verbal form and culture appears in Fiona Paton’s “Beyond Bakhtin: Towards a Cultural Stylistics.” In this essay, Paton draws on a mostly Bakhtinian vocabulary of analysis (heteroglossia, dialogism, parody) to argue that language is “materially embedded in its cultural moment” (2000, p. 170). To illustrate, Paton offers an extended analysis of Jack Kerouac’s novel Dr. Sax, arguing that its style internalizes, and re-inflects, the languages and even media formats of various cultural forms contemporaneous with the novel’s production (such as pulp fiction, comic books, jazz, literary fiction, popular cinema, and street vernacular). The strength of Paton’s analysis lies in its effort to work from the particularities of verbal form toward the broader concerns of cultural criticism, ultimately situating the novel’s style in the context of Cold War discourses on nationalism and debates among American intellectuals of the 1950s over high and low culture. But where Paton could have pushed her analysis further is in understanding the stylistic features she identifies as cultural forms in their own right. Instead, she treats them in one of three ways:

1.as compositional elements borrowed from other cultural forms: for example, onomatopoeia from comic strips, or phrasings and idioms from pulp fiction or nursery rhymes (2000, p. 189);

2.as vehicles for imitating the formats of other media: for example, parataxis mimics the “sequential narrative panels of a comic strip” (2000, p. 186);

3.as instances of Bakhtin’s more abstract categories: for example, parenthesis contributes to the dialogic style of the novel (2000, p. 186).

These categories certainly call attention, at least in a general sense, to the social and cultural dimensions of verbal form, but what Paton might have also noted is that devices such as onomatopoeia, parataxis, and parenthesis are themselves cultural forms. In other words, they (together with hundreds of other verbal devices) are ritualizations of language at the level of word, phrase, or clause that circulate widely, while accumulating, carrying, and shedding “cultural values and meanings independent of the content they may be used [in any given instance] to convey” (Holcomb, 2007, p. 80).

An analyst of style who does recognize such verbal patterns as cultural forms is sociolinguist Penelope Eckert. In her studies of adolescent speech at a high school in the suburbs of Detroit, Eckert charts stylistic variations within and across the school’s two primary social networks: jocks and burnouts. What she finds is that features of verbal style work alongside of, and in concert with, other cultural products and practices and that, collectively, they form a richly expressive repertoire for performing identity. In other words, students perform identity by drawing on elements from both verbal style (variations at the level of phonology and syntax) and nonverbal style (variations in “clothing, posture and body movement, makeup, hair, territory, substance use, [and] leisure activities” [Eckert, 2005, p. 11]). Together, these verbal and nonverbal elements of style blend seamlessly in the everyday interactions of the students Eckert has observed. Theoretically, then, Eckert’s study suggests that distinctions between narrow and broad definitions of style will not hold—that analyses of style (and its uses in performance) must consider verbal form working alongside (and together with) other cultural elements. Pedagogically, her study invites us to look for new ways to present and teach style to our students.

Arenas of Style: From Text to Culture

To help our students explore relationships between verbal form and culture, and thus to construct a more comprehensive understanding of style, we offer two pedagogical frameworks. The first (considered in this section) moves from the textual features of verbal style through its social and rhetorical uses to its cultural meanings and values. The second framework (considered in the

next section) reverses this movement and starts with stylistic activities more familiar to students (such as fashion, music, and food), activities whose social and cultural uses are more readily apparent to students.

The first framework serves as a model for helping students understand style as performance—that is, as a vehicle by which writers not only present a self, but also orchestrate relationships with readers, subject matters, and contexts. At the heart of this model is the notion of interaction. As Richard Schechner claims, "To treat any object, work, or product 'as' performance … means to investigate what that object does, how it interacts with other objects and beings" (2002, p. 24). Building on this claim, we consider style in terms of three arenas of interaction: the textual, social, and cultural.

1.Within the textual arena, students examine how all the words on the page interact with one another to form patterns and meanings. Here students gain practice in applying different vocabularies of analysis (those from traditional grammar, linguistics, or rhetoric), and they become more accustomed to following closely the word-by-word choices of an author as they unfold in a given text.

2.With the social arena, attention turns from interactions among words and structures to interactions between writers and readers through those words and structures. Here we have in mind something along the lines of Rosanne Carlo's contribution to this volume where Carlo examines the interplay between a "performative ethos" and "enfolding a reader." Along similar lines, students might consider how writers use style to construct roles for themselves and their readers, to position themselves in relation to those readers (above, below, equal, familiar, or distant), and to invite readers into participatory relationships with a text, relationships that include enacting all the various rituals of social interaction (joking, flirting, sparring, instructing, and so on).

3.With the cultural arena, students consider how a word or pattern has, independent of the content it might express, a particular value or meaning to some larger community of language users. To borrow an example from Eckert, consider "negative concord," or the use of double, triple, or even quadruple negatives, as in "I ain't never done nothing to nobody." Although this feature is stigmatized in most professional and institutional contexts, among burnouts it carries the positive value of performing an "anti-school stance," and among male jocks it performs "ruggedness." (Eckert, 2005, p. 19)

A good place to start is with patterns with which students are already familiar—at least, intuitively. We're thinking here of such powerhouse tropes and schemes as metaphor, anaphora, antithesis, and tricolon. Because these figures are so ubiquitous, so much a part of our culture's repertoire for performance, students will already have at least a tacit sense of some of their cultural meanings and values. Take tricolon, for instance. It's a scheme involving a series of three words, phrases, or clauses in parallel form:3

- We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. (The Declaration of Independence, 1776)
- There's never enough bread, never enough olives, never enough soup. (Simic, 2005, p. 85)
- Our campaign was not hatched in the halls of Washington—it began in the backyards of Des Moines and the living rooms of Concord and the front porches of Charleston. (Barak Obama, "Election Night Victory Speech," 11/4/08)
- It concludes that The Daily Show can be better understood not as "fake news" but as an alternative journalism, one that uses satire to interrogate power, parody to critique contemporary news, and dialogue to enact a model of deliberative democracy. (Baym, 2005, p. 261)

Students will probably have little trouble identifying the textual features shared across all of these examples (parallel series of three). They might also observe some of the social uses of this pattern—that is, how the speakers or writers in these examples are interacting with their listeners or readers through tricolon. In the fourth example, President Obama uses tricolon (a staple of presidential oratory) to reassure listeners that his goals are thoroughly democratic, springing not from the interests Beltway insiders, but from the people—the demos—in their most familial settings. In the final example, Baym uses tricolon to perform another kind of ritual, one common to academic discourse: previewing the organization of his article for readers.

Where students might have trouble, however, and thus need more explicit guidance, is in teasing out the cultural meanings of tricolon. We begin by asking students, "Why three items in each series? Why not two, or four, or five?" If this question doesn't ring some bells, we ask them about other patterns, objects, or activities that have three parts. If one of our students doesn't volunteer it first, we recall one of the short educational cartoons from the 1970's series Schoolhouse Rock!: "Three Is a Magic Number," which celebrates the virtues of three while teaching its viewers some of its multiples ("Three, six, nine … Twelve, fifteen, eighteen …"). Other examples we use come from Alan Dundes, an anthropologist who documents the pervasive role three plays not only in ritual, myth, and folklore but also in everyday American culture:

- Folklore (three wishes, three little pigs, three blind mice).
- Games and spectacles (tick-tack-toe, three strikes and you're out, three ring circus).
- Product sizes and appliance settings (small, medium, and large; low, medium, and high).
- Eating rituals and food (three meals per day; coffee, tea, or milk; rare, medium, and well-done).
- Common or well-known sayings ("Beg, borrow, or steal"; "Lock, stock, and barrel"; "Ready, willing, and able"). (Dundes, 1968, pp. 404-09)

To Dundes' list, we might add religion and philosophy (the Holy Trinity of Christianity; the triadic semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce; the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis of the Hegelian dialectic).

Having established the cultural pervasiveness of three, we return to tricolon and ask students what cultural meanings and values it might have. Even if they respond, "It just feels right," that's a start because it speaks to the cultural power of three and suggests just how thoroughly this number structures our expectations and behavior. We've probably all had the experience of drafting something and jotting down two items, when a voice in our head calls to us, "You need to add one more." Apparently, Captain Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean felt the same compulsion when he said, "I think we've arrived at a very special place. Spiritually, ecumenically, grammatically." His three-part list, especially the last two items, doesn't make much propositional sense, but it makes symbolic sense: he needs the three items, regardless of their semantic sense, to complete this little stylistic ritual. In fact, as Max Atkinson observes about conversational discourse, "Lists comprising only two items tend to appear inadequate and incomplete —so much so that there are various phrases that can be slotted in whenever we are having difficulty in finding a third item for a list," phrases such as "and so on," "somethingorother," and "etcetera" (1984, p. 57).

Part of what drives this compulsion towards tripartite structures has to be that, in our culture, three means stability, completeness, and (in some instances) finality. Tricolon, with its items cast in parallel form rather than dispersed over varying and irregular structures, serves as the stylistic crystallization of those meanings.4 Thus, writers often use tricolon to deliver a well-rounded description of a person, thing, or event:

- [Colin Duffy] is four feet eight inches, weighs seventy-five pounds, and appears to be mostly leg and shoulder blade. (Orlean, 1995, p. 99)
- I require three things in a man. He must be handsome, ruthless, and stupid. (Parker, 2009, p. 19)
- Carlo, the counterman, unwrapped a Mars bar, dunked it in the universal batter, and dropped it in oil. When it floated, golden brown, on the surface, he removed it, sprinkled a little powder sugar on it, and handed it over. "Careful," said Simon. "Inside it's bloody napalm."Mmmm. I like grease. I like chocolate. And I like sugar. (Bourdain, 2002, p. 253)

Writers also use tricolon to present a representative sample of some phenomenon or class (just as Obama's tricolon [quoted above] is representative of the citizenry):

- He kept scraps of wood in a cardboard box—the ends of two-by-fours, slabs of shelving and plywood, odd pieces of molding—and everything in it was fair game. (Sanders, 2008, p. 134)
- Many of us had suspended the connections to the world we had established back home—the part-time job in the library, the graduate program, the circle of supportive friends—and we resented the loss. (Gordon, 1998, p. 121)

In all of these examples, the tricola work something like triangulation, the technique by which astronomers calculate the distance of celestial objects from the Earth and navigators determine the position of their vessels. The tricola fix and thus offer what seems a reliable description of, or sampling from, their targets. Similarly, in academic discourse (even in the humanities), we often hear of "triangulating" data—that is, confirming some observed phenomenon by finding at least three instances of it, or examining a single phenomenon from three methodological perspectives.

In public oratory, tricolon often serves the performance function of cuing listeners to applaud (Atkinson, 1984, pp. 57ff.). Stephen Colbert capitalized on this power in a comedic segment, way back when he was just a correspondent on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart.5 In the segment, Colbert is supposedly on-the-scene in D.C., reporting on the previous night's State of the Union address, and while anchor Stewart is trying to get Colbert to report on the substance of the speech, Colbert's responses keep culminating in tricola delivered in tones and rhythms of presidential oratory. These tricola are followed by cut-shots to file footage of the House floor with members standing and applauding—as if Colbert were the President. Here are several of Colbert's tricola (reinforced by anaphora):

- The State of the Union is a celebration of democracy, a night when Washington and the entire country can reaffirm their faith in the nation—not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Americans.
- If we do go to war, there's no one I'd rather have defending me than the brave men and women of the armed forces. We're proud of you. We believe in you. And we will prevail. (Holcomb, 2007, pp. 71-75)

Finally, when the exasperated Stewart asks if Colbert can "tell us about the actual substance of the speech," Colbert responds, "Why, Jon? That won't get applause."

This segment implicitly confirms tricolon's status as a cultural form (Holcomb, 2007, p. 74). The humor wouldn't work if viewers failed to recognize as such. It wouldn't work, that is to say, if listeners failed to register how Colbert was using tricolon (along with other elements of performance, such as vocal tone and pacing, the cut-shot to the House floor, etc.) to signal a shift between performing (and comedically confusing) two cultural identities—journalist and politician.

The three-arenas framework can be applied to other verbal devices—not only to the figures of speech, but to any pattern or feature whose meanings exceed the subject matter that, on any given occasion, it might express. For instance:

- The intentional misspellings and typos of geeks and gamers ("teh suc," "pwned," and "pr0n").
- The heavily nominalized and jargon-filled prose of academics.
- Passive voice in scientific writing.
- The esoteric (and overworked) diction and metaphors of wine connoisseurs ("with notes of honeysuckle and a strong, oaky finish").

All of these features (and so many more) are little rituals of language that circulate relatively widely, get rehearsed again and again, and assembled (along with other non-verbal elements) into fresh combinations as writers and speakers orchestrate their interactions with audiences and perform various selves. Exploring these possible functions requires students and teachers to treat verbal form as an object of serious (and deep) cultural analysis.

Principles of Stylistic Performance: From Culture to Text

In Performing Prose, we introduce stylistic principles like convention and deviation, voice and footing, tropes and schemes, through the close study of language—that is, to use the terms in the last section, we begin with the textual arena and work toward the cultural arena—finishing in our last chapter by showing how, once these concepts are worked out in language, they can be demonstrated as evident in all strata of cultural activity. Our point is that the concepts of culture and language are thoroughly interdependent, and that language itself is one of many such activities. Unlike the search for food, water, and habitat, the primary activities of existential life, or even sex, on which the perpetuation of species depends, language is a secondary activity that, by facilitating social interchange, supports and enlivens the primary work of survival and reproduction. The same trends found in linguistic style—convention and deviation, for example—are at work in other stylistic performances: in fashion, food, art, sport, technology, and other areas that are partly rule-governed and partly based on decisions, whether by individuals or groups. More significantly for the study of style, concepts like convention and deviation can help to form bridges between the understandings of style in various cultural activities. Here, we'd like briefly to consider a second approach or framework for studying style. Instead of moving from language outward to the larger cultural arena, with the help of these conceptual bridges, we might well turn things around and begin with an area more familiar to the average student—fashion, for example—thereby applying the old premise of behaviorism in education: always move from the most familiar to the least familiar material (see Zoellner, 1969).

In matters of clothing, as in cultural practices, people depend partly on rules or laws, partly on conventions, and partly on personal choices. In the west, required clothing includes a top (shirt, blouse, etc.), a bottom (pants, skirt, etc.), and footwear (shoes, boots, sandals). At some public places, like the beach or the swimming pool, the rules are more relaxed unless you want to go into the snack bar for a hot dog ("No shirt, No shoes, No service"). Even at this most basic level, however, culture intervenes. In hot, moist climates like the tropical rain forest, some cultural groups wear nearly nothing (the rules are more like a perpetual trip to the beach), while in many desert climates, more elaborate rules for covering prevail—full-length robes and head scarves and veils, for example, many of which elements have been codified in religious law, such as that of Islam. Covering in one way or another becomes a matter of religious duty—and a matter of identity politics in global society, where requirements for dress become issues of confrontation and legislation. For any given society, the law becomes the foundation of required behavior. The law says what must be covered and to what extent. Despite the so-called sexual revolution and the vaunted freedom of expression in American life and art, laws against indecent exposure remain on the books. It is against the law for women to go topless on most U.S. beaches,

for example, but not on most European beaches; and at least one well known political commentator on the European scene has expressed wonder over the prudery and hypocrisy of Americans on this score (see Zizek, 2010, pp. 121-22). The law may also require uncovering, as in the case of some European countries that have tried to institute anti-veiling laws on the argument that public safety depends upon the police being able to identify the faces of citizens.

Beyond the law, dress is governed to some extent by conventions. We “dress up” for weddings and funerals and “dress down” for ball games and college classes. The occasions for dressing up have changed over the years—people used to dress up for air travel, for example, and Sunday church—as has the meaning of dressing up. (Do men dress up in tuxedo, dark suit with necktie, or just slacks with ironed shirt; must women wear a full-length gown, “little black dress,” or skirt and blouse with low heels?) Along with historical shifts, regional and national customs cause variation in the definition of dressing up—the relaxed west coast versus the more formal east coast in the U.S., for example.

Finally we come to style—deviations from, or personal variations within, dress codes and conventions. East-coast businessmen might express themselves with a colorful tie, or businesswomen with a bright scarf, while still following the convention of wearing a dark suit to work. The daring may flaunt convention entirely, leaving off the tie or jacket, and thereby engendering expectations of rebelliousness or special creativity (that they better live up to).

Students can bring plenty of their own examples along these lines. The key is to make the transition to language via the conceptual bridges to the more familiar cultural practice. Once the concept of rule-governed, conventional, and deviant behavior is established, we can get at some key definitions in the basic study of language:

- Grammar is the set of rules by which a language functions. The rules change over time, but are relatively stable.
- Style comprises the choices a writer makes within that system. Style is often defined as deviation from a norm.
- Convention is the shifting ground of linguistic restriction between grammar and style, between definite rules and clear choices.

A great place to begin working with these distinctions is the kind of restrictions that often get codified as rules when they are in fact matters of choice or community preference. An injunction that every student will recognize, for example, is never use the first-person pronoun. What grammar (the law) actually says about use of the first-person is that, like all pronouns, it must agree in person, number, and case with its antecedent and with any verb to which it serves as subject. Avoiding the use of the first-person I or we is not a law or a rule, but a convention. For one thing, it is a convention of formality, like wearing a tuxedo to the prom. Drawing attention to oneself—whether by the use of I or by the wearing of flamboyant clothing—can be considered bad manners in some situations or in some cultures. One must become a student of the culture to know the conventions and codes, the manners and mores. Avoiding the use of the first-person I or we can also be a badge of identity—like the businessperson’s dark suit, the head scarf of Moslem women, or the uniform of the soldier. Writers in science and engineering avoid the first person to suggest the objectivity and reproducibility of their work. It doesn’t matter that I get one result in my lab; by following these procedures, anyone can get such a result. The emphasis thus falls on the methods and the findings rather than on the interpretations of any individual. In forthrightly using we in the famous paper announcing the structure of DNA, Francis Crick and James Watson flouted convention and emphasized the originality of their discovery and the daring quality of their interpretation (see the discussion in Holcomb & Killingsworth, 2010, pp. 50-53).

Students may grasp the analogies between language and other cultural practices quite quickly, but still have trouble crossing the bridge between them. Ultimately they must be convinced that it is in their best interest to know the inner workings of language as well as they know the intricacies of fashion, sports, or music. To that end, we rely on performance. Performance is the moment when language goes into action, when the writer puts the stylistic repertoire to use with a rhetorical awareness of audience and context. Good performance finally requires mastery of rules (grammar), knowledge of conventions (norms, audience expectations), and the informed practice of style (good decisions about deviations).

Performance will also reveal continuities (and thus bridge the divide) between the two definitions of style with which this chapter began: narrow definitions which identify style with verbal style, and broad definitions which identify it with fashion, music, food, etc. Narrow definitions often fall short because they measure style in terms of its efficiency in transmitting information (for instance, the whole prescriptive tradition on clarity and concision), or because they are too invested in the representational function of language (style may depict behavior—may even enhance depictions of behavior—but is not a form of behavior itself). In either case, style is defined (sometimes exclusively) as a relation to content and usually as content’s subordinate partner. As a result, narrow definitions leave style vulnerable to charges of formalism. Broad definitions, by contrast, often ignore or underestimate the

role verbal style plays in the production and reproduction of culture, and their selection of objects of analysis seem driven by a misguided assumption: if you want to examine relations between style and culture, you can't get there through verbal form.

If, however, we approach style as performance—as a medium for social and cultural interaction—then doing so will dismantle distinctions between narrow and broad definitions by treating the objects each traditionally analyzes as belonging to the same set. Reconfiguring them as such invites us (and our students) to consider patterns at the level of word, phrase, and clause as performative set-pieces—that is, as ritualizations of language that work alongside of (or sometimes in tension with) ritualizations in deportment, dress, food, visual design, sport, etc.—all of which play a role in structuring and orchestrating interactions not only between style and content, but also (and more importantly) among performers, audiences, and the contexts they inhabit. More generally, this reconfiguration invites students to marshal the strengths of both linguistic and cultural analysis in developing a practice of composition that addresses the deep motives of writers and readers in the widest possible context.

Notes

1.These frameworks originally appeared in our textbook Performing Prose: The Study and Practice of Style in Composition. Here we elaborate on their pedagogical uses and explore their theoretical implications more fully.

2.See, for instance, Cicero's De Oratore (2.60.244; 2.60.247; 2.61.251-52; and 2.67.270) and Quintilian (6.3.17-18; 6.3.29; 6.3.46-47; and 5.3.83).

3.The following discussion of tricolon is based on our analysis of the same scheme in Performing Prose (pp. 151-154).

4.Our thinking here is influenced by Jeanne Fahnestock's Rhetorical Figures in Science where she argues that several key figures exemplify or "epitomize" particular lines of reasoning (pp. 23-24).

5.The following is based on Holcomb's analysis of the same segment (pp. 71-75).

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2.4.3: Case Studies

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3.1.1.1.1: What Is the Writing Process?

Even the most talented writers rarely get a piece right in their first draft. What's more, few writers create a first draft through a single, sustained effort. Instead, the best writers understand that writing is a process: it takes time; sustained attention; and a willingness to change, expand, and even delete words as one writes. Good writing also takes a willingness to seek feedback from peers and mentors and to accept and use the advice they give. In this book, we will refer to and model the **writing process**, showing how student writers like yourself worked toward compelling papers about literary works.

In this video (bigthink.com/ideas/25140), the decorated modern novelist Salman Rushdie, the author of such books as *Midnight's Children* and *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, talks about his own writing process.Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (New York: Penguin, 1991); Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Random House, 2008). Writing, Rushdie insists, "is not inspiration; it's concentration."Salman Rushdie, "Inspiration Is Nonsense," interview by Max Miller, directed by Jonathan Fowler, *Big Think*, video, November 29, 2010, bigthink.com/ideas/25140. Rushdie even calls the idea of pure inspiration "nonsense," saying that writing is "exploratory" and "more a process of discovery."Salman Rushdie, "Inspiration Is Nonsense," interview by Max Miller, directed by Jonathan Fowler, *Big Think*, video, November 29, 2010, bigthink.com/ideas/25140. Rushdie is talking about writing fiction, but his insight applies just as well to writing critical papers for a college class: good academic writing requires that you devote time and energy to exploring and discovering new ideas. Fortunately, this means you should not panic if a brilliant paper idea doesn't appear when you first start thinking about a paper topic. If you commit to the writing process the ideas will come.

Your Process

1. How do you typically approach writing assignments in your classes? When do you start working? Do you employ any prewriting techniques?
2. Have you ever been given the chance to revise your writing after receiving feedback from your peers or your instructor? How did the act of revising change your relationship to your paper?

Good writing takes, above all, planning and organization. If you wait until the night before a written assignment is due to begin, your hurrying will supersede the necessary steps of prewriting, researching, outlining, drafting, revising, seeking feedback, and re-revising. Those stages look something like this:

Prewriting

Many of the activities we'll ask you to do in the "Your Process" sections of this book will be **prewriting** activities. We'll ask you to reflect on your reading, to make connections between your experiences and our text, and to jot down ideas spurred by your engagement with the theories presented here. It's from activities like these that writers often get their ideas for writing. The more engaged you are as a reader, the more engaged you'll be when the time comes to write.

Researching

This book will also help you start the research process, in which you hone in on those aspects of a given literary text that interest you and seek out a deeper understanding of those aspects. Literary researchers read not only literary texts but also the work of other literary scholars and even sources that are indirectly related to literature, such as primary historical documents and biographies. In other words, they seek a wide range of texts that can supplement their understanding of the story, poem, play, or other text they want to write about. As you research, you should keep prewriting, keeping a record of what you agree with, what you disagree with, and what you feel needs further exploration in the texts you read.

Outlining

To write well you should have a plan. As you write, that plan may change as you learn more about your topic and begin to fully understand your own ideas. However, papers are easier to tackle when you first sketch out the broad outline of your ideas. Committing those ideas to paper will help you see how different ideas relate to one another (or don't relate to one another). Don't be afraid to revise your outline—play around with the sequence of your ideas and evidence until you find the most logical progression.

Drafting

The most important way to improve your writing is to start writing! Because you're treating writing as a process, it's not important that every word you type be perfectly chosen, or that every sentence be exquisitely crafted. When you're drafting, the most important thing is that you get words on paper. Follow your outline and write.

Revising

After you've committed words to paper (or, more accurately, to your computer screen), you can go back and shape them more deliberately through **revision**. Cognitive research has shown that a significant portion of reading is actually remembering. As a result, if you read your work immediately after writing it, you probably won't notice any of the potential problems with it. Your brain will "fill in the gaps" of poor grammar, misspelling, or faulty reasoning. Because of this, you should give yourself some time in between drafting and revising—the more time the better. As you revise, try to approach your text as your readers will. Ask yourself skeptical questions (e.g., Are there clear connections between the different claims I'm making in this paper? Do I provide enough evidence to convince someone to believe my claims?). Revisions can often be substantial: you may need to rearrange your points, delete significant portions of what you've written, or rewrite sentences and paragraphs to better reflect the ideas you have developed while writing. Most importantly, you should revise your introduction several times. Writers often work into their strongest ideas, which then appear in their conclusions but not (if they do not revise) their introductions. Make sure that your introduction reflects the more nuanced claims that appear in the body and conclusion of your paper.

Seeking Feedback

Even after years of practice revising your writing, you'll never be able to see your writing in an entirely objective light. To really improve your writing, you need feedback from others who can identify where your ideas are not as clear as they should be. You can seek feedback in a number of ways: you can make an appointment in your college's writing center, you can participate in class peer-review workshops, or you can talk to your instructor during his or her office hours. If you will have a chance to revise your paper after your instructor grades it, his or her comments on that graded draft should be considered essential feedback as you revise.

A key notion that drives this textbook is peer review: we believe that you should share your writing with your peers, your classmates. For each chapter in this book, we suggest that you conduct peer review with one or two classmates. We provide peer-review guides for each chapter that can be accessed in Chapter 10.

Re-Revising

One you've garnered feedback on your writing, you should use that feedback to revise your paper yet again. You should not, however, simply make every change that your colleagues or instructor recommended. You should think about the suggestions they've made and ensure that their suggestions will help you make the argument you want to make. You may decide to incorporate some suggestions and not others. When you treat writing as a process, it should become a genuine dialogue between you and your readers.

Publishing

Finally, you will submit your paper to an audience for review. As college students, this primarily means the paper that you turn in to your instructor for evaluation.

The preceding categories suggest that writing is a linear process—that is, that you will follow these steps in the following order:

prewriting → researching → outlining → drafting → revising → feedback → re-revising → publishing.

The reality of the writing process, however, is that as you write you shuttle back and forth in these stages. For example, as you begin writing your thesis paragraph, the beginning of your essay, you will write and revise many times before you are satisfied with your opening; once you have a complete draft, you will more than likely return to the introduction to revise it again to better match the contents of the completed essay. This shuttling highlights the recursive nature of the writing process and can be diagrammed as follows:

prewriting ↔ researching ↔ outlining ↔ drafting ↔ revising ↔ feedback ↔ re-revising ↔ publishing.

Furthermore, you should be aware that each writer has a unique writing process: some will be diligent outliners, while others may discover ideas as they write. There is no right way to write (so to speak), but the key is the notion of process—all strong writers engage in the writing process and recognize the importance of feedback and revision in the process.

Your Process

1. Describe your writing process.
2. Do you normally engage in the stages listed previously?
3. If not, why? If so, what part of the process do you find most helpful?
4. Share your process with the class to discover the variety in approaches writers take when writing.

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3.1.1.1.2: Why Commit to the Writing Process?

In short, you should commit to the writing process because it's the best known method for helping unconfident writers become confident writers. If there's one thing that over fifty years of writing research has shown, it's that students improve their writing skills through practice, practice, and more practice. The more you write in college, the more comfortable you will be with the conventions of academic and professional prose. When you commit to the process of writing, you will begin to understand that writing isn't a rarefied talent available to a privileged few. You'll begin to see that writing is a skill and can be developed through practice. What's more, the writing process does not include the terrifying idea that you produce perfect prose on demand. Instead, you will learn to produce the best prose you can now and to improve it as you develop your ideas. This frees you up to concentrate on developing your skills of argument—skills that will be useful in whatever professional field you eventually work—rather than living in terror that you will make a mistake.

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3.1.1.1.3: What Is Academic Argument?

Your Process

1. When you hear the word “argument,” what other words come immediately to mind? Jot down as many related words as you can think of.

While scientists test their theories through experiments, literary scholars most often engage with their theories through **academic argument**. When you think of the word “argument,” you probably think of conflict. Arguments are loud disagreements; arguments may involve yelling, cursing, or even, in extreme cases, physical violence. That’s not what we mean by academic argument, though. When scholars disagree, they don’t start throwing punches. Instead, academic argument looks more like a conversation. One scholar makes a **claim** about a given text and cites **evidence** to support that claim. Another scholar might dispute that claim by making a **counterclaim** and citing evidence that either challenges the original claim or supports the counterclaim. In an extended academic argument, more points of view emerge: the original scholar might respond or other scholars might intervene, offering claims of their own that support, modify, or challenge the original claims in the argument.

Let’s sketch out an example of an academic argument. First, review William Shakespeare’s famous “Sonnet 130”:

My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun;

Coral is far more red than her lips’ red;

If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;

If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.

I have seen roses damasked red and white,

But no such roses see I in her cheeks;

And in some perfumes is there more delight

Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.

I love to hear her speak, yet well I know

That music hath a far more pleasing sound;

I grant I never saw a goddess go:

My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.

And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare

As any she, belied with false compare.William Shakespeare, “CXXX,” in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*(1609; Project Gutenberg, 2010), http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1041.

We can imagine a critical argument centered on the speaker’s description of his lover. One scholar might claim that the poem is forward-thinking in its attitudes toward gender, refusing to employ the idealized rhetoric of most Renaissance love poetry, which characterized women purely by their adherence to physical standards of beauty. By insisting that his love can be “rare”—meaning here “valuable” or “unique”—even though her lips, hair, breasts, cheeks, breath, and voice do not match society’s expectations for exceptional beauty, this speaker implies that women are complex individuals, not static figures meant to satisfy men’s erotic desires.

Another scholar might disagree with this reading, pointing out that even though the poem refuses certain idealized comparisons (“Coral is far more red than her lips’ red”), it nonetheless dwells only on this woman’s physical features. This scholar might claim that the speaker’s refusal to employ common metaphors to describe his mistress only demonstrates his desire to show his superiority over other poets. The poem’s final line, which ends on “false compare,” says nothing about the woman, but instead insults the metaphors and similes of other poets whom this speaker sees as less talented than himself. The woman is given no name, no voice, and no personality—she is only described through what she is not.

These two critics disagree, but they express that disagreement through careful, reasoned prose. Indeed, they find some common ground: as the second scholar begins to respond, he or she admits that the poem does refuse idealized comparisons. Good academic argument is a give-and-take process, as each participant acknowledges the best points made by his or her interlocutors. The goal of academic argument is (usually) not to prove another scholar wrong, but instead to show how his or her argument could be expanded, supplemented, redirected, modified, or amended.

In this book, we will teach you how to engage in these conversations. Each chapter helps you develop your skills of engagement and will ask you to practice responding to the ideas of other scholars. Through repeated practice, you will learn how to bring these skills of academic argument into your class papers—to move beyond simply summarizing literary works and toward interpreting them. Each chapter also includes a sample paper from student writers so that you can see how your peers have applied both theoretical and rhetorical principles to craft effective academic arguments about a range of literary works and cultural topics.

Note

Our discussions of argument in this textbook largely follow the Toulmin method, which you can read more about in this writing guide provided by Colorado State University (http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/reading/toulmin).“Writing Guide: The Toulmin Method,” Colorado State University, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/reading/toulmin. Our approach is also influenced by the refinements to Toulmin in the Little Red Schoolhouse (LRS) curriculum taught at the University of Chicago, the University of Virginia, and other institutions (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/welcome#3).“Little Red Schoolhouse Online,” University of Virginia Writing Program, http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/welcome. We have found Toulmin and LRS to be effective methods for beginning academic writers in a range of fields, including English literature.

In addition, we also follow the principles of nonthreatening argument that are presented by Carl Rogers. For more on Rogerian argument, review this article from Colorado State University (http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/co300man/com5e1.cfm) or Joseph M. Moxley’s article on the topic at *Writing Commons* (http://writingcommons.org/genres/aca...erian-argument).Kate Kiefer, “What Is Rogerian Argument?,” Colorado State University, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/co300man/com5e1.cfm; “Rogerian Argument: Solving Problems by Negotiating Differences,” *Writing Commons* (blog), 2012, http://writingcommons.org/genres/aca...erian-argument.

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3.1.1.1.4: Introducing an Academic Argument

In order to better understand the broad strokes of academic argument, we will read and analyze an undergraduate paper about Washington Irving's short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."Washington Irving, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and the Spectre Bridegroom: From the "Sketch Book"* (London: J. B. Lippincott, 1875; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 2000), etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin...&division=div1.

Your Process

As you work through this text, these process descriptions will make more sense if you've read the literary work under discussion. For this section, you should read Washington Irving's short story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Our discussion of student research and writing will reveal important plot details that you may want to discover on your own first. You can read this as an e-text provided by the University of Virginia (etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin...&division=div1).

You can also listen to a free audiobook of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" at Librivox (http://librivox.org/the-legend-of-sleepy-hollow-by-washington-irving).

Monica submitted this paper for an introductory literature class after the students read Washington Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" during their unit on short fiction. Let's look at her introduction first:

When one hears the title "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," a reader might shiver a little and think of the infamous spectre, "the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head … known, at all the country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow" (Irving 966). It is this legendary phantom that grants Washington Irving's tale the label of ghost story. As such, readers would expect the legend to be overflowing with superstition and opposing forces—good vs. evil, known vs. unknown, supernatural vs. reality. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is in fact meant to be a tale of opposing forces, but not in the same way as ghost story. It is a legend of rivalry, a rivalry between the characters Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt. Readers must understand that the opposing forces presented here are these two characters, the victim and the victor, the underdog and the front-runner—not those of supernatural and reality—in order to understand the true significance of Irving's tale. Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its "motherland," Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and the true opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand the ultimate message behind Irving's tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America.

Your Process

After you finish Monica's introduction, jot down the answer to these questions:

1. How does this introduction entice you to read on? What lines grab your attention? Can you articulate why they do?
2. Are any of the statements overly strong? "Must" we read the story in this particular way to understand it? Are there ways to tone down the language?
3. What do you think will come next in this paper? You have just read "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"—are there details from the story that you think Monica will cite in the longer paper?

What makes Monica's introduction so effective? Note first the way she summarizes one way that many readers interpret the story: "readers would expect the legend to be overflowing with superstition and opposing forces—good vs. evil, known vs. unknown, supernatural vs. reality." In her argument, Monica will challenge this reading, but she does so subtly. "'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' is in fact meant to be a tale of opposing forces," she writes, "but not in the same way as ghost story." Monica establishes common ground with those who read the tale as a ghost story, noting that it "*is…a tale of opposing forces*." By working from common ground toward a new understanding of the story, Monica follows the principles of argument laid out by Carl Rogers, a psychologist who insisted that effective argument is based not on conflict, but on compromise and negotiation between reader and writer.

However, a reader may sense that Monica is presenting her reading as the most authoritative or the best interpretation of the story, which can make a reader a bit defensive, especially if he or she does not necessarily agree with Monica's claim. Notice the subtle revision (highlighted in bold) that makes the opening even more persuasive because it is less totalizing:

When one hears the title "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," a reader might shiver a little and think of the infamous spectre, "the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head … known, at all the country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow" (Irving 966). It is this legendary phantom that grants Washington Irving's tale the label of ghost story. As such, readers would expect the legend to be overflowing with superstition and opposing forces—good vs. evil, known vs. unknown, supernatural vs. reality. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" **can be read as a** tale of opposing forces, but not in the same way as ghost story. It is a legend of rivalry, a rivalry between the characters Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt. Readers **may benefit by** understand**ing** that the opposing forces presented here are these two characters, the victim and the victor, the underdog and the front-runner—not those of supernatural and reality—in order to understand **a major** significance of Irving's tale. Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its "motherland," Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and **these** opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand **a central** message behind Irving's tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America.

After establishing the common ground more subtly using the principles of **nonthreatening argument**, Monica then turns to her own ideas about the story: the tale, she insists, does focus on opposing forces, "*but not in the same way* as a ghost story" (our emphasis). Monica prepares the reader for her new claims about "Sleepy Hollow" by shifting her focus from the broad theme of opposition to the specific, nonsupernatural opposition of two characters' rivalry. She writes, "It is a legend of rivalry, a rivalry between the characters Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt." Monica introduces a fact from the story—a small piece of textual evidence—that doesn't quite fit with the common view. Readers who have interpreted "Sleepy Hollow" through the lens of the ghost story want to read on and see how Monica's focus on rivalry will change their view of Irving's tale.


Illustration by John Quidor, *The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane* (1858).

Of course, most readers are skeptical: for each claim a writer makes, readers ask "So what?" Monica answers that "So what?" question by demonstrating a potential problem with her readers' interpretations of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." In the next sentence of her introduction, Monica shows her readers why her interpretation of the story is significant. "Readers must understand," she writes, "that the opposing forces presented here are these two characters, the victim and the victor, the underdog and the front-runner—not those of supernatural and reality—in order to understand the true significance of Irving's tale." Effective introductions to literary interpretations focus on interpretive problems—not for the writer, but for the readers of the paper. Keep in mind that a literary interpretation may not seem significant to every person who reads it. Monica assumes, as you should assume when you write papers for your literature classes, that her readers care about literary works and want to understand them fully and

well. For readers who do care about literature, however, the stakes Monica proposes are significant: readers who insist on interpreting “Sleepy Hollow” as a ghost story will miss the tale’s “true significance.”

Your Process

The University of Virginia provides a number of free modules to help college writers understand the parts of argument we discuss here. To better understand the parts of an effective introduction, you might work through the following modules:

1. “Problem Frames Start Here”: http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...e/LRSintheWild.
2. “Problem Frame Elements”: http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...e/LRSintheWild.
3. “State the Consequences of a Conceptual Problem by Answering ‘So What?’”: http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...s/LRSintheWild.

Once a writer introduces a problem, however, readers expect him or her to also propose a solution to that problem. The first big question readers are likely to ask a writer is, “What do you think?” In the final lines of her introduction, Monica tells her readers what she thinks about this story by making the central claim of her argument. Her claim explains what she believes to be the central opposition in Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”: “Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its ‘motherland,’ Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and the true opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand the ultimate message behind Irving’s tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America.” Monica offers a historicized reading of Irving’s tale (for more on historical theories about literature, see Chapter 7), arguing that the story’s true significance can be found by looking more closely at the time of the story’s composition, when America was an “adolescent” nation still at odds with Great Britain. Monica’s claim is specific, debatable, and significant (at least to readers who care about this story). In the body of her paper, Monica will unpack her claim, using subclaims and reasons to demonstrate to her readers why they should follow her interpretation of the story.

Your Process

1. You can practice developing an effective subclaim using the module “Build Your Argument around a Significant Claim” (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...t/LRSintheWild).
2. Choose a literary work to analyze, preferably a short story or short lyric poem.
3. Develop a working thesis that makes a claim about the work, knowing that this thesis claim may be revised.
4. Create an informal outline that highlights the major stages of your argument—the evidence that you will use to support your thesis claim.

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3.1.1.1.5: Introduction to Writing Process

Why is it necessary to think of writing as a process?

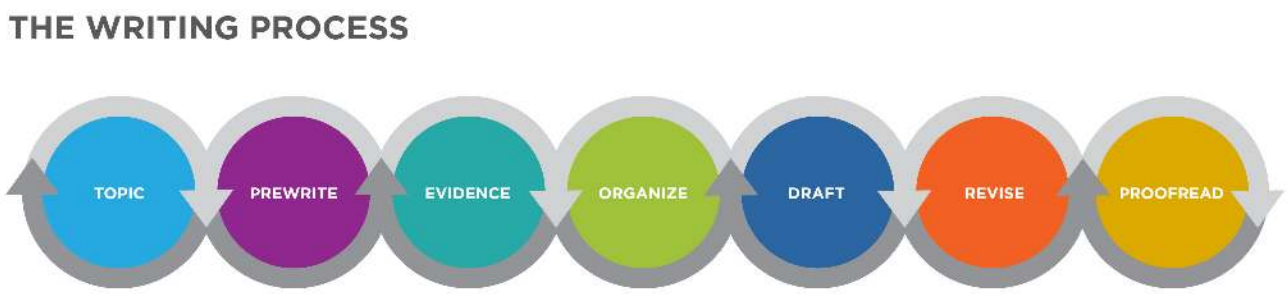
As students, we're used to thinking of "essay" as a noun. It's often seen as an obligation, a task, a chore.



But the origin of the word "essay" is actually as a verb, meaning "to attempt." Thought of in this way, writing an essay can be seen as an open, inviting exercise. It's a way of exploring a new concept. It's using writing as thinking.

A mountain climber wouldn't attempt a new technically-challenging climb without a lot of planning and preparation ahead of time. Essayists also need planning and preparation for new technical challenges.

The **writing process** supports the exploratory, open-ended nature of essay writing. It gives you guidance towards a final product, while still allowing you room to explore along the way.



We'll spend this module exploring each stage of the writing process, showing how stages overlap and intersect to lead you towards writing success.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to

- Identify topic selection activities
- Identify prewriting activities
- Identify activities to find evidence in support of a claim
- Identify essay organizational techniques
- Identify drafting activities
- Identify revision activities
- Identify proofreading activities

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3.1.1.1.6: Selecting a Topic

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify strategies for personalizing an assigned topic
- identify strategies for finding a focus for an unassigned topic
- identify strategies for moving from general to specific



Some instructors who assign writing projects will leave the choice of what to write about up to you. Others will have a very defined set of topics for you to write from. But even when an instructor assigns a given topic or offers a choice of assigned topics, you have a lot of opportunity for creativity.

The real issue here is **approach**. When you come to an assigned essay as a project, how you first engage with it will determine your overall experience. Some students see any writing assignment as an externally imposed task — something they have to do in order to pass the course. This approach will guarantee that those students will eventually hate their assignments, possibly their instructor, and when push comes to shove the whole project of being in school.

Solution: Choosing an Approach to Your Topic

Deliberately choosing how you approach your topic will help you not only choose one that will satisfy the requirements, but also ensure that you enjoy the process of research and writing. After all, no one on earth can do what you do. So, only you can figure out how to write a great essay in your own voice.

It all starts with selecting a topic. How you approach that selection process is vastly important.

The key is to identify what made you take the class in the first place. Something about this class captured your fancy and made you register (particularly in the case of an elective), so place that interest at the heart of your topic.

Look to what you were interested in as a way of finding your paper topic! Use that initial fascination to twist the topic of your paper so that it becomes an excuse to wallow in whatever got you interested in that class in the first place.

Avoiding the Pit of Despair

Whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of thinking that your work is simply a required box that needs to be checked and you can't bring any creativity to the table. Even if the class was required for your program or degree, you still chose that program. There are ways to make almost any writing task enjoyable, or at least something you gain something interesting out of.

How to Come Up With a Topic to Write About

Many people are intimidated by the thought of writing. One of the biggest factors that can contribute to writers' block is not knowing what to write about. If you can find a topic that interests you, your writing will likely flow more readily and you will be more likely to write a successful piece. Use a variety of strategies for coming up with something to write about to find what works best for your writing and learning style.



Understand the Essay Assignment

Understanding the assigned essay is the first step to coming up with a topic. Knowing the type of essay that is expected, the length of the essay, and to what degree research is expected will all determine the scope of the topic you will choose.

Evaluate the Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of the assignment will also determine the type of topic. A persuasive essay, for example, will have a much different type of topic than a personal experience essay.

- Look for key action words like *compare*, *analyze*, *describe*, *synthesize*, and *contrast*. These words will help you determine what your teacher wants you to do in the essay.

Select a Topic from a Provided List

If your instructor has provided a list of topics for you, choose a topic from the given list. It is likely that the topics have been gathered together because they are an appropriate scope and breadth and the instructor has found that the topics have led to successful essays in the past .

- Choose the topic for which a main idea comes most naturally and for which you feel you can develop the paper easily.

Brainstorm a List of Ideas

Write down a list of ideas that come to mind. They don't have to be good ideas, but it's good to just start writing a list to get your ideas flowing. Just write down everything you can think of; you can evaluate the ideas later.

This video demonstrates that writers of all levels and experiences value the process of brainstorming. Watch brainstorming in action for a television sitcom.

Freewrite for a Predetermined Amount of Time

Decide ahead of time how long you want to freewrite, then just write without stopping.

- Most people write for 10-20 minutes.
- Do not stop writing, even if you need to just write "blah blah blah" in the middle of a sentence.
- Hopefully, you will write yourself towards a useful thought or idea through freewriting. Even if it does not give you content you can use in your essay, it can be a valuable writing warm-up.

Create a Visual Representation of Your Ideas

Especially if you are a visual learner, creating a visual representation of your ideas may help you stumble onto or narrow down ideas to a good topic.

- Use a mind map. The center of the mind map contains your main argument, or thesis, and other ideas branch off in all directions.
- Draw an idea web. This a visual that uses words in circles connected to other words or ideas. Focusing on the connections between ideas as well as the ideas themselves may help you generate a topic.

Remember What the Teacher Focused On In Class

If you are writing an essay for a class, think about what the teacher spent a lot of time talking about in class. This may make a good choice for an essay, as the teacher clearly thinks it's something important.

- Review your class notes and see if there is anything that stands out as interesting or important.
- Review any handouts or focus sections of a text that were assigned.

Think About What Interests You



Writing something you care about or that you are interested in is much easier than making yourself write about things that seem boring. Make a list of your interests and see if there is a way to connect one or more of them to your essay.

Consider the List You Have Generated

Write a few additional notes next to each potential topic and evaluate whether each item would be an appropriate topic. At this point, you should be able to narrow your list down to a few good choices.

- You may want to ask your teacher if you have narrowed down your ideas to two or three items. She may have some insight as to which topic would be the most successful.
- Go back and look at the original assignment again and determine which of your narrowed topics will best fit with the intent of the essay assignment.

When to Narrow Down a Topic

Most students will have to narrow down their topic at least a little. The first clue is that your paper needs to be narrowed is simply the length your professor wants it to be. You can't properly discuss "war" in 1,000 words, nor talk about orange rinds for 12 pages.

Steps to Narrowing a Topic

1. First start out with a general topic. Take the topic and break it down into categories by asking the five W's and H.

- Who? (American Space Exploration)
- What? (Manned Space Missions)
- Where? (Moon Exploration)
- When? (Space exploration in the 1960's)
- Why? (Quest to leave Earth)
- How? (Rocket to the Moon: Space Exploration)

- Now consider the following question areas to generate specific ideas to narrow down your topic.
  - Problems faced? (Sustaining Life in Space: Problems with space exploration)
  - Problems overcome? (Effects of zero gravity on astronauts)
  - Motives? (Beating the Russians: Planning a moon mission)
  - Effects on a group? (Renewing faith in science: aftershock of the Moon mission)
  - Member group? (Designing a moon lander: NASA engineers behind Apollo 11)
  - Group affected? (From Test Pilots to Astronauts: the new heroes of the Air force)
  - Group benefited? (Corporations that made money from the American Space Program)
  - Group responsible for/paid for _____ (The billion dollar bill: taxpayer reaction to the cost of sending men to the moon)
- Finally, refine your ideas by by considering the **S.O.C.R.A.P.R**. model.
  - **S** = Similarities (Similar issues to overcome between the 1969 moon mission and the planned 2009 Mars Mission)
  - **O** = Opposites (American pro and con opinions about the first mission to the moon)
  - **C** = Contrasts (Protest or patriotism: different opinions about cost vs. benefit of the moon mission)
  - **R** = Relationships (the NASA family: from the scientists on earth to the astronauts in the sky)
  - **A** = Anthropomorphisms [interpreting reality in terms of human values] (Space: the final frontier)
  - **P** = Personifications [giving objects or descriptions human qualities] (the eagle has landed: animal symbols and metaphors in the space program)
  - **R** = Repetition (More missions to the moon: Pro and Con American attitudes to landing more astronauts on the moon)

Self-Check

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/1259

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3.1.1.1.7: Prewriting

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify purpose and defining characteristics of prewriting
- identify various prewriting strategies, including freewriting, listing, questioning, clustering, and dialoguing
- identify rhetorical context for the writing task
- identify working thesis statement



Many students — and some teachers — want to skip the pre-writing stage of the writing process because they see it as unnecessarily burdensome and time-consuming. However, teachers who dismiss the pre-writing stage as being completely

unnecessary are performing a disservice to many of their students. Pre-writing is an essential part of the entire writing process because it enables you to begin documenting the process by which the eventual essay will be formed and evaluated.

The term “pre-writing” may be a bit misleading because writing can and often does occur at this critical stage. For example, written notes and outlines, including graphic organizers, can serve as a record of one’s ideas and the sources of those ideas. A preliminary thesis or hypothesis could inform the process and the product.

Many people do brainstorm via their thoughts without recording those ideas and sources in permanent form prior to the next steps in the writing process. Most developing writers, however, need to record their pre-writing ideas in permanent form so that those ideas can clearly inform and guide the thinking and writing process, resulting in a coherent, well-organized product or text.

Prewriting Strategies

The term “pre-writing” conjures up a lot of strange activities and practices. You’ve probably tried many different prewriting strategies in the past, and may have a good idea of what works for you and what doesn’t.

Keep in mind that the KIND of writing project you’re working on can impact how effective a particular technique is to use in a given situation. Something that you’ve relied on before may not be as effective as you move into new subjects. Experiment often.

Make it fun! Here are some to try:

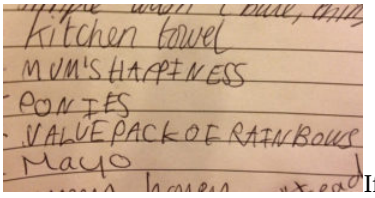
Freewriting



Set a timer for a short amount of time (5 minutes or 10 minutes are good options). During that period, write anything that comes to mind related to your topic. The goal is to not worry about what comes out of your pen or keyboard. Instead, just free your mind to associate as it wishes. It’s amazingly productive for rich ideas, and it’s nice not to have to worry about spelling and grammar.

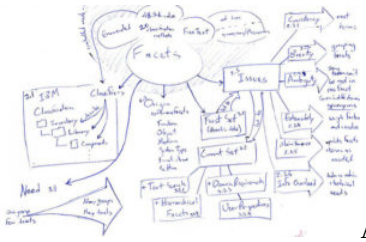
If it’s hard for you to “turn off” the worry about writing well, challenge yourself to write a few awful, terrible sentences as the beginning.

List-Making



If you’re a list-maker by nature, there’s no reason not to harness that for academic writing purposes. Jot notes about major ideas related to the subject you’re working with. This also works well with a time limit, like 10 minutes. A bonus feature–after you’ve had time to reflect on your list, you can rearrange it in hierarchical order, and create a basic outline quickly.

Clustering



Also known as “mapping,” this is a more visual form of brainstorming. It asks you to come up with topic ideas, and draw lines to connect ideas and figure out sub-categories and related ideas. You can end up with a quite extensive “bubble cloud” as a result. This also works well within a time limit, like 10 minutes.

Questioning



The way to find answers is to ask questions–seems simple enough. This applies to early-stage writing processes, just like everything else. When you have a topic in mind, asking and answering questions about it is a good way to figure out directions your writing might take.

Start with just listing the questions. What do you want or need to know the answers to regarding your topic?

Dialoging



Another approach to getting inside a topic is to imagine two people talking about it. Write out a script for two characters you invent. Give them names and brief personalities–why are they interested in this subject? Assume one of them knows more than the other about it.

An option is to find another person to participate with you. Write down a back and forth conversation you have about the topic. Try texting or emailing one another to make it feel authentic.

Rhetorical Context For Yourself as a Writer

External forces work to shape any text you read. The author’s background, the intended audience, and the intended purpose of a text combine to influence the text itself.

The same is true for items *you* write. Who you are as an author, who you anticipate as your audience, and what your purpose for writing is, will all shape what you produce.

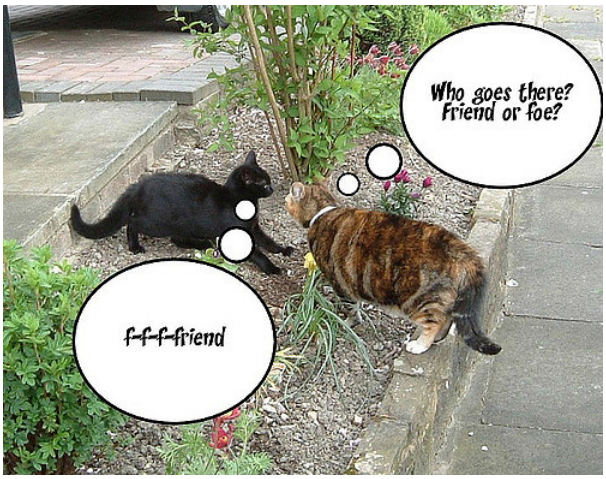
This presentation addresses considerations about Author, Audience, and Purpose when you write.



A SlideShare element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/temp/?p=1575

The Working Thesis Statement

Students often see a thesis statement as an object of mystery. It helps to realize that they are friend, not foe. They are often quite useful tools, both in helping you write and in making sure the final product is powerful.



Simply put, a **thesis** tells the reader your topic and your position on that topic.

When you've decided on a topic and explored it with prewriting activities, drafting a **working thesis** is a very helpful next step. As the name implies, a working thesis is a work in progress–it helps you form initial ideas, but is open to change as you keep working on the project.

A working thesis statement is just like a regular thesis statement, except that you can tweak it and change it as you research and write. It's sort of like making a plan for the weekend on Tuesday night: you know the plan will probably be modified, but it's a good place to start. — Portland State University Writing Center[1]

Self-Check

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/1260

1. "Step Three: Developing a Working Thesis Statement" *Writing Resources Guided Tour* 8.03: Prewriting#return-footnote-1575-1

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3.1.1.1.8: Finding Evidence

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify experience or examples from personal life as they relate to the topic
- identify strategies for preliminary research on the topic
- identify strategies for synthesis of research and personal ideas
- identify effective techniques for quoting a source
- identify effective techniques for paraphrasing a source
- identify effective techniques for summarizing a source



Watch this clip from the TV show *Mythbusters*. It presents a common argument : that the U.S. government perpetrated a conspiracy

to fake the moon landing in 1969.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/temp/?p=1577

(The video has an instrumental soundtrack but no voice-over.)

The argument for the Moon Landing Hoax depends upon two pieces of evidence : the flag was waving when there should be no wind; and the sun did not cast parallel shadows, as it apparently should have. How did you react to this evidence ?

If you are like most people, you reacted with skepticism. Did the picture alone convince you that the shadows were wrong? Is it possible that the shadows were actually parallel, and that the photograph was simply unclear? Could you tell that the flag's movement was caused by the wind on the moon, or could the astronaut have been moving the flagpole? Did you even know that flags are not supposed to flap on the moon?

Even if you offer "hard" facts like photographs or smoking guns as evidence , your readers will not find your argument convincing unless you show that these facts actually support your claims. You should provide as evidence not only reliable facts—facts drawn from sources your readers trust—but also the right kinds of facts—facts that are directly relevant to your claim and appropriate to the kind of argument you are making. If you can't do this, you may have to make an additional argument showing that your evidence is relevant, reliable , and connected to your claims. If you can't show this, you shouldn't expect your evidence to persuade your readers.

For these reasons , the evidence presented in the Moon Landing Hoax clip is not convincing. No source is listed for the information given; we cannot be sure that these are the most reliable photographs and video footage available. The evidence is also unexplained. In short, the evidence here does not prove that the moon landing was a hoax—but it may accomplish the ad's goal, which is to provide just enough evidence to get us to watch the show.

The following section will address how to supply evidence that is convincing, and supportable, as part of your academic writing.

Support and Elaboration



Support and elaboration consist of the specific details and information writers use to develop their topic. The key to developing support and elaboration is getting *specific*. Good writers use concrete, specific details, and relevant information to establish mental images for their readers.

Two important concepts in support and elaboration are *sufficiency* and *relatedness*.

> **Sufficiency** refers the amount of detail — is there enough detail to support the topic? Any parent who has asked his or her child what happened at school knows how hard it is to get a child to elaborate on a subject. Good writers supply their readers with sufficient details to comprehend what they have written. In narrative writing, this means providing enough descriptive details for the reader to construct a picture of the story in their mind. In expository writing, this means not only finding enough information to support your purpose, whether it is to inform or persuade your audience, but also finding information that is credible and accurate.

Sufficiency, however, is not enough. The power of your information is determined less by the quantity of details than by their *quality*.

Relatedness refers to the quality of the details and their relevance to the topic. Good writers select only the details that will support their focus, deleting irrelevant information. In narrative writing, details should be included only if they are concrete, specific details that contribute to, rather than detract from, the picture provided by the narrative. In expository writing, information should be included only if it is relevant to the writer's goal and strengthens rather than weakens the writer's ability to meet that goal.

? Guiding Questions for Support and Elaboration

FOR NARRATIVE WRITING:

- Is your story developed with specific details that are related to the main event?
- Do all of the details move the story along?
- Does your story have enough elaboration so that your reader can see and feel what is happening? Can you show me an example where your reader can see or feel what is happening?

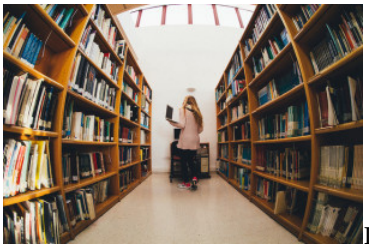
FOR INFORMATIONAL WRITING:

- Is your essay developed with specific information (facts, statistics, etc.) that is related to the main topic?
- Does all of the information support the main topic?
- Does your essay have enough information to fulfill your reader's needs?

FOR ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING:

- Is your essay developed with specific details that are related to the main topic?
- Does all of the information support the main argument?
- Does your essay have enough supporting evidence to persuade your reader?

Preliminary Research



In the preliminary research stage, the you'll begin the process of finalizing your topic, continuing to refine your working thesis, and documenting the sources to be used for guidance and support.

Techniques and Strategies

- use an online search engine (like Google) or print resources (like magazines and books) at the local media center or library to gain familiarity with a topic
- read a text's table of contents, index, and chapter headings in order to determine your primary interest for the assignment
- examine sources to determine the availability of authentic, credible, current resources for your topic
- select a final topic for a thesis that permits focused research and writing

Finding the Scope

The preliminary research stage serves as an important connection between pre-writing and formulating a thesis. This stage is characterized by many of the components of the pre-writing stage, such as gathering information from a variety of sources. But rather than thinking broadly, as in pre-writing, the goal in the preliminary research stage is to narrow things down and home in on a reasonable scope for the topic.

This stage enables you to understand which of your ideas can be documented by sources. Even an opinion piece needs to be validated through documented research. Preliminary research also permits you to change your mind about the intended topic before too much time and effort are committed to the process.

Blending Source Material with Your Own Work

The process of research can be fun, interesting work. Sometimes it can be hard to stop researching, and start writing. You may also find that you find so many great ideas from research, that it's hard to say anything unique yourself.

The goal of most college writing, though, is to showcase your own ideas. The research should take a back seat to your personal thoughts.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

-  **education, air, and genetic heritage. In the middle, emphasized in red, are bubbles labeled Capitalism. To the right, are empty bubbles collectively labeled Society. Arrows and lines indicate movement between bubbles in all sections.**

  Blend sources with your assertions. Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both as a whole and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.
- **Write an original introduction and conclusion.** As much as is practical, make the paper's introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own understanding of the ideas from your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.
- **Open and close paragraphs with originality.** In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work —"enclose" your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.
- **Use transparent rhetorical strategies.** When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description, definition, evaluation, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are *thinking* as you write.

Also, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create context for the cited information. A phrase such as "A 1979 study revealed that…" is an obvious announcement of citation to come.

Another recommended technique is the insertion of the author's name into your sentence to announce the beginning of your cited information.

When to Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize a Source

When you present evidence from a source, you have three options:

-  **Quote** the source by using its exact language with quotation marks or in a block quotation.
- **Paraphrase** the source by restating a short passage in your own words.
- **Summarize** the source by restating its ideas in fewer words than the original.

Which option you choose depends on how much of a source you are using, how you are using it, and what kind of paper you are writing, since different fields use sources in different ways. You have to decide each case individually, but here are some general guidelines:

- **If it's long, summarize.** If a passage is more than a paragraph or two, summarize it. Never quote or paraphrase long passages.
- **Don't quote too much.** If you use many passages from sources, do not quote them all. Too many quotations will make readers wonder whether you have contributed any of your own ideas.
- **In the sciences and experimental social sciences, paraphrase and summarize.** In these fields, it's usually the results that matter, not the words used to report them.
- **In the humanities and qualitative social sciences, quote only when the exact words matter.** If a passage from a source is your primary evidence, quote it (or, if it is too long, quote parts of it). If you address the exact words of a secondary source ,

quote them.

NOTE: You must **always** cite the source of every quotation, paraphrase, and summary, both in your text and in your bibliography or works cited. If you fail to do so, even by accident, you open yourself to a charge of plagiarism.

Quoting

In general, do not quote a source unless its exact words matter to your argument . You should think about quoting a source

- when the quoted words are your primary evidence (for instance, in an English paper you might quote from a novel; in a history paper you might quote from an official record; or in a sociology paper you might quote an informant)
- when the passage raises an important objection that you rebut, and you want to show that you are not misrepresenting it or taking it out of context
- when the words of a passage are original, odd, or otherwise too useful to lose in a paraphrase
- when a secondary source supports your claim and is written by an important authority who will give your argument credibility

Paraphrasing

In a paraphrase, you restate a passage in your own words. You should think about paraphrasing a source

- when a source's ideas or information, but not its language, are important to your argument (for example, if the result of a study of earthworms supports your claim, but its exact language doesn't matter)
- when you can state the ideas of a source more clearly or concisely than the original
- when a source uses technical terms that are unfamiliar to your readers
- when you use many passages from sources (so that you can avoid having too many quotations)

Summarizing

In a summary, you report the main ideas in a passage in fewer words than the original. You should think about summarizing a source

- when a passage from a source is too long to quote or paraphrase
- when only the main ideas of a source are relevant to your argument (for example, if you want to address only the claim and reasons in an argument, not its evidence or warrants)
- when the details in a source might distract or confuse readers (for example, if a source raises issues that might interest your readers but are not relevant to your argument)

Self-Check

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3.1.1.1.9: Drafting

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify strategies for drafting from an outline
- identify considerations unique to early drafts
- identify the value of multiple drafts

We're ready to dive into the process of writing, proper.

As we do, consider these observations from Dr. Pat Thomson, from the School of Education at The University of Nottingham.



There is a strong temptation to send things off too early. Finishing a first draft usually feels like a win – even a triumph. You didn't

know that it was going to be possible to write that much and here it is – all your words in one place. You rush to get it to your professor and then wait impatiently for the response. And when it comes, it suggests major revisions… Corrections beyond editing? This is a disaster. I am hopeless. The thesis/paper is doomed. I will never finish. The professor is an unfeeling monster.

Not true. All it takes is revision, some of which could have been done in the first place if we hadn't felt so darned elated that we'd actually produced a text.

But on the other hand…some people are feel deeply that their writing isn't going to be good enough, now in the first draft, and probably ever. All of the research on writer's block suggests that people who aim for perfection the first time round are likely to seriously inhibit their writing. They agonize over phrases, work on a first sentence until they can't face it any more, take weeks to get a few pages written to their impossibly high expectations. We often see this kind of person characterized in movies – the unsuccessful writer who begins confidently on a first sentence but some hours later is surrounded by crumpled-up papers and sits despondently, staring sadly at a blank screen. Academic writers do this too.

Part of the problem seems to be that in conversations about academic writing we don't talk enough about the inevitability of the crappy first draft and the importance of revising. We don't suggest that it takes more than one go to reach the levels of polished prose that we admire. But really – let me reiterate – it doesn't happen straight away. If we just read finished articles and never see work in progress – and how many of us actually do get to see the work of experienced writers along the way – then we have no idea how much revising good academic writers actually do.

Using an Outline to Write a Paper

The main difference between outlining a reading and outlining your own paper is the source of the ideas. When you outline something someone else wrote, you are trying to represent their ideas and structure. When outlining your own paper, you will need to focus on your own ideas and how best to organize them. Depending on the type of writing assignment, you might want to incorporate concepts and quotations from various other sources, but your interpretation of those ideas is still the most important element. Creating an outline based on the principles outlined above can help you to put your ideas in a logical order, so your paper will have a stronger, more effective argument.

Step 1: Figure out your main points and create the headings for your outline

Once you have come up with some ideas for your paper, you will need to organize those ideas. The first step is to decide what your main points will be. Use those main ideas as the headings for your outline. Remember to start with your introduction as the first heading, add headings for each main idea in your argument, and finish with a conclusion.

For example, an outline for a five-paragraph essay on why I love my dog might have the following headings:

I. INTRODUCTION

II. BODY PARAGRAPH 1: My Dog is a Good Companion

III. BODY PARAGRAPH 2: My Dog is Well-Behaved

IV. BODY PARAGRAPH 3: My Dog is Cute

V. CONCLUSION

Since the topic is why I love my dog, each of the body paragraphs will present one reason why I love my dog. Always make sure your main ideas directly relate to your topic!

You can order your main ideas based on either the strength of your argument (i.e. put your most convincing point first) or on some other clear organizing principle. A narrative on how you became a student at this college would most likely follow a chronological approach, for example. Don't worry if you are not completely satisfied with the ordering; you can always change it later. This is particularly easy if you are creating your outline in a word-processing program on a computer: you can drag the items into different positions to test out different orderings and see which makes the most sense.

Step 2: Add your supporting ideas

The next step is to fill in supporting ideas for each of your main ideas. Give any necessary explanations, descriptions, evidence, or examples to convince the reader that you are making a good point. If you are using quotes, add those here. Remember to include

the appropriate citation based on whichever format your teacher requires; having that information in your outline will speed things up when you write your paper (since you won't have to go hunting for the bibliographic information) and make it easier to avoid plagiarism.

To continue the example above, a writer might fill in part II of the outline as follows:

II. Body Paragraph 1: My Dog is a Good Companion

A. My dog is fun

1. My dog likes to play
2. My dog likes to go on walks

B. My dog is friendly

1. My dog likes to cuddle
2. My dog likes people

This section is focused on the idea that "I love my dog because he is a good companion." The two first-level subheadings are general reasons why he is a good companion: he is fun (A) and he is friendly (B). Each of those ideas is then further explained through examples: My dog is fun because he like to play and go on walks. I know my dog is friendly since he enjoys cuddling and like people. Even more detail could be added by including specific games my dog likes to play, behaviors that tell me he like to go on walks, and so. The more detail you add, the easier it will be to write you paper later on!

In terms of how to organize your subheadings, again try to present these supporting ideas in a logical order. Group similar ideas together, move from general concepts to more specific examples or explanations, and make sure each supporting idea directly relates to the heading or subheading under which it falls.

When you have finished adding supporting ideas, read through the outline to see if there is anywhere you think your argument has holes or could be further fleshed out. Make sure that your ideas are in the most logical order. Don't be afraid to test out different orderings to see what makes the most sense!

Step 3: Turn your headings and subheadings into complete sentences

Once you have added as much detail as possible and your outline is complete, save it as a new file on your computer (or type it into the computer). If your main and supporting ideas in the outline are not already in sentence form, turn each item into one or more complete sentences. This will help you to see more clearly idea where to divide up your paragraphs. When writing a short to medium length paper, each heading (or main idea) will typically correspond to one paragraph. For longer papers, each heading may be a section and your first (or even second) level of subheading will eventually become your paragraphs. See how many sentences fall under each heading to get a rough idea of what correspondence makes the most sense for your paper.

Step 4: Construct your paragraphs

Next, start at the beginning of your outline and go through point by point. Delete the outline formatting (indentations and letter/numeral designations) and start to put your sentences together into paragraphs. You may need to add transition phrases or even extra sentences to make sure your prose flows naturally. You might also find that even though your ideas seemed to make sense in the outline, you need to add still more details here or change the order of your ideas for everything to fully make sense. You may even find that you have too many ideas or that some ideas are not really all that relevant and need to be cut. That is perfectly normal. The outline is a plan to help you get organized, but you always have the flexibility to change it to fit the needs of your assignment.

Remember to start a new paragraph whenever you introduce a new idea (or when a paragraph has gotten very long and the reader needs a break). Again, you will probably want to add transition phrases or sentences to connect each paragraph to what came before and to help the reader follow your argument.

Once you have finished turning your outline into paragraphs, you should have a decent first draft of your paper. Now you just need to proofread and revise (and repeat) until you are ready to turn in your assignment!

Crappy First Drafts

Essay assignments are such high-stakes tasks, that we feel a lot of pressure to do serious work, and perform well, at every stage of the writing process. Sure, prewriting can be kind of fun, and outlining can get us excited about the possibilities a project can hold.

At the time of starting to write a first draft, however, the pressure starts to mount. Sometimes we can feel locked into the need to get everything perfect, that it can be paralyzing.

The thing to remember is that EVERY first draft is crappy. Everyone's.



Consider this blog post by Melissa Ward:

"The first draft of anything is shit." —Ernest Hemingway

I should be able to stop here, leaving you with Hemingway's sage and true statement, and go work onto something else, maybe my own shitty first draft of a blog post. But I won't because I know most of you refuse to accept this truth.

No, instead you think if you beat your head against your desk hard enough and long enough, you will craft some 24k golden prose, words so sweet and deftly written that you'll bring tears to the eyes of babes.

Well you won't. So stop it.

Still don't believe me? Are you saying, "Melissa, how do you know how well I write?" To this, I say, that doesn't matter. If you can't learn to write a shitty first draft, getting whatever it is out of your system, then you're never going to have the energy to keep writing. You're not going to learn how to take risks, because you'll never let yourself write anything less than perfect on the first go.

FREAKING STOP IT. Write some garbage. Let it spew forth, and once you've finally emptied that stinking pustule, take a step away and come back later. Put on some gloves and dig through the pile you emptied out on those pages, and you'll begin to find some gems. Use them to write a good second draft, and then repeat until you have an excellent final draft.

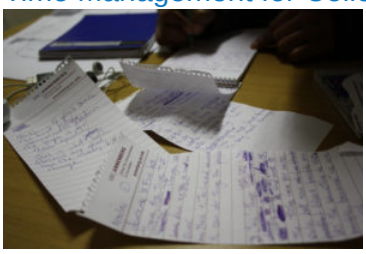
If you don't believe me, then see what Anne Lamott has to say about it. Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* has a chapter titled "Shitty First Drafts." The book was required reading when I took my short fiction workshop in college, and it's a great book for all writers.

The shitty first draft isn't about encouraging bad writing … it's about encouraging writing AT ALL. You'll never write a page if you keep stopping yourself within the first sentence or two and rewriting. Free yourself and learn to love the shitty first draft.

The crappy first draft can be very liberating. If it doesn't have to be good, then we feel a lot more freedom to get started and get it over with.

Trust in the process. Write crap. Plenty of time later to refine it.

Time Management for College Writers



Your only goal during the first draft is to get things down on the page so that you can start rewriting. The first draft has no other value. Regardless of how many faults it has, the first draft accomplishes its entire purpose merely by coming into existence. — Richard K. Neumann, *Legal Reasoning and Legal Writing*

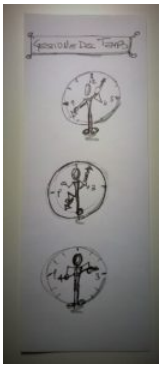
Budgeting the time it takes to create an essay is really important, but it's not usually explicitly discussed in classrooms. Consider the following advice as you map out your time between the date you're given a writing assignment and the date it's due.

Writing

- **Plan on 20 minutes, minimum, per typed page.**
- **Start writing your rough draft as soon as you can.** Once you have those first words on paper, the rest is much easier.
- **Find your best time of day and write then.** Never put off writing until you are tired or sleepy. Tired writing is almost always bad writing.
- **For short essays, a llow an absolute minimum of 10 minutes per paragraph.** "Short" means fewer than 3 pages of typed text. Thus, for a four-paragraph essay allow at least 40 minutes for the first draft.
- **For longer essays, allow an absolute minimum of one hour to produce every three typed pages of rough draft.** You don't have to write it all at one sitting, but budget enough total time to complete a rough draft without feeling any time pressure.
- **Once your rough draft is done, leave it until the next day (at least!) before revising it.** This way you'll be able to look at it with "fresh eyes" and recognize room for improvement.

Rewriting

You and your classmates may assume that the first draft is the most important part of writing. Actually, the first draft is the LEAST important part. The analysis and reflection you do in the process of revision and proofreading are much more valuable contributions toward a strong final product.



- **Allow at least the same amount of time for revision and proofreading as you did for writing the rough draft.** The more important the writing project, the more time will be needed in revising and proofreading. This means that a very important three-page, typed paper would require a total of at least two to three hours to complete in final form.
- **R evise first.** Allow enough time before your final deadline to rewrite nine-tenths of your paper (or to start over with some components, if necessary).
- **L eave enough time to read the text out loud or to have someone else read it out loud to you.** This is one of the most important things you can do to as a scholar to ensure the quality of your text. Your ears will detect elements that are out of place more readily than your eyes will see them.

- **If your mother language is not English, or if you have more than average difficulty with spelling, punctuation, or grammar, consult a tutor.** While you don't want anyone else to rewrite your paper, a native speaker of English can offer advice and coaching on wording things most effectively.
- **P roofread last.** The time necessary for this process depends on the length of the paper. The best method for this is to print out the paper, proofread it in hard copy (or, even better, have someone else correct it), make the necessary corrections on the computer text, and only then print out the final version.
- **Save your final copy in several ways.** Back it up on your computer files, through a cloud storage, on a flash drive, and/or in your school's electronic class platform. You never know when the unexpected will happen. Almost every student experiences a major electronic data loss at some point, and it can be devastating.
- **Keep secure, permanent electronic and paper files of all papers you write in college.** You never know when you may need to consult them again.

Self-Check

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3.1.1.1.10: Revising

Introduction

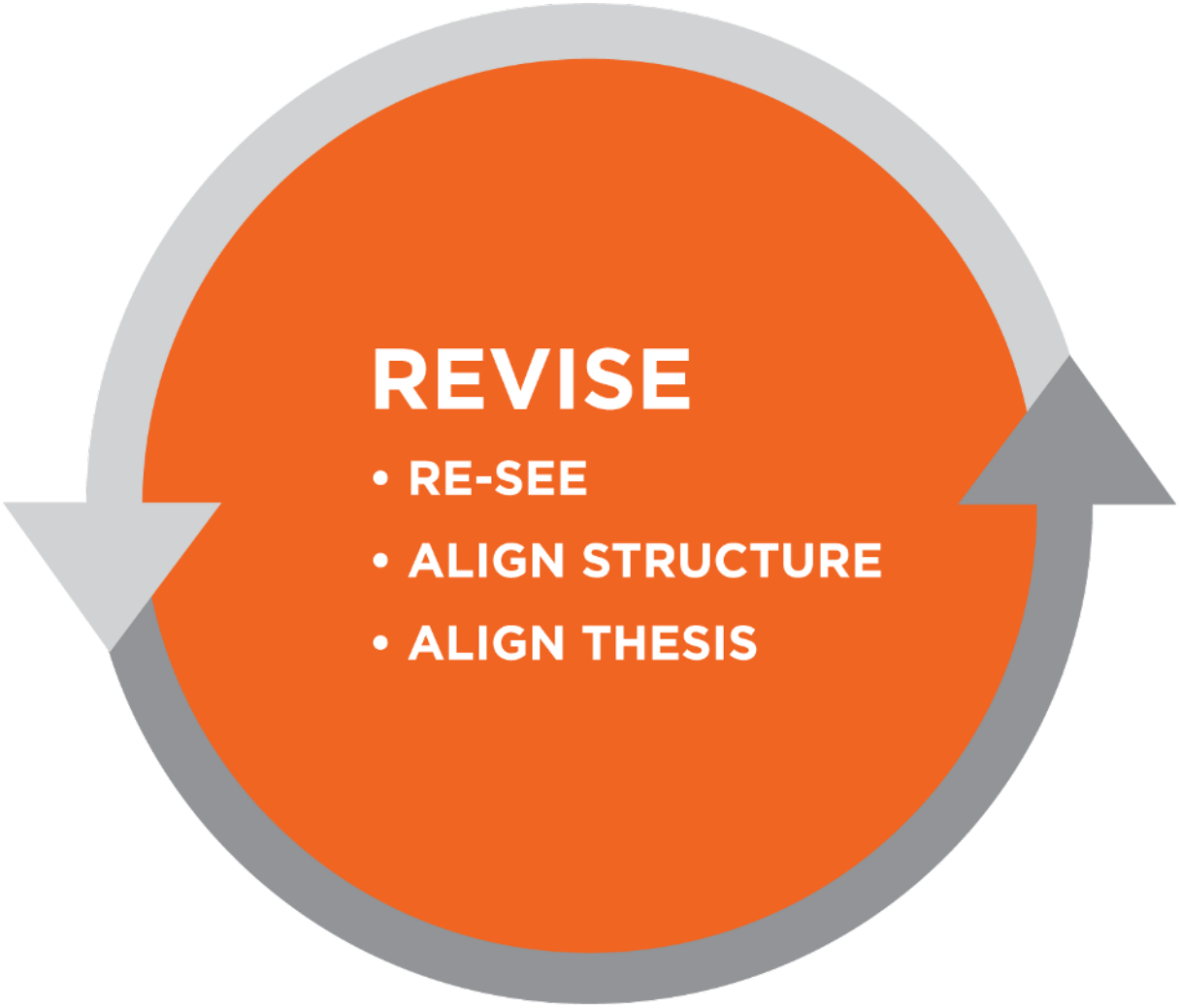
Learning Objectives

- identify the process of seeking input on writing from others
- identify strategies for incorporating personal and external editorial comments
- identify methods for re-seeing a piece of writing
- identify higher order concerns for revision

Taken literally, revision is re-vision — literally re-seeing the paper in front of you.

The act of revision centers heavily around the practice of questioning your work. As you read through this section, and consider your own habits when it comes to revision, consider this list of guiding questions from The Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Revision Checklist



Subject, Audience, Purpose

1. What's the most important thing I want to say about my subject?
2. Who am I writing this paper for? What would my reader want to know about the subject? What does my reader already know about it?
3. Why do I think the subject is worth writing about? Will my reader think the paper was worth reading?
4. What verb explains what I'm trying to do in this paper (tell a story, compare X and Y, describe Z)?
5. Does my first paragraph answer questions 1-4? If not, why not?

Organization

1. How many specific points do I make about my subject? Did I overlap or repeat any points? Did I leave my points out or add some that aren't relevant to the main idea?
2. How many paragraphs did I use to talk about each point?
3. Why did I talk about them in this order? Should the order be changed?
4. How did I get from one point to the next? What signposts did I give the reader?

Paragraphing (Ask these questions of every paragraph)

1. What job is this paragraph supposed to do? How does it relate to the paragraph before and after it?
2. What's the topic idea? Will my reader have trouble finding it?
3. How many sentences did it take to develop the topic idea? Can I substitute better examples, reasons, or details?
4. How well does the paragraph hold together? How many levels of generality does it have? Are the sentences different lengths and types? Do I need transitions? When I read the paragraph out loud, did it flow smoothly?

Sentences (Ask these questions of every sentence)

1. Which sentences in my paper do I like the most? The least?
2. Can my reader "see" what I'm saying? What words could I substitute for people, things, this/that, aspect, etc.?
3. Is this sentence "fat"?
4. Can I combine this sentence with another one?
5. Can I add adjectives and adverbs or find a more lively verb?

Things to Check Last

1. Did I check spelling and punctuation? What kinds of grammar or punctuation problems did I have in my last paper?
2. How does my paper end? Did I keep the promises I made to my reader at the beginning of the paper?
3. When I read the assignment again, did I miss anything?
4. What do I like best about this paper? What do I need to work on in the next paper?

— from *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers* by Erika Lindemann

Respond and Redraft

There are several steps to turn a first (or second, or third!) draft of a piece of writing into the final version. There is no way to get to that wonderful final draft without all the steps in between.

Professors often ask for draft essays in order to guide you as your writing develops. As you progress from 1st to 2nd draft, or from 2nd (3rd or 4th) to final draft, seeking input from others can help you get a fresh perspective on your work.

Find a Trusted Reader

A survival tip for college is to develop relationships with people whose opinions you trust. You'll want to be able to draw on these people to give valuable, helpful, supportive feedback on your writing.



As you first get started with college classes, you'll likely participate in peer reviews for essay assignments. Show your appreciation to your classmates who offer you helpful feedback. Note which of your classmates whose writing you admire. Try to continue working with these people as much as possible.

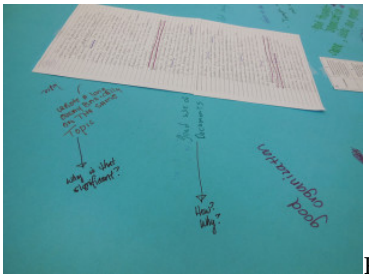
Also take advantage of your school's Writing Center, if possible. Most tutoring centers will welcome talking with you at any stage of your essay-writing process. **Note**: tutors won't just "fix" a paper draft. They will talk with you about what areas you are concerned with, and offer strategies to help focus YOU as YOU revise your paper.

Finally, your professor will likely be happy to talk over a draft with you, as well. Some classes will require you to turn in a rough draft for a grade and instructor comments, but most won't. Nonetheless, your professors expect you to write multiple drafts, and will welcome a visit during office hours to talk about how to make your paper as strong as it can possibly be.

Respond to your reader's comments

Whether you received comments from your professor, your friends, or a peer review, your edits are a way to *respond* to their questions and comments. Was your reader confused by what you thought was a really good point? Edit your paragraph so that your idea becomes clearer. Use specific pieces of evidence, such an important quote or statistic, to strengthen the paragraph. You can even try responding to the comments aloud–and then write them down in your draft in appropriately "academic" language.

Redraft your essay



Really going from draft to final version requires rethinking the flow of logic in your writing. For instance, you might realize that a sentence buried on the 3rd page of your paper would be an excellent "hook." To use it well, you will need to redraft, moving it to the opening and altering the rest of the material on page 3 as well.

Redrafting means looking again at how each piece of your argument fits together in the whole.

- Shift paragraphs around–don't worry about losing your train of thought.
- Delete unnecessary information–or if you think it fits better elsewhere, re-place it.
- Outlining your paper as it stands in the current draft can be very helpful for figuring out how you are presenting your ideas and can make it much easier to see where you need to reorder your information, add more support, or delete unnecessary material.
- If you are a visual person, try a craftsy approach. Print your essay out (single-sided) and cut it into paragraph-long pieces. Shuffle the pieces around so that you've mixed up their original order entirely. Then individually read and place the pieces/paragraph in the order that the ideas connect. As you tape or pin the parts together, you might find that the paragraphs are coming together in different ways than in your original draft.

Higher Order Concerns

You've written a draft of your paper. Now your work is done, so you should just turn it in, right? No, WAIT! Step away from the computer, take a deep breath, and don't submit that assignment just yet.

You should always revise and proofread your paper. A first draft is usually a very rough draft. It takes time and at least two (or more!) **additional**

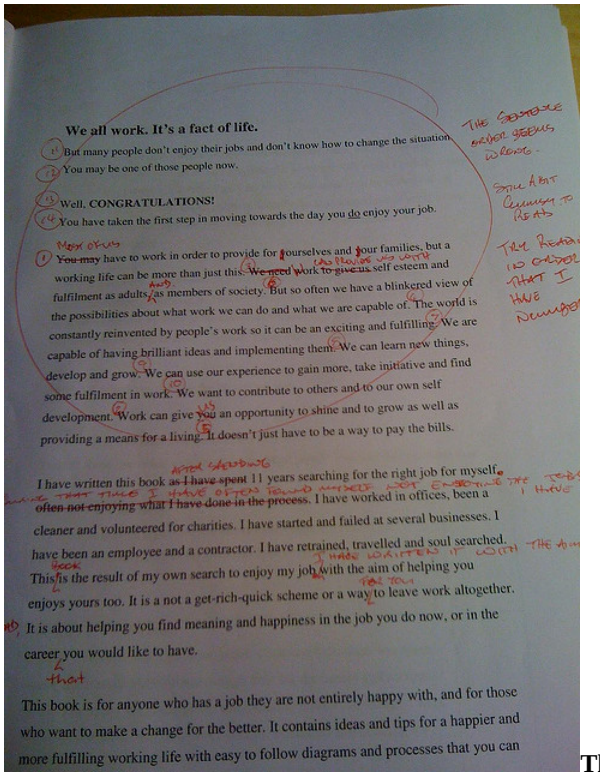


passes through to really make sure your argument is strong, your writing is polished, and there are no typos or grammatical errors. Making these efforts will always give you a better paper in the end.

Try to wait a day or two before looking back over your paper. If you are on a tight deadline, then take a walk, grab a snack, drink some coffee, or do something else to clear your head so you can read through your paper with fresh eyes. The longer you wait, the more likely it is you will see what is actually on the page and not what you meant to write.

What to Look for in the First Pass(es): Higher-Order Concerns

Typically, early review passes of a paper should focus on the larger issues, which are known as **higher-order concerns**. Higher-order concerns relate to the strength of your ideas, the support for your argument, and the logic of how your points are presented. Some important higher-order concerns are listed below, along with some questions you can ask yourself while proofreading diting to see if your paper needs work in any of these areas:

- **The Thesis Statement:**
  - Does your paper have a clear thesis statement? If so, where is it?
  - Does the introduction lead up to that thesis statement?
  - Does each paragraph directly relate back to your thesis statement?
- **The Argument:**
  - Is your thesis statement supported by enough evidence?
  - Do you need to add any explanations or examples to better make your case?
  - Is there any unnecessary or irrelevant information that should be removed?
- **Large-Scale Organization:**
  - Could your paper be easily outlined or tree-diagrammed?
  - Are your paragraphs presented in a logical order?
  - Are similar ideas grouped together?
  - Are there clear transitions (either verbal or logical) that link each paragraph to what came before?
- **Organization within Paragraphs:**
  - Is each paragraph centered around one main idea?
  - Is there a clear topic sentence for each paragraph?
  - Are any of your paragraphs too short or too long?
  - Do all the sentences in each paragraph relate back to their respective topic sentences?
  - Are the sentences presented in a logical order, so each grows out of what came before?
- 
We all work. It's a fact of life.

But many people don't enjoy their jobs and don't know how to change the situation.
You may be one of those people now.

Well, CONGRATULATIONS!
You have taken the first step in moving towards the day you do enjoy your job.

~~You may~~ have to work in order to provide for yourselves and your families, but a working life can be more than just this. ~~We need~~ work to give us self esteem and fulfilment as adults, as members of society. But so often we have a blinkered view of the possibilities about what work we can do and what we are capable of. The world is constantly reinvented by people's work so it can be an exciting and fulfilling. We are capable of having brilliant ideas and implementing them. We can learn new things, develop and grow. We can use our experience to gain more, take initiative and find some fulfilment in work. We want to contribute to others and to our own self development. Work can give you an opportunity to shine and to grow as well as providing a means for a living. It doesn't just have to be a way to pay the bills.

I have written this book as ~~I have spent~~ 11 years searching for the right job for myself, ~~often not enjoying what I have done in the process~~. I have worked in offices, been a cleaner and volunteered for charities. I have started and failed at several businesses. I have been an employee and a contractor. I have retrained, travelled and soul searched. This is the result of my own search to enjoy my job with the aim of helping you enjoys yours too. It is a not a get-rich-quick scheme or a way to leave work altogether. It is about helping you find meaning and happiness in the job you do now, or in the career you would like to have.

This book is for anyone who has a job they are not entirely happy with, and for those who want to make a change for the better. It contains ideas and tips for a happier and more fulfilling working life with easy to follow diagrams and processes that you can

The Assignment Instructions:
  - Does your paper answer all aspects of the writing prompt?
  - Have you completed all of the tasks required by the instructor?

- Did you include all necessary sections (for example, an abstract or reference list)?
- Are you following the required style for formatting the paper as a whole, the reference list, and/or your citations? (That last question is technically a lower-order concern, but it falls under the assignment instructions and is something where you could easily lose points if you don't follow instructions.)

When reading through your early draft(s) of your paper, mark up your paper with those concerns in mind first. Keep revising until you have fixed all of these larger-scale issues.

Your paper may change a lot as you do this – that's completely normal!

You might have to add more material; cut sentences, paragraphs, or even whole sections; or rewrite significant portions of the paper to fix any problems related to these higher-order concerns. This is why you should be careful not to get too bogged down with small-scale problems early on: **there is no point in spending a lot of time fixing sentences that you end up cutting because they don't actually fit in with your topic.**

Self-Check

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3.1.1.1.11: Proofreading

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify lower order concerns for revision
- identify strategies for improving sentence clarity
- identify strategies for recognizing potential grammatical issues in a draft
- identify strategies for recognizing potential spelling issues in a draft
- identify strategies for recognizing potential punctuation issues in a draft

Pr



oofreading is the final dust-and-polish pass-through of your writing. Though it's the last step of writing, it's what will make the first impression people have of your work.

John Green, author of *The Fault in Our Stars*, walks through some of his favorite typos from history in the video below. Each of these fundamentally changed the way people read the works in question. Proofreading (or a lack thereof) can have lasting impact!



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: http://pb.libretexts.org/temp/?p=1583

Lower Order Concerns

What to Look for in the Later Proofreading Pass(es): Lower-Order Concerns

Once you have fully addressed the higher-order concerns with an essay draft, you can focus on more local fixes or **lower-order concerns**. Lower-order concerns include writing style, wording, typos, and grammar issues.



Yes, it's true: grammar is a lower-order concern! Even though students are often very concerned that their grammar needs to be fixed, it is actually more important to focus on the quality of your ideas and the logic of how they are presented first. That's not to say you shouldn't worry about grammar; it's just that you shouldn't make it a main focus until closer to the end of the writing process.

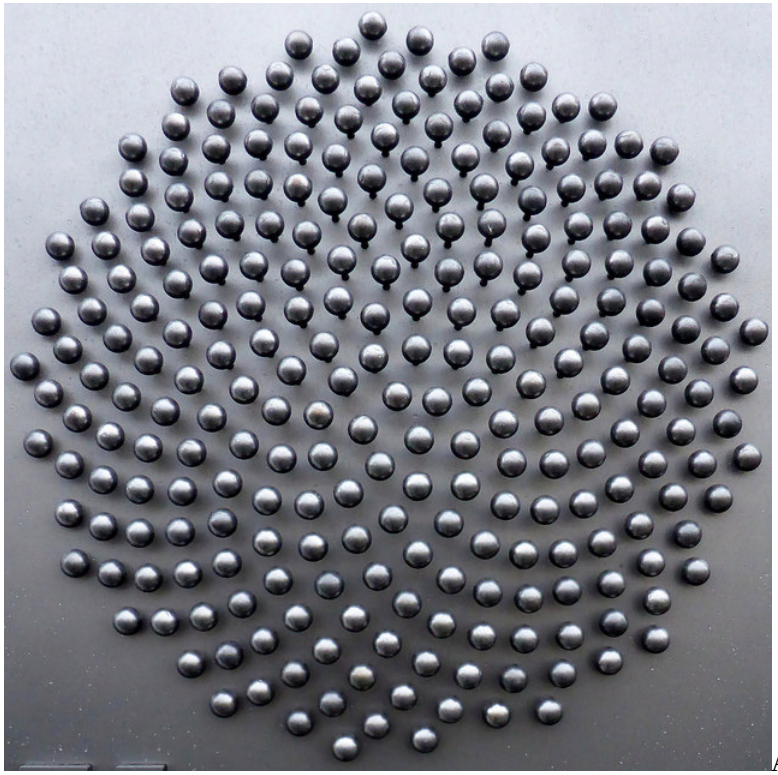
Some typical lower-order concerns are listed below, along with some questions that can help you recognize aspects in need of revision:

- **Style**:
  - Are you using an appropriate tone?
  - Are you following the conventions that are typical of your discipline?
  - Are you using the required style for formatting?
- **Wording**:
  - Are you always picking the word that has the precise meaning you want?
  - Are there any places where your wording is confusing or where your sentences are long and hard to follow?
  - Are there any awkward phrases?
  - Are you writing as simply and concisely as possible?
  - Are there any redundant words or sentences that should be removed?

- **Grammar**:
  - Do you have any sentence fragments or run-on sentences?
  - Are your subjects and verbs in agreement?
  - Are you handling your plurals and possessives correctly?
  - Are there any punctuation errors?
- **Typos**:
  - Are there missing words?
  - Are any words misspelled (be especially careful to watch out for words that spell-check won't catch, for example typing "can" when you meant "van")?
  - Are there any extra spaces that need to be removed?

Cleaning up these local issues is the final stage in the writing process. Think of this as polishing up your writing, so that the quality of your prose matches the quality of your ideas.

Other Tips for Proofreading

-  Always read slowly and carefully when proofreading. Don't rush! If you try to go too fast, you will probably miss errors you would otherwise catch.
- Read your paper out loud. This can be very helpful for catching typos, missing words, awkward phrasings, and overly long or confusing sentences.
- Pretend you are the reader, not the author of the paper. Try to look at what you wrote from the perspective of someone who does not know all the things you know. Would a reasonably intelligent audience be able to understand your prose and be convinced by your argument?
- Keep track of any errors you consistently make (within a single paper or in multiple papers).
- Get feedback on your paper from your teacher, a classmate or friend, a tutor, or all of the above.

The Change-Up Method

The following video walks us through a simple but effective way to proofread our writing. It's helpful to see that even professional writers and editors make mistakes in their drafts that need to be corrected before sharing with the world.



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A transcript for this video can be downloaded here (.docx file).

The steps include

- changing the font style and size
- making the line spacing bigger
- reading the text backwards, from last sentence to first sentence

---

Proofreading Strategies

Below, you'll see a long list of potential items to look for in the proofreading process. Because everyone has a unique writing style, some of these items are much more likely to apply to you (and be helpful for you to consider) than others.

As you continue to write papers and get feedback on them in college, make note of the concerns that show up in your writing again and again. Make your own customized list of proofreading tips, to save time in the future.

Some suggestions to get you started–again, not all of these will apply to each paper, each time.



Editing for Language

With language, the overall question is whether you are using the most accurate language possible to describe your ideas. Your reader will have an easier time understanding what you want to say if you're precise. Be sure to check for the following.

- **Pronoun clarity**: Make sure it's clear what each "it," "he," and "she" refers to.
- **Precise vocabulary**: Make sure every word means what you intend it to mean. Use a dictionary to confirm the meaning of any word about which you are unsure.

- **Defined terms**: When using terms specific to your topic, make sure you define them for your readers who may not be familiar with them. If that makes the paragraph too bulky, consider using a different term.
- **Properly placed modifiers**: Make sure your reader can clearly discern what each adjective and adverb is meant to describe.
- **Hyperbole**: See if you can eradicate words like “amazing” and “gigantic” in favor of more precise descriptions. Also examine each use of the word “very” and see if you can find a more precise adjective that doesn’t require its use.

Finally, pay attention to wordiness. Writing that is clean, precise, and simple will always sound best.

Editing for Sentence Construction

If you want to make everything easy for your audience to read and understand, start by simplifying your sentences. If you think a sentence is too complicated, rephrase it so that it is easier to read, or break it into two sentences. Clear doesn’t have to mean boring.



Consider how balanced your sentences are within a paragraph. You don’t want every sentence to have identical length and structure or to begin the same way. Instead, vary your sentence style.

This is also the time to add transitions between phrases and sentences that aren’t connected smoothly to each other. You don’t need to introduce every sentence with “then,” “however,” or “because.” Using these words judiciously, though, will help your reader see logical connections between the different steps of your argument.

Suggestions While Proofreading

1. Remove unnecessary words such including *that*, *very*, *just*, *so*, and *actually*.
2. Avoid the passive voice. Rewrite sentences that include *am*, *is*, *was*, *were*, *be*, *being*, and *been* so that the sentence reads in the active voice.
3. Don’t end sentences with a preposition. For example, don’t end sentences with these words: *in*, *for*, *at*, *with*, *by*, and *from*.
4. Is the content in past, present, or future tense? Do a scan to make sure you use the same tense from start to finish.
5. Are you writing in first, second, or third person? Do a scan to make sure you use a consistent voice throughout. Generally, avoid second person pronouns–“you”–throughout an essay, unless you have specific reasons to in the assignment. Use the “find” feature in your word processor to locate any that may have slipped in. Likewise, only use first person pronouns–“I,” “me,” “we,” etc.,–if your assignment calls for it.
6. Have you used one space after each sentence or two spaces? Double check for consistency.
7. Run spell check, but also check for commonly misspelled words that your spell check might not pick up. Here’s a quick list:
    - To/ Too/ Two
    - Than/ Then
    - Trail/ Trial
    - Were/ Where/ We’re
    - It’s/ Its
    - Lose/ Loose
    - Complement/ Compliment
    - Their/ There/ They’re
    - Compliant/ Complaint
8. What words do you commonly misspell?

9. Eliminate words you overuse. Keep a running list near your workspace that notes words you rely heavily on, and edit use the “Find” feature of your word processor to search for them while editing.

Self-Check

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3.1.1.2.3: Assignment- Writing Effective Intros Activity

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3.1.1.2.1: Paragraphs

What this handout is about

This handout will help you understand how paragraphs are formed, how to develop stronger paragraphs, and how to completely and clearly express your ideas.

What is a paragraph?

Paragraphs are the building blocks of papers. Many students define paragraphs in terms of length: a paragraph is a group of at least five sentences, a paragraph is half a page long, etc. In reality, though, the unity and coherence of ideas among sentences is what constitutes a paragraph. A paragraph is defined as "a group of sentences or a single sentence that forms a unit" (Lunsford and Connors 116). Length and appearance do not determine whether a section in a paper is a paragraph. For instance, in some styles of writing, particularly journalistic styles, a paragraph can be just one sentence long. Ultimately, a paragraph is a sentence or group of sentences that support one main idea. In this handout, we will refer to this as the "controlling idea," because it controls what happens in the rest of the paragraph.

How do I decide what to put in a paragraph?

Before you can begin to determine what the composition of a particular paragraph will be, you must first decide on a working thesis for your paper. What is the most important idea that you are trying to convey to your reader? The information in each paragraph must be related to that idea. In other words, your paragraphs should remind your reader that there is a recurrent relationship between your thesis and the information in each paragraph. A working thesis functions like a seed from which your paper, and your ideas, will grow. The whole process is an organic one—a natural progression from a seed to a full-blown paper where there are direct, familial relationships between all of the ideas in the paper.

The decision about what to put into your paragraphs begins with the germination of a seed of ideas; this "germination process" is better known as brainstorming . There are many techniques for brainstorming; whichever one you choose, this stage of paragraph development cannot be skipped. Building paragraphs can be like building a skyscraper: there must be a well-planned foundation that supports what you are building. Any cracks, inconsistencies, or other corruptions of the foundation can cause your whole paper to crumble.

So, let's suppose that you have done some brainstorming to develop your thesis. What else should you keep in mind as you begin to create paragraphs? Every paragraph in a paper should be

- **Unified**—All of the sentences in a single paragraph should be related to a single controlling idea (often expressed in the topic sentence of the paragraph).
- **Clearly related to the thesis**—The sentences should all refer to the central idea, or thesis, of the paper (Rosen and Behrens 119).
- **Coherent**—The sentences should be arranged in a logical manner and should follow a definite plan for development (Rosen and Behrens 119).
- **Well-developed** —Every idea discussed in the paragraph should be adequately explained and supported through evidence and details that work together to explain the paragraph's controlling idea (Rosen and Behrens 119).

How do I organize a paragraph?

There are many different ways to organize a paragraph. The organization you choose will depend on the controlling idea of the paragraph. Below are a few possibilities for organization, with brief examples.

- **Narration:** Tell a story. Go chronologically, from start to finish. (See an example.)
- **Description:** Provide specific details about what something looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or feels like. Organize spatially, in order of appearance, or by topic. (See an example.)
- **Process:** Explain how something works, step by step. Perhaps follow a sequence—first, second, third. (See an example.)
- **Classification:** Separate into groups or explain the various parts of a topic. (See an example.)

- **Illustration:** Give examples and explain how those examples prove your point. (See the detailed example in the next section of this handout.)

5-step process to paragraph development

Let's walk through a 5-step process to building a paragraph. Each step of the process will include an explanation of the step and a bit of "model" text to illustrate how the step works. Our finished model paragraph will be about slave spirituals, the original songs that African Americans created during slavery. The model paragraph uses illustration (giving examples) to prove its point.

Step 1. Decide on a controlling idea and create a topic sentence

Paragraph development begins with the formulation of the controlling idea. This idea directs the paragraph's development. Often, the controlling idea of a paragraph will appear in the form of a topic sentence. In some cases, you may need more than one sentence to express a paragraph's controlling idea. Here is the controlling idea for our "model paragraph," expressed in a topic sentence:

Model controlling idea and topic sentence— *Slave spirituals often had hidden double meanings.*

Step 2. Explain the controlling idea

Paragraph development continues with an expression of the rationale or the explanation that the writer gives for how the reader should interpret the information presented in the idea statement or topic sentence of the paragraph. The writer explains his/her thinking about the main topic, idea, or focus of the paragraph. Here's the sentence that would follow the controlling idea about slave spirituals:

Model explanation—*On one level, spirituals referenced heaven, Jesus, and the soul; but on another level, the songs spoke about slave resistance.*

Step 3. Give an example (or multiple examples)

Paragraph development progresses with the expression of some type of support or evidence for the idea and the explanation that came before it. The example serves as a sign or representation of the relationship established in the idea and explanation portions of the paragraph. Here are two examples that we could use to illustrate the double meanings in slave spirituals:

Model example A— *For example, according to Frederick Douglass, the song "O Canaan, Sweet Canaan" spoke of slaves' longing for heaven, but it also expressed their desire to escape to the North. Careful listeners heard this second meaning in the following lyrics: "I don't expect to stay / Much longer here. / Run to Jesus, shun the danger. / I don't expect to stay."*

Model example B— *Slaves even used songs like "Steal Away to Jesus (at midnight)" to announce to other slaves the time and place of secret, forbidden meetings.*

Step 4. Explain the example(s)

The next movement in paragraph development is an explanation of each example and its relevance to the topic sentence and rationale that were stated at the beginning of the paragraph. This explanation shows readers why you chose to use this/or these particular examples as evidence to support the major claim, or focus, in your paragraph.

Continue the pattern of giving examples and explaining them until all points/examples that the writer deems necessary have been made and explained. NONE of your examples should be left unexplained. You might be able to explain the relationship between the example and the topic sentence in the same sentence which introduced the example. More often, however, you will need to explain that relationship in a separate sentence. Look at these explanations for the two examples in the slave spirituals paragraph:

Model explanation for example A— *When slaves sang this song, they could have been speaking of their departure from this life and their arrival in heaven; however, they also could h ave been describing their plans to leave the South and run, not to Jesus, but to the North.*

Model explanation for example B—*[The relationship between example B and the main idea of the paragraph's controlling idea is clear enough without adding another sentence to explain it.]*

Step 5. Complete the paragraph's idea or transition into the next paragraph

The final movement in paragraph development involves tying up the loose ends of the paragraph and reminding the reader of the relevance of the information in this paragraph to the main or controlling idea of the paper. At this point, you can remind your reader about the relevance of the information that you just discussed in the paragraph. You might feel more comfortable, however, simply transitioning your reader to the next development in the next paragraph. Here's an example of a sentence that completes the slave spirituals paragraph:

Model sentence for completing a paragraph— *What whites heard as merely spiritual songs, slaves discerned as detailed messages. The hidden meanings in spirituals allowed slaves to sing what they could not say.*

Notice that the example and explanation steps of this 5-step process (steps 3 and 4) can be repeated as needed. The idea is that you continue to use this pattern until you have completely developed the main idea of the paragraph.

Here is a look at the completed "model" paragraph:

Slave spirituals often had hidden double meanings. On one level, spirituals referenced heaven, Jesus, and the soul, but on another level, the songs spoke about slave resistance. For example, according to Frederick Douglass, the song "O Canaan, Sweet Canaan" spoke of slaves' longing for heaven, but it also expressed their desire to escape to the North. Careful listeners heard this second meaning in the following lyrics: "I don't expect to stay / Much longer here. / Run to Jesus, shun the danger. / I don't expect to stay." When slaves sang this song, they could have been speaking of their departure from this life and their arrival in heaven; however, they also could have been describing their plans to leave the South and run, not to Jesus, but to the North. Slaves even used songs like "Steal Away to Jesus (at midnight)" to announce to other slaves the time and place of secret, forbidden meetings. What whites heard as merely spiritual songs, slaves discerned as detailed messages. The hidden meanings in spirituals allowed slaves to sing what they could not say.

Troubleshooting paragraphs

1) Problem: the paragraph has no topic sentence. Imagine each paragraph as a sandwich. The real content of the sandwich—the meat or other filling—is in the middle. It includes all the evidence you need to make the point. But it gets kind of messy to eat a sandwich without any bread. Your readers don't know what to do with all the evidence you've given them. So, the top slice of bread (the first sentence of the paragraph) explains the topic (or controlling idea) of the paragraph. And, the bottom slice (the last sentence of the paragraph) tells the reader how the paragraph relates to the broader argument. In the original and revised paragraphs below, notice how a topic sentence expressing the controlling idea tells the reader the point of all the evidence.

Original paragraph

> *Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.*

Revised paragraph

> *Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.*

Once you have mastered the use of topic sentences, you may decide that the topic sentence for a particular paragraph really shouldn't be the first sentence of the paragraph. This is fine—the topic sentence can actually go at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph; what's important is that it is in there somewhere so that readers know what the main idea of the paragraph is and how it relates back to the thesis of your paper. Suppose that we wanted to start the piranha paragraph with a transition sentence—something that reminds the reader of what happened in the previous paragraph—rather than with the topic sentence. Let's suppose that the previous paragraph was about all kinds of animals that people are afraid of, like sharks, snakes, and spiders. Our paragraph might look like this (the topic sentence is underlined):

Like sharks, snakes, and spiders, pirahnas are widely feared. Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When

confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.

2) Problem: the paragraph has more than one controlling idea. If a paragraph has more than one main idea, consider eliminating sentences that relate to the second idea, or split the paragraph into two or more paragraphs, each with only one main idea. In the following paragraph, the final two sentences branch off into a different topic; so, the revised paragraph eliminates them and concludes with a sentence that reminds the reader of the paragraph's main idea.

Original paragraph

> *Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. A number of South American groups eat piranhas. They fry or grill the fish and then serve them with coconut milk or tucupi, a sauce made from fermented manioc juices.*

Revised paragraph

> *Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, for the most part, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' first instinct is to flee, not attack. Their fear of humans makes sense. Far more piranhas are eaten by people than people are eaten by piranhas. If the fish are well-fed, they won't bite humans.*

3) Problem: transitions are needed within the paragraph. You are probably familiar with the idea that transitions may be needed between paragraphs or sections in a paper (see our handout on this subject). Sometimes they are also helpful within the body of a single paragraph. Within a paragraph, transitions are often single words or short phrases that help to establish relationships between ideas and to create a logical progression of those ideas in a paragraph. This is especially likely to be true within paragraphs that discuss multiple examples. Let's take a look at a version of our piranha paragraph that uses transitions to orient the reader:

Although most people consider piranhas to be quite dangerous, they are, except in two main situations, entirely harmless. Piranhas rarely feed on large animals; they eat smaller fish and aquatic plants. When confronted with humans, piranhas' instinct is to flee, not attack. But there are two situations in which a piranha bite is likely. The first is when a frightened piranha is lifted out of the water—for example, if it has been caught in a fishing net. The second is when the water level in pools where piranhas are living falls too low. A large number of fish may be trapped in a single pool, and if they are hungry, they may attack anything that enters the water.

In this example, you can see how the phrases "the first" and "the second" help the reader follow the organization of the ideas in the paragraph.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial .

Lunsford, Andrea and Robert Collins. *The St. Martin's Handbook, Annotated Instructor's Edition*. 5th Ed. New York: St. Martin's, 2003.

Rosen, Leonard and Laurence Behrens. *The Allyn and Bacon Handbook, Annotated Instructor's Edition*. 4th Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000.

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3.1.1.2.2: How to Write Introductory Paragraphs



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3.1.1.2.3: Assignment- Writing Effective Intros Activity

Instructor Guidelines

Time: 50 min.-1 hr 15 min.

Materials needed:

- students need original intro from an essay
- 8 Ways to Begin an Essay handout

Directions

1. Have students copy and paste the introductory paragraph from any essay on to a blank word document.
2. Watch the YouTube video “How to write introductory paragraphs” and discuss the different ways to begin an essay. Provide the supplemental handout (see below)—8 Ways to begin an essay.
3. Have students look at their current introduction. Ask: What method did you use to write your intro? Title it “Intro 1—Method”. i.e. Intro 1—Anecdote or Intro 1—Quotation. Type the label above the paragraph. You may have used more than one method or no method at all. You can note such in the label.
4. Now, choose two other methods for beginning the essay. For example, if you already started with questions, then try writing a new intro by starting with a quote. Then try another intro starting with one of the other methods. You can choose any method you like.
5. The new intros should be completely different. The topic should not change in anyway and the thesis will remain the same. They are simply writing new intros for the chosen essay.
6. Once they have written the two new intros, they should clear their desks of everything except the three intros. They should also keep a writing utensil.
7. Play music and have the students walk around. When the music stops, they sit at someone else’s desk. They read the three intros and mark which one they find most interesting. They can mark it with a star or checkmark or something. Do this for as many rounds as time allows. Toward the end of class, have them return to their original seat and see which intro their classmates liked best. Then have a discussion to see who thinks they will use their new intro for the next draft of the essay.

8 Ways to Begin Your Essay

1. *Use a rhetorical question–Pose a question related to your subject and then answer it (or invite your readers to answer it). This will get the reader think about your topic.*
    - Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be cold and hungry every night? To not have a warm bed to lie in? To not have friends or family to take care of you? This is what over 1.5 million Americans face every day (economist.com).
2. State an interesting fact about your subject.
    - In 2014, 1.49 million people used temporary shelter and another 578, 000 didn’t have shelter at all, sleeping in tents, cars, and doorways when the required “point-in-time” survey took place which is required by the federal government every two year during which volunteers walk around cities counting the homeless (economist.com).
3. Present your thesis as a recent discovery or revelation.
    - I’ve finally figured out how we can solve the issue of homelessness—we must make these people visible and provide the housing they need to get them off the streets.
4. Briefly describe the place that serves as the primary setting of your essay.
    - It was a bitter cold night as I weaved my way through the crowds of homeless people standing around metal barrels, blazing with fire, under the interstate exchange. A hard wind blew through the tunnel, and the men and women huddled together around the fires to gather whatever warmth they could. The place was barren minus a few shopping carts filled with bags of recyclables. All around me, people slept on the ground on top of cardboard boxes covered with the newspapers. The lucky few had ratty sleeping bags or torn blankets to cover themselves with.
5. Recount an incident that dramatizes your subject.

- One October afternoon as I walking through Cambridge square, I was struck by the sad eyes of a young man asking for money. He couldn't have been more than 18. His face was dirty and his hair was greasy. He wore mismatched clothes and his toes poked through the holes in his shoes. I didn't have any cash, so I gave him a granola bar from lunch bag. I wondered how he ended up here. I wondered how we might be able to help him.

6. Use the narrative strategy of delay: put off identifying your subject just long enough to pique your readers' interest without frustrating them.
   - We see them everywhere in the city. On the street corners. In the subways. Even more so, we might smell them. The pungent odor of onions and celery. We smell their leftover urine in the elevator carts. We hear them ask for money. We hear them shake their cups, clinking like tic tacs. They are the homeless.
7. Using the historical present tense, relate an incident from the past as if it were happening now.
   - I pull up to the intersection. The light turns red, so I must stop. A man with a sign and a dog stands on the street corner. I make eye contact. His sign says he's hungry. I always carry snacks, so I roll down my window and give him two tangerines. He thanks me with a toothless smile. That was ten years ago and the first time I had given something to a homeless person. That was just the beginning. Now, it has become my cause—my passion.
8. Reveal a secret about yourself or make a candid observation about your subject.
   - I try to avoid contact. If I don't make eye contact, I won't feel badly about giving him nothing. I can't help it. I look up at him at the very last minute. He stands without putting weight one foot. His sign says he just had surgery—that he's a homeless vet—that he's been sober for 33 years. I offer him a granola bar. He says he can't eat that because his mouth is wired shut. I keep walking. The guilt overcomes me and I wish I could do more.

A handout of this activity can be found here.

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3.1.1.2.4: Conclusions

What this handout is about

This handout will explain the functions of conclusions, offer strategies for writing effective ones, help you evaluate your drafted conclusions, and suggest conclusion strategies to avoid.

About conclusions

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. While the body is often easier to write, it needs a frame around it. An introduction and conclusion frame your thoughts and bridge your ideas for the reader.

Just as your introduction acts as a bridge that transports your readers from their own lives into the "place" of your analysis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. Such a conclusion will help them see why all your analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down.

Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject. The conclusion allows you to have the final say on the issues you have raised in your paper, to summarize your thoughts, to demonstrate the importance of your ideas, and to propel your reader to a new view of the subject. It is also your opportunity to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note.

Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment. The conclusion pushes beyond the boundaries of the prompt and allows you to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings.

Your conclusion should make your readers glad they read your paper. Your conclusion gives your reader something to take away that will help them see things differently or appreciate your topic in personally relevant ways. It can suggest broader implications that will not only interest your reader, but also enrich your reader's life in some way. It is your gift to the reader.

Strategies for writing an effective conclusion

One or more of the following strategies may help you write an effective conclusion.

- Play the "So What" Game. If you're stuck and feel like your conclusion isn't saying anything new or interesting, ask a friend to read it with you. Whenever you make a statement from your conclusion, ask the friend to say, "So what?" or "Why should anybody care?" Then ponder that question and answer it. Here's how it might go:

  > You: *Basically, I'm just saying that education was important to Douglass.*
  >
  > Friend: *So what?*
  >
  > You: *Well, it was important because it was a key to him feeling like a free and equal citizen.*
  >
  > Friend: *Why should anybody care?*
  >
  > You: *That's important because plantation owners tried to keep slaves from being educated so that they could maintain control. When Douglass obtained an education, he undermined that control personally.*

  You can also use this strategy on your own, asking yourself "So What?" as you develop your ideas or your draft.

- Return to the theme or themes in the introduction. This strategy brings the reader full circle. For example, if you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding. You may also refer to the introductory paragraph by using key words or parallel concepts and images that you also used in the introduction.
- Synthesize, don't summarize: Include a brief summary of the paper's main points, but don't simply repeat things that were in your paper. Instead, show your reader how the points you made and the support and examples you used fit together. Pull it all together.
- Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for your paper.
- Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study. This can redirect your reader's thought process and help her to apply your info and ideas to her own life or to see the broader implications.

- Point to broader implications. For example, if your paper examines the Greensboro sit-ins or another event in the Civil Rights Movement, you could point out its impact on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. A paper about the style of writer Virginia Woolf could point to her influence on other writers or on later feminists.

Strategies to avoid

- Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase such as “in conclusion,” “in summary,” or “in closing.” Although these phrases can work in speeches, they come across as wooden and trite in writing.
- Stating the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion.
- Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion.
- Ending with a rephrased thesis statement without any substantive changes.
- Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of an analytical paper.
- Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper.

Four kinds of ineffective conclusions

1. The “That’s My Story and I’m Sticking to It” Conclusion. This conclusion just restates the thesis and is usually painfully short. It does not push the ideas forward. People write this kind of conclusion when they can’t think of anything else to say. Example: In conclusion, Frederick Douglass was, as we have seen, a pioneer in American education, proving that education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.
2. The “Sherlock Holmes” Conclusion. Sometimes writers will state the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion. You might be tempted to use this strategy if you don’t want to give everything away too early in your paper. You may think it would be more dramatic to keep the reader in the dark until the end and then “wow” him with your main idea, as in a Sherlock Holmes mystery. The reader, however, does not expect a mystery, but an analytical discussion of your topic in an academic style, with the main argument (thesis) stated up front. Example: (After a paper that lists numerous incidents from the book but never says what these incidents reveal about Douglass and his views on education): So, as the evidence above demonstrates, Douglass saw education as a way to undermine the slaveholders’ power and also an important step toward freedom.
3. The “America the Beautiful”/”I Am Woman”/”We Shall Overcome” Conclusion. This kind of conclusion usually draws on emotion to make its appeal, but while this emotion and even sentimentality may be very heartfelt, it is usually out of character with the rest of an analytical paper. A more sophisticated commentary, rather than emotional praise, would be a more fitting tribute to the topic. Example: Because of the efforts of fine Americans like Frederick Douglass, countless others have seen the shining beacon of light that is education. His example was a torch that lit the way for others. Frederick Douglass was truly an American hero.
4. The “Grab Bag” Conclusion. This kind of conclusion includes extra information that the writer found or thought of but couldn’t integrate into the main paper. You may find it hard to leave out details that you discovered after hours of research and thought, but adding random facts and bits of evidence at the end of an otherwise-well-organized essay can just create confusion. Example: In addition to being an educational pioneer, Frederick Douglass provides an interesting case study for masculinity in the American South. He also offers historians an interesting glimpse into slave resistance when he confronts Covey, the overseer. His relationships with female relatives reveal the importance of family in the slave community.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial .

All quotations are from:

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, edited and with introduction by Houston A. Baker, Jr., New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

Strategies for Writing a Conclusion. Literacy Education Online, St. Cloud State University. 18 May 2005 < http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html >.

Conclusions. Nesbitt-Johnston Writing Center, Hamilton College. 17 May 2005 <http://www.hamilton.edu/academic/Res...nclusions.html>.

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3.1.1.2.5: Organizing

Introduction

Learning Objectives

- identify appropriate rhetorical pattern for the topic and the task
- identify components of an effective thesis statement
- identify components of an effective logical argument
- identify components of an effective paragraph
- identify components of an effective essay body
- identify components of an effective introduction
- identify components of an effective conclusion



You may hear the terms **structure** and **organization** used interchangeably when it comes to essay writing. Both are important aspects, but they do have an important distinction.

Structure refers to the function a particular piece of your essay serves in the essay. Elements like introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions are structural components of an essay. It's similar to the structure of a house: certain spaces are designated as a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen, and so forth.

As we know, houses appear in many different shapes and sizes, even though they contain all of these similar features. You might say that the *structure* of a house can be *organized* in many different ways. In writing, organization is where your unique approach as an author comes into play. In what particular order are body paragraphs placed? Why?






In short, structure is the **what**, and organization is the **why**.

As a writer, you'll identify what pieces are necessary for your essay to include. Then you'll determine what order those pieces will appear in, and how they connect together.

How to Write a Thesis Statement

Whether you are writing a short essay or a doctoral dissertation, your thesis statement will arguably be the most difficult sentence to formulate. An effective thesis statement states the purpose of the paper and, therefore, functions to control, assert and structure your entire argument. Without a sound thesis, your argument may sound weak, lacking in direction, and uninteresting to the reader.

Start with a question — then make the answer your thesis

Regardless of how complicated the subject is, almost any thesis can be constructed by answering a question.

-  **Question:** "What are the benefits of using computers in a fourth-grade classroom?"
- **Thesis:** "Computers allow fourth graders an early advantage in technological and scientific education."
- **Question:** "Why is the Mississippi River so important in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*?"
  - **Thesis:** "The river comes to symbolize both division and progress, as it separates our characters and country while still providing the best chance for Huck and Jim to get to know one another."
- **Question:** "Why do people seem to get angry at vegans, feminists, and other 'morally righteous' subgroups?"
  - **Thesis:** "Through careful sociological study, we've found that people naturally assume that "morally righteous" people look down on them as "inferior," causing anger and conflict where there generally is none."

Tailor your thesis to the type of paper you're writing

N ot all essays persuade, and not all essays teach. The goals of your paper will help you find the best thesis.

- **Analytical:** Breaks down something to better examine and understand it.

- Ex. “This dynamic between different generations sparks much of the play’s tension, as age becomes a motive for the violence and unrest that rocks King Lear.”

- **Expository:** Teaches or illuminates a point.
  - Ex. “The explosion of 1800’s philosophies like Positivism, Marxism, and Darwinism undermined and refuted Christianity to instead focus on the real, tangible world.”
- **Argumentative:** Makes a claim, or backs up an opinion, to change other peoples’ minds.
  - Ex. “Without the steady hand and specific decisions of Barack Obama, America would never have recovered from the hole it entered in the early 2000’s.”

Ensure your thesis is provable



Do not come up with your thesis and then look it up later. The thesis is the end point of your research, not the beginning. You need to use a thesis you can actually back up with evidence.

Good Theses Examples:

- “By owning up to the impossible contradictions, embracing them and questioning them, Blake forges his own faith, and is stronger for it. Ultimately, the only way for his poems to have faith is to temporarily lose it.”
- “According to its well-documented beliefs and philosophies, an existential society with no notion of either past or future cannot help but become stagnant.”
- “By reading “Ode to a Nightingale” through a modern deconstructionist lens, we can see how Keats viewed poetry as shifting and subjective, not some rigid form.”

Bad Theses Examples:

- “The wrong people won the American Revolution.” While striking and unique, who is “right” and who is “wrong” is exceptionally hard to prove, and very subjective.
- “The theory of genetic inheritance is the binding theory of every human interaction.” Too complicated and overzealous. The scope of “every human interaction” is just too big
- “Paul Harding’s novel *Tinkers* is ultimately a cry for help from a clearly depressed author.” Unless you interviewed Harding extensively, or had a lot of real-life sources, you have no way of proving what is fact and what is fiction.”

Get the sound right



You want your thesis statement to be identifiable as a thesis statement. You do this by taking a very particular tone and using specific kinds of phrasing and words. Use words like “because” and language which is firm and definitive.

Example thesis statements with good statement language include:

- “Because of William the Conqueror’s campaign into England, that nation developed the strength and culture it would need to eventually build the British Empire.”
- “Hemingway significantly changed literature by normalizing simplistic writing and frank tone.”

Know where to place a thesis statement

Because of the role thesis statements play, they appear at the beginning of the paper, usually at the end of the first paragraph or somewhere in the introduction. Although most people look for the thesis at the end of the first paragraph, its location can depend on a number of factors such as how lengthy of an introduction you need before you can introduce your thesis or the length of your paper.

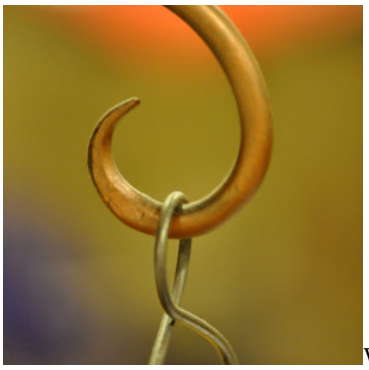
Limit a thesis statement to one or two sentences in length

Thesis statements are clear and to the point, which helps the reader identify the topic and direction of the paper, as well as your position towards the subject.

Text Structures

A **text structure** is the framework of a text’s beginning, middle, and end. Different narrative and expository genres have different purposes and different audiences, and so they require different text structures. Beginnings and endings help link the text into a coherent whole.

BEGINNINGS: HOOKING YOUR READER



Where to begin is a crucial decision for a writer. Just as a good beginning can draw a reader into a piece of writing, a mediocre beginning can discourage a reader from reading further. The beginning, also called the **lead** or the **hook**, orients the reader to the purpose of the writing by introducing characters or setting (for narrative) or the topic, thesis, or argument (for expository writing). A good beginning also sets up expectations for the purpose, style, and mood of the piece. Good writers know how to hook their readers in the opening sentences and paragraphs by using techniques such as dialogue, flashback, description, inner thoughts, and jumping right into the action.

WHAT’S IN THE MIDDLE?

The organization of the middle of a piece of writing depends on the genre. Researchers have identified five basic organizational structures: **sequence**, **description**, **cause and effect**, **compare and contrast**, and **problem and solution**.

Sequence uses time, numerical, or spatial order as the organizing structure. Some narrative genres that use a chronological sequence structure are personal narrative genres (memoir, autobiographical incident, autobiography), imaginative story genres (fairytales, folktales, fantasy, science fiction), and realistic fiction genres. Narrative story structures include an initiating event, complicating actions that build to a high point, and a resolution. Many narratives also include the protagonist’s goals and obstacles that must be overcome to achieve those goals.

Description is used to describe the characteristic features and events of a specific subject (”My Cat”) or a general category (”Cats”). Descriptive reports may be arranged according to categories of related attributes, moving from general categories of features to specific attributes.

Cause and Effect structure is used to show causal relationships between events. Essays demonstrate cause and effect by giving reasons to support relationships, using the word “because.” Signal words for cause and effect structures also include if/then

statements, “as a result,” and “therefore.”

Comparison and Contrast structure is used to explain how two or more objects, events, or positions in an argument are similar or different. Graphic organizers such as venn diagrams, compare/contrast organizers, and tables can be used to compare features across different categories. Words used to signal comparison and contrast organizational structures include “same,” “alike,” “in contrast,” “similarities,” “differences,” and “on the other hand.”

Problem and Solution requires writers to state a problem and come up with a solution. Although problem/solution structures are typically found in informational writing, realistic fiction also often uses a problem/solution structure.

ENDINGS: BEYOND “HAPPILY EVER AFTER”

Anyone who has watched a great movie for ninety minutes only to have it limp to the finish with weak ending knows that strong endings are just as critical to effective writing as strong beginnings. And anyone who has watched the director’s cut of a movie with all the alternate endings knows that even great directors have trouble coming up with satisfying endings for their movies. Just like directors, writers have to decide how to wrap up the action in their stories, resolving the conflict and tying up loose ends in a way that will leave their audience satisfied.



The type of ending an author chooses depends on his or her purpose. When the purpose is to entertain, endings may be happy or tragic, or a surprise ending may provide a twist. Endings can be circular, looping back to the beginning so readers end where they began, or they can leave the reader hanging, wishing for more. Endings can be deliberately ambiguous or ironic, designed to make the reader think, or they can explicitly state the moral of the story, telling the reader what to think. Strong endings for expository texts can summarize the highlights, restate the main points, or end with a final zinger statement to drive home the main point to the audience.

Components of an Effective Paragraph

Every paragraph in the body of an essay consists of three main parts: a topic sentence, some supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. Transition words and phrases provide links between individual paragraphs, and so are important to consider, as well.

Of these elements, the **topic sentences** are the most important to building a strong essay, and deserve the most attention.

Topic Sentences

A clear topic sentence in each paragraph will assist with essay organization. Consider writing topic sentences early in the process, while you’re working on an outline. You can return later to fill in the rest of the paragraph. Having these single sentences figured out early makes the rest of the essay much easier to write!

Devote each body paragraph of an essay to discussing only the point of its topic sentence. If something is interesting to you, but not directly related to the topic sentence, save it for elsewhere in the essay (or hang on to it for a future writing task!). This will help keep your essay focused and effective.

Ensure that your topic sentence is directly related to your main argument or thesis.

Make sure that your topic sentence offers a “preview” of your paragraph’s discussion. Many beginning writers forget to use the first sentence this way, and end up with sentences that don’t give a clear direction for the paragraph.

For example, compare these two first sentences:

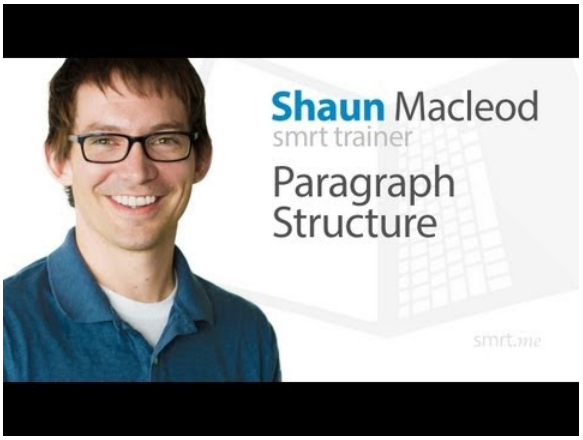
Thomas Jefferson was born in 1743.

Thomas Jefferson, who was born in 1743, became one of the most important people in America by the end of the 18th century.

- The first sentence doesn't give a good direction for the paragraph. It states a fact but leaves the reader clueless about the fact's relevance. The second sentence contextualizes the fact and lets the reader know what the rest of the paragraph will discuss.

Supporting & Concluding Sentences

This video walks through all three components of an effective paragraph, giving good examples of what supporting statements and concluding sentences might look like.



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Transitions

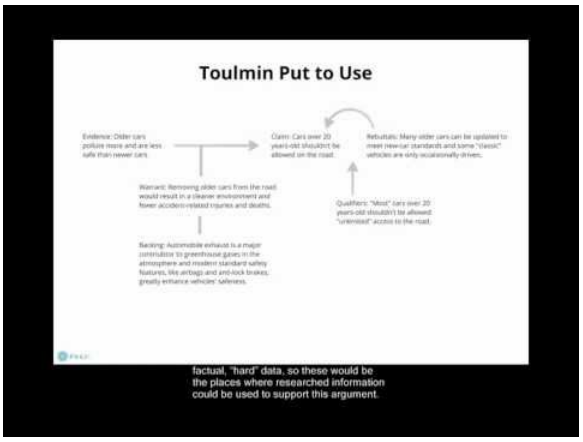
You spend so much time thinking about the ideas of an academic essay that the way these ideas connect makes perfect sense to you. Keep in mind, though, that readers of your essay aren't nearly as familiar with the subject as you are, and will need your guidance.

Transitional phrases, usually found at the beginning of body paragraphs, will allow your reader to follow your train of thought. Phrases like "likewise" or "in contrast" are key indicators as to what relationship different paragraphs have to one another.

- Transitions help underline your essay's overall organizational logic. For example, beginning a paragraph with something like "Despite the many points in its favor, Mystic Pizza also has several elements that keep it from being the best pizza in town" allows your reader to understand how this paragraph connects to what has come before.
- Transitions can also be used inside paragraphs. They can help connect the ideas within a paragraph smoothly so your reader can follow them.
- If you're having a lot of trouble connecting your paragraphs, your organization may be off. Experiment with different paragraph order, to see if that helps.

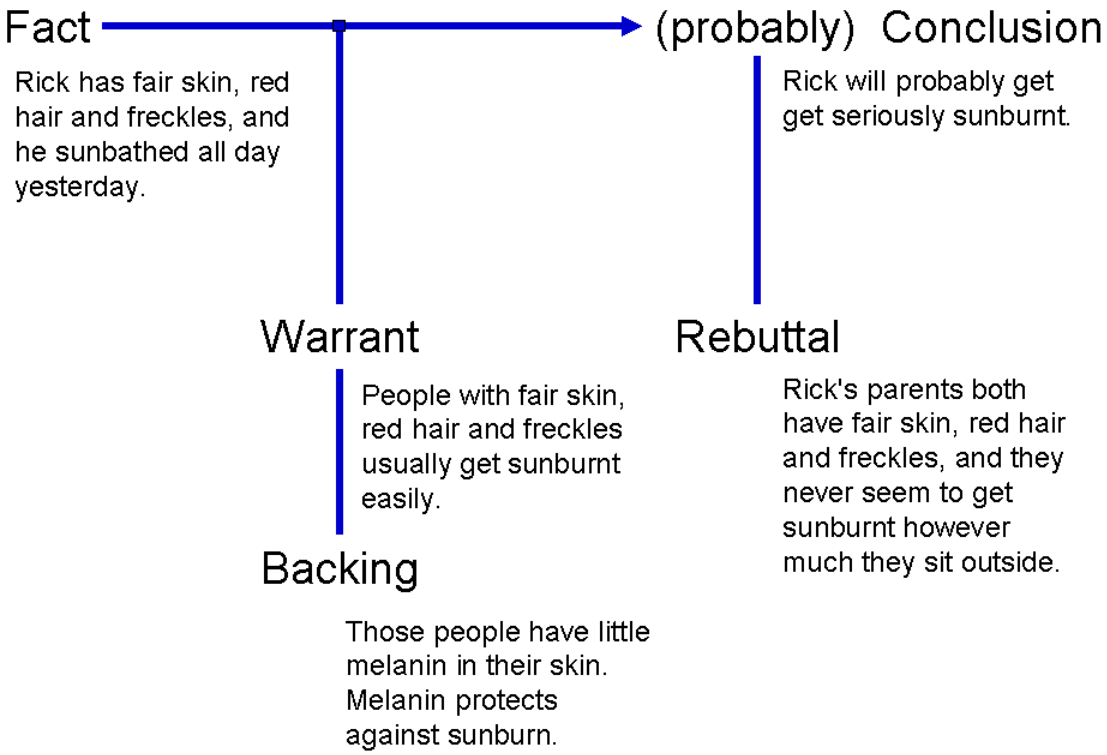
The Toulmin Model

The following video introduces the components of a particular type of persuasive writing, The Toulmin Model. It can be useful to think about **claims** and **evidence** in your writing, and what unstated assumptions (**warrants**) might be influencing you.



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This image shows how conclusions are reached, using the Toulmin model of arguments.



In essays using the Toulmin model, warrants aren't usually stated explicitly in writing. They are often shared beliefs between a reader and the writer, however.

Consider what assumptions you make about your chosen subject, that your reader likely also agrees with. What assumptions do you have that your readers may not share?

Self-Check

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/1262

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3.1.1.2.6: Organizing an Essay

There are many elements that must come together to create a good essay. The topic should be clear and interesting. The author's voice should come through, but not be a distraction. There should be no errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, or capitalization. Organization is one of the most important elements of an essay that is often overlooked. An organized essay is clear, focused, logical and effective.

Organization makes it easier to understand the thesis. To illustrate, imagine putting together a bike. Having all of the necessary tools, parts, and directions will make the job easier to complete than if the parts are spread across the room and the tools are located all over the house. The same logic applies to writing an essay. When all the parts of an essay are in some sort of order, it is both easier for the writer to put the essay together and for the reader to understand the main ideas presented in the essay.

 Photo of a white kitchen lit with windows. Rows of glass jars line shelves over the countertop, and a hanging rack of pans and pots appears beneath that.Although organization makes tasks easier to complete, there is not just one way of organizing. For example, there are hundreds of ways to organize a kitchen. The glasses can go in the cupboard to the right of the sink or to the left of it. The silverware can be placed in any number of drawers. Pots and pans can be hung on hooks over the island in the center of the kitchen or hidden in cupboard space beneath the counter. It does not matter as much where these items are placed, but that they are organized in a logical manner. Essays, like kitchens, can also be organized in different ways. There are three common strategies; however, it is important to note that these are broad categories. Variations of these strategies can be used, and they may be combined with one another.[1]

Strategy 1. Reverse Outlining

If your paper is about Huckleberry Finn, a working thesis might be: "In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore." However, you might feel uncertain if your paper really follows through on the thesis as promised.

This paper may benefit from reverse outlining. Your aim is to create an outline of what you've already written, as opposed to the kind of outline that you make before you begin to write. The reverse outline will help you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of both your organization and your argument.

Read the draft and take notes

Read your draft over, and as you do so, make very brief notes in the margin about what each paragraph is trying to accomplish.

Outline the Draft

After you've read through the entire draft, transfer the brief notes to a fresh sheet of paper, listing them in the order in which they appear. The outline might look like this:

- Paragraph 1: Intro
- Paragraph 2: Background on Huck Finn
- Paragraph 3: River for Huck and Jim
- Paragraph 4: Shore and laws for Huck and Jim
- Paragraph 5: Shore and family, school
- Paragraph 6: River and freedom, democracy
- Paragraph 7: River and shore similarities
- Paragraph 8: Conclusion

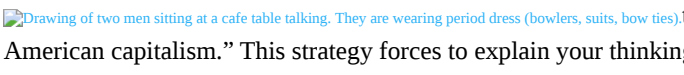
Examine the Outline

Look for repetition and other organizational problems. In the reverse outline above, there's a problem somewhere in Paragraphs 3-7, where the potential for repetition is high because you keep moving back and forth between river and shore.

Re-examine the Thesis, the Outline, and the Draft Together

Look closely at the outline and see how well it supports the argument in your thesis statement. You should be able to see which paragraphs need rewriting, reordering or rejecting. You may find some paragraphs are tangential or irrelevant or that some paragraphs have more than one idea and need to be separated.

Strategy 2. Talk It Out


Drawing of two men sitting at a cafe table talking. They are wearing period dress (bowlers, suits, bow ties).

If your paper is about President Roosevelt's New Deal, and your working thesis is: "The New Deal was actually a conservative defense of American capitalism." This strategy forces to explain your thinking to someone else.

Find a Friend, your T.A., your Professor, a relative, a Writing Center tutor, or any sympathetic and intelligent listener.
People are more accustomed to talking than writing, so it might be beneficial to explain your thinking out loud to someone before organizing the essay. Talking to someone about your ideas may also relieve pressure and anxiety about your topic.

Explain What Your Paper Is About
Pay attention to how you explain your argument verbally. It is likely that the order in which you present your ideas and evidence to your listener is a logical way to arrange them in your paper. Let's say that you begin (as you did above) with the working thesis. As you continue to explain, you realize that even though your draft doesn't mention "private enterprise" until the last two paragraphs, you begin to talk about it right away. This fact should tell you that you probably need to discuss private enterprise near the beginning.

Take Notes
You and your listener should keep track of the way you explain your paper. If you don't, you probably won't remember what you've talked about. Compare the structure of the argument in the notes to the structure of the draft you've written.

Get Your Listener to Ask Questions
As the writer, it is in your interest to receive constructive criticism so that your draft will become stronger. You want your listener to say things like, "Would you mind explaining that point about being both conservative and liberal again? I wasn't sure I followed" or "What kind of economic principle is government relief? Do you consider it a good or bad thing?" Questions you can't answer may signal an unnecessary tangent or an area needing further development in the draft. Questions you need to think about will probably make you realize that you need to explain more your paper. In short, you want to know if your listener fully understands you; if not, chances are your readers won't, either.[2]

Strategy 3. Paragraphs

Readers need paragraph breaks in order to organize their reading. Writers need paragraph breaks to organize their writing. A paragraph break indicates a change in focus, topic, specificity, point of view, or rhetorical strategy. The paragraph should have one main idea; the topic sentence expresses this idea. The paragraph should be organized either spatially, chronologically, or logically. The movement may be from general to specific, specific to general, or general to specific to general. All paragraphs must contain developed ideas: comparisons, examples, explanations, definitions, causes, effects, processes, or descriptions. There are several concluding strategies which may be combined or used singly, depending on the assignment's length and purpose:

- a summary of the main points
- a hook and return to the introductory "attention-getter" to frame the essay
- a web conclusion which relates the topic to a larger context of a greater significance
- a proposal calling for action or further examination of the topic
- a question which provokes the reader
- a quote
- a vivid image or compelling narrative[3]

Put Paragraphs into Sections
You should be able to group your paragraphs so that they make a particular point or argument that supports your thesis. If any paragraph, besides the introduction or conclusion, cannot fit into any section, you may have to ask yourself whether it belongs in the essay.

Re-examine each Section
Assuming you have more than one paragraph under each section, try to distinguish between them. Perhaps you have two arguments in favor of that can be distinguished from each other by author, logic, ethical principles invoked, etc. Write down the distinctions — they will help you formulate clear topic sentences.

Re-examine the Entire Argument

Which section do you want to appear first? Why? Which Second? Why? In what order should the paragraphs appear in each section? Look for an order that makes the strongest possible argument.[4]

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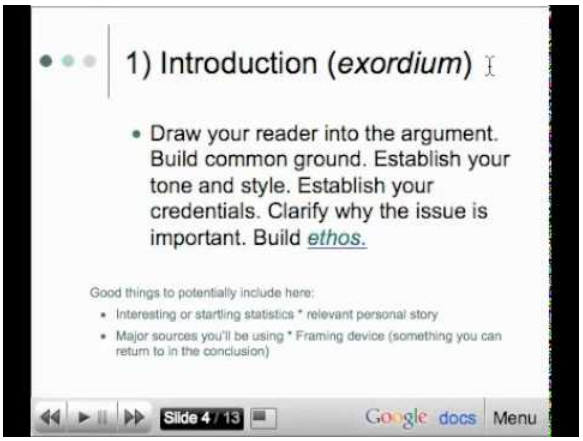
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2. Reorganizing Your Draft 9.02: Organizing an Essay#return-footnote-1589-2
3. Parts of an Essay 9.02: Organizing an Essay#return-footnote-1589-3
4. Reorganizing Your Draft 9.02: Organizing an Essay#return-footnote-1589-4

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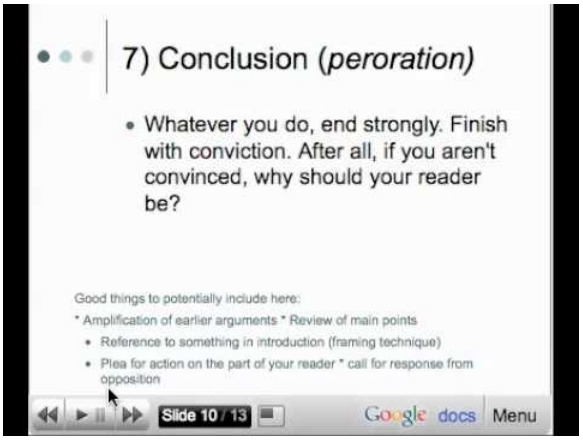
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3.1.1.2.7: Classical Essay Structure

The following videos provide an explanation of the classical model of structuring a persuasive argument. You can access the slides alone, without narration, here.



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3.1.1.2.8: Formulating a Thesis

You need a good thesis statement for your essay but are having trouble getting started. You may have heard that your thesis needs to be specific and arguable, but still wonder what this really means.

Let's look at some examples. Imagine you're writing about John Hughes's film *Sixteen Candles* (1984).

You take a first pass at writing a thesis:

> *Sixteen Candles* is a romantic comedy about high school cliques.

Is this a strong thesis statement? Not yet, but it's a good start. You've focused on a topic–high school cliques–which is a smart move because you've settled on one of many possible angles. But the claim is weak because it's not yet arguable. Intelligent people would generally agree with this statement—so there's no real "news" for your reader. You want your thesis to say something surprising and debatable. If your thesis doesn't go beyond summarizing your source, it's descriptive and not yet argumentative.

The key words in the thesis statement are "romantic comedy" and "high school cliques." One way to sharpen the claim is to *start asking questions*.

For example, how does the film represent high school cliques in a surprising or complex way? How does the film reinforce stereotypes about high school groups and how does it undermine them? Or why does the film challenge our expectations about romantic comedies by focusing on high school cliques? If you can answer one of those questions (or others of your own), you'll have a strong thesis.

Tip : Asking "how" or "why" questions will help you refine your thesis, making it more arguable and interesting to your readers.



Take 2. You revise the thesis. Is it strong now?

> *Sixteen Candles* is a romantic comedy criticizing the divisiveness created by high school cliques.

You're getting closer. You're starting to take a stance by arguing that the film identifies "divisiveness" as a problem and *criticizes* it, but your readers will want to know how this plays out and why it's important. Right now, the thesis still sounds bland – not risky enough to be genuinely contentious.

Tip: Keep raising questions that test your ideas. And ask yourself the "so what" question. Why is your thesis interesting or important?

Take 3. Let's try again. How about this version?

> Although the film *Sixteen Candles* appears to reinforce stereotypes about high school cliques, it undermines them in important ways, questioning its viewers' assumptions about what's normal.

Bingo! This thesis statement is pretty strong. It challenges an obvious interpretation of the movie (that is just reinforces stereotypes), offering a new and more complex reading in its place. We also have a sense of why this argument is important. The film's larger goal, we learn, is to question what we think we understand about normalcy.



What's a Strong Thesis?

As we've just seen, a strong thesis statement crystallizes your paper's argument and, most importantly, it's *arguable*.

This means two things. It goes beyond merely summarizing or describing to stake out an interpretation or position that's not obvious, and others could challenge for good reasons. It's also arguable in the literal sense that it can be *argued*, or supported through a thoughtful analysis of your sources. If your argument lacks evidence, readers will think your thesis statement is an opinion or belief as opposed to an argument.

Exercises for Drafting an Arguable Thesis

A good thesis will be *focused* on your object of study (as opposed to making a big claim about the world) and will introduce the *key words* guiding your analysis.
To get started, you might experiment with some of these "mad libs." They're thinking exercises that will help propel you toward an arguable thesis.

By examining _____ [topic/approach], we can see _____[thesis—the claim that's surprising], which is important because _____.[1]

Example:

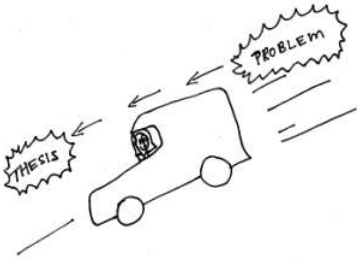
"By examining *Sixteen Candles* through the lens of Georg Simmel's writings on fashion, we can seethat the protagonist's interest in fashion as an expression of her conflicted desire to be seen as both unique and accepted by the group. This is important because the film offers its viewers a glimpse into the ambivalent yearnings of middle class youth in the 1980s.

Although readers might assume _____ [the commonplace idea you're challenging], I argue that _____ [your surprising claim].

Example:

Although viewers might assume the romantic comedy *Sixteen Candles* is merely entertaining, I believe its message is political. The film uses the romance between Samantha, a middle class sophomore, and Jake, an affluent senior, to reinforce the fantasy that anyone can become wealthy and successful with enough cunning and persistence.

Still Having Trouble? Let's Back Up…



It helps to understand why readers value the arguable thesis. What larger purpose does it serve? Your readers will bring a set of expectations to your essay. The better you can anticipate the expectations of your readers, the better you'll be able to persuade them to entertain seeing things your way.

Academic readers (and readers more generally) read to learn something new. They want to see the writer challenge commonplaces —either everyday assumptions about your object of study or truisms in the scholarly literature. In other words, academic readers want to be surprised so that their thinking shifts or at least becomes more complex by the time they finish reading your essay. Good essays problematize what we think we know and offer an alternative explanation in its place. They leave their reader with a fresh perspective on a problem.

We all bring important past experiences and beliefs to our interpretations of texts, objects, and problems. You can harness these observational powers to engage critically with what you are studying. The key is to be alert to what strikes you as strange, problematic, paradoxical, or puzzling about your object of study. If you can articulate this and a claim in response, you're well on your way to formulating an arguable thesis in your introduction.

How do I set up a "problem" and an arguable thesis in response?

All good writing has a purpose or motive for existing. Your thesis is your surprising response to this problem or motive. This is why it seldom makes sense to start a writing project by articulating the thesis. The first step is to articulate the question or problem your paper addresses.



Here are some possible ways to introduce a conceptual problem in your paper's introduction.

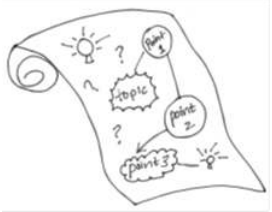
1. Challenge a commonplace interpretation (or your own first impressions).



How are readers likely to interpret this source or issue? What might intelligent readers think at first glance? (Or, if you've been given secondary sources or have been asked to conduct research to locate secondary sources, what do other writers or scholars assume is true or important about your primary source or issue?)

What does this commonplace interpretation leave out, overlook, or under-emphasize?

2. Help your reader see the complexity of your topic.



Identify and describe for your reader a paradox, puzzle, or contradiction in your primary source(s).

What larger questions does this paradox or contradiction raise for you and your readers?

3. If your assignment asks you to do research, piggyback off another scholar's research.



Summarize for your reader another scholar's argument about your topic, primary source, or case study and tell your reader why this claim is interesting.

Now explain how you will extend this scholar's argument to explore an issue or case study that the scholar doesn't address fully.

4. If your assignment asks you to do research, identify a gap in another scholar's or a group of scholars' research.



Summarize for your reader another scholar's argument about your topic, primary source, or case study and tell your reader why this claim is interesting. Or, summarize how scholars in the field tend to approach your topic.

Next, explain what important aspect this scholarly representation misses or distorts. Introduce your particular approach to your topic and its value

5. If your assignment asks you to do research, bring in a new lens for investigating your case study or problem.



Summarize for your reader how a scholar or group of scholars has approached your topic.

Introduce a theoretical source (possibly from another discipline) and explain how it helps you address this issue from a new and productive angle.

Tip: your introductory paragraph will probably look like this:



Testing Your Thesis

You can test your thesis statement's arguability by asking the following questions:

Does my thesis only or mostly summarize my source?

If so, try some of the exercises above to articulate your paper's conceptual problem or question.

Is my thesis arguable –can it be supported by evidence in my source, and is it surprising and contentious?

If not, return to your sources and practice the exercises above.

Is my thesis about my primary source or case study, or is it about the world?

If it's about the world, revise it so that it focuses on your primary source or case study. Remember you need solid evidence to support your thesis.

"Formulating a Thesis" was written by Andrea Scott, Princeton University

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank my current and former colleagues in the Princeton Writing Program for helping me think through and test ways of teaching the arguable thesis. Special thanks go to Kerry Walk, Amanda Irwin Wilkins, Judy Swan, and Keith Shaw. A shout-out to Mark Gaipa as well, whose cartoons on teaching source use remain a program favorite.

[1] Adapted from Erik Simpson's "Five Ways of Looking at a Thesis" athttp://www.math.grinnell.edu/~simpsone/Teaching/fiveways.html

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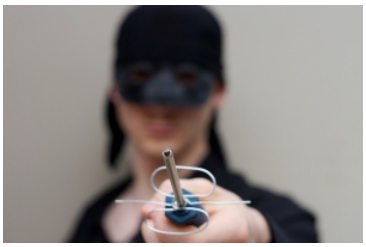
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3.1.1.2.9: 5 Ways of Looking at a Thesis

1. A thesis says something a little strange.

Consider the following examples:

> A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup's triumph over evil, *The Princess Bride* affirms the power of true love.



> B: Although the main plot of *The Princess Bride* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks—baseball bats, tree branches, and swords—link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

I would argue that both of these statements are perfectly correct, but they are not both strange. Only the second one says something, well, weird. Weird is good. Sentence A encourages the paper to produce precisely the evidence that *The Princess Bride* presents explicitly; sentence B ensures that the paper will talk about something new.

Romeo and Juliet concerns the dangers of family pride, *Frankenstein* the dangers of taking science too far. Yup. How can you make those things unusual? Good papers go out on a limb. They avoid ugly falls by reinforcing the limb with carefully chosen evidence and rigorous argumentation.

2. A thesis creates an argument that builds from one point to the next, giving the paper a direction that your reader can follow as the paper develops.

This point often separates the best theses from the pack. A good thesis can prevent the two weakest ways of organizing a critical paper: the pile of information and the plot summary with comments. A paper that presents a pile of information will frequently introduce new paragraphs with transitions that simply indicate the addition of more stuff. ("Another character who exhibits these traits is X," for instance.) Consider these examples:

> A: The Rules and Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey both tell women how to act.
>
> B: By looking at The Rules, a modern conduct book for women, we can see how Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey is itself like a conduct book, questioning the rules for social success in her society and offering a new model.

Example A would almost inevitably lead to a paper organized as a pile of information. A plot summary with comments follows the chronological development of a text while picking out the same element of every segment; a transition in such a paper might read, "In the next scene, the color blue also figures prominently." Both of these approaches constitute too much of a good thing. Papers must compile evidence, of course, and following the chronology of a text can sometimes help a reader keep track of a paper's argument. The best papers, however, will develop according to a more complex logic articulated in a strong thesis. Example B above would lead a paper to organize its evidence according to the paper's own logic.

3. A thesis fits comfortably into the Magic Thesis Sentence (MTS).

The MTS: By looking at _____, we can see _____, which most readers don't see; it is important to look at this aspect of the text because _____.

Try it out with the examples from the first point:

A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup's triumph over evil, The Princess Bride affirms the power of true love.

B: Although the main plot of The Princess Bride rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks–baseball bats, tree branches, and swords–link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained

in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

Notice that the MTS adds a new dimension to point number one above. The first part of the MTS asks you to find something strange ("which most readers don't see"), and the second part asks you to think about the importance of the strangeness. Thesis A would not work at all in the MTS; one could not reasonably state that "most readers [or viewers] don't see" that film's affirmation of true love, and the statement does not even attempt to explain the importance of its claim. Thesis B, on the other hand, gives us a way to complete the MTS, as in "By looking at the way fighting sticks link the plot and frame of *The Princess Bride*, we can see the way the grandson is trained in true love, which most people don't see; it is important to look at this aspect of the text because unlike the rest of the film, the fighting sticks suggest that love is not natural but socialized." One does not need to write out the MTS in such a neat one-sentence form, of course, but thinking through the structure of the MTS can help refine thesis ideas.

4. A thesis says something about the text(s) you discuss *exclusively*.

If your thesis could describe many works equally well, it needs to be more specific. Let's return to our examples from above:

> A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup's triumph over evil, *The Princess Bride* affirms the power of true love.
>
> B: Although the main plot of *The Princess Bride* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks–baseball bats, tree branches, and swords–link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

Try substituting other works:

> A: By telling the story of Darcy and Elizabeth's triumph over evil, *Pride and Prejudice* affirms the power of true love.

Sure, that makes sense. Bad sign.

> B: Although the main plot of *Pride and Prejudice* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks–baseball bats, tree branches, and swords–link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that it is not natural but socialized.



Um, nope. Even if you have never read *Pride and Prejudice*, you can probably guess that such a precise thesis could hardly apply to other works. Good sign.

5. A thesis makes a lot of information irrelevant.

If your thesis is specific enough, it will make a point that focuses on only a small part of the text you are analyzing. You can and should ultimately apply that point to the work as a whole, but a thesis will call attention to specific parts of it. Let's look at those examples again. (This is the last time, I promise.)

> A: By telling the story of Westley and Buttercup's triumph over evil, *The Princess Bride* affirms the power of true love.
>
> B: Although the main plot of *The Princess Bride* rests on the natural power of true love, an examination of the way that fighting sticks–baseball bats, tree branches, and swords–link the frame story to the romance plot suggests that the grandson is being trained in true love, that love is not natural but socialized.

One way of spotting the problem with example A is to note that a simple plot summary would support its point. That is not of true example B, which tells the reader exactly what moments the paper will discuss and why.

If you find that your paper leads you to mark relevant passages on virtually every page of a long work, you need to find a thesis that helps you focus on a smaller portion of the text. As the MTS reminds us, the paper should still strive to show the reader

something new about the text as a whole, but a specific area of concentration will help, not hinder, that effort.

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3.1.1.2.10: Thesis 21 Activity

Time to complete: 50 Minutes.

Materials needed: Writing Thesis Statements Handout (attached)

Blank 3 x 5 notecards

- Give students the Writing Thesis Statements Handout the class before you plan to do this activity and have them complete it for homework. You can create specific topics that are related to current essay you are working on. The handout provided is related to the first essay of my Southern Culture class which is a Critical Analysis. Also have them watch the YouTube Video “Writing Ninja: Writing a Strong Thesis Statement.”
- On the day of the activity, have them get out the thesis worksheet and discuss the elements of an effective thesis statement.
- Give each student a notecard. Tell them to pick the thesis statement from the worksheet that they think is best and write it on the notecard. Remind them not to put their name on the card.
- Take up the worksheet.
- Tell them that when the music starts (I played fast banjo music from YouTube, but one class requested a song, so I played it instead) to stand up and pass their notecard to another student. Tell them to keep passing, and passing, and passing until the music stops. When the music stops, they should partner with the person nearest and have a seat where they are. They do not need to return to their original desk.
- They should read both statements together out loud. Then, they should rank the statements giving each card a score—the scores should total to 7 points. For example, if the thesis statements are pretty equal give one a 3 and one a 4 to equal 7. If one is really good and the other isn’t a thesis statement at all, give the good one a 7 and the other a 0 (totaling 7 points). Other options are 6 and 1 or 5 and 2 (I write the scoring options on the board).
- Tell them to score the statements and put the score on the back.
- Repeat passing and scoring two more times.
- After the last scoring, ask the students to total the points on the card they end up with.

Ask if anyone has 21 points? Then count down. Put the top three thesis statements on the board. Talk about what makes them effective. Ask who they belong to and give them recognition if they want to claim their statement.

Practice Writing Thesis Statements

Remember, a thesis statement tells the reader what your essay will be about while providing three reasons to support your main idea.

Look at the following topics and their example thesis statements:

a) Topic—Society and Class in “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

Thesis—The Grandmother in “A Good Man is Hard to Find” demonstrates a particular social class of the South. She associates being from the upper-class through superficial elements such as who one descends from, how one speaks and acts, and how one dresses.

For the following topic, come up with a thesis statement of your own. Make sure the thesis statement states the main idea and has three reasons to support the topic.

1. Topic—The importance of Family in Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl

Thesis—

2. Topic— The portrayal of slaver in Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl

Thesis—

3. Topic— Racial stereotypes in Incidents in a Life of a Slave Girl

Thesis—

4. Topic—Significance of the setting in ““The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”

Thesis—

5. Topic— Character analysis of Smiley in “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”

Thesis—

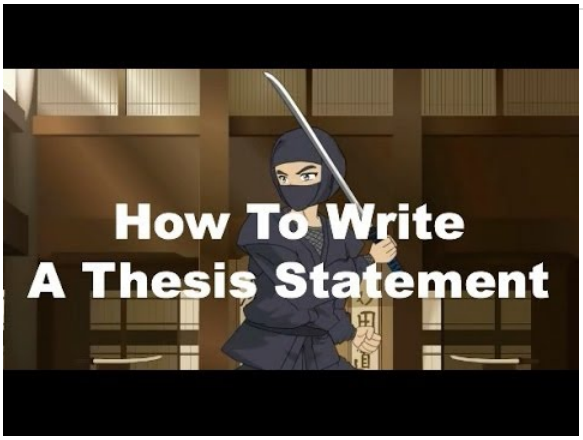
6. Topic—The importance of animals in “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”

Thesis—

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3.1.1.2.11: Writing Ninjas- How to Write a Strong Thesis Statement



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3.1.1.2.12: Process- Writing a Thesis Statement

Thesis statements are easy to construct if you: 1. can condense your secondary sources—that you've read and understood—into a "main idea and argument" grid (explained below); and 2. answer a framework of organizational questions (also below). These two steps can help to ensure that your thesis simultaneously situates an idea within a particular "conversation" and specifies a unique perspective/makes a new argument/contribution to the conversation.

1. Condensing secondary sources:

    a. Include some brief information each of your secondary sources (books, journal articles, etc.) on a grid so that you can organize the authors' main ideas and perspectives in one space. For instance,

Author	Main Idea	Argument
Jones	Climate change policy	Climate change policy is at a standstill because the government is concerned about economic growth
Smith	Climate change policy	Climate change policy ought to be communicated as an ethical imperative because that will motivate the public to respond
Taylor	Climate change policy	Climate change policy needs to be communicated to the public by interdisciplinary teams of academics and politicians

    b. Once you've created an organizational table, you'll want to examine it for commonalities/linkages among the authors' ideas and arguments. In the example above, all authors have written about climate change policy, so now you know that you'll need to include something like this phrase, "climate change policy," in your thesis statement. Regarding the authors' arguments, Jones argues about how climate change policy is affected by the government's concern with economic growth; Smith argues that it needs to be communicated as an ethical imperative; and Taylor argues that it needs to be communicated by interdisciplinary teams.

    c. Given this information, the first half of your thesis – which explains the specific topic – needs to explain to the audience/reader that you are writing specifically about climate change policy. The second half of your thesis – which contextualizes the argument – needs to explain to the audience/reader your interpretation of these authors' arguments. For instance, you may choose to argue that:

        i.climate change policy regarding the effect of government policies about economic growth is the greater imperative for accomplishing more effective climate change policies in the U.S.

        ii.ethical imperatives are the motivating factor for encouraging the public to respond – causing academic institutions to work with government officials/decision-makers in responding to the public's opinion/support of climate change policy as an ethical concern

    d. The examples above are hypothetical; and only two of the many, creative possibilities for interpreting an *argument* out of a specific *topic*. Whereas an argument seeks to persuade an audience/reader about a way of interpreting others' information, a topic simply describes how to categorize/identify where the argument "fits" (i.e. which generalized group of people would be concerned with reading your writing)

    e. Hint: oftentimes, the authors of academic journal articles conclude their arguments by suggesting potential research questions that they believe ought to be addressed in future scholarship. These suggestions can potentially provide some really excellent information about how to begin articulating a unique argument about a specific topic.

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3.1.1.2.13: Creating Paragraphs

A paragraph is a self-contained portion of your argument. Paragraphs will begin by making a claim that connects back to your thesis. The body of the paragraph will present the evidence, reasoning and conclusions that prove that claim. Usually, paragraphs will end by connecting their claim to the larger argument or by setting up the claim that the next paragraph will contain.

How Many Paragraphs Do You Need?

There is no set number for how many paragraphs a paper should have. You will need one for an introduction and one for a conclusion, but after that the number can vary. However, you will need one paragraph for every claim that makes up your argument.

Paragraphs should be used to develop one idea at a time rather than contain many different ideas and claims. If you have a lot of ideas and claims to address, you may be tempted to combine related claims into the same paragraph. Combining different points in the same paragraph cuts down on how much space you have to argue each point. This will divide your reader's attention and make your argument less thorough.

By dedicating each paragraph to only one part of your argument, you will give the reader time to fully evaluate and understand each claim before going on to the next one. Think of paragraphs as a way of guiding your reader's attention – by giving them a single topic, you force them to focus on it. When you direct their focus, they will have a much easier time following your argument.

Some writing manuals will direct you to have one paragraph for every point made in your thesis. The general idea behind this rule is a good one – you need to address every point, and you will need at least a paragraph for each. However, do not feel like you can only devote one paragraph to each point. If your argument is complex, you may need to have subsections for each of your main points. Each one of those supporting points should be its own paragraph.

Using Topic Sentences

Every paragraph of argument should begin with a topic sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph will prove. By providing the reader with expectations at the start of the paragraph, you help them understand where you are going and how the paragraph fits in with the overall structure of your argument. Topic sentences should always connect back to your thesis statement – if you cannot find a way to describe a paragraph in relation to your thesis, you probably do not need it for your argument.

Creating Good Paragraphs

If the thesis contains multiple points or assertions, each body paragraph should support or justify them, preferably in the order the assertions were originally stated in the thesis. Thus, the topic sentence for the first body paragraph will refer to the first point in the thesis sentence and the topic sentence for the second body paragraph will refer to the second point in the thesis sentence. Each body paragraph is something like a miniature essay in that they each need an introductory sentence that makes an important and interesting argument, and that they each need a good closing sentence in order to produce a smooth transition between one point and the next. Transitions from one argument to the next, as well as within paragraphs, are important to add coherence to your paper.

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3.1.2.1: Writing Skills- Avoiding Plagiarism

When you are using research in your essays, there are many aspects to think about other than how to organize your essay and explain your topic. There are many steps to finding information you need for your essay topic.

- **How do I find the information I need, and quickly?**
  - Search for keywords. They don't need to be perfect grammar, and you don't need a lot of words. Sometimes more words make it more difficult, so keep it short. For example, for the following assignment, you could search for "why Mars planet name".
- **How do I know if the information I find is accurate, trustworthy, and up to date?**
  - After you get search results, don't just choose the first one. Look at the information and the titles given. Also, take a look at the website it comes from before you click on it. Sources that come from databases and academic journals are good, but not always appropriate for the topic. Sites that end with .edu, .gov, and .org are often the most trustworthy. Sites that show the author's name and some information about the author are good. Also, look for a date and see if the information is up to date.
- **Should I quote the information or paraphrase it?**
  - Only quote if you feel a paraphrase would make the information lose power or meaning. That doesn't mean quote everything because you don't have confidence in your grammar! If you are just giving facts and statistics, it's probably best to just paraphrase, even if your grammar isn't perfect. If you quote, you do not change any of the borrowed words and they are surrounded with quotation marks (" "). Paraphrases are the same meaning as the borrowed information, but in your own words. Therefore, they do not use quotation marks.
- **How do I integrate the research into my essay?**
  - When you finally have the information you want to use, it needs to be clear when you start talking about the research and when you finish and go back to your own words and ideas. This can be done by introducing the source before giving the information and then ending the information with an in-text citation. Go to this site for some good examples of introductory phrases to use before you quote or paraphrase: https://www.ccis.edu/offices/academicresources/writingcenter/essaywritingassistance/suggestedwaystointroducequotations.aspx
- **How do I avoid plagiarism?**
  - Plagiarism is serious business. Students can be expelled from their universities and people can lose their jobs if they plagiarize. Thus, it's important to avoid it as much as possible. To avoid plagiarism, you need to use quotation marks when you quote and properly paraphrase with an in-text citation. You will also need a list of your sources and more detailed information about them at the end of the essay.

You will be practicing all of these important skills above in the following short writing assignment. You can go to the following website for more information, especially about how to do MLA Style citations: https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/aboutwriting/chapter/mla-paper-review-sources/

Practice 1: Paraphrasing and MLA Style in-text citations

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Why are all of our planets (except Earth) named after the Latin version of the Greek gods? What is the connection between the characteristics of the gods and the characteristics of the planets? Find the answer by searching the Internet. Introduce the source and quote or paraphrase the information, and end with an MLA style in-text citation. Then make an MLA style works cited page. Try to use different sources for each question, but keep in mind the quality of the source. Pay attention to punctuation.

Example (quote): The website Cool Cosmos says, "Being very cold and the farthest from the Sun, Pluto was named after the Roman god of death" ("How did Pluto").

Example (paraphrase): The planet Pluto is named after the Roman god of the dead since it so far away from the sun and so frigid, according to the website Cool Cosmos ("How did Pluto").

MLA style works cited pages entries needs to be alphabetized and with hanging indent.

1. Venus: use "according to…" before the information and paraphrase
2. Mercury: use "…says that" and quote
3. Mars: use "according to…" at the end of the information and quote
4. Jupiter: use "…says" at the end of the information and paraphrase
5. Saturn: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase
6. Neptune: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase
7. Uranus: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase

More about paraphrasing

If you have trouble paraphrasing, you can visit http://www.eslwriting.org/learn-paraphrase-writing/ for help.

Use a combination (not just one!) of the paraphrasing strategies below if you have trouble paraphrasing. Also, think about how you would tell a classmate the material without looking at the text. Paraphrases can have a little less or a few more sentences than the original.

1. **Synonyms:** Use words and phrases with a similar meaning.
2. **Voice:** Change the sentence from active voice to passive.
3. **Word forms:** Change nouns to verbs or vice versa.
4. **Conjunctions:** Combine two sentences with conjunctions.
5. **Separation:** Separate a longer sentence of ideas into two or more sentences, especially if that makes them clearer.
6. **Clauses:** Join two sentences with relative clauses, appositives, and reduced phrases.
7. **Rearrange parts:** Change around dependent and independent clauses and prepositional phrases, as appropriate.

Paraphrasing Practice 2

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Paraphrase the following sentences about famous ancient Greek philosophers and their ideas we still study and use today. Write your paraphrases on a separate sheet of paper. All quotes come from Wikipedia, but you may want to check the definitions in your first language to make sure you understand the ideas before you paraphrase them.

1. Platonic love is a type of love that is non-sexual. The term is named after Plato, who described a kind of love centered on same-gender relations and included sex, which underwent a transformation during the Renaissance (15th–16th centuries) to get its contemporary sense of nonsexual heterosexual love.
2. Cynicism is a school of thought of ancient Greek philosophy as practiced by the Cynics. For the Cynics, the purpose of life is to live in virtue, in agreement with nature. As reasoning creatures, people can gain happiness by rigorous training and by living in a way which is natural for themselves, rejecting all conventional desires for wealth, power, sex, and fame. Instead, they were to lead a simple life free from all possessions.
3. However, the modern definition of this has changed. Now, Cynicism is an attitude or state of mind characterized by a general distrust of others' motives. A cynic may have a general lack of faith or hope in the human species or people are only motivated by ambition, desire, greed, gratification, materialism, goals, and opinions that a cynic perceives as vain, unobtainable, or ultimately meaningless and therefore deserving of ridicule or admonishment.
4. Skepticism is generally any questioning attitude or doubt towards one or more items of putative knowledge or belief. It is often directed at domains, such as morality (moral skepticism), religion (skepticism about the existence of God), or knowledge (skepticism about the possibility of knowledge, or of certainty).
5. In ordinary usage, skepticism refers to: an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a particular object; the doctrine that true knowledge or some particular knowledge is uncertain; or the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism that is characteristic of skeptics (Merriam–Webster). (Hint: try to make the three definition parts part of one sentence.)

6. The Socratic method is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presumptions. It is a dialectical method, often involving a discussion in which the defense of one point of view is questioned; one participant may lead another to contradict themselves in some way, thus weakening the defender's point.
7. Socrates, one of the most famous ancient Greek philosophers, found guilty of both corrupting the minds of the youth of Athens and of impiety ("not believing in the gods of the state"), and subsequently sentenced to death by drinking a mixture containing poison hemlock.
8. Hippocrates was a Greek physician of the Age of Pericles (Classical Greece), and is considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine. He is referred to as the "Father of Modern Medicine" in recognition of his lasting contributions to the field as the founder of the Hippocratic School of Medicine. Hippocrates is credited with being the first person to believe that diseases were caused naturally, not because of superstition and gods. He separated the discipline of medicine from religion, believing and arguing that disease was not a punishment inflicted by the gods but rather the product of environmental factors, diet, and living habits.
9. The Hippocratic Oath is an oath historically taken by physicians. It is one of the most widely known of Greek medical texts. In its original form, it requires a new physician to swear, by a number of healing gods, to uphold specific ethical standards.
10. The Oath is the earliest expression of medical ethics in the Western world, establishing several principles of medical ethics which remain of paramount significance today. These include the principles of medical confidentiality and non-maleficence. Although the ancient text is only of historic and symbolic value, swearing a modified form of the Oath remains a rite of passage for medical graduates in many countries.

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CEFR Level: CEF Level C1

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3.1.2.2: Writing Skill- Summary and Response

by Charity Davenport and Doug Terry Writing a summary and response essay can be a difficult task, but one you may be asked to do many times in your academic career. Summary and response papers are ways that teachers can see that you understand the materials and can think about it critically, so this is a good chance for you to show what you have learned and your creativity. The advice below will help you write a great summary and response paper: just remember EDDIE.

- Step 1: Expectations of the Assignment
- Step 2: Dissecting the article or reading
- Step 3: Deciding the summary's thesis statement
- Step 4: Identifying your opinions and thoughts after reading
- Step 5: Evaluating points to use to support your ideas

Step 1: Expectations of the Assignment

The first step is to make sure you understand what is expected of you concerning the assignment. For this example, we will use the following instructions, but your teacher's requirements might be different.

"Summarize the article and give a two-paragraph response. Make sure to cite the article using MLA style citations and formatting."

In this case, we suggest the following organization for a 5-paragraph essay:

1. Introduction:
    1. Hook
    2. Background information about the topic
    3. Introduce the article (author, title, source) and how the author approaches its topic
    4. Give your thesis statement that refers to your responses
2. Summary of article
3. Response part 1: you could agree, disagree, present a problem
4. Response part 2: You could concede, give another reason you agree or disagree, or present a solution
5. Conclusion
    1. Restate your thesis (and the main idea of the article)
    2. Summarize your response
    3. Clean it up with SOAPY: **S**uggestion, **o**pinion (not for this one, though), call to **a**ction, **p**rediction, and/or emphasis on wh**y** this topic is important.

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Step 2: Dissecting the article or reading

Let's say that your teacher gives you this 3-page reading to summarize and then respond to. The first and most important step is to read the article and make sure you understand it. As you read, take notes–of both important ideas (main ideas) and your thoughts and questions as you are reading.

Notice if there are any subheadings. This means that the article or reading is broken up into sections, usually by subtopic. This helps point out where important ideas might be.

Think about when you write an essay. You need a hook, thesis statement, and topic sentences for each of your subtopics. It might not be exactly the same for every article or reading, but you can keep your eye out for similar structures. You might find the main idea of the whole article right before the first subheading, and each subsections main ideas near the top and end of each section. However, there may be times when there is not a clear main idea sentence, and so you will need to create your own. This is when taking notes while reading is most useful.

Highlight the main ideas that you find–but be careful–don't go highlight crazy. For the article and each section, there should only be one or two sentences that contain the main ideas.

After identifying and highlighting the main ideas for the article and its subsections, paraphrase them and make sure they flow together to form a nice summary paragraph. For example, if the article has four sections, then your paragraph should be about five

to six sentences long–one sentence for the main idea of the article, and one (or two) sentence(s) for each section.

The usual advice for paraphrase is to read your notes about the main ideas, reread the mains ideas, and then flip over the article or put it aside so that you can't see the original, and then imagine repeating the same ideas to a classmate. However, this can be one of the most difficult aspects of using outside sources, so if you need extra help, you can check out the paraphrasing help in this article: https://iagtm.pressbooks.com/chapter/writing-skills-avoiding-plagiarism/#parahelp

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Step 3: Deciding the summary's thesis statement

Only after reading the whole article and taking note of all the main ideas can you start to write about the main idea of the whole article. In fact, your summary's thesis statement should be right before your response thesis statement. In this sentence, you should mention the article, the author's last name, the title of the article, the author's purpose, and the main topic of the article.

Think about what we have asked before reading every article or reading from this textbook: was the purpose of the article or reading to inform, persuade, or entertain? Use the following reporting verbs to help show the author's purpose:

REPORTING VERB	FUNCTION
Consider, Discuss, Emphasize, State that, explain	TO INFORM
Assert, claim, argue, suggest, propose	TO PERSUADE

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Step 4: Identifying your opinions and thoughts after reading

This step is why it's so important to take notes on what you are thinking and any questions you have while reading the article. Identify the big questions and thoughts you had while reading and see if there's a theme. Do you disagree with some points in the article? Do you agree with some points in the article? Both? Did the article present any problem and could you write about possible solutions? Do they offer solutions you think are good? Are there any solutions you could think of not offered in the article? Did something in the article remind you of something else you learned about before? Or a previous experience? It always depends on the type of reading, but all of these could help you build a good response section of your paper.

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Step 5: Evaluating points to use to support your ideas

Of course, you can't just give your opinion and response without using some of the information from the article.

Go back to your notes where you wrote down your reactions to the reading. What made you react that way? Do you agree with the article? Disagree? Connecting with personal experience? Seeing solutions to a problem? What was said in the article that made you have these thoughts? You will need these pieces of information to support your ideas in your response section.

Highlight in a different color the parts of the article you want to use to support your response. You may want to keep some of these as quotes or also paraphrase them, especially if they are long.

In your essay, you may want to reference the information in the article right before or after your response. Either way, don't forget you will need to reference the article as well. Here is a site that can help you with different ways to reintroduce the source: https://www.ccis.edu/offices/academicresources/writingcenter/essaywritingassistance/suggestedwaystointroducequotations.aspx

If you follow these steps, you should have a great start to writing your summary and response paper!

CEFR Level: B2

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3.1.2.3: Writing Skills- Noun Clauses for Better Sentences

Using Noun Clauses for Better Topic Sentences

Let's take a look at two sentences:

1. The first way that Edison changed the world was by inventing electricity.

2. First, Edison changed the world by inventing electricity.

Which of these two sentences do you think is better? Why?

In your essays, you can use either way, but it's important in writing to use variety. That means you should have different kinds of sentences to make your writing better and more interesting. If you just use "First," "second," "last" to separate your ideas, it sounds boring. However, the same happens if all of your body paragraph sentences start like this: "The first way is. . . ", "the second way is. . . "

So let's practice other ways to write topic sentences! Is there a way we can change the sentence parts in 1. to make a similar but different sentence?

Below are several ways to make different kinds of topic sentences, depending on the kind of essay you are writing. You may want to practice by making some example sentences for your essay topic.

Note: Clauses have a subject and a verb, although they may not make a complete idea.

Example: where he was going

Phrases are a group of words, but they do not have a verb. They usually consist of nouns, gerunds, infinitives, adjectives, and prepositions.

Example: the reason behind all the commotion

Before you write an essay, practice making good topic sentences using the charts below.

For classifying information:

Subject (controlling idea)	Adjective clause (topic)	"be" verb	Object / prepositional phrase (paragraph focus)
The first way	(that) MLK changed the world	is / was	by fighting for equal civil rights.

Gerund phrase (paragraph focus)	"be" verb	Subject (controlling idea)	Adjective clause (topic)
Fighting for equal civil rights	is / was	the first way	that) MLK changed the world.

For processes:

step process	Infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)	"be" verb	Infinitive phrase (paragraph focus: step)
The first step	(to get a handsome boyfriend)	is	to go to parties.

Gerund phrase (paragraph focus: step)	"be" verb	step process	infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)
Going to parties	is	the first step	(to get a handsome boyfriend).

For classifying information:

Subject (controlling idea)	Adjective clause (topic)	"be" verb	Object / prepositional phrase (paragraph focus)
The first way	(that) MLK changed the world	is / was	by fighting for equal civil rights.

Gerund phrase (paragraph focus)	"be" verb	Subject (controlling idea)	Adjective clause (topic)
Fighting for equal civil rights	is / was	the first way	that) MLK changed the world.

For processes:

step process	Infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)	"be" verb	Infinitive phrase (paragraph focus: step)
The first step	(to get a handsome boyfriend)	is	to go to parties.

Gerund phrase (paragraph focus: step)	"be" verb	step process	infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)
Going to parties	is	the first step	(to get a handsome boyfriend).

To explain causes:

number	“cause” noun	topic as noun phrase	“be” verb	“cause” noun phrase
One	cause of	deforestation	is	to make more land available for human life.
Another	trigger of			
An additional	reason for			
The last	explanation for			

“Cause” noun phrase	“Be” verb	Number	“Cause” noun	Topic as noun phrase
Making more land available for human life	is	one	cause of	deforestation.
		another	trigger of	
			reason for	
			explanation for	

To explain effects:

number	"effect" noun	topic as noun phrase	"be" verb	"effect" noun phrase
One	effect of	deforestation	is	less oxygen in the atmosphere.
Another	consequence of			
An additional	result of			
The last	outcome of			

"effect" noun phrase	"Be" verb	Number	"effect" noun	Topic as noun phrase
Less oxygen in the atmosphere	is	one	effect of	deforestation.
		another	consequence of	
		also	a result of	
		the last	outcome of	

To give reasons:

Number + "reason" (why)	opinion noun clause	"be" verb	(that) reason noun clause
One reason (why)	we should stop cutting down rainforests	is	(that) it reduces the amount of oxygen in the air.
The second reason (why)			
Another reason (why)			
The last reason (why)			

reason as noun phrase	"be" verb	number + "reason" (why)	opinion noun clause
The reduction of the amount of oxygen in the air	is	the first reason (why)	we should stop cutting down rainforests.
		the second reason (why)	
		another reason (why)	
		the last reason (why)	

Other Noun Clauses

It + “be” + adj. + (that) noun clause

This formula is a very common sentence construct in English. The following adjectives are often used with the formula:

amazing	clear	good	important	interesting
likely	lucky	nice	obvious	a pity
possible	a shame	strange	surprising	too bad
true	undeniable	unfortunate	(well) known	wonderful

Also, “for + (someone)” and an infinitive can also be added to the formula. Take a look at how the following sentences are constructed using different parts of the formula:

- It is impossible that John got away with murder.
- It’s too bad for Amy that Bill broke up with her.
- It is nice to know that I have good friends to help me.
- It is important for students to realize how Greek influence permeates American culture.

Sentence Practice

Practice a variety of the “it is adj” formula in the following sentences.

1. It is lucky_____ .
2. It’s a shame _____ .
3. 3. It is highly possible _____ .
4. 4. It’s very possible _____ .
5. 5. It is strange _____ .

Noun clauses from question-answer responses

Another common type of noun clause are ones made from questions. They usually describe discussions of questions or report the answers to questions.

Example:

- Student A: Where does Xu live?
- Student B: I don’t know.
- Reported sentence: I don’t know where Xu lives.

The question and the answer can be combined to report someone’s answer about something using noun clauses. The most important thing to remember here is that when you make the question into a noun clause, it does NOT keep the question grammar.

These kinds of noun clauses can be the subject or object of the sentence.

Example: We do not know exactly how many people were affected by the power outage.

Example: Exactly how many people were affected by the power outage remains unknown.

This can be done for all kinds of questions, including yes / no questions. But for yes / no questions, the noun clauses look a little different. For yes / no questions, we can use either “if” or “whether” in the noun clause.

Example:

- Xu: Are we going to have a test tomorrow?
- Bill: I’m not sure.
- Bill isn’t sure if we are going to have a test tomorrow.
- Whether we have a test tomorrow (or not) depends on Mrs. D’s mood.

For questions that involve “can”, “could”, or “should”, a noun clause can be used or an infinitive.

Example:

- Xu: I have a big problem. What should I do? Please tell me! Please tell me **what I should do** about my problem.

- Please tell me **what to do** about my problem.
- I don't know **where you could find** tacos in this city.
- I don't know **where to find** tacos in this city.

Noun clause practice

Put together the following conversations into one sentence using a noun clause.

Example: A: Who are you taking to the dance? B: I don't know yet.

Answer I don't know yet who I am taking to the dance.

1. A: Where did John go? B: I have no idea.
   _____
2. A: William lost his job. B: That's a shame.
   _____
3. A: Who is that girl over there? B: It's obvious!
   _____
4. A: Yuxin got roses from her boyfriend! B: That's so nice!
   _____
5. A: How can I get to the bus station? B: *gives directions*
   _____
6. A: It's snowing. Should I go home or stay here at work until it stops? B: That's up to you to decide.
   _____
7. A: Would your sister like to come to my party? B: I'll find out tonight.
   _____
8. A: Does the copy machine need more paper? B: I'll let you know.
   _____
9. A: Anna loves her new job. B: That's clear.
   _____
10. A: How do you use a microwave? B: I don't know…
    _____

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3.1.2.4: Grammar Skills- Active and Passive Voice

SIMPLE PRESENT	I paint my living room every year.	My living room is painted every year.
	I painted my living room yesterday.	My living room was painted yesterday.
SIMPLE FUTURE	I will paint my living room.	My living room will be painted.
	I am painting my living room now.	My living room is being painted now.
PAST PROGRESSIVE	I was painting my living room yesterday when I saw a mouse run across the floor.	My living room was being painted yesterday when I saw a mouse run across the floor.
	I will be painting my living room when my husband comes home tomorrow.	My living room will be being painted when my husband comes home tomorrow.
PRESENT PERFECT	I have painted my living room twice.	My living room has been painted twice.
	I had already painted my living room by the time my husband came home.	My living room had already been painted by the time my husband came home.
FUTURE PERFECT	I will have painted my living room by the time my husband comes home tomorrow.	My living room will have been painted by the time my husband comes home tomorrow.
	I have been painting my living room for two hours.	My living room has been being painted for two hours.
PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE	I had been painting my living room for two hours.	My living room had been being painted for two.
	I will have been painting my living room for two hours.	My living room will have been being painted for two hours.
GERUND	I need to paint my living room.	My living room needs to be painted.
	Painting a living room takes a long time.	Being painted is not what I expected to happen to me.

Active voice is usually how verbs are used in a sentence when the subject of the sentence performs an action, and sometimes an object receives the result of the action.

Example: The dog chased the cat.

Passive voice changes the object of a sentence into the subject and also changes the verb form with it. This is by adding a form of “be” and a past participle. Sometimes the subject of the active sentence becomes the “agent” using “by”.

Example: The cat was chased by the dog.

The two example sentences here have the same meaning. Then why are there two different ways to say the same thing?

Active and passive are voices because the meaning may be the same, but the emphasis is not. Although many English teachers advise against using passive voice, there are many reasons it is a useful grammatical structure.

- When the “agent” is unknown:
  - Three million dollars **were stolen** from the bank.
- When the “agent” is obvious or unimportant:
  - Your package **was delivered** at 6:30 pm.
- To focus on the receiver of the action, often inanimate:
  - A pink ribbon **was placed** around the cute kitten’s neck.

- To focus more on the action than on the subject doing the action, such as giving instructions or explaining processes:
  - The pizza must be baked at 400 F for 25 minutes.
- To avoid blame:
  - "Mistakes **were made**" is a famous quote by President Ronald Reagan.

Passive is used often in writing in these disciplines:

- Lab reports:
  - In the study, 300 participants **were given** a questionnaire about their eating habits.
- News reports:
  - Three people **were killed** and one child **was badly injured** in a collision between two cars on Highway 40 yesterday.
- Scientific research:
  - Animal studies **have been used** for decades to understand various physiological and behavioral phenomena, including the factors involved in drug addiction.
- Instructions:
  - The coffee beans are then ground into a powder before being brewed.

In general, passive voice is more often used in writing about topics that do not focus on people or receivers of actions.

Practice 1

Discuss with a classmate the following passive sentences and the sentences above in the example. Why are they preferably in passive voice?

1. The First Tennessee Bank was robbed last night at 3:45 am.
2. In this experiment, the eggs were placed in vinegar overnight.
3. After that, chunks of graphite (a soft, dark mineral) and clay are placed inside a huge rotating drum. Large rocks inside the drum crush the graphite and clay into a fine powder. Then water is added, and the mixture is blended in the drum for up to three days.
4. All the fruit in the pantry is covered in mold.
5. Somehow the window had been broken.

Practice 2

Discuss with a classmate the following topics. Do you expect these topics to have more or less passive voice used in their explanation?

1. The history of the banana
2. Red pandas
3. My best friend's wedding
4. My best friend
5. Emojis
6. Chocolate: from tree to store
7. Rainbows

For each of the topics above, write on a separate sheet of paper one active and one passive sentence. Share your sentences with a partner and compare your sentences.

Sentences should only be made passive for the reasons mentioned above, but sometimes sentences cannot be made passive. That is because if a sentence does not have an object, it cannot be made passive. Some verbs are intransitive–that means they cannot be changed into passive. I could give you a long list of intransitive verbs, but it would be much easier to just not try to make sentences passive if they don't have an object. Let's practice so you can see what I mean.

Practice 3

Make the following sentences passive, if possible. If it's not possible, why is it not? Is the agent necessary to the meaning, or can it be deleted? Also, think about whether the sentence would be better active or passive, or if it doesn't matter in the current context.

Last, make sure your form of "be" matches the verb tense used in the active sentence.

1. Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote the song "Let It Be."
2. People in Saudi Arabia speak Arabic.
3. The scientist used an EKG machine to check the participant's heart after exercising.
4. Someone stole my phone.
5. The mailman already delivered the mail.
6. Did your parents teach you to read?
7. Someone has taken her to the hospital.
8. Many artists have covered the song "Yesterday."
9. Students should turn in their homework on time.
10. Michael Jackson died in 2009.
11. An earthquake occurred yesterday.
12. I didn't sleep well last night.
13. My wallet fell out of my bag.
14. Someone has to stay here.
15. Many people saw the game.

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3.1.2.5: Grammar Skills- Gerund and Infinitive

Gerunds

Gerunds are formed by adding “ing” to a verb to make it function as a noun. The following are ways gerunds are used.

- As the subject of a sentence:
  - **Swimming** is my hobby.
  - **Consuming fast food** contributes to higher obesity rates.
  - **Swimming in the lake in the summer** is my favorite summertime activity.
- As the object of a verb, depending on the verb. The action of the gerund in this situation usually happens before or at the same time as the main verb:
  - I can’t stop **eating** chocolate.
  - I don’t recall **allowing** you into this room.
- After a pronoun/person as an object, depending on the verb, and in formal situations, a possessive noun or pronoun may be used:
  - I enjoy **Ms. Chitty(‘s) playing** the guitar.
  - I don’t appreciate **their being** rude.
- Some special verb phrases require a gerund:
  - You should **spend some time studying** every day.
  - She **had difficulty studying** with all the noise in the library.
- Prepositions cannot have a verb after them, so change the action to a gerund:
  - I am afraid **of flying**.
  - My sister isn’t interested **in trying** to learn how to use a computer.
- Sense verbs “see”, “smell”, and “hear” can use base form verbs, but they usually have a gerund after them:
  - I **heard** a little girl **crying** at the playground.

This website gives good word lists for the previous gerund rules: http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/gerundsum.html#complements

Infinitive

Infinitives are formed by adding “to” before a verb to make the phrase function as a noun. Be careful as “to” can also be a preposition, and thus a gerund form of a verb must be used after. The following are ways infinitives are used.

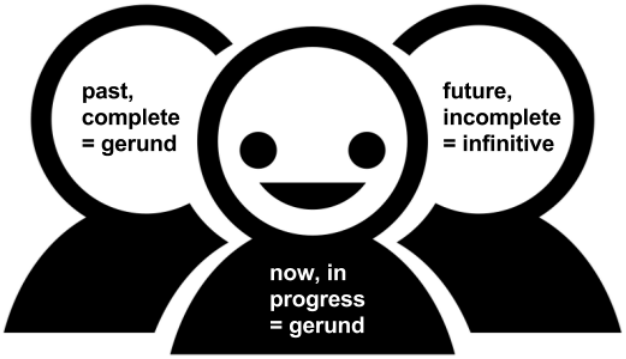
- As the subject of a sentence, but it is not common.
  - **To be** or **not to be**–that is the question.
- As the object of a verb, depending on the verb. The action of the infinitive in this situation usually happens after the main verb:
  - I want **to go** to UT next year.
  - I plan **to visit** Turkey next month.
- Can be used after a pronoun/person as an object, depending on the verb: Ex I want my students to go to UT next year.
  - Bob advised his brother **not to buy** stock in Apple.
- To show purpose, reason for an action (same as“in order to”, but“in order”is deleted:
  - I walked to Panera **to get** some coffee.
    - Note: The preposition “for” can also be used to show purpose, but usually the purpose is for some thing. Use infinitive if the purpose is an action, and use “for” if the purpose is a thing.
      - I walked to Panera **for some coffee**.
- With some adjectives to describe someone’s feelings:
  - I was surprised **to see** Ms. Smith in her Halloween costume.

- I'm sorry **to see** you go.

- Causative verbs "let", "make", and "have", and usually the verb "help" do not use "to" with the infinitive—just the base form verb:
  - I **let** Claudia **braid** my hair.
  - Linda was too lazy, so she **had** someone else **write** her essay.
  - Unfortunately, I was the one who **helped** her **write** it.
    - Note: The meaning of "let" and "make" are very different here. "Let" has a meaning of permission, allowing someone to do something, while "make" means to force someone to do something. How are the following example sentences different in meaning?
      - I **let** Claudia **braid** my hair.
      - I **made** Claudia **braid** my hair.
- "it + be verb + adj. (for someone) + inf."
  - It is a good day **to go** outside.
  - It is not easy for students **to learn** English.
- "too + adj. + inf.":
  - It is too cold **to go** outside today.
  - She's too beautiful **to go** to jail.
- "adj. + enough + inf.":
  - It's not warm enough **to go** outside.
  - The chicken isn't done enough **to eat** yet.
- "enough + noun + inf.":
  - I don't have enough money **to go** to the mall this weekend.
  - Brian did not have enough points **to pass** the test.
  - I don't have enough money **to go** to the mall this weekend.

This website gives good word lists for the previous infinitive rules: http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/infinitivesum.html#complements

Gerund or Infinitive?



Created by Charity Davenport using NounProject, $\ccbyncsa$

One of the most difficult aspects of using gerunds or infinitives is when they are used after a verb. As the chart explains, some verbs require either a gerund or infinitive after them. You could just memorize which verbs need a gerund and which need an infinitive, or you could use the loose rule pictured here.

This rule doesn't always work, but it's better than just memorizing a list of verbs. These especially can be useful for verbs where both a gerund or infinitive may be used, but it can change the meaning. Let's look at an example of that.

- I stopped smoking.
- I stopped to smoke.

These two sentences have different meanings. We can break down the sentences into two actions– although only one of them is a verb. If one happens before the verb, in the past, most of the time you will need a gerund.

- I stopped smoking. (I smoked in the past, but then I stopped.)

In this example, the person first smoked, but then the later action was to stop. The first action was completed and finished before the verb happened.

- I stopped to smoke. (I stopped first, and then started to smoke.)

As you can see from the two examples, oftentimes gerunds are the first action before the verb, but infinitives happen after the verb. Let's look at some other examples.

- I enjoy playing tennis. (Gerunds can also mean at the same time. You usually have fun and enjoy something while you do that activity.)
- I want to talk to you. (You want now the future activity of talking to someone. This action has not been started yet, and hopefully will occur in the future.)
- I miss talking to my friends in my country. (I talked to my friends in my country before, and now I miss that.)
- I don't remember locking my door! (You may or may not have locked the door before you left, and just now you thought about that.)
- Don't forget to turn the oven off. (Hopefully you remember you need to turn the oven off and then do so.)
- I decided to go to the US to study English. (First you made a decision, and that will be realized in the future.)

Let's practice using this rule to guess if we need a gerund or infinitive in the following sentences.

Fill in the blank with a gerund or infinitive.

_____ (1. watch) movies is my favorite hobby. I like _____ (2. watch) American movies and TV series. I think it's the easiest way _____ (3. have) fun and practice _____ (4. learn) English. I usually watch movies after doing my homework because it encourages me _____ (5. finish) my homework. _____ (6. watch) movies can truly help me _____ (7. improve) my listening skill. My teacher recommended _____ (8.watch) movies with subtitles if I thought they spoke too fast. Subtitles have made it possible _____ (9. increase) my vocabulary. _____ (10. see) the actors' expressions can help me learn new words. Sometimes it's too difficult _____ (11. catch) every word they say, so I guess the meaning by _____ (12. observe) their body language.

The most important thing _____ (13. choose) the right movies. I used _____ (14. choose) movies with many difficult words and I found it was boring and annoying _____ (15. stop) the movies so often _____ (16. look) new vocabulary words. It made me _____ (17. feel) bored. So, I chose easy movies, like animation, _____ (18. learn) step by step.

Last week after I finished _____ (19. do) my homework, I went to the movie theater downtown _____ (20. watch) the new Jungle Book movie with my friend Morgan. We chose this movie because we believed it would be easier _____ (21. understand). However, there was one thing that made me dislike _____ (22. go) to the movies. I resented _____ (23. hear) people spoil the movie. It's frustrating _____ (24. hear) other people _____ (25. talk) while we're watching the most exciting scene in the movie. Also the movie started at 10 pm. It's too late _____ (26. watch) a movie. Anyway, the movie was awesome and I had a good time _____ (27. hang) with my new friend. I can't wait _____ (28. have) some free time so that I can go out _____ (29. watch) a movie again at the theater.

Practice 2

-

Make your own sentences using the sentence beginners. Do you need to use a gerund or infinitive? Try to write your sentences about your hobbies.

1. I have a difficult time_____ .
2. I waste a lot of time_____ .
3. On the weekend I often lie on my bed_____ .

4. In my free time, I like to _____ .
5. I promise _____ .
6. I would like _____ .
7. I can't stand _____ .
8. It is a bad idea _____ .
9. It takes patience _____ .
10. It is dangerous _____ .
11. I am ashamed _____ .
12. I am determined _____ .
13. I am relieved _____ .
14. It's too easy _____ .
15. I am not strong enough _____ .
16. I don't have enough money _____ .

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3.1.2.6: Grammar Skills- Participle Phrases

Participial phrases are magical words or phrases that also help you combine sentences, better describe details, and improve your writing! They are verbs that when “ed” or “ing” are added (or past participle verb), it becomes an adjective. (Not a gerund–this is when we add “ing” to a verb and it becomes a noun. That’s different!)

- When I was 12, I suffered from a broken heart. (My heart was broken.)
- I bought myself a used car. (I bought myself a car that was used.)
- Don’t wake up the sleeping baby! (Don’t wake up the baby who is sleeping!)

In the sentences in the parentheses above, you can see that the original sentence uses a participle. Present participles (ing) are used with active meanings, and usually in progressive verb tenses. Past participles (ed or past participle form verbs) are used for passive meanings and are usually used for passive verbs tenses. However, participles by themselves can act as a kind of adjective to help describe an action that either a noun is doing or receiving. This meaning can be seen in the example sentences above.

Which sentences in the examples sound better? Probably the ones with the participle phrases. Why should we use them?

- It’s another way to vary our sentence style. We can use adjective clauses, or to add variety, use participial phrases. Using many styles shows you have mastery of the language and makes your paper more interesting. It gives it life!
- It’s another way to combine some sentences–just like adjective clauses, if you have 2 short sentences that have the same subject or object, you can combine them using adjective clauses or participial phrases.
- It’s a good way to get rid of EVIL “be”–the most boring verb in English. Even though it is not the main verb, we will be able to see more action in your writing if you turn some of those UGLY passive verbs into “ed” participles.

There are several ways to easily add participial phrases to your sentences.

- Adjective clauses can often be reduced to participial phrases.
  - People who are living in glass houses should not throw stones. (clause)
  - People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. (clause)
  - People living in glass houses should not throw stones. (phrase)
  - Mary applied for a job that was advertised in the paper. (clause) (PASSIVE!)
  - Mary applied for a job advertised in the paper. (phrase)
  - Knoxville, which is located in Tennessee, is a medium-sized city. (clause)
  - Knoxville, located in Tennessee, is a medium-sized city. (phrase)
    - Appositives are not the same as participle phrases, but they are created in much the same way, by deleting the relative clause word and form of “be” from an adjective clause.
      - Mary, who is a doctor at John Hopkins Hospital, states that many of her patients are not happy with the decision. (clause)
      - Mary, a doctor at John Hopkins Hospital, states that many of her patients are not happy with the decision. (appositive)
      - My son Carlos got four As on his report card. (appositive)
    - Participial phrases created from adjective clauses follow the same comma rule as adjective clauses and appositives! YAY! That means if the information is necessary to complete the meaning, there is no comma!
      - A woman hurrying to catch the bus tripped and fell. (No comma–”A woman” is general!)
      - Tina, hurrying to catch the bus, stumbled and fell. (Tina is a specific woman’s name.)
- Time clauses can sometimes be reduced to participial phrases, but they will need to keep the time adverb to make sense. This is usually possible for sentences using “after”, “before”, “when”, “while”, and “since”. To safely reduce, the subject of the main clause and the time clause must be the same topic, and only reduce the time clause, not the main part of the sentence. Don’t forget to replace the name or noun deleted from the time clauses if it’s different from the one in the main clause.
  - After I started classes at UT, I learned how important it was to make a schedule for myself.
    - After starting classes at UT, I learned how important it was to make a schedule for myself.

- Since Adam came to the US, he has learned many things about cultures from around the world.
  - Since coming to the US, Adam has learned many things about cultures from around the world.
- Thomas was a famous biker before he was thrust into student life once again.
  - Thomas was a famous biker before thrust into student life once again.
- Anna didn't want to be a diver anymore after the doctor said she was injured.
  - (This sentence's time clause cannot be reduced because the subject of the main clause and the time clause are different topics.)
- Time clauses with "while" can often be reduced to participial phrases, and "while" can be kept or deleted. Be careful, though–your participial phrase should be directly AFTER the noun it modifies. You can begin a sentence with a participial phrase ONLY if it is modifying the subject. Usually these kinds of participial phrases stay at the beginning of the sentence. These are good to use instead of sentences with "and" as well.
  - (While I was) Sitting on the beach, I watched the sunset.
  - I watched the sunset sitting on the beach. (The sunset was sitting? Crazy!)
  - Sipping on some coffee, reading a magazine, I enjoyed my free time in the cozy cafe.
    - (I was drinking coffee and reading a magazine and enjoying my free time in the cozy cafe.)
- Also "after" clauses can use past participle. Use this when you want to show time order–1 event happened first, and a second event happened later.
  - After the students (had) solved the problem without any help, they were very happy. (adverb / time clause)
    - Having solved most of the problem without any help, the students were very happy. (participial phrase)
- Participial phrases similar to the one in the example above can also be used to show a cause/effect relationship without needing to use "because". In these cases it's sometimes better to use "having" to help show which happened first–the cause happens first, and then the effect afterward. Once again, this reduction is only possible if the subjects of both the main and because clause are the same topic.
  - Because she needed $500, Amelia phoned her parents.
    - Needing $500, Amelia phoned her parents.
  - All of the students gave out a sigh of relief because they learned the test had been canceled.
    - All of the students gave out a sigh of relief having learned that the test had been canceled.

Practice 1

Reduce the sentences below, if possible. Are they being reduced from an adjective clause or an adverb clause?

1. Many of the myths and stories were adopted by the Romans, who often just changed the names of the gods and heroes from Greek to Latin words.
2. Hera was proud and quarrelsome and ready to harm those who made her angry.
3. Nemesis, like the Furies, pursued those who had done wrong.
4. But Juno, the queen who lived with Jupiter and shared his throne in the midst of the clouds, did not love Io at all.
5. Demeter had one fair daughter, named Proserpine (Persephone), who was playing with her companions near Mount Etna.
6. After a prophecy that his first wife, Metis, would give birth to a god greater than he, he tricked her into turning herself into a fly.
7. After Hebe married Heracles, her place was taken by Ganymede, a beautiful Trojan boy.
8. Before Theseus was attacked by the robbers and giants, his father gave him a special sword.
9. After leaving the cave, Cadmus hardly had time to walk down into the road again before he saw a white cow, which he followed, as the voice had told him to do.
10. Because Cronus had betrayed his father, he feared that his offspring would do the same.
11. Tantalus was to be punished forever because he had betrayed the gods.
12. They called him Oedipus, Swollen-Foot, because of the wounds they had found upon him.
13. It was not a brave thing to do, and yet he drew a long, sharp knife from his belt and cut off the head of poor Argus while he slept.

14. As much as possible, you should guess vocabulary while you read and avoiding using the dictionary unless you feel you don't understand the material.
15. Excuse me for leaving you, but my queen will do all she can to make you comfortable while I am gone.

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3.1.3: Paper- Popular Culture is Killing Writing

Author: Bronwyn T. Williams, English, University of Louisville

For more than a century, common sense has been telling us that popular culture is killing writing. In 1887, Adams Sherman Hill, of Harvard, bemoaned the effect of popular culture on writing this way: “To read nothing but newspapers and second-rate novels is surely a waste of time... (and) tends to weaken the powers of attention and concentration, to diminish, if not destroy, freshness of thought and individuality of expression.” While the culprits have changed over the years, from newspapers to movies to television in the 20th-century, to digital games and social media today, the concerns and complaints remain remarkably the same. Popular culture texts, according to these laments, are intellectually undemanding, too reliant on emotion, too informal, and often morally compromising (the last was also a concern of Hill’s). Students who read too many comics, watch too much television, or play too many digital games, according to this narrative, will produce naïve, emotional writing that is riddled with errors.

Curiously, however, literacy has not disappeared in the years since Hill developed the foundational first-year writing course at Harvard, to combat the poor writing he attributed in part to popular culture. Literacy rates continue to increase in the U.S., as do the number of words people read and write every year, thanks to the rise in online writing. In university classrooms, as Stanford University’s Andrea Lunsford demonstrates in her research, undergraduate writing students are not only writing longer papers in their courses today, they are making fewer errors of usage and style. Clearly, popular culture has not led to a generation of illiterate people. What’s more, popular culture is not, in itself, the cause of poor writing and when young people engage with popular culture they are learning valuable rhetorical concepts and skills.

Yet when I tell people, whether members of the public or other writing teachers, that popular culture is not the nemesis of writing they assume it to be—and I’ve been researching the interplay of popular culture and student writing for close to twenty years—they can’t believe what I’m saying is true. Across the political spectrum, they are convinced that popular culture is killing writing. Critics on the right fear the intellectual and moral laxity of popular culture, while those on the left fault popular culture for reinforcing harmful stereotypes and brainwashing them into becoming mindless consumers. Across the board, they are convinced that popular culture harms writing because it is too easy to understand and students learn nothing from it. In short, popular culture wastes time and minds. People complain that students refuse to read novels, or that they write emails containing typos, or that they include *text-speak* in college papers.

Even though research contradicts these anecdotal experiences, these narratives persist for several reasons. For one thing, research on memory and narrative makes it clear that all of us are notoriously bad at accurately remembering how we learned things, or how we struggled to learn things, when we were younger. In addition, people tend to distrust or discount new technologies and media with which they are unfamiliar, while maintaining nostalgia for what they did as youth. As Mitchell Stephens notes, in tracing the complaints that have accompanied new communication media dating back to the Gutenberg printing press (and including the telephone, pencils, and television, among others), “We rarely trust the imposition of a new magic on our lives, and we rarely fail to work up nostalgia for the older magic it replaces.” Such nostalgia leads to narratives of a perpetual literacy crisis that are remarkably consistent decade after decade.

Perhaps most important, however, is the general misunderstanding of how people acquire rhetorical and literate abilities, particularly as they move from one genre or medium to another. A substantial, and growing, body of research on the relationship between popular culture and writing shows time and again students engaging in literacy practices that are complex and constantly evolving. There are ways in which popular culture helps student writers, some ways in which it doesn’t seem to make much difference, and, yes, some ways in which it collides with the writing students do in school.

One prevailing myth about popular culture is that it is easy or simple and that’s why young people like it. It’s true that some movies or video games or television programs are not all that challenging in content or form. The same can be said of many books, plays, and poems. Even as critics of popular culture find it easy to summon uncomplicated reverence for established media and genres, such as the print novel, the reality is that there is no medium or genre in which every work is a masterpiece, and no medium or genre that cannot carry substantial intellectual insights. Young people talk to me and other researchers about being heavily invested in popular culture such as television series, comics, movies, and games that are complex, innovative, and engaging their minds. People who still think television is a vast wasteland aren’t watching series such as *The Americans* or *Westworld*, with their complex

characters and narrative structures. People who think all computer games are mindless and don't require thought haven't played the range of games I see students playing, which require diligence, creativity, and learning to complete.

The reason students read popular culture with facility and enthusiasm, including complex and sophisticated forms, is not a matter of simplicity, it's a matter of practice. Learning how to navigate any genre takes time and practice to figure out how it works. Think about the first time you tried to figure out something in a genre with which you had little practice, whether it was a legal contract, poem, opera, or heavy metal. It probably slowed you down, was a bit confusing, and was neither pleasurable nor confidence building. Yet, if you had more practice, your familiarity and facility would increase. There is no doubt that, for the great majority of students, they have much, much more practice reading and making sense of popular culture than they do with academic articles or textbooks. Although, it is also the case that, for every student, there are genres of popular culture they do not have much experience with and are not able to make sense of easily. When I talk with students about popular culture, it is not long before they'll tell me of a form or genre that they just think is weird or that they don't get, whether it's hip hop or country music or horror films or Twitter. It is practice with reading and interpreting genres that has developed their skills in reading, movies, popular music, television, computer games, social media, and more. They read with ease, but not because the content is always easy.

The ease with which students can interpret a form of popular culture has developed with practice, which at some point included struggle, help from others, and accumulating knowledge—in other words, learning. Another myth about popular culture and writing is that people learn nothing from it. Students learn a tremendous amount about rhetoric and communication from their engagement with popular culture, most notably about rhetorical concepts such as genre, audience, and style. When researchers talk with students about their popular culture reading, the students talk knowledgeably and even critically about these rhetorical aspects. Students may talk about a romantic comedy in terms of genre conventions, for example, discussing the kinds of character types that typically show up, whether as protagonists or sidekicks. Or, ask students to discuss the people who frequent an online popular culture discussion forum and they will be able to describe the audience there, as well as the kinds of posts that are viewed positively or negatively. Young people may not always discuss these elements using the specific terms we use in academic settings, but they are familiar with these key rhetorical concepts.

It is not the case that the rhetorical abilities students learn through their extensive engagement with popular culture transfer seamlessly to their classroom writing. Like any of us learning to write in a new genre, students need writing classes that help them understand the conventions, and the reasons for the conventions, of that new genre. Still, when we talk with students about key rhetorical concepts of audience, genre, and style—elements crucial to negotiating any writing situation—we need to understand that students enter the classroom with a vast range of experiences with these concepts. If we help students understand and articulate the knowledge they have learned from popular culture in terms of audience, genre, and style, it is easier to get them to consider how all writing works within particular genre conventions. If we can help them see how they have learned the conventions of popular culture through practice and discussion, they can see how they can do the same if they learn and practice the conventions of academic texts. I should also note that when students understand more about genre and rhetoric, they also become more creative and critical readers and writers of popular culture. Learning is best when the bridge goes both ways.

People do not necessarily connect the ideas of guidance and instruction to how students learn popular culture. Certainly, it is true that young people are exposed to some popular culture forms, such as television, from an early age and do not need to learn how to interpret many television programs in the same way they have had to learn to read. On the other hand, there are popular culture forms, such as computer games, that take more explicit instruction and guidance to learn. Even within familiar forms such as television or music, new genres and unusual songs or programs can be confusing to young people. They do, in fact, need instruction or guidance to help them with their struggles to understand unfamiliar popular culture. At these moments students typically turn to their peers for advice. You don't need to spend much time around young people before you can hear them arguing about, or explaining to each other, the meaning of a song or movie. The development of online forums has offered another popular source of advice and guidance. Research with students with a variety of interests demonstrates that they go to online forums about everything from computer games, to music, to movies for reviews, tips, or discussions. It is important to remember that these discussions happen through writing and reading.

Indeed, one of the results of the advent of an online, participatory popular culture is that it has led to an explosion of reading and writing. Although there are other modes of communication online, such as video, there is still a tremendous amount of reading and writing taking place in online spaces. In fact, compared with thirty years ago, when television and film dominated popular culture practices, young people today are engaged in significantly more reading and writing. What they are learning from writing and

reading in online spaces is, again, a more sophisticated and critical appreciation of concepts of audience, genre, and style, as well as concepts of authorial presence, collaboration, and remix. If you make the time and effort to listen to young people who write and read online, they can talk at length and with insight about how, for example, they consider audience and their online persona when creating a social media profile and posting comments on that page.

Again, when students talk about rhetorical concepts such as audience or genre, they may not articulate their knowledge using these terms unless we make that connection for them. Even so, they do understand the effect of rhetoric on communication. They understand that context influences the choices they make when communicating, and consequently they usually understand that they should use different rhetorical approaches in different contexts. I have not interviewed or observed a single student over the years who did not understand that there were differences in expectations for genre and style between posting an update on social media and writing an essay for a university course. They understand that they are supposed to switch from popular culture genres and language use when writing for a course. (Indeed, linguist David Crystal, among others, demonstrates that stories of students incorporating text-speak in academic papers is largely an urban myth.) That students understand that writing in an academic setting necessitates a different kind of writing than popular culture does not mean they can do so automatically and effortlessly. Learning to write in a new genre always results in uneven moments of struggle and a tendency to make more errors of usage. Still, the issue is switching from one genre to another, not that one of the genres happens to be some form of popular culture.

Finally, while this is not the place to address concerns people have about the effects of popular culture on morality, I do want to challenge the idea that popular culture makes young people lazy and shortens their attention spans. Simply put, how do we reconcile the argument about shorter attention spans with young people flocking to popular movies that are more than three hours long, or playing video games for hours until solving a particular problem, or reading book series such as *Harry Potter* or *The Hunger Games* that run for thousands of pages? Instead, we should ask why they are willing to spend so much time and effort on these popular culture texts and yet are often less interested in lengthy academic texts. One reason, as I noted above, is that having had more practice with popular culture they are able to engage with it more skillfully. Yet, another reason for the appeal of popular culture for students is that the movies, games, and music they engage with on their own time are usually under their control. Students' interpretations of popular culture are not dictated by their parents or evaluated by their teachers. According to researchers on motivation, control over our activities and of the meaning we make of those activities usually increases our motivation to engage in such activities. We rarely take as much pleasure in work that is assigned to us as in projects that we engage in by choice. Perhaps rather than fretting about popular culture we should be worrying more about the damage that relentless standardized assessment is having on student motivation.

Please understand, I am not going down the road to "everything that is bad is actually good for you." Popular culture can be problematic in many ways. The representations of gender and race and violence can be deeply disturbing, as can cynical appeals to emotion—from advertisements to cable news talk shows. What's more, the kind of extended, evidence-based argument common in academic writing is much rarer in popular culture, where narrative and collage are much more prevalent rhetorical forms. Students who have more of their experience reading and writing popular culture will have some learning to do in college to practice and master the genres of writing expected there. The point is, however, that students would have to learn to read and write in new genres when they get to university, regardless of the genre knowledge they had when they arrived on campus.

If we understand this last point—that students will always have to learn, and struggle with, writing in new genres at university—then we can understand why popular culture, regardless of the form, has been the source of so much complaint for more than a century. Too many people still believe that you can be taught to write once, and that such knowledge should serve you for the rest of your life. First-year writing courses are often regarded as providing the single inoculation for writing—and against popular culture—that students need. Instead, we must understand that writing and reading are abilities that we acquire through learning and practice, and that we never stop learning them. The more we are immersed in texts, the richer understanding we have of the genre, style, audience, and rhetorical context for which they were produced. Students are adept at reading and writing popular culture because they practice it, learn it, control it. Given the same conditions, and motivation, they can learn to do the same with other forms of writing.

Further Reading

For more about the many literacies that students negotiate in and out of school, see Daniel Keller's *Chasing Literacy: Reading and Writing in an Age of Acceleration* or Jennifer Rowsell's *Working with Multimodality: Rethinking Literacy in the Digital Age*, along

with these collections of essays, listed by editors' names: Donna Alvermann and Kathleen Hinchman's *Reconceptualizing the Literacies in Adolescents' Lives* (3rd ed.); Cathy Burnett et al.'s *New Literacies around the Globe: Policy and Pedagogy*; Ito Mizuko et al.'s *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*; or Marc Lamont Hill and Lalitha Vasudevan's *Media, Learning, and Sites of Possibility*. I have also written about these subjects in *Shimmering Literacies: Popular Culture and Reading and Writing Online*; *Tuned In: Television and the Teaching of Writing*; and *New Media Literacies and Participatory Popular Culture Across Borders* (co-edited with Amy Zenger). To learn more about fan communities, identity, and online writing, see Rebecca Black's *Adolescents and Online Fan Fiction* and Angela Thomas's *Youth Online: Identity and Literacy in the Digital Age*.

Keywords

fan communities, genre, participatory culture, popular culture, remix

Author Bio

Bronwyn T. Williams is a professor of English and director of the University Writing Center at the University of Louisville. He has taught writing and studied the connections between popular culture and students' writing and reading practices, both in the U.S. and abroad, for more than 25 years. He is the author of a number of books on the teaching of writing, popular culture, and student identity. Twitter: @bronwyntw. Website: bronwyntwilliams.com.

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3.1.4: Paper- Popular Culture is Only Useful as a Text for Criticism

Author: Mark D. Pepper, English, Utah Valley University

Popular culture, once written off as lacking depth and importance, is now the subject of in-depth analysis both on college campuses and in non-academic venues. Students write extended considerations of how cult TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* explores teen insecurities through their embodiment in the show's demonic villains. Bookstores sell essay collections with titles like *Myth, Media, and Culture in Star Wars* and *The Sopranos and Philosophy*. Online think pieces analyze how Taylor Swift's lyrics may or may not be feminist. A public wiki devoted to the television show *LOST* still has devoted fans trying to figure out what it all meant (maybe even figuring out what those accursed numbers were all about).

All this writing increasingly problematizes the argument that popular culture is primarily dumb, simplified fodder for the masses. In his book, *Everything Bad is Good For You*, Steven Johnson builds a sustained argument that popular culture (especially in the past three decades) has become more complex, better written, and cognitively stimulating. The existence of so many college courses, mass-marketed books, and online pieces of analysis suggest that popular culture warrants close textual scrutiny. The popularity of this writing also suggests a desire for consumers to dig deeper into what their entertainment is about and what broader cultural effects it may have. Considering the actual depth of pop culture texts, it's not surprising that performing deep reading is so popular in the classroom.

This textual analysis of popular culture for its deeper meanings or cultural effects is not a bad idea in and of itself; in fact, getting popular culture taken seriously was a hard-fought struggle in academic circles throughout the latter half of the 20th century. However, that battle was seemingly won on the idea that popular-culture texts should be treated in the same manner as classic literature where textual features such as symbolic and metaphorical messages are treated as important elements of the texts. Therein lies the problem. When popular culture is predominantly written about from the perspectives of textual analysis and cultural criticism, this writing often fails to capture the personal, varied, and complex experiences of consuming popular culture. Students often balk at these writing assignments because they recognize that something is missing (or murdered, in the words of William Wordsworth). Without different kinds of writing assignments that balance the rush to critique content, students are seemingly asked to disregard a lifetime of experience with these texts that do not seem valued by an educational setting that is laser focused on textual dissection.

The Unique Place of Popular Culture in Daily Life

When popular culture is brought into a classroom as analytical fodder for student papers, the results are often smart and well written. Such writing often presents the popular text in a "here's its deeper meaning" light, sometimes to counter the still-common misconception that pop culture is lower or dumber than other forms of texts. Other written analysis often suggests how a popular text is damaging because of the problematic representations of society's marginalized and disenfranchised groups through encoded, normalized messages and symbols. And the assignments work. Students writing in this vein hit all the checkboxes currently heralded by educational goals and outcomes statements: critical thinking, inquiry, close reading, and working with diverse texts. However, saying this type of writing works means something very specific and potentially limiting.

When instructors ask students to write about *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* or *Breaking Bad* with the same focal points also applied to *Hamlet* or *Moby-Dick*, there's an implied message that pop culture is not more than that. Sure, the texts may operate similarly in some ways (they all have symbolically charged, complex plots, characters, and themes), however, the popular texts operate in some uniquely different ways too. These are the texts we get hyped for and binge in encaptivating doses. These are the texts that inspire us to buy related t-shirts, toys, and memorabilia. These are the texts we avoid spoilers for and geek out with our friends about (sometimes while wearing costumes of characters from the text). These are the texts sometimes so bad that we watch them simply because they are so bad (hey, *Sharknado)*. These are the texts that are sometimes just on or just there—a background tapestry for everyday living. Pop culture is a unique and contradictory site of meaning making that often (and usually) goes far beyond the definition of meaningfulness required by a textual analysis/critique writing assignment. It's a realm of personal connections, emotional nuance, and messy contradictions that defies most traditional grading rubrics.

This is not to suggest that literature (or even essays) offered for analysis in the classroom don't also come with personal connections, entertainment value, and emotional perspectives. However, standard-issue writing assignments far too often ask that those factors be stripped away or ignored in the actual writing (some instructors of writing still inexplicably discourage the use of

"I" in any situation). So it's not hard to imagine how some students react negatively when they're suddenly asked to dissect pop culture in ways that explicitly (or implicitly) ask them to disregard everything they know and feel about a popular text and reduce it to a textual artifact for parsing.

Textual analysis often come with an implied demand for the readers of such pieces to reject their enjoyment (or, at least, feel guilty about it), and adopt the correct stance when a problematic element is being dissected. Fans may rightly ask: Why should this author's critical interpretation affect my personal relationship with the text just because he or she has a degree or book contract? Another response may be: I see now that this text is problematic, but I still like it. After all, close textual analysis might change minds (or add some nuance) for some readers and writers, but it more likely allows readers who already have these specific critical tendencies to feel good about being on the right side of what they already know.

Here, the unique status of popular culture must be noted again. Students likely expect that the authors of critical essays about Toni Morrison or Kafka know more about the texts than they do. Students often (but not always) have little prior experience with the work. And students write cautiously and with reservation about *Beloved* or *The Metamorphosis* because they're treading new ground. But when pop culture becomes the topic of writing, students may have the feeling that something is missing because they bring so much prior experience with them to the blank page. They have a knowledge base from which to confidently observe, "Well, that hasn't been my experience with the text." Not to be misunderstood, it's obviously good to encounter new perspectives and question previous assumptions. Nonetheless, the question becomes: What is being taught about writing when textual/critical analysis asks students to disregard their outside expertise, turn off their personal investments, and attack (from their points of view) texts that they know are more complex than narrative meaning and cognitive impact?

Fandom Studies and Affective Musings

Again, the problem is one of ratio. These textual/critical analyses wouldn't be so potentially limiting if they were more frequently balanced with other ways of writing about popular culture. One alternate direction is summed up under the loose banner of fandom studies.

In fandom studies, textual critique takes a backseat to observing how texts are reacted to, invested in, and made part of fans' identities and daily lives. While textual critique often assumes a text's particular effects, fandom studies goes to the source and lets fans and their practices speak for themselves (though still filtered through the critical lens of the observer). Fandom writing also brings a myriad of possibilities to the classroom. Students can write ethnographic research reports on face-to-face or digital communities that chart the movement of writing practices within a network of fan activity. Fan fiction can be analyzed (and even compared to the original work) as an exercise in learning style and voice. The clever and surprising alterations in fan fiction also have much to teach about creativity and invention. Finally, fandom offers avenues to analyze or produce *transliteracy*—the process of writing across different media with a variety of tools. For example, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a popular YouTube channel that video blogs (vlogs) the modernized lives of characters from *Pride and Prejudice*. Along with the vlogs, the characters use Twitter and Google+, which allows fans to co-create and shape the ongoing story.

Popular culture may also be written about in ways that go beyond the confines of textual content. Lawrence Grossberg argues that outside the actual content being considered, the pleasure people take in popular culture, is primarily based in affective investments. Affect (admittedly a complex concept too broad for full exploration here) can aptly be understood as the motivating force that adds intensity to our daily interactions and subsequently leads to an individual's sense of what matters—the feeling of life. Obviously, textual and ideological content sometimes matter in our enjoyment or dislike of a text; however, they are just two pieces of the puzzle because affect privileges the depth and complexity of feeling over textual meaning. Grossberg suggests that our encounters with popular texts are intensified (or come to matter) by the complex investments of emotion, passion, mood, and energy that we bring to them in the process of actively integrating popular texts into our identities and social lives. This is the element of popular culture consumption missed in a million close, textual readings. This is where textual meaning is merely a starting place for a text's integration into a person's identity and social performance.

So what does affective popular culture writing look like? Such writing is less concerned with criticism and more focused on what the text means to the author's life. The writing is more personally revealing and socially inviting as it attempts to chart the author's investment in a text, while simultaneously inviting the audience to recognize themselves and reflect on their own relationship to the subject matter. Put differently, affective writing shows authors speaking directly for the texts that usually speak for them. The work of Chuck Klosterman, a pop culture essayist, provides an apt example. Though Klosterman does not avoid textual criticism and

cultural effect (as in his essay critiquing how MTV's *The Real World* created "one-dimensional personalities"), he consistently connects pop culture to his personal experiences in a memoir-like style. Whether he's writing an ode to the universality of Billy Joel, analyzing how porn feeds our need for amateur celebrities, noting how people dismiss country music to sound cool, or what he learned from extensively playing *The Sims* video game, Klosterman's work highlights how popular culture makes us feel, makes us connect, and makes us discuss.

Embracing affect leads to a more personal style of student writing about pop culture but does not have to lead to completely subjective journaling (not that there's anything wrong with that either). Though students are encouraged to write about their participation and engagement with popular culture, the focus is more on the intensity and complexity of that enjoyment. Pleasure (and distaste) is a complicated orientation that, from an affective perspective, is created by any number of extratextual features: early memories of the text (or its genre), opinions about the texts' fans, how the text is publically disseminated, public images/narratives of the artist, and ways the text encourages social investment. By the nature of affect, some of these aspects will necessarily matter more or less. As student writings map this complex web of personal/ social investments (intensely engaging with some while possibly ignoring others), the writer understands that textual effects and reactions (plus the motivations texts may or may not spur) are often unpredictable, contradictory, and incomplete. Such a lesson is fundamentally important when a purely textual focus often implicitly teaches that writing has a unified effect and preferred interpretation.

Textual/critical analysis certainly has an important place. However, as the dominant form of writing about popular culture, it often fails to account for the ways pop culture is used when the viewer isn't specifically focused on critique. Pop culture is a complex space that creates diverse, contradictory, and messy ways to consume, participate, identify, discuss, and make meaning. And pop culture is too entrenched in the daily lives of millions to let one type of writing oversell its importance. Through balancing pop culture use in the classroom, students continue to learn analytical criticism while simultaneously being awarded for their current expertise and complex relationships with the source material.

Further Reading

For more information on the history of popular culture analysis and criticism, see *Culture, Media, Language* (Routledge), which charts the theories and methodologies of The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies throughout the 1970s. Though obviously not the only group of thinkers to influence how pop culture became a subject for textual criticism, many of the school's members and writings form important historical touchstones for the type of analysis critiqued in this chapter. The book includes Stuart Hall's (director of the Centre from 1974–1979) famous work, "Encoding/ Decoding," which highlights how cultural producers create and distribute ideology and meanings through texts that readers can either accept/naturalize or critique/resist.

For more on the theories and methods of fandom studies, Henry Jenkins is arguably the most well-known name in what is often a diverse field. His books, T*extual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (Routledge) and *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Media Consumers in a Digital Age* (NYU Press), both allow textual criticism to take a backseat to the practices and dispositions of fans. For a broader take on fandom studies as a whole, Mark Duffett's (Bloomsbury) explores fan stereotypes, representations, and practices while citing many thinkers in the field along the way. His chapter, "Beyond the Text" is most applicable to this chapter, in that, it explores how criticism and analysis alone will always miss out on the lived experience of the text under scrutiny.

As this chapter mentions, affect theory is complex and really needs a fuller study to appreciate both its usefulness and limitations. Lawrence Grossberg's *Bringing it All Back Home: Essays on Cultural Studies* (Duke University Press) collects some of his earliest writings on the relationship between affect and pop culture consumption and enjoyment. But for a more current take on competing definitions and applications of affect theory, Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth's collection, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Duke University Press), probes much deeper into the nuances and ramifications of this pre-conscious, intensity producing force that shapes our attachments and affinities for popular culture's offerings.

Keywords

affect, cultural studies, fandom, popular culture, taste studies

Author Bio

Mark D. Pepper is an associate professor of English at Utah Valley University where he teaches courses in composition, technical writing, popular culture, and graphic novels. Much of his research deals with how people use and talk about popular culture in their daily lives to create both personal identity and social belonging. His dissertation looked at how the popularity of texts is created and spread in a digital age of blogs, wikis, and social media. His own pop culture fandom started with comic books as a kid and carries on to a Netflix queue full of television series with far too many seasons to ever reasonably catch up on.

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3.2: Sample Papers

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3.2.1: The Danger of a Single Story (Adichie)

By Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie


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I'm a storyteller. And I would like to tell you a few personal stories about what I like to call "the danger of the single story." I grew up on a university campus in eastern Nigeria. My mother says that I started reading at the age of two, although I think four is probably close to the truth. So I was an early reader, and what I read were British and American children's books.

I was also an early writer, and when I began to write, at about the age of seven, stories in pencil with crayon illustrations that my poor mother was obligated to read, I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading: All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples, and they talked a lot about the weather, how lovely it was that the sun had come out.

Now, this despite the fact that I lived in Nigeria. I had never been outside Nigeria. We didn't have snow, we ate mangoes, and we never talked about the weather, because there was no need to.

My characters also drank a lot of ginger beer, because the characters in the British books I read drank ginger beer. Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was.

And for many years afterwards, I would have a desperate desire to taste ginger beer. But that is another story.

What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children. Because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books by their very nature had to have foreigners in them and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify. Now, things changed when I discovered African books. There weren't many of them available, and they weren't quite as easy to find as the foreign books.

But because of writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, I went through a mental shift in my perception of literature. I realized that people like me, girls with skin the color of chocolate, whose kinky hair could not form ponytails, could also exist in literature. I started to write about things I recognized.

Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

I come from a conventional, middle-class Nigerian family. My father was a professor. My mother was an administrator. And so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help, who would often come from nearby rural villages. So, the year I turned eight, we got a new house boy. His name was Fide. The only thing my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. My mother sent yams and rice, and our old clothes, to his family. And when I didn't finish my dinner, my mother would say, "Finish your food! Don't you know? People like Fide's family have nothing." So I felt enormous pity for Fide's family.

Then one Saturday, we went to his village to visit, and his mother showed us a beautifully patterned basket made of dyed raffia that his brother had made. I was startled. It had not occurred to me that anybody in his family could actually make something. All I had

heard about them was how poor they were, so that it had become impossible for me to see them as anything else but poor. Their poverty was my single story of them.

Years later, I thought about this when I left Nigeria to go to university in the United States. I was 19. My American roommate was shocked by me. She asked where I had learned to speak English so well, and was confused when I said that Nigeria happened to have English as its official language. She asked if she could listen to what she called my "tribal music," and was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.

She assumed that I did not know how to use a stove.

What struck me was this: She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa: a single story of catastrophe. In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.

I must say that before I went to the U.S., I didn't consciously identify as African. But in the U.S., whenever Africa came up, people turned to me. Never mind that I knew nothing about places like Namibia. But I did come to embrace this new identity, and in many ways I think of myself now as African. Although I still get quite irritable when Africa is referred to as a country, the most recent example being my otherwise wonderful flight from Lagos two days ago, in which there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in "India, Africa and other countries."

So, after I had spent some years in the U.S. as an African, I began to understand my roommate's response to me. If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner. I would see Africans in the same way that I, as a child, had seen Fide's family.

This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. Now, here is a quote from the writing of a London merchant called John Lok, who sailed to west Africa in 1561 and kept a fascinating account of his voyage. After referring to the black Africans as "beasts who have no houses," he writes, "They are also people without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breasts."

Now, I've laughed every time I've read this. And one must admire the imagination of John Lok. But what is important about his writing is that it represents the beginning of a tradition of telling African stories in the West: A tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa as a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness, of people who, in the words of the wonderful poet Rudyard Kipling, are "half devil, half child."

And so, I began to realize that my American roommate must have throughout her life seen and heard different versions of this single story, as had a professor, who once told me that my novel was not "authentically African." Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places, but I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact, I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

But I must quickly add that I too am just as guilty in the question of the single story. A few years ago, I visited Mexico from the U.S. The political climate in the U.S. at the time was tense, and there were debates going on about immigration. And, as often happens in America, immigration became synonymous with Mexicans. There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border, that sort of thing.

I remember walking around on my first day in Guadalajara, watching the people going to work, rolling up tortillas in the marketplace, smoking, laughing. I remember first feeling slight surprise. And then, I was overwhelmed with shame. I realized that I had been so immersed in the media coverage of Mexicans that they had become one thing in my mind, the abject immigrant. I had bought into the single story of Mexicans and I could not have been more ashamed of myself.

So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person. The Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti writes that if you want to dispossess a people, the simplest way to do it is to tell their story and to start with, "secondly." Start the story with the arrows of the Native Americans, and not with the arrival of the British, and you have an entirely different story. Start the story with the failure of the African state, and not with the colonial creation of the African state, and you have an entirely different story.

I recently spoke at a university where a student told me that it was such a shame that Nigerian men were physical abusers like the father character in my novel. I told him that I had just read a novel called "American Psycho" --

-- and that it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.

Now, obviously I said this in a fit of mild irritation.

But it would never have occurred to me to think that just because I had read a novel in which a character was a serial killer that he was somehow representative of all Americans. This is not because I am a better person than that student, but because of America's cultural and economic power, I had many stories of America. I had read Tyler and Updike and Steinbeck and Gaitskill. I did not have a single story of America.

When I learned, some years ago, that writers were expected to have had really unhappy childhoods to be successful, I began to think about how I could invent horrible things my parents had done to me.

But the truth is that I had a very happy childhood, full of laughter and love, in a very close-knit family.

But I also had grandfathers who died in refugee camps. My cousin Polle died because he could not get adequate healthcare. One of my closest friends, Okoloma, died in a plane crash because our fire trucks did not have water. I grew up under repressive military governments that devalued education, so that sometimes, my parents were not paid their salaries. And so, as a child, I saw jam disappear from the breakfast table, then margarine disappeared, then bread became too expensive, then milk became rationed. And most of all, a kind of normalized political fear invaded our lives.

All of these stories make me who I am. But to insist on only these negative stories is to flatten my experience and to overlook the many other stories that formed me. The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes: There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo and depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

So what if before my Mexican trip, I had followed the immigration debate from both sides, the U.S. and the Mexican? What if my mother had told us that Fide's family was poor and hardworking? What if we had an African television network that broadcast diverse African stories all over the world? What the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe calls "a balance of stories."

What if my roommate knew about my Nigerian publisher, Muhtar Bakare, a remarkable man who left his job in a bank to follow his dream and start a publishing house? Now, the conventional wisdom was that Nigerians don't read literature. He disagreed. He felt that people who could read, would read, if you made literature affordable and available to them.

Shortly after he published my first novel, I went to a TV station in Lagos to do an interview, and a woman who worked there as a messenger came up to me and said, "I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen ..."

And she went on to tell me what to write in the sequel. I was not only charmed, I was very moved. Here was a woman, part of the ordinary masses of Nigerians, who were not supposed to be readers. She had not only read the book, but she had taken ownership of it and felt justified in telling me what to write in the sequel.

Now, what if my roommate knew about my friend Funmi Iyanda, a fearless woman who hosts a TV show in Lagos, and is determined to tell the stories that we prefer to forget? What if my roommate knew about the heart procedure that was performed in the Lagos hospital last week? What if my roommate knew about contemporary Nigerian music, talented people singing in English and Pidgin, and Igbo and Yoruba and Ijo, mixing influences from Jay-Z to Fela to Bob Marley to their grandfathers.

What if my roommate knew about the female lawyer who recently went to court in Nigeria to challenge a ridiculous law that required women to get their husband's consent before renewing their passports? What if my roommate knew about Nollywood, full of innovative people making films despite great technical odds, films so popular that they really are the best example of Nigerians consuming what they produce? What if my roommate knew about my wonderfully ambitious hair braider, who has just started her own business selling hair extensions? Or about the millions of other Nigerians who start businesses and sometimes fail, but continue to nurse ambition?

Every time I am home I am confronted with the usual sources of irritation for most Nigerians: our failed infrastructure, our failed government, but also by the incredible resilience of people who thrive despite the government, rather than because of it. I teach writing workshops in Lagos every summer, and it is amazing to me how many people apply, how many people are eager to write, to tell stories.

My Nigerian publisher and I have just started a non-profit called Farafina Trust, and we have big dreams of building libraries and refurbishing libraries that already exist and providing books for state schools that don't have anything in their libraries, and also of organizing lots and lots of workshops, in reading and writing, for all the people who are eager to tell our many stories.

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The American writer Alice Walker wrote this about her Southern relatives who had moved to the North. She introduced them to a book about the Southern life that they had left behind. "They sat around, reading the book themselves, listening to me read the book, and a kind of paradise was regained."

I would like to end with this thought: That when we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.

Thank you.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie grew up in Nigeria.

She is the author of the novels *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun*,and *Americanah*, which won the National Book Critics Circle Award and was named one of The New York Times Top Ten Best Books of 2013. Her 2009 TED Talk, The Danger of A Single Story, is now one of the most-viewed TED Talks of all time.

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3.2.2: Shadows of the Bat- Constructions of Good and Evil in the Batman Movies of Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan (Born)

By Simon Philipp Born



Fig. 1: Lives primarily in a world of darkness and shadows: Batman, Gotham City's iconic superhero. Film still, BATMAN (Tim Burton, US 1989), 01:57:21.

Joker [to Batman]: *I think you and I are destined to do this forever.*[1]

Abstract

The superhero narrative is typically premised on the conflict between the hero and the villain, the mythical struggle between good and evil. It therefore promotes Manichaean worldview where good and evil are clearly distinguishable quantities . This bipolar model is questioned in the Batman movies of Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan. Since his creation in 1939, Batman has blurred the line between black and white unlike any other classic comic book superhero . As a "floating signifier", he symbolizes the permeability of boundaries, for his liminal character inhabits a world between light and darkness, order and anarchy, hero and villain. Drawing on the complex ambiguity of the character, Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan deconstruct the traditional dichotomy of good and evil in the superhero narrative by reversing its polarity and emphasizing the fictionality of it all. Although they differ in style and method , both filmmakers invite us to overcome the Manichaean belief in favor of a more ambivalent and sophisticated viewpoint.

Keywords

Batman, good and evil, Manichaeism, duality, superhero, mythology theatricality

The 21st century is proving to be the Golden Age of superhero movies. Comic book stories about superhuman beings fighting evil, which have circulated in popular culture since the 1930s, are now being recognized and consumed by an even broader audience. the omnipresence of the superhero transforms him from pop-cultural icon into modern-day myth. Drawing on Joseph Campbell's works, David Reynolds remarks that modern myths like the superhero narratives are not confined to religious ideologies, but rather "develop from ethical perspectives as they relate to a political and economic world".2 Indeed, their stories about heroism, justice, virtue and villainy not only entertain us, but also function as a moral educator, reinforcing Western values and mediating norms of social behavior: "Superhero stories bill themselves as tales of courage and friendship, representing American ideals at their best while attempting to pass on a strong moral code to the impressionable children who read comic books, play superhero video games, and watch superhero films."3 In order to explain these stories' widespread popularity, scholars like Richard J. Gray and Betty Kaklamanidou have argued that superhero narratives respond to the general longing for "true heroism" and a clear distinction between right and wrong in an uncertain and morally ambiguous globalized world: "Superhero films promote the ideas of peace, safety and freedom and seek to restore the planet to a nostalgic harmony."4

To promote these ideals, the superhero narrative is typically premised on the conflict between hero and villain, the mythical struggle between good and evil. In the superhero genre, good and evil mainly fulfill narrative functions. The struggle between hero and villain produces suspense and drives the plot, where, ironically, the roles of protagonist and antagonist are switched: the villain,

and not the hero, plays the active part, as his evil actions initiate the story and call upon the hero to act. According to Richard Reynolds, “The common outcome, as far as the structure of the plot is concerned, is that the villains are concerned with change and the heroes with the maintenance of the status quo.”5 The evil antagonist is a necessary counterforce who challenges the protagonist and allows him to be good. the rise and fall of the villain is a socially required evaluation that crime does not pay, while the certain triumph of the hero reminds the audience of the superiority of the values he represents. As far as the narrative structure of the superhero story and the ideology it conveys are concerned, good and evil are mutually dependent, one cannot exist without the other. The threat from the villain forces the hero to act, his malignity enabling the hero to show off his goodness. Superhero mythologies therefore seem to promote a Manichaean worldview. Recalling the dualistic cosmology of the late-antique prophet Mani, life is conceived as a constant struggle between two external forces – the spiritual realm of light and the material realm of darkness. In a yin-and-yang balance of opposites, the existence of one is defined through the existence of the other.

This bipolar explanation of the world is questioned by the more ambivalent take of contemporary superhero films, as Johannes Schlegel and Frank Habermann remark. Postmodern films like *Unbreakable* (M. Night Shyamalan, US 2000) or *Hellboy* (Guillermo del Toro, US 2004) display in their “metanarrative”6 deep distrust of the absolute distinction between good and evil, which they expose as constructions rather than natural quantities: “The dichotomy of good and evil in contemporary superhero films is first and foremost negotiated, performatively generated and constantly debated, rendering it an unstable phenomenon of produced and ascribed meaning that has to be reaffirmed perpetually”.7 This essay argues that good and evil are socially constructed categories that regulate the world and explain human behavior. Their order-obtaining duality is culturally mediated in narratives and visual texts such as superhero stories. Ultimately, some of these texts not only reflect but also disclose and willingly subvert the clear-cut dichotomy in favor of a more complex and sophisticated viewpoint, as is the case with the Batman movies of Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan. Their visions of the Caped Crusader are unique, yet not completely out of line with the character. Instead, they ingeniously condense Batman’s conflicting history into a multi-layered psychologization. In his many incarnations, Batman blurs the line between black and white, and unlike any other classic comic book superhero he constructs a world of multitudinous grey. Long before the postmodern hero deconstructions found in graphic novels like Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* (U.S. 1986–87), he had already been conceived in his original draft as an alteration and revision to the superhero myth. The Dark Knight is driven by his dual nature. in order to defend the light, he utilizes his darkness to fight evil (see fig. 1). Additionally, his fragmented textual existence self-consciously reflects his symbolic nature, unveiling the fictionality and theatricality of his character.



Fig. 2: Mise-en-abyme: although battling the Joker in the final showdown of film, Batman still finds the time to pose with his Bat-plane in front of the moon, displaying the Bat logo as his intradiegetic and extradiegetic brand. Film still, Batman (Tim Burton, US 1989), 01:39:16.

The floating signifier

Since his debut in Issue 27 of *Detective Comics*, from May 1939, Batman has become one of the most popular and most iconic comic book superheroes of all time, spawning a gigantic media franchise that includes major blockbuster films, TV shows, video games, direct-to-video animations, comic books, novels and a massive range of licensed merchandise. All these simultaneously existing Batmen challenge our traditional notion of a fictional character as coherent, semantic figure. Who is the “real” Batman? The original comic book vigilante from the 1940s, Adam West’s colorful “Camped Crusader” from the infamous *Batman* TV show

(ABC, US 1966–1968), the dark and gritty incarnation of the 1980s, Christian Bale's post–9/11 Dark Knight or even the Lego Batman? The answer is that he is all of them. Batman is the sum of all his iterations, a hypertext that connects conflicting identities, media texts and storyworlds in an interacting matrix. According to Roberta Pearson and William Uricchio, Batman is a "floating signifier", not defined by any sort of author, medium, time period or primary text, but held together by a small number of essential character traits such as his iconographically specific costume, his secret identity as billionaire Bruce Wayne, the murder of his parents, his setting (Gotham City) and a recurring cast of friends and foes.8 For Will Brooker, even these core components can be reduced to one essential element as the minimal marker for a Batman story – the Bat logo, Batman's symbol of his crime-fighting idea, which also functions as his unique brand both inside and outside the narrative (see fig. 2).9

Similarly to Brooker, Paul Levitz ponders the idea that Batman's protean nature is "built on a purely visual icon, which has proved to be remarkably reinterpretable".10 He refers to the fact that Batman's character originated as loose sketch of a bat-man figure inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's drawings of a flying machine. When comic artist Bob Kane and author Bill Finger introduced the Caped Crusader in 1939, he was conceived as a quick-fire response that would capture the huge success of Superman, who had debuted just a year before. His character was not yet fully drawn, as demonstrated by the fact that his defining origin story was only told six months later. Kane and Finger combined various tropes and figures of popular culture of the 1930s present in movies, pulp fiction, comic strips and newspaper headlines and formed them into one,11 but Batman is primarily influenced by the detective stories of his time, like most of the comic book superheroes. Drawing on their roots in crime and mystery fiction, detective stories also contain a Manichaean philosophy. According to Marcel Danesi, they transfer the medieval struggle between angels and demons into the secular contexts of investigators and perpetrators: "The detective story is, in a sense, a modern-day morality play. Evil must be exposed and conquered. In the medieval period the evil monster or demon was vanquished by spiritual forces, such as Goodness; today, he is vanquished by a detective or a superhero crime fighter."12 Batman varies the tradition of the detective story, as he is both angel and demon in one person. In terms of mythology, he combines two major mythical archetypes, namely the Hero and the Shadow.13

Batman is a superhero, but a very human one. He has no special powers; he was not born on an alien planet and bitten by a radioactive insect. He relies purely on his limitless resources: a multi-billion dollar heritage, outstanding combat skills, an inventive mind and, of course, his qualities as "world's greatest detective", which relate him to other famous crime-solving characters from literature like Sherlock Holmes or pulp hero Doc Savage. Batman accords perfectly with Joseph Campbell's famous definition of the hero as "someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself".14 Batman is not driven, however, by a noble impulse to altruism like Superman, but rather by the experience of loss and a need for vengeance.15 Having been unable to prevent the murder of his parents, he finds the only way to halt injustice is through his second life, as masked vigilante. But even when as new and empowered Caped Crusader he becomes painfully aware of the limits of his might, he cannot prevent either himself or those entrusted to him from getting hurt. In his masquerade, Batman does not overcome his trauma, but instead relives it anew night by night. There is an inherent darkness to the character and his setting. Newer comic books like Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) psychologize Batman as broken justice fanatic, a dark reflection of the bright Superman, the American Dream degenerated into a nightmare. He shares similarities with the Jungian archetype of the shadow, the presentation of the psyche's dark, hidden side, which is not necessarily evil, but rather everything the self wants to conceal and keep out of the light.16 Batman is not a savior, but an avenger. A creature of the night, a mystery figure dressed in black who employs his darkness to mercilessly fight crime like his pulp predecessor the Shadow. His blackness condenses in the image of a bat, a central symbol in the American Gothic tradition of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that conjured up "images of darkness, terror, animal savagery, and soul-sapping vampirism, all of which were often linked to notions of ethnic infiltration".17 Like the infamous title character of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), Batman operates in the shadows, flies through the night and radiates an intriguing aura of awe and terror. Bela Lugosi's iconic portrayal of the prince of darkness in Tod Browning's *Dracula* (US 1931) may even have inspired Batman's cape – just as the mystery film *The Bat Whispers* (Roland West, US 1930), where a masked murderer named "the Bat" terrorizes America's upper class, features a prototype of the Bat logo.

In conclusion, Batman's character has origins not only in heroic figures like Sherlock Holmes, but also in famous incarnations of evil like Dracula. This vital duality is also evident in Batman's relationship with his enemies, who function as his doppelgangers: "Understanding Batman requires us to look hardest at him and his foes. The villains mirror and warp his darkness, his fears, his needs for puzzles to solve and criminals to hurt, and his hopes too."18 Batman's antagonists play a part for the narrative that is as important as the part played by the protagonist himself. Just as the Dark Knight is not solely good, his opponents are not solely evil. Batman's rogues' gallery unfolds as a panorama of tragic existences that were shattered by reality. In a dystopian hell like

Gotham City, “All it takes is one bad day to reduce the sanest man alive to lunacy”, as the Joker explains in Alan Moore’s graphic novel *The Killing Joke* (1988).19 The comic also raises the question whether Gotham’s villains created Batman as their own nemesis, or if the self-appointed avenger attracted these troubled spirits by his presence, thus being himself responsible for their making. “I made you, you made me first”, Batman growls at his eternal adversary, the Joker, at the end of Batman (1989).20 “You complete me” is the clown’s answer 19 years later in *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, US 2008).21 Batman and his villains are “locked into a ritualized dance” with each other (see fig. 3), justifying each other’s existence.22 Both sides adopt costumed identities in attempts to make sense of life.23 The carnivalesque world of Batman is a stage where the Manichean struggle between good and evil is nothing but a role-play acted out by the Dark Knight and his foes.



Fig. 3: In Batman (1989), Bruce Wayne (Michael Keaton) and the Joker (Jack Nicholson) are visualized as reflecting doppelgangers. Film still, Batman (Tim Burton, US 1989), 00:47:50.

This celebration of theatricality where the mask is of the utmost importance can be seen most notably in the movie adaptations of Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan. With the examples of *Batman Returns* (1992) and *The Dark Knight* (2008), I shall demonstrate that Burton and Nolan can be seen as opposing poles on the same scale. Both are heavily influenced by film noir, but while Burton experiments with the fantastic-melodramatic component of the epochal film style on the edge to expressive gothic horror, Nolan courts a contemporary update in the tradition of the neo noir. Above all, *Batman Returns* (1992) and *The Dark Knight* (2008) deconstruct the dichotomy of good and evil in the superhero narrative by reversing its polarity and emphasizing the artificiality of it all.

Batman Returns or the insurrection of signs

Christmas in Gotham City – a never-ending nightmare. Flanked by two absurdly large muscular statues, a gigantic Christmas tree lights the overcrowded Gotham Plaza. An allegory of power. The Christmas tree sits between the sign codes of fascist architecture as a central image of mass slavery, the tyranny of department stores and advertised dreams. The city is run by tycoon Max Shreck (Christopher Walken), whose very name hints at his bloodsucking nature – actor Max Schreck played the title character of the silent horror film *Nosferatu, Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu – A Symphony of Horror*, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, De 1922). The ubiquitous symbol of Shreck’s store empire is the face of a grinning cartoon cat reminiscent of Felix the Cat. Through the image of a powerful corporation hiding behind the friendly face of a cartoon animal, Burton processes his time as a subordinate at the Walt Disney Company, which has always dominated the American popular culture with its many images, conservative ideologies and merchandise products. Suddenly, a big present box arrives at the Plaza and unleashes a cascade of maniac circus clowns with machine guns. The scenery descends into chaos as bikers with enormous skulls trash hot-dog stands, a devilish fire breather incinerates teddy bears and a maniac ringleader shoots the Christmas tree to pieces with his barrel-organ Gatling gun. An insurrection of signs, released by the bizarre Penguin (Danny DeVito) who lives in Gotham’s sewers. Flushed away as a deformed baby of rich parents on Christmas Eve twenty years ago, Penguin takes revenge on the affluent consumer society that rejected him as a monster (see fig. 4–5). He kidnaps Shreck and blackmails him into assisting his ascent into the world above, recycling Shreck’s dirty secrets that have washed up in his underground kingdom and using them against him. from toxic waste to body parts – the by-products of a ruthless capitalism.



Figs. 4–5: The view of the outcast: the Penguin watches the Christmas charade on Gotham Plaza (fig. 4) from his underground world and executes his revenge on the society that expelled him on Christmas Eve as a child (fig. 5). Film stills, BATMAN RETURNS (Tim Burton, US 1992), 00:11:04,



Society creates its own demons. Even the whip-wielding Catwoman is a product of a sexist macho society that keeps its women small as tamed pussycats. And, if an unruly female does not obey the male order, she is pushed out of the window, as happens to secretary Selina Kyle (Michelle Pfeiffer), who is killed by her boss, Max Shreck, for her curiosity (see fig. 6). Down in the gutter, however, Selina is resurrected with the help of wild stray cats. The tables are turned: from being a helpless mouse that had to be

rescued by Batman from bad guys in an earlier scene, Selina transforms into a black beast and now has claws of her own: “I am Catwoman. hear me roar!”24 For her empowerment against a chauvinistic busiuness world she adapts the symbol of her oppression – the cat – and reframes it (see fig. 7). The grinning cat turns into a furious panther that lives out its sexual autonomy in its animalistic ferocity in the spirit of Jacques Tourneur’s *Cat People* (US 1942).25 Selina destroys her stuffy apartment, which is filled with the slavish insignia of her old life, and tailors the skin of her new identity – a skintight, black-leather outfit whose seams remain all too visible. The emphasis on the fragmented self refers to the construction and performance of gender roles; as a pop-cultural condensation of post-feminist theories, Catwoman reveals the correlation between sexuality, power and identity. Her rebellion against masculine rule is doomed to failure, however, as Catwoman is killed again and again throughout the movie by every male protagonist. Even though she exposes on the screen the uneven power relationship between men and women, she cannot change it. Located between the poles of fetishized male fantasy and a feminist avenger model, Selina’s self-search reaches an impasse. Objectified by the male’s gaze, her riot is smashed by Hollywood’s patriarchal semiotic system.26



Figs. 6–7: After the punishment for her uprising against the male order (fig. 6), Selina Kyle returns as Catwoman (fig. 7) to rebel against the patriarchal semiotic system. Film stills, BATMAN RETURNS (Tim Burton, US 1992), 00:27:07 (fig. 6), 00:53:40 (fig. 7).



While the Penguin and Catwoman reign over Gotham's streets with terror, another beast man is fielded to restore the order: Batman (Michael Keaton). Batman, too, has been maimed by the outside world and left with emotional scars, but his revenge is directed not at the causes of his pain, but at its symptoms – the criminals. He fights the freaks and monsters of the town, with whom he has more in common than with the sane citizens he swore to protect. Burton draws the disrupted psyche of the Dark Knight as a hopeless case of a traumatized individual who has lost his own identity within the whole superhero masquerade. Batman is no longer the mask of Bruce Wayne; Bruce Wayne is the mask of Batman. Burton's Batman is a deeply introverted character, trapped within his inner trauma. He puts on the mask of the monstrous in order to shield himself from the outside world. He does not even flinch from killing, but takes lives with a casualness and malice that make you shudder. First he scorches the fire breather with his Batmobile, then he slips a strong thug a bomb and sends him to hell with a diabolical smile. Is Batman a gruesome sadist? There is a revealing shot in Burton's first Batman movie where the protagonist looks down from the roof of the Axis Chemicals factory, with "Axis" in big letters shining above his dark figure (see fig. 8). While Batman fought bravely against the Axis powers in a propagandistic movie serial from 1943, he now



Fig. 8: Batman watches over Gotham City using questionable means. Film still, BATMAN (Tim Burton, US 1989), 00:28:54.

seems to adapt their relentless methods to control Gotham City as in a fascist

surveillance state.27 This sinister interpretation does not move far from Frank Miller's version of the Dark Knight.

"I guess I am tired of wearing masks."28 In *Batman Returns* (1992), good and evil appear not as fixed, moral quantities, but as narrative constructs whose compositions are freely variable. They are attributions, masks, in which one appears before others and which others attach to one. They mean protection (Batman), but also freedom (Catwoman). The perpetual role-play goes on until the mask becomes the skin and the skin a mask. After a short liaison, Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle meet again at a



Figs. 9–10: An embrace of mask and identity: at night, they fight as Batman and Catwoman (fig. 9); in the day, they meet as lovers Bruce Wayne and Selina Kyle (fig. 10). Film stills, BATMAN RETURNS (Tim Burton, US 1992), 01:15:49 (fig. 9), 01:31:59 (fig. 10).



masquerade ball, no disguises needed. In a dance of mask and identity, they recognize each other's second face by means of a line of dialogue they had shared as their alter egos (see fig. 9–10). They see the mask behind the face and ask, "Does this mean we have to start fighting?"29 The advanced schizophrenia of their dual identities prevents

the reconciliation of their personalities both with themselves and with the other. The masquerade theme in *Batman Returns* (1992) becomes a game of signs. As in his other movies, Burton reinterprets established sign codes: black becomes white, and ugly is beautiful. Christmas, a leitmotif of the movie, is unmasked as commercial mass deception.30 The perversion of Christmas suggests the protagonist's lost innocence: too often the violence is aimed at tokens of infantility and cuteness or stems directly from

them – as in the case of Batman's gadget toys and Penguin's obscure weaponry. The destruction of anything "that appears benign, cute or cuddly" even led bewildered Batman-chronicler Mark S. Reinhart to the conclusion that Burton hatches a distaste for "just about anything that society at large would perceive as 'good.'"31

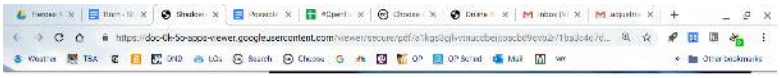
In the end, the concepts of good and evil or normal and abnormal are just a matter of perception. Arguably the only purely evil character in the movie is the human Max Shreck, who behind a façade of normalcy manipulates, corrupts and kills. As for the other freaks and monsters, Burton sees them not as villains, but as victimized individuals.32 He breaks through the common association of disability with evil in fiction,33

Figs. 11–16: Burton's postmodern cabinet of monsters and their classic role models:



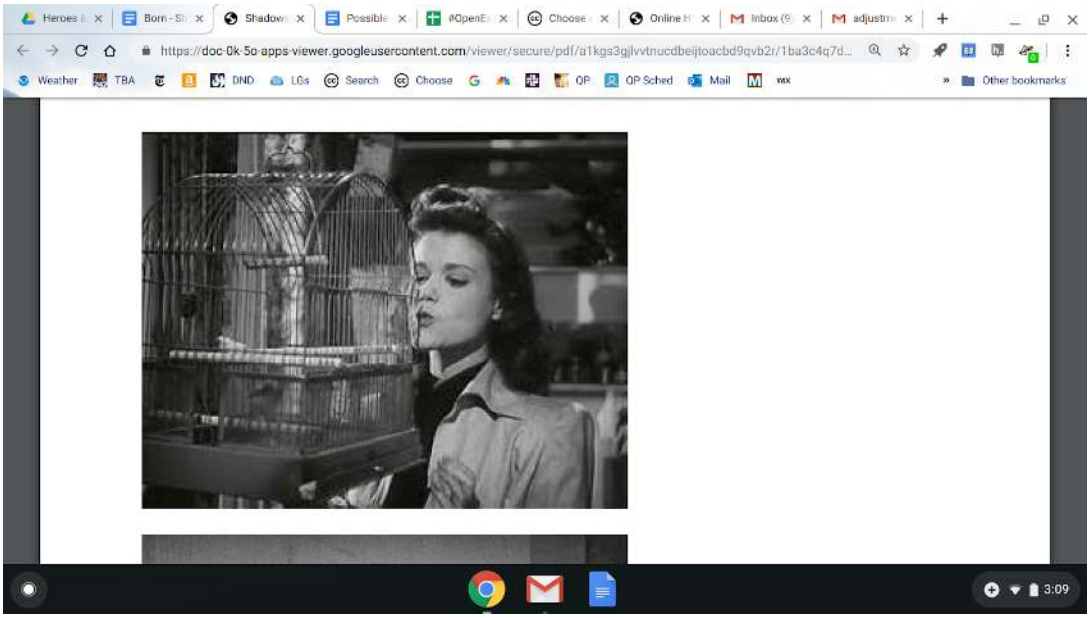
Catwoman (fig. 11) and Irena Dubrovna (Simone Simon) from CAT PEOPLE (1942) (fig. 14, r.); Penguin (fig. 12) and Count Orlok (Max Schreck) from NOSFERATU (1922) (fig. 15, r.); Batman (fig. 13) and Count Dracula (Bela Lugosi) from DRACULA (1931) (fig. 16, r.).

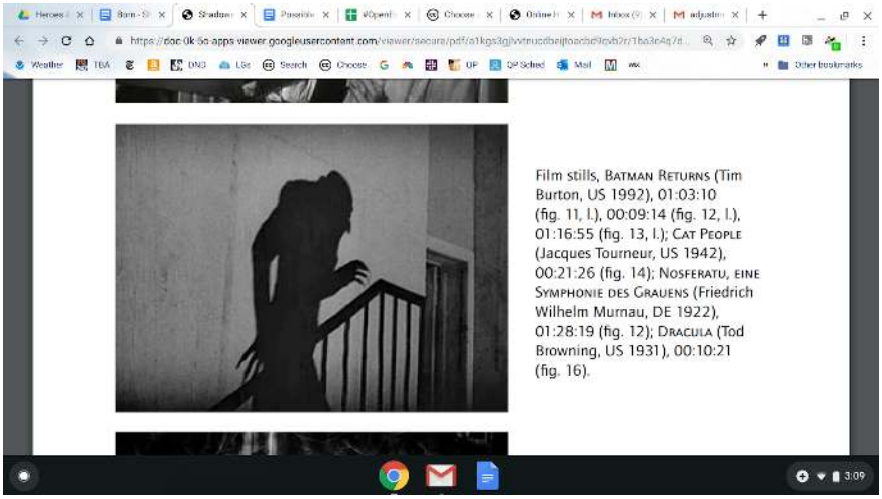




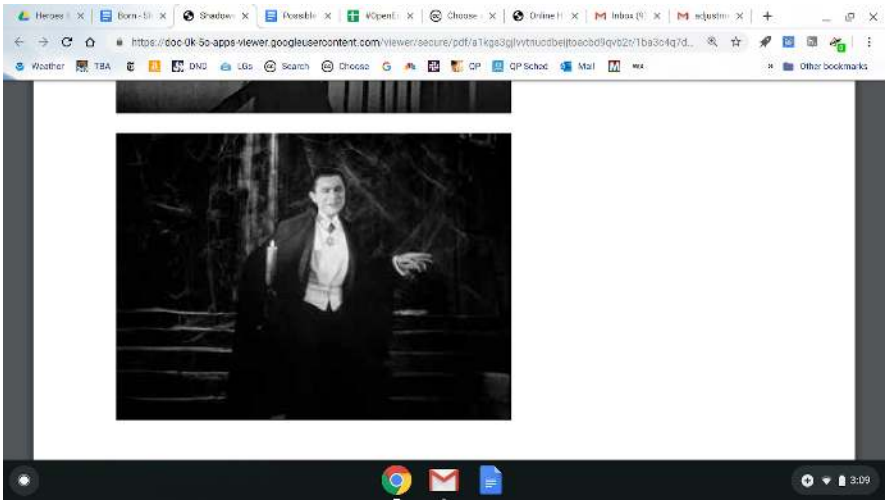








Film stills, Batman Returns (Tim Burton, US 1992), 01:03:10 (fig. 11, l.), 00:09:14 (fig. 12, l.), 01:16:55 (fig. 13, l.); Cat People (Jacques Tourneur, US 1942), 00:21:26 (fig. 14); Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens (Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, DE 1922), 01:28:19 (fig. 12); Dracula (Tod Browning, US 1931), 00:10:21 (fig. 16).



As his variation on the Obsessive Avenger–stereotype, a character who relentlessly pursues those he holds responsible for his disablement, is rendered as a misunderstood monster and applied to villains and heroes alike. As in most of Burton's work, in a Burton movie you fear not the Other but the "ordinary". In the end, *Batman Returns* (1992) is sheer gothic, modeled after the cinematic re-imaginings of classic gothic tales. Burton eagerly draws on the vast symbolic-image stock of the horror movie, influenced by German expressionism (see fig. 11–16). In the tradition of films like *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, Robert Wiene, DE 1920), he uses stylized settings to illustrate the dark and twisted world of his film. Burton externalizes the protagonist's ambivalent psychic states in an opulent pictorial design. the repressed subconscious of the characters turns outward in the bizarre exaggerations and expressive color contrasts of the set design, the gloomy lighting, the costumes, the make-up and the sinister score by composer Danny Elfman. The characters' environments are framed as psychological dioramas that strung together would evoke the image of a multi-faceted theme park. Burton's Gotham is a world of décors in which no neutral space exists, no outside, no escape. A postmodern no man's land in which the signs of light and darkness, reason and madness, reality and fiction are perverted into their eerie opposites.

A taste of theatricality: *The Dark Knight*

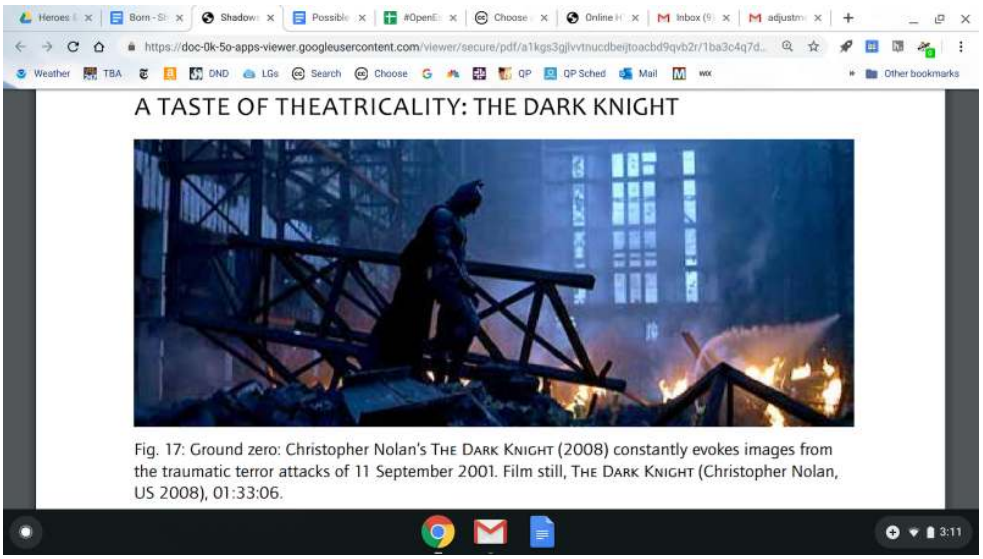
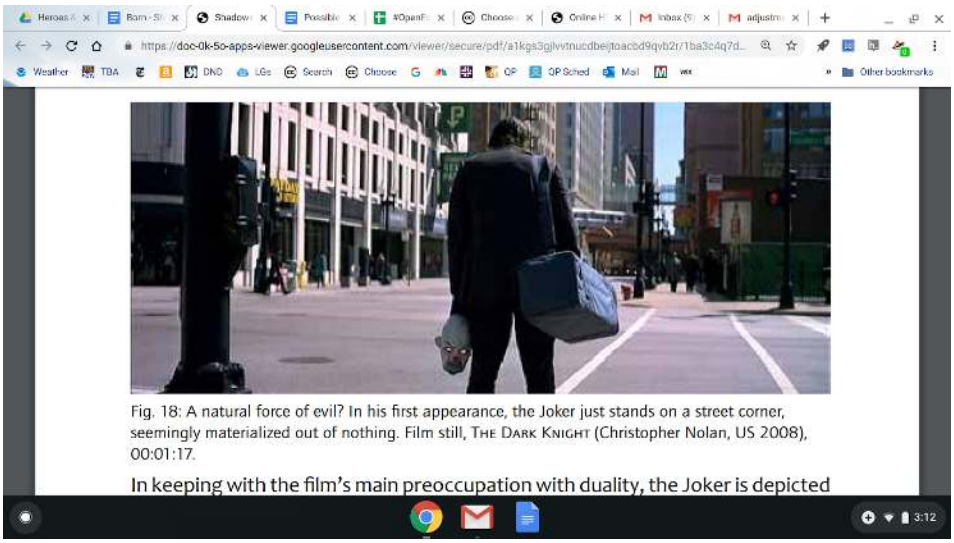


Fig. 17: Ground zero: Christopher Nolan's The Dark Knight (2008) constantly evokes images from the traumatic terror attacks of 11 September 2001. Film still, The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, US 2008), 01:33:06.

Burton's Batman vision is dark, fatalistic, oppressive. the Dark Knight loves his shadowy existence so much that he refuses to stand in the light of attention. the proactive villains take over and marginalize the hero in his own movie. By contrast, in *Batman Begins* (2005) Christopher Nolan resets the Caped Crusader as the main protagonist of the story and explores the beginnings of the character. After Joel Schumacher's gaudy and flamboyant take in *Batman Forever* (US 1995) and *Batman & Robin* (US 1997), which did not resonate well with fans and critics, Nolan seeks to wipe the slate clean with his elaborate reboot of the character. Basically he brings the superhero "down to earth" and connects him with the contemporary American zeitgeist (see fig. 17). For that, he stepped outside the studio and shot on-location in major cities like Chicago and London (*Batman Begins*, 2005; *The Dark Knight*, 2008) and Los Angeles, New York and Pittsburgh (*The Dark Knight Rises*, US 2012) in order to compose a hyper-real cityscape of Gotham City. Following the films' courted authenticity and realism, Batman's world is purged of any supernatural, fantastic and whimsical elements that could expose its comic book source material. Instead, Nolan focuses in his first Batman movie on the Dark Knight's character development as he struggles to adopt a moral position in a corrupted society. The battle between good and evil is portrayed as a dispute between opposing principles, ideas and philosophies. Batman's ethical code, which requires him to work outside the law but never to kill, stems from the dialectic juxtaposition of his father figures: from the thesis of empathetic understanding embodied by his murdered father Thomas Wayne (Linus Roache) and carried further by his butler Alfred (Michael Caine) and the antithesis of absolute and revengeful justice claimed by his fundamentalist mentor Ducard/Ra's al Ghul (Liam Neeson) comes the synthesis of the principled avenger Batman (Christian Bale).

After 135 minutes of soul-searching in *Batman Begins* (2005), the masked vigilante is finally ready to face his equal – the Joker (Heath Ledger). At the end of the film, Lieutenant Gordon (Gary Oldman) has already established a connection between the two on the basis of their staged appearance. Gordon talks about escalation and how Batman's advent might encourage a new type of criminal. He hands the Dark Knight a joker card with the words, "You're wearing a mask, jumping off rooftops. Now, take this guy. Armed robbery, double homicide. Has a taste for the theatrical, like you."34 Consequently, *The Dark Knight* (2008) opens with the introduction of the Joker. the prologue of the film shows a group of clown-masked gangsters robbing a mob bank while talking about their anonymous boss, the Joker. their heist successful, they start to kill each other off in order to increase the share each will receive, until only one robber is left. Before he leaves with all the money, this last robber lifts his clown mask in an extreme close-up, revealing not his hidden identity, but another mask: the scarred and painted face of the Joker. the ambiguous masquerade of the prologue confirms Gordon's fears – the Joker is established as a direct consequence of Batman's theatricality. The Joker's "mask" dissolves the analogy between face and identity, for his "makeup does not hide his true identity, but instead attests to the absence of one",35 making him a being of pure theatricality, a displayed sign of a sign (see fig. 18).36



In keeping with the film's main preoccupation with duality, the Joker is depicted not only as Batman's criminal equivalent but also as the ultimate counterforce who answers Batman's desire for order with chaos.37 Their combat represents the constant struggle Batman has to face as outlaw vigilante: "Batman emerges as a hero positioned in the darkness between extremes, mediating between the oppressive power of modern systems and the chaos of postmodern anarchy".38 In view of the increasing number of victims and the experience of powerlessness in his staged no-win scenarios, the battle against the Joker becomes a crucial test for the good. How can such boundless evil be countered? Nolan's Dark Knight trilogy is heavily influenced by the terror attacks of 9/11 and their aftermath. His Gotham City becomes a stage for America's current anxieties, with the audience compelled to connect their own experiences of 11 September with the experiences of the film,39 above all in the confrontation with a faceless evil with which there can be no negotiation and which cannot be dealt with: "You have nothing, nothing to threaten me with. Nothing to do with all your strength", the Joker replies to the hard and desperate blows of the Dark Knight.40 The interrogation scene between the two in Gordon's Police Department is a key scene of the film: under the eye of the law, Batman temporarily oversteps his limits and tortures the Joker in order to get information about the whereabouts of his two hostages in a literal ticking-bomb scenario (see fig. 19). In order to beat the Joker, Batman creates an emergency situation, mirroring the extreme measures taken by the Bush administration in the War on terror, with his pure intentions for justice and freedom irrevocably compromised and perverted. By crossing "a line beyond heroic exceptionality",41 Batman blurs the line between good and evil.



"Why so serious?"42 While Burton and Nicholson contrive the Joker in *Batman* (1989)

as a postmodern homicidal artist celebrating insanity as freedom, Nolan retraces the archetype of the clown to his anarchistic roots. With twisted bodies, grotesque faces and nonsensical tirades, jesters in the Middle Ages offered criticism of the social status quo from the perspective of an outsider, inverting courtly and ecclesiastical norms with their devilish antics and exposing in their masquerades the duplicity of society. The jester was the ambassador of a netherworld from which humans could find their way back to the chaotic origins of life. Heath Ledger's Joker joins this tradition. As an agent of chaos he creates disorder and rocks the "schemers" to demonstrate the fragility of ideologically shaped worldviews. He inverts everything there is into its opposite. In his last encounter with Batman, the Joker dangles upside down on the Dark Knight's rope. While he explains his twisted worldview, the camera slowly rotates 180 degrees, until he is upright again and Gotham's night sky upside down. The Joker is a master of deception – with or without make-up, as corpse or as nurse. the fact that he has no secret identity, that his entire appearance functions as a whole-body mask links him directly to medieval fools who, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, "were not actors playing parts on stage ... but remained fools and clowns always and wherever they made their appearance".43 With his disconcerting speech patterns, gestures and way of walking, the Joker does not seem to be of this world, but rather has stepped out of the liminal world of carnival. He repeatedly calls attention to his mouth, highlighting his scars with red lipstick, smacking his lips, grinning and holding it directly into the camera (see fig. 20). In the subversive theatricality of the carnival, the concept of the grotesque body concentrates in the gaping mouth, for Bakhtin the symbol of a "wide-open bodily abyss".44 The Joker's mouth gapes like a large wound in his face; by conjuring a smile onto his victim's face with a knife, he lets that victim share his own limitless blackness.

The face is the leitmotif of the film. Recalling Béla Balázs' early film theory of the visualization of man through his physiognomy on screen,45 the faces in *The Dark Knight* (2008) become an important carrier of meaning (see fig. 21). Looking into the painted visage of the Joker, one gets caught up in the maelstrom of his infinite malignity. In contrast, Batman's masked face becomes a symbol of resistance and hope, an immortal ideal that inspires people to follow his lead in the fight against crime. Unfortunately, his freely interpretable face also allows people to misconceive his ideal, as militant copycats take up arms and act against his intentions. Finally, there is the face of district attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart), whose all-American look becomes a surface for projected hopes and optimism: "Look at this face. This is the face of Gotham's bright

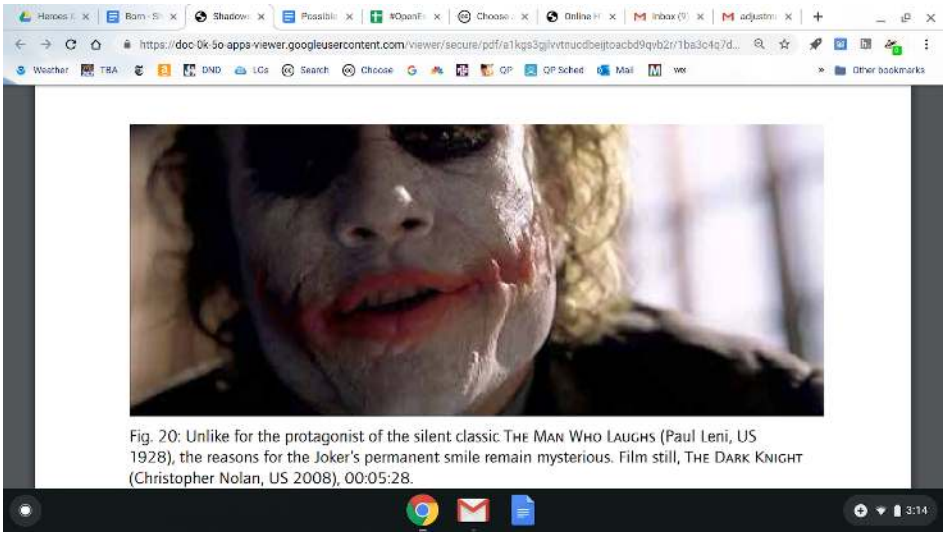


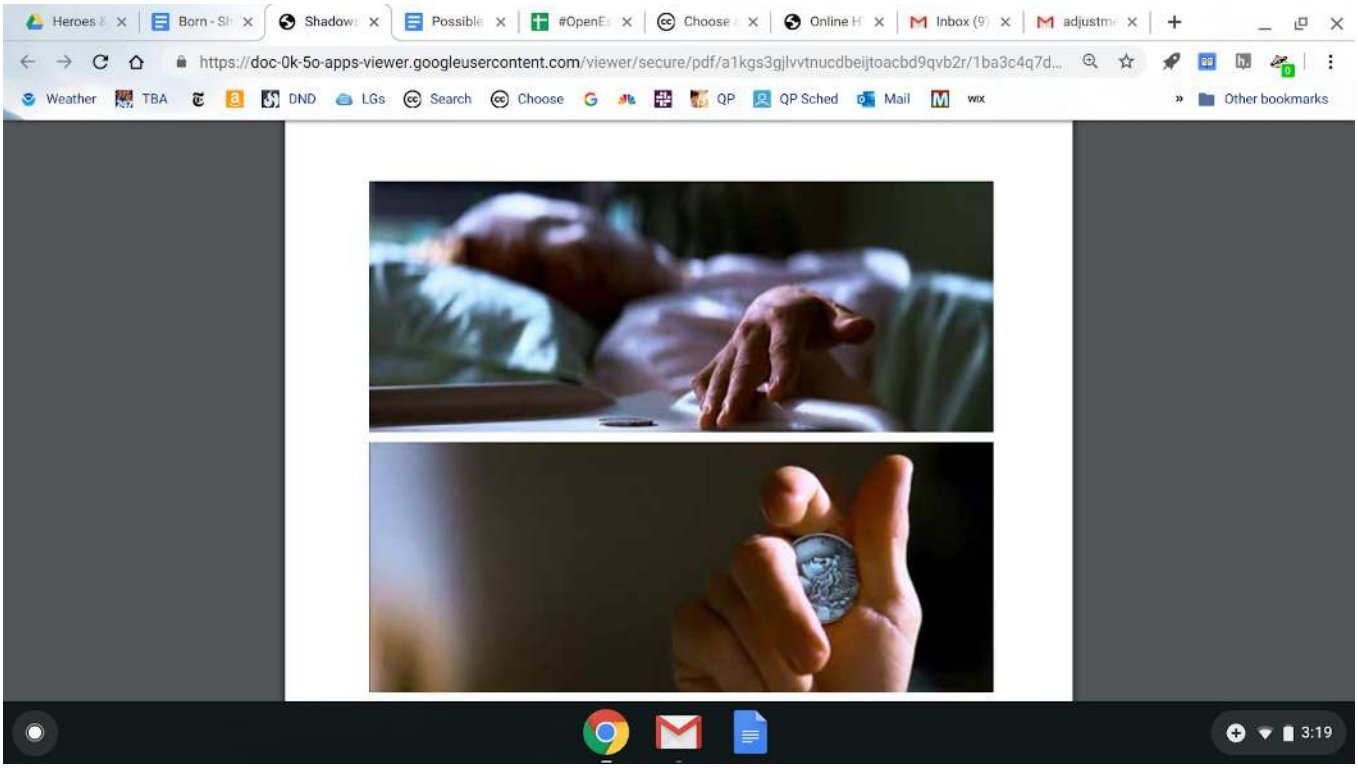
Fig. 20: Unlike for the protagonist of the silent classic The Man Who Laughs (Paul Leni, US 1928), the reasons for the Joker's permanent smile remain mysterious. Film still, The Dark Knight (Christopher Nolan, US 2008), 00:05:28.

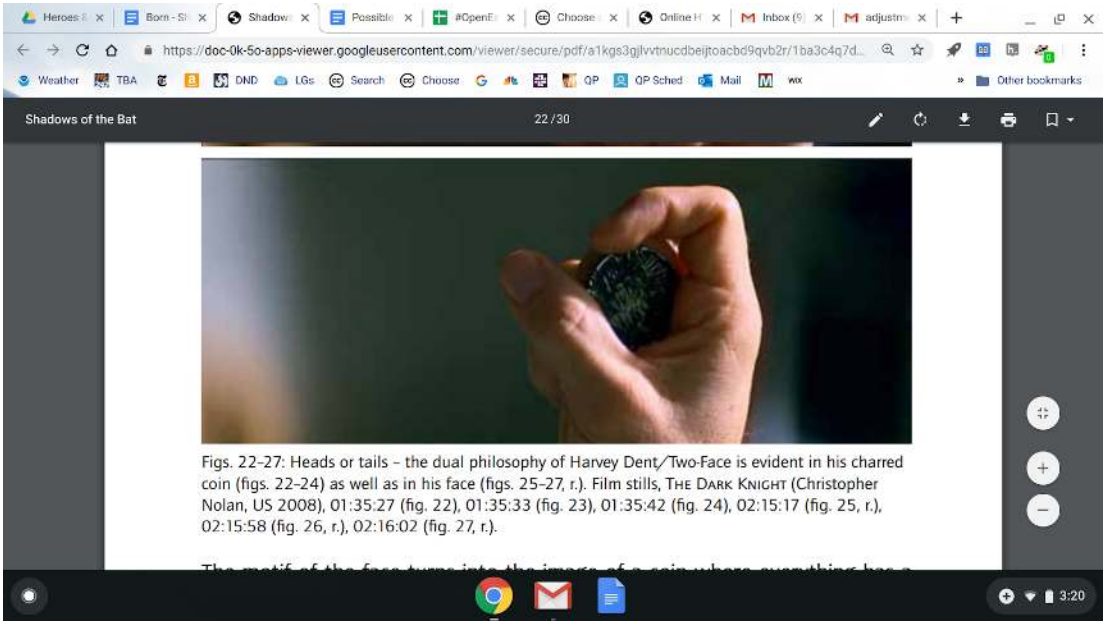
future", Bruce Wayne declares at his fundraising party.46 Dent is Gotham's shining white knight, a hero with a face that eventually could suspend the need for a masked Dark Knight. Behind this façade, however, lies a second face – two-face. Dent's flaw is his moral intransigency. In his monochrome worldview, good and evil are so widely separated that the self-righteous attorney cannot connect to his darker side, which erupts in occasional outbursts and acts of desperation. Dent's case alludes to the Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886), Robert Louis Stevenson's famous examination of human nature's duality. Like Jekyll, Dent tries at all costs to hide his evil other, because he does not recognize it as part of his own self. Therefore, all it takes is a "little push" from the Joker and Harvey's world is turned upside down. Deprived of the love of his life and left with serious physical and mental injuries, his moral bigotry is gruesomely written in his face in the figure of the Janus-like Two-Face. After his departure from good, the only consistent option left to him is to join with evil: "Either you die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain."47 The motif of the face turns into the image of a coin where everything has a reverse side (see fig. 22–27). Two-Face lost his faith in the right decision and his decision-making ability. instead of being the master of his own destiny, he despairs of the

cruel arbitrariness of human existence. This shift is symbolized by his lucky coin. At the beginning, the coin had two identical sides, thus negating the possibility of loss and highlighting his full control over life: “I make my own luck.”48 In the explosion that kills his fiancée, Rachel (Maggie Gyllenhaal), the coin, like he himself is burned on one side. incapable of accepting the tension of duality and of being at one with himself, he now leaves all life and death

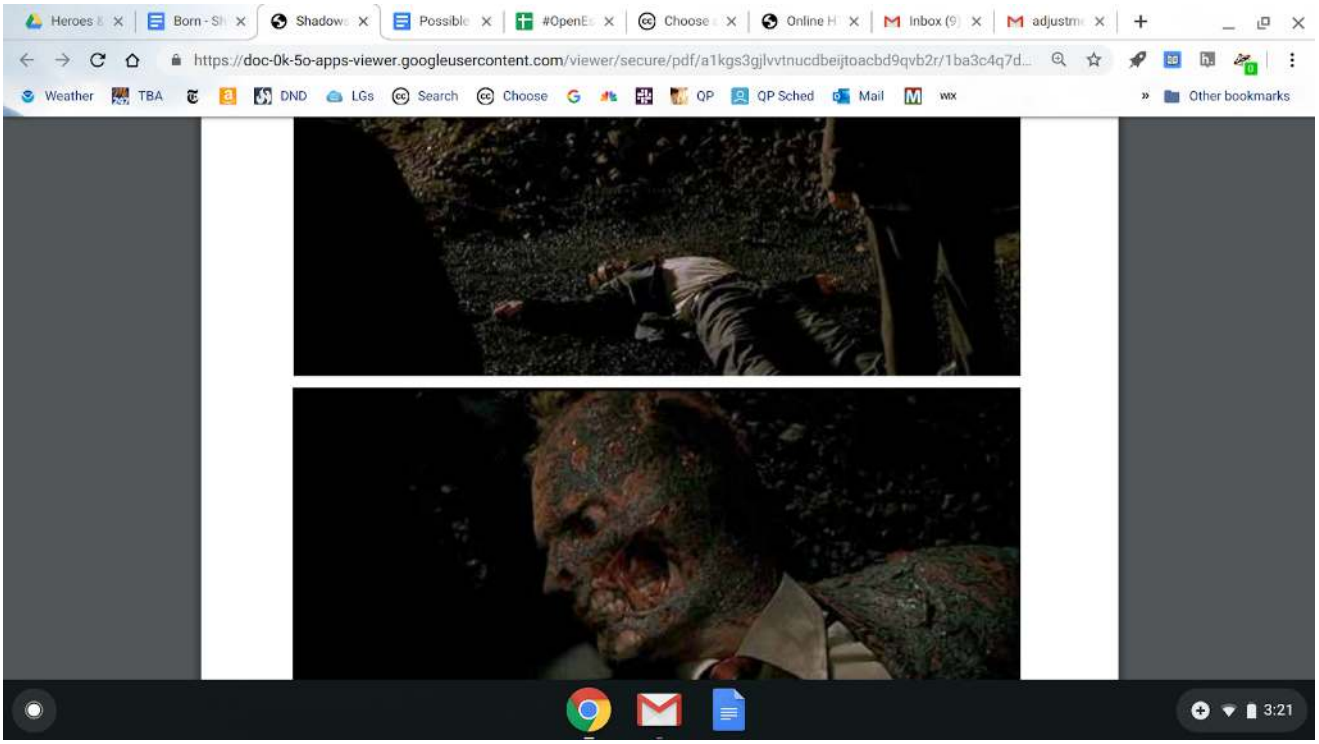


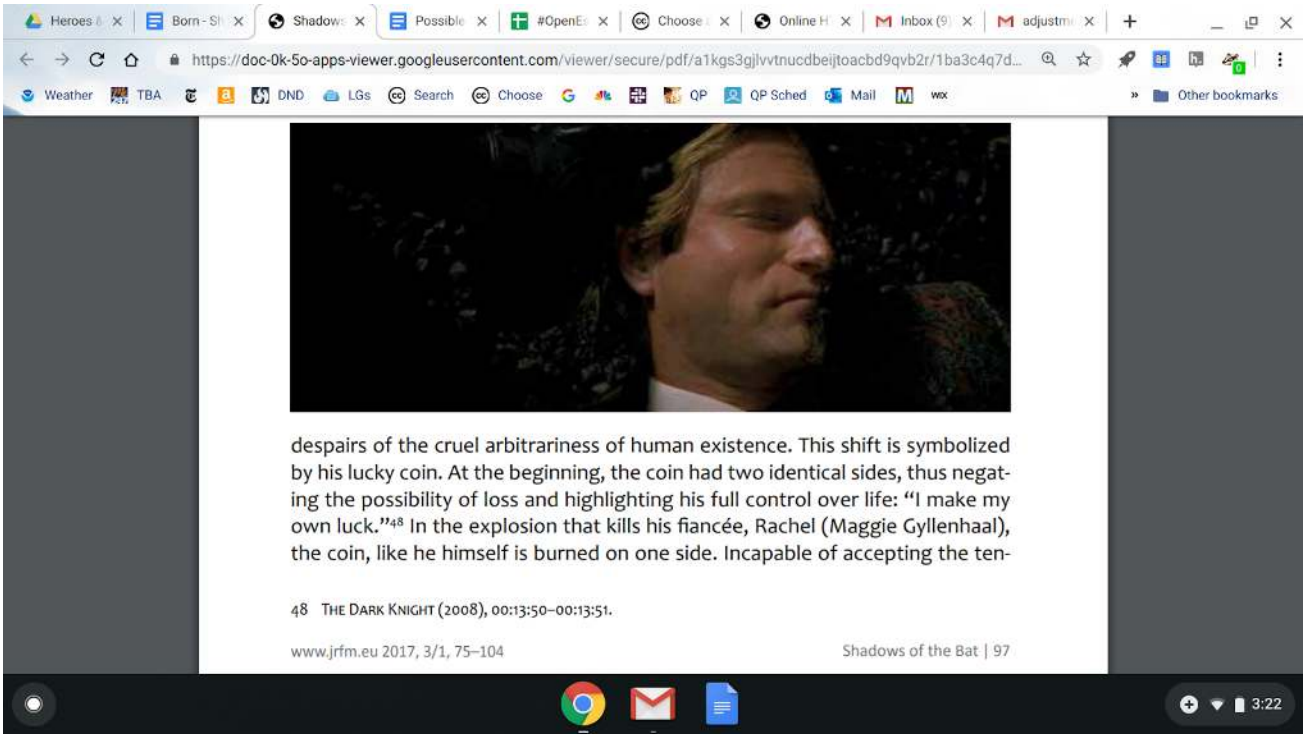
Fig. 21: This downloadable wallpaper from The Dark Knight’s (2008) official website showcases the film’s use of the face as an image of its underlying theme of duality. http://thedarkknight.warnerbros.com/dvdsite/media/images/downloads/TDK04_1600x1200.jpg [accessed 19 September 2016].





Figs. 22–27: Heads or tails – the dual philosophy of Harvey Dent/Two-Face is evident in his charred coin (figs. 22–24) as well as in his face (figs. 25–27, r.). Film stills, THE DARK KNIGHT (Christopher Nolan, US 2008), 01:35:27 (fig. 22), 01:35:33 (fig. 23), 01:35:42 (fig. 24), 02:15:17 (fig. 25, r.), 02:15:58 (fig. 26, r.), 02:16:02 (fig. 27, r.).




despairs of the cruel arbitrariness of human existence. This shift is symbolized by his lucky coin. At the beginning, the coin had two identical sides, thus negating the possibility of loss and highlighting his full control over life: "I make my own luck."[48] In the explosion that kills his fiancée, Rachel (Maggie Gyllenhaal), the coin, like he himself is burned on one side. Incapable of accepting the ten-

48 THE DARK KNIGHT (2008), 00:13:50–00:13:51.

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decisions to chance, his new god of justice: "The only morality in a cruel world is chance. Unbiased. Unprejudiced. Fair."49 Harvey's lapse provides the backbone of the film's narrative. Evil has won. The Joker brought down the best and turned him into an insane cop killer. But the good must not lose, heroic stories are supposed to have a happy ending. So the result is marked: Batman takes on responsibility for two-face's crimes and is hunted by the police, while Harvey Dent died a hero's death and becomes the legend that Batman always wanted to be. Gotham's peace is restored, but on the basis of a lie: "Sometimes the truth is not good enough. Sometimes people deserve more."50 This outcome is a clear reference to John Ford's late Western *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (US 1962), in which the forged legend of a town's hero becomes a constitutive social truth. For Vincent M. Gaine, this compromise "problematizes the 'natural, unquestionable justice' favored by superhero narratives".51 The ending of *The Dark Knight* (2008) evidently demonstrates that good and evil have no individual ontological status but are reciprocally constructed and conceptualized via storytelling. Thus Batman really is a floating signifier, for he can take on any role the city needs him to fulfill, enabled by the public: "Batman can convincingly play the dark knight only because his role was perceived as (potentially) evil from the outset – at least by a few. While Batman is the one who theatrically produces signs, those few represent the constitutive counterpart."52

Shadows of the bat

The dual cosmology of Manichaeism, which underlines the superhero narrative of the hero's fight against the villain, eventually serves as an explanation for the origin and essence of evil itself. Mani's belief system is based on the fundamental question, "Why does evil exist?"53 In his view, evil does not exist as a lack of good, but as a real, powerful force that actively intervenes with the world. Evil opposes and negates everything that is good and pure; it seduces man to commit sin. Although corresponding with the notion of Satan in Christianity, Mani's binary belief contradicts the Christian dictates of monotheism, as the existence of an equally powerful counterforce denies the omnipotence of God. Nevertheless, the ideas of Manichaeism have influenced Western thinking until today. The image of a metaphysical evil as the ultimate adversary, as the devil who has to be fought with all means, can be found, for example, in the rhetoric

of enemy stereotypes. Invoked bogeymen whose very existence threatens the Western value system, like the Germans during the World Wars, the Soviets in the Cold War or the Islamist terrorist of present day, carry a clear political function. Exploiting the fears, insecurities and prejudices of a community, enemy images help to simplify things in a complicated, globalized world by pinpointing a scapegoat. They strengthen a weakened group identity via exclusion and serve as a means of justification for a political agenda.54 The United States, in particular, has a long tradition of enemy images. In times of war and conflict, American

politicians constantly evoke the Manichaean rhetoric of good versus evil, posing God's chosen people against foreign enemies of freedom and democracy. Considering the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, George W. Bush declared that the United States were "at war" and famously labeled enemy states like North Korea, Iran and Iraq, which seek weapons of mass destruction and allegedly support terrorism, an "axis of evil".55 Throughout his presidency, he constituted a bipolar world of "freedom" and "fear", "us" and "them".56

In their Batman movies, Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan visualize the dynamics of enemy images; they deconstruct the Manichaean worldview by illustrating its flipside and highlighting its fragility. In place of the dualistic belief system, their movies propose an alternative discourse about the nature and origin of evil. In the case of *Batman Returns* (1992), Burton tells a modern fairytale about good and evil from the perspective of the rejected other. He lets us partake in the "personal catharsis" he gains from identification with "characters who are both mentally and physically different":57 He renders Batman, Penguin and Catwoman non-conformists who use their alleged otherness to express their independency and are therefore sanctioned by a hostile collective. For that, Burton utilizes the gothic imagery of horror movies he grew up with, but reverses it. Originally, the monster in classic U.S. horror films was depicted as an inhuman, external force of evil that invades the idyllic harmony of everyday American life. Thereby it has often functioned as a coded sign for contemporary images of the enemy58 and a social panic that the traditional order within the sexes, races and classes could collapse.59 In *Batman Returns* (1992), monstrosity is a sign not of evil, but of isolating individuality, while the so-called normalcy conceals true viciousness. Like the pitiable creature (Boris Karloff) in James Whale's *Frankenstein* (US 1931), Burton's monsters are inherently innocent; it is the confrontation with a xenophobic society that makes them evil.

In *The Dark Knight* (2008), Nolan demonstrates his deep passion for fictionality and storytelling as he exposes the duality of good and evil as a key rhetoric in the narrative of a society that uses these terms to justify its actions. On the surface, the Joker incarnates the enemy image of a terrorist, as he is represented as a resourceful force of destruction that cannot be negotiated with, a mad man determined to watch the world burn. His real intentions, however, are to face Gotham's inhabitants with their own viciousness, which primarily resides in their utilitarian ethics of "scheming". For him, cops and criminals behave the same, for they are enslaved to the selfish object of their plan. In his sadistic games of life and death, he confronts the people of Gotham with the "logic of their scheming taken to its end point", but also "provides an opportunity for them to break out of calculation".60 So the Joker's evil is actually the basis for the hero's ethics. Ultimately, The Dark Knight (2008) is not about the nature of evil, but about the way it is fought by the good. Does Batman make the right decision? Are his means just? Reflecting America's ongoing War on Terror, the movie refuses to give an unequivocal answer. Instead, the movie implies a shifting, fluid moral universe where the characters embody contradictory, unstable positions.61 Because of this complexity, some interpreted the movie as praise for Bush's conservative policies, where the boundaries of civil rights were pushed in order to "deal with an emergency".62 Others, however, saw Batman's use of torture and a problematic surveillance technology as critique of the Bush regime.63 from reactionary to subversive, the movie's political message above all lies in "the blurring of boundaries" and "instability of oppositions",64 favoring ambiguity over simplistic duality. Tim Burton and Christopher Nolan persuasively question the clear separation of good and evil as well as their ontological statuses. They unmask them as ideological attributions often misused for propaganda, as makeshift explanatory patterns for complex human behavior. Consequently, their Batman movies exhibit that the struggle between good and evil is fought not externally, but internally. Moving from the subject of morality to a broader scale, the dispute between contrary principles articulates the antagonistic tendencies in the individual, which are constantly fighting.65 There the fictional representations of good and evil function as interchangeable metaphors for the many dichotomies that define human nature, whether in the conflict



Fig. 28: Batman's shadowy appearance marks him as liminal character who inhabits a space between light and darkness, justice and anarchy, good and evil. Film still, BATMAN RETURNS (Tim Burton, US 1992), 00:55:37.

between individuality and conformity, inside and outside, normal and abnormal (*Batman Returns*, 1992) or the fight between order and chaos, justice and vengeance, rule and exception (The Dark Knight, 2008). What image could be more suitable, then, to illustrate these antagonisms than the shadowy figure of Batman, the very representation of duality itself? His whole nature as Batman, as semi-entity, symbolizes the permeability of boundaries as he unites hero and villain, light and darkness, man and beast, idea and matter (see fig. 28). Among his clownish foes and circus counterparts, Batman is the true embodiment of the trickster archetype. He shifts between worlds, defies clear categories and signifies ambivalence. His multiplicity attracts artists like Burton and Nolan, who can express their individual vision through the versatility of his image.

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1 The Dark Knight (2008), 02:08:31–02:08:35.

2 Reynolds 2011.

3 DiPaolo 2011, 5.

4 Gray ii/Kaklamanidou 2011, 3.

5 Reynolds 1992, 51.

6 Lyotard 1997, xxiv–xxv.

7 Schlegel/Habermann 2011, 31.

8 Uricchio/Pearson 1991, 186.

9 Brooker 2012, 79–83.

10 Levitz 2015, 15.

11 Boichel 1991, 6.

12 Danesi 2016, 19.

13 see Vogler 2007, 23–80.

14 Campbell/Moyers 1988, 151.

15 Regalado 2015, 120.

16 Langley 2012, 170–171.

17 Regalado 2015, 122.

18 Langley 2012, 268.

19 Moore 2008, 42.

20 Batman (1989), 01:50:50–01:50:52.

21 The Dark Knight (2008), 01:24:32–01:24:34.

22 Brooker 2012, 138.

23 Coogan 2006, 105.

24 Batman Returns (1992), 00:42:13–00:42:17. The line is an obvious reference to Helen Reddy's hymn of the women's right movement from 1972: "I am woman. hear me roar!" See Heger 2010, 200.

25 See Dotyingham 2004.

26 See Mulvey 1999.

27 Heger 2010, 174.

28 Batman Returns (1992), 01:32:21–01:32:23.

29 Batman Returns (1992), 01:34:01–01:34:03.

30 Merschmann 2000, 64–65.

31 Reinhart 2005, 175–176.

32 Salisbury 2006, 103.

33 See Norden 2007.

34 *Batman Begins* (2005), 02:04:50–02:05:04.

35 McGowan 2012, 135.

36 Fischer-Lichte 1995, 88.

37 DiPaolo 2011, 59.

38 regalado 2015, 227.

39 Muller 2011, 58.

40 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 01:26:32–01:26:39.

41 McGowan 2012, 130.

42 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 00:29:27–00:29:30.

43 Bakhtin 1984, 8.

44 Bakhtin 1984, 317.

45 See Balázs 2011.

46 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 00:43:27–00:43:31.

47 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 00:20:01–00:20:05.

48 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 00:13:50–00:13:51.

49 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 02:12:30–02:12:40.

50 *The Dark Knight* (2008), 02:17:03–02:17:09.

51 Gaine 2011, 128.

52 Schlegel/Habermann 2011, 35.

53 See Coyle 2009, xiv.

54 See Fiebig-Von Hase 1997, 1–40.

55 Bush 2002.

56 See Wagner 2009, 31.

57 Hanke 2007, 95.

58 See Worland 1997.

59 Seeßlen/Jung 2006, 127.

60 McGowan 2012, 141.

61 Brooker 2012, 204–207.

62 Klavan 2008.

63 ip 2011, 229.

64 Brooker 2012, 207.

65 See Hickethier 2008, 238.

Simon Born studied Media Dramaturgy at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Germany, and is currently working on his doctoral thesis at the University of Siegen. This essay was originally published in the *Journal for Religion, Film and Media.*

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3.2.3: How the New “Aladdin” Stacks Up Against a Century of Hollywood Stereotyping (Alsultany)

By Evelyn Alsultany



"Aladdin & the Genie of the Lamp" by Brian Neudorff is licensed under CC BY 4.0

Though critically acclaimed and widely beloved, the 1992 animated feature “Aladdin” had some serious issues with stereotyping.

Disney wanted to avoid repeating these same problems in the live action version of “Aladdin,” which came out on May 24. So they sought advice from a Community Advisory Council comprised of Middle Eastern, South Asian and Muslim scholars, activists and creatives. I was asked to be a part of the group because of my expertise on representations of Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. media.

The fact that a major studio wants to hear from the community reflects Hollywood’s growing commitment to diversity.

But while the live action “Aladdin” does succeed in rectifying some aspects of Hollywood’s long history of stereotyping and whitewashing Middle Easterners, it still leaves much to be desired.

Magical genies and lecherous sheikhs

In his seminal 1978 book “Orientalism,” literature professor Edward Said argued that Western cultures historically stereotyped the Middle East to justify exerting control over it.



A movie poster for the 1921 film ‘The Sheik.’ Public Domain; Library of Congress

Orientalism in Hollywood has a long history. Early Hollywood films such as “The Sheik” and “Arabian Nights” portrayed the Middle East as a monolithic fantasy land – a magical desert filled with genies, flying carpets and rich men living in opulent palaces with their harem girls.

While these depictions were arguably silly and harmless, they flattened the differences among Middle Eastern cultures, while portraying the region as backwards and in need of civilizing by the West.

Then came a series of Middle Eastern conflicts and wars: the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973, the Iran Hostage Crisis and the Gulf War. In American media, the exotic Middle East faded; replacing it were depictions of violence and ominous terrorists.

As media scholar Jack G. Shaheen observed, hundreds of Hollywood films over the last 50 years have linked Islam with holy war and terrorism, while depicting Muslims as either "hostile alien intruders" or "lecherous, oily sheikhs intent on using nuclear weapons."

Cringeworthy moments in the original 'Aladdin'

Against this backdrop, the Orientalism of Disney's 1992 animated "Aladdin" wasn't all that surprising.

The opening song lyrics described a land "Where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face" and declared, "It's barbaric, but hey, it's home!"

When the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee protested the lyrics, Disney removed the reference to cutting off ears in the home video version but left in the descriptor "barbaric."

Then there were the ways the characters were depicted. As many have noted, the bad Arabs are ugly and have foreign accents while the good Arabs – Aladdin and Jasmine – possess European features and white American accents.



In the animated 'Aladdin,' the good Arabs are drawn with Caucasian features, while the bad guys speak with foreign accents. "El malo maloso de Aladdin" by MissRagamuffyn is licensed under CC BY 4.0

The film also continued the tradition of erasing distinctions between Middle Eastern cultures. For example, Jasmine, who is supposed to be from Agrabah – originally Baghdad but fictionalized because of the Gulf War in 1991 – has an Indian-named tiger, Rajah.

Questionable progress

After 9/11, a spate of films emerged that rehashed many of the old terrorist tropes. But surprisingly, some positive representations of Middle Eastern and Muslim characters emerged.

In 2012, I published my book "Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11." In it, I detail the strategies that writers and producers used after 9/11 to offset stereotyping.

The most common one involved including a patriotic Middle Eastern or Muslim American to counterbalance depictions as terrorists. In the TV drama, "Homeland," for example, Fara Sherazi, an Iranian American Muslim CIA analyst, is killed by a Muslim terrorist, showing that "good" Muslim Americans are willing to die for the United States.

But this didn't change the fact that Middle Easterners and Muslims were, by and large, portrayed as threats to the West. Adding a 'good' Middle Eastern character doesn't do much to upend stereotypes when the vast majority are still appearing in stories about terrorism.

Another strategy also emerged: reverting to old Orientalist tropes of the exotic, romantic Middle East. Maybe writers and producers assumed that depicting the Middle East as exotic would be an improvement over associating it with terrorism.

The 2004 film "Hidalgo," for example, tells the story of an American cowboy who travels to the Arabian desert in 1891 to participate in a horse race. In classic Orientalist fashion, he saves the rich sheik's daughter from the sheik's evil, power-hungry nephew.

The 2017 movie "Victoria and Abdul" depicts an unlikely friendship between Queen Victoria and her Indian-Muslim servant, Abdul Karim. While the film does critique the racism and Islamophobia of 19th-century England, it also infantilizes and exoticizes Abdul.

Nonetheless, some glaring problems persisted. Jake Gyllenhaal was cast in the lead role of "The Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time" (2010), while Christian Bale and Joel Edgerton were cast in "Exodus: Gods and Kings" (2014) as Egyptian characters.

Why were white actors assuming these roles?

When challenged, producer Ridley Scott infamously said that he can't "say that my lead actor is Mohammad so-and-so from such-and-such. I'm just not going to get it financed."

Does the new 'Aladdin' make strides?

Perhaps in a desire to avoid the mistakes of the past, Disney executives sought advice from cultural consultants like me.

There's certainly some notable progress made in the live-action "Aladdin."

Egyptian Canadian actor Mena Massoud plays Aladdin. Given the dearth of people of Middle Eastern descent in lead roles, the significance of casting Massoud cannot be overstated. And despite the fact that some white extras had their skin darkened during filming, Disney did cast actors of Middle Eastern descent in most of the main roles.

Casting Indian British actress Naomi Scott as Jasmine was controversial; many hoped to see an Arab or Middle Eastern actress in this role and wondered whether casting someone of Indian descent would simply reinforce notions of "Oriental" interchangeability. Nonetheless, the film does note that Jasmine's mother is from another land.

The biggest problem with the 2019 "Aladdin" is that it perpetuates the trend of reverting to magical Orientalism – as if that's a noteworthy improvement over terrorist portrayals. In truth, it's not exactly a courageous move to trade explicit racism for clichéd exoticism.

To be fair, "Aladdin" distinguishes itself from "Hidalgo" and other Orientalist films of this trend by not revolving around the experiences of a white protagonist.

However, once again, characters with American accents are the "good guys" while those with non-American accents are mostly, but not entirely, "bad." And audiences today will be as hard pressed as those in 1992 – or 1922, for that matter – to identify any distinct Middle Eastern cultures beyond that of an overgeneralized "East." Belly dancing and Bollywood dancing, turbans and keffiyehs, Iranian and Arab accents all appear in the film interchangeably.

Just as making positive tweaks within a story about terrorism doesn't accomplish much, so does making positive tweaks within a story about the exotic East. Diversifying representations requires moving beyond these tired tropes and expanding the kinds of stories that are told.

"Aladdin," of course, is a fantastical tale, so questions about representational accuracy might seem overblown. It is also a really fun movie in which Mena Massoud, Naomi Scott and Will Smith all shine in their roles. But over the last century, Hollywood has produced over 900 films that stereotype Arabs and Muslims – a relentless drumbeat of stereotypes that influences public opinion and policies.

If there were 900 films that didn't portray Arabs, Iranians and Muslims as terrorists or revert to old Orientalist tropes, then films like "Aladdin" could be "just entertainment."

Until then, we'll just have to wait for the genie to let more nuanced and diverse portrayals out of the lamp.

Evelyn Alsultany is an Associate Professor of American Studies and Ethnicity, University of Southern California – Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences and a leading expert on the history of representations of Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. media and on forms of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim racism. Her essay originally appeared in The Conversation.



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3.2.4: The Story We Tell about Millennials — and Who We Leave Out (Allen)

By Reniqua Allen


Photo by unknown. CC 0 via pxhere.

So on the surface, Troy is the kind of millennial that think pieces are made of. He's arrogant, self-centered and convinced that he is smarter than people give him credit for. His favorite topics of conversation are girls, sneakers and cars -- not a surprise for someone who was a teenager just a few years ago. But Troy's mannerisms -- they reveal the patterns of someone who is scared, troubled and unsure of the future.

Now Troy also embodies the many positive qualities his generation is known for. An entrepreneurial spirit, an independent streak and a dedication to his parents. He believes in hard work and has tried gigs in both the licit and underground economies, but he hasn't had any luck and is just trying to find his way and still dances between both worlds.

When I met Troy a few years ago, he had been employed as a golf caddy at a local country club, carrying bags for rich men and women who often never even acknowledged his existence. Before that, he sold sneakers on Facebook. He even tried selling candy bars and water bottles, but he wasn't making enough money to help his parents out or save up for a car any time soon. So Troy saw how hard his immigrant mother from Jamaica worked and how little she got back in return, and he vowed -- Troy vowed to take a different path. So he ended up selling drugs. And then he got caught, and right now, he's trying to figure out his next steps.

In a country where money equals power, quick money, at least for a while, gives young men and women like him a sense of control over their lives, though he said he mainly did it because he wanted stability. "I wanted a good life," he told me. "I got greedy and I got caught." Yet the amazing thing about Troy is that he still believes in the American dream. He still believes that with hard work, despite being arrested, that he can move on up. Now, I don't know if Troy's dreams came true. He disappeared from the program for troubled youth that he was involved in and slipped through the cracks, but on that day that we spoke, I could tell that more than anything, Troy was happy that someone listened to his dreams and asked him about his future.

So I think about Troy and his optimism when I think of the reality that so many young, black millennials face when it comes to realizing their dreams. I think about all the challenges that so many black millennials have to endure in a world that tells them they can be anything they want to be if they work hard, but actually doesn't sit down to listen to their dreams or hear stories about their struggle. And we really need to listen to this generation if we hope to have a healthy and civil society going forward, because millennials of color, they make up a fair chunk of the US and the world population.

Now when we talk about millennials, a group that is often labeled as entitled, lazy, overeducated, noncommittal and narcissistic, the conversations often swirl around avocado toast, overpriced lattes and fancy jobs abroad -- you probably have heard all these things before. But millennials are not a monolith. Actress Lena Dunham may be the media's representation of this generation, but Troy and other voices like his are also part of the story. In fact, millennials are the largest and most diverse adult population in this country. 44 percent of all American millennials are nonwhite, but often, you wouldn't even know it at all.

Now sure, there are similarities within this population born between 1981 and 1996. Perhaps many of us do love avocado toast and lattes -- I know I do, right? But there are also extreme differences, often between millennials of color and white millennials. In fact, all too often, it seems as though we're virtually living in different worlds.

Now black millennials, a group that I have researched for a book I recently wrote, are the perfect example of the blind spot that we have when it comes to this group. For example, we have lower rates of homeownership, we have higher student debt, we get ID'd

more at voter registration booths, we are incarcerated at higher rates ... we make less money, we have higher numbers of unemployment -- even when we do go to college, I should say -- and we get married at lower rates. And honestly, that's really just the beginning.

Now, none of these struggles are particularly new, right? Young black people in America have been fighting, really fighting hard to get their stories told for centuries. After the Civil War in the 1800s, Reconstruction failed to deliver the equality that the end of slavery should have heralded, so young people moved to the North and the West to escape discriminatory Jim Crow policies. Then, as segregation raged in much of the country, young black people helped spearhead civil rights campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s. After that, some people embraced black power and then became Black Panthers and then the next generation, they turned to hip-hop to make sure their voices were heard. And then Barack Obama, hopeful that he, too, may bring about change. And when that failed, when we realized we were still brutalized and battered, we had to let the world know that our lives still mattered. Now, when technology allows more video of our pain and struggle to be broadcast to the world, we wonder, like, what is next?

Our country feels more polarized than ever, yet we are still being told to pull up our pants, be respectable, be less angry, smile more and work harder. Even the attitudes of millennials themselves are overdue for an update. Research done by the Washington Post in 2015 about this supposedly "woke" group found that 31 percent of white millennials think that blacks are lazier than whites, and 23 percent say they're not as intelligent. These are, like, surprising things to me, and shocking. And these responses are not that much different than generations in the past, and it shows that unfortunately, this generation is repeating the same old stereotypes and tropes of the past. Now, a study conducted by David Binder Research and MTV in 2014 -- it found that 84 percent of young millennials were taught by their families that everyone should be equal. This is a really great thing, a really positive step. But only 37 percent in that group actually talked about race with their families.

So I could understand why things may be confusing to some. There are definitely black millennials who are succeeding. Marvel's "Black Panther," directed by black millennial Ryan Coogler and showcasing many others, broke all sorts of records. There's a crop of television shows by creatives like Donald Glover, Lena Waithe and Issa Rae. Beyoncé is, like, the queen, right? She is, like, everything. Young black authors are winning awards, Serena Williams is still dominating on the tennis court despite all her haters, and there's a crop of new politicians and activists running for office. So I don't want to, like, kill these moments of black joy that I too revel in, but I want to make it clear that these wins are too few and far between for a people that's been here for over 400 years. Like, that's insane, right?

And most people still don't really understand the full picture, right? Our stories are still misunderstood, our bodies are still taken advantage of, and our voices? Our voices are silenced in a world that still shows little concern for our everyday struggles. So our stories need to be told in a multitude of ways by a range of voices talking about diverse and nuanced topics, and they really need to be listened to.

And it is not just here in America, right? It's all around the world. Millennials make up 27 percent of the world's population. That's around two billion people. And with countries like India, China, Indonesia and Brazil, along with the United States, accounting for 50 percent of the world's millennials, it's clear that the white, often male, heterosexual narrative of the millennial is only telling half the story. Now, there's many people trying to broaden the palette. They're fighting to get their stories told and bust the millennial stereotype. Whether it's students in South Africa protesting statues of Cecil Rhodes, Michaela Coel making us laugh from the UK, or Uche Eze, who's framing views about Nigerian life, online. But I want to make it clear -- I want to make it really clear to everyone that just because things look more equal than they did in the 20th century, doesn't mean that things are equitable at all. It doesn't mean our experiences are equitable, and it certainly doesn't mean that a post-racial society, that thing that we talked about so much, ever became close to being a reality.

I think of Joelle, a middle-class 20-something who did everything the "right way," but she couldn't go to her dream school, because it was simply too expensive. Or Jalessa, who knows she can't be mediocre at her job the same way that her white peers can. Or Trina, who knows that people judge her unconventional family choices in a different way than if she were a white woman. Or actor AB, who knows that the roles he takes and gets in Hollywood are different because of his skin color. And then there's Simon. So Simon, by all means, would be an example of someone who's made it. He's a CFO at a tech company in San Francisco, he has a degree from MIT and he's worked at some of the hottest tech companies in the world.

But when I asked Simon if he had achieved the American dream, it took him a while to respond. While acknowledging that he had a really comfortable life, he admitted that under different circumstances, he might have chosen a different path. Simon really loves

photography, but that was never a real option for him. "My parents weren't able to subsidize me through that sort of thing," Simon said. "Maybe that's something my children could do." So it's these kinds of stories -- the quieter, more subtle ones -- that reveal the often unique and untold stories of black millennials that show how even dreaming may differ between communities.

So we really need to listen and hear the stories of this generation, now more than ever, as the baby boomers age and millennials come to prominence. We can talk all we want to about pickling businesses in Brooklyn or avocado toast, but leaving out the stories and the voices of black millennials, large swaths of the population -- it will only increase divisions. So stories of black millennials, brown millennials and all millennials of color really need to be told, and they also need to be listened to. We'd be a far better-off country and world.

Thank you.

Reniqua Allen is a journalist who produces and writes for various outlets on issues of race, opportunity, politics and popular culture. She is the author of *It Was All a Dream: A New Generation Confronts the Broken Promise to Black America.* This essay is a transcript of her TED Talk.

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3.2.5: The Plot to Privatize Common Knowledge (Bollier)

By David Bollier

#reportinginformation #descriptive #sharedvalues #currentevents #research #pathos #logos #kairos #cognitivebias #artsandculture #intellectualproperty



"adler barbie articulated" by deborah is lola is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

Over the past three decades, modern culture has become infatuated with the idea that knowledge should be owned like real estate or stock shares. The original idea, of course, is that copyrights, trademarks and patents reward people for their creative labors and thereby boosts the common good.

But this line of thinking has come to resemble a kind of Market Fundamentalism: copyrights, trademarks and patents are the only morally legitimate and practical method for managing creations of the mind. There is no middle ground. You either believe in intellectual property rights, or you support “theft” and “piracy.

This fundamentalist approach shuts down a broader discussion about how knowledge ought to circulate in our culture. To avoid any confusion, let me just say straight-up that I believe in copyrights and patents. In some cases, they provide significant and necessary incentives to invest in new works. But today, copyrights and patents are going far beyond their intended goals—such as the U.S. Constitution provision to “promote progress in science and the useful arts”-- to become ends in themselves. Instead of carefully balancing private interests and public needs, copyrights and patents are becoming crude, anti-social instruments of control and avarice.

This is the conclusion that I came to in my book Brand Name Bullies, which is filled with dozens of stories of copyright and trademark owners bullying citizens, artists, scholars and others with ridiculous legal threats.

Silent Campfires

One of my favorite stories about the alarming expansion of copyright law involves ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the organization that collects performance licensing fees from public establishments where recorded music is played.

ASCAP decided that their domain should be extended to summer camps. Why shouldn’t boys and girls singing around the campfire be considered a “public performance” that should pay royalties? A while back ASCAP approached the American Camping Association and said it wanted blanket performance licenses from hundreds of summer camps – something on the order of $300 to $1,400 per season per camp.

This caused quite a ruckus. When it was discovered that ASCAP wanted money for the Girl Scouts to sing “This Land Is Your Land” and “Puff, the Magic Dragon”, the press went nuts. There were stories about camps resorting to non-copyrighted songs like “The Bow-Legged Chicken.” An ASCAP official heartlessly told a reporter: “They [camps] buy paper, twine and glue for their

crafts – they can pay for the music too." Eventually, after a huge public outcry, ASCAP backed down. But its claim to legal authority in charging summer camps for their "public performances" of copyrighted songs remains intact.

Lawsuit Barbie

The issue in so many of these battles is: Who shall control the "public meaning" of familiar images? Mattel is legendary in trying to protect the cultural "meaning" of Barbie. It has gone after any unauthorized uses of Barbie. It went after a series of photographs by Mark Napier called Distorted Barbie, which dared to depict Barbie as fat or as having Down's Syndrome. Even highly distorted images of Barbie that were essentially unrecognizable were deemed unacceptable by Mattel.

Mattel went after a magazine that caters to adult collectors of Barbie dolls. Mattel even pressured the Seattle publisher of a book, Adios, Barbie: Young Women Write About Body Image and Identity, to change the title. The book was reprinted as Body Outlaws. This extreme clampdown on free expression spurred culture-jammers, such as the self-styled Barbie Liberation Organization, which substituted voice boxes of GI Joe with those in Barbie, so that GI Joe would say, "Let's plan our dream wedding," and Barbie would yell, "Vengeance is mine!"

I am happy to report, a federal circuit court in the United States put a damper on Mattel's bullying litigation. The case involved Utah photographer Tom Forsythe, who made a series of 78 photos of Barbie for his Food Chain Barbie exhibit. It featured Barbie in enchiladas, stuffed into a blender and in other kitchen poses. Only a few of Forsythe's photos sold. He spent about $5,000 to mount the exhibit, and lost money.No matter; Mattel wanted to send a message that you can't mess with Barbie. It spent years litigating the case, requiring Forsythe to find pro bono legal counsel, which spent nearly $2 million defending him. Forsythe prevailed in the circuit court, which delivered a stinging rebuke to Mattel for bringing a "groundless and unreasonable" trademark dilution claim.

Watch Your Words

The privatization of words—language is one of the most basic form of commons— is another disturbing trend. The Japanese corporation that owns the "Godzilla" trademark has a habit of threatening all sorts of people who use the phoneme "zilla," including a website called "Davezilla" that featured a lizard-like cartoon character.

The corporate obsession with owning words is really quite extensive. McDonald's claims to own 131 words and phrases. The San Diego-based McDonald's actually claims to own the Irish prefix "Mc." It has successfully prevented restaurant from naming their businesses McVegan, McSushi and McMunchies.

Ralph Lauren, the clothing line, went after Polo magazine, run by an equestrian organization, claiming it was a trademark infringement for the U.S. Polo Association to use the word "polo" on its line of clothing! MasterCard went after Ralph Nader for using "priceless" in his campaign ads when running for President in 2000. (Nader's free speech rights ultimately prevailed.) But the gay athletes who wanted to host a series of athletic competitions in San Francisco could not use the phrase "Gay Olympics" because that phrase is owned by the U.S. Olympic Committee, who gets to decide who can use it. "Special Olympics" for disabled kids is OK, but not "Gay Olympics."

The TV demagogue Bill O'Reilly reportedly went ballistic when he learned that the comedian (and now senator) Al Franken was using the words "fair and balanced" as a subtitle in his book that mocked various right-wing pundit, including him. The federal court laughed Fox News' case out of court, and Franken won. But pity the people who can't afford to hire Floyd Abrams, a prominent First Amendment attorney, to represent them. A woman from Los Angeles dared to name her neighborhood newspaper the Beechwood Voice. She was threatened with legal action by the Village Voice, which claimed that use of the word "voice" as a newspaper name diluted its trademark.

These stories illustrate just how far Market Fundamentalism is willing to go in order to enforce its vision of the world. It wants to commodify all of culture as private property, and require people to obtain permission (and to make royalties) before embarking on any modestly derivative new creativity. This approach, not coincidentally, favors the Disneys, Time Warners and Rupert Murdochs because it protects the market value of large inventories of copyrighted and trademarked works. It directly stifles expression that is local, amateur, small-scale or non-commercial in nature— the kind of expression that almost anyone outside a powerful corporation would engage in. This amounts to a wholesale privatization of our cultural commons.

Patents Privatize Taxpayer-Funded Research

The Market Fundamentalist worldview is even more infuriating, if that is possible, when applied to patents arising out of publicly funded research. Until 35 years ago, there had been a broad consensus that the intellectual property rights of federal research should stay in the public domain, or at least be licensed on a nonexclusive basis. That way, taxpayers could reap the full measure of value from their collective investments. In the late 1970s, however, large pharmaceutical, electronics and chemical companies mounted a bold lobbying campaign to reverse the public ownership of federal research. Since enactment of Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, authorizing universities to patent the fruits of federally funded research, we have seen a land rush to sell academic research that was once freely available to all.

Between 1980 and 2000, the number of patents secured by universities grew ten-fold, bringing in more than $1 billion in royalties and licensing fees – a windfall enjoyed mostly by a dozen top research universities. This, in reality, is a privatization of the public's investments. Even though the public pays for the lion's share of risky basic research for new drugs, the long-term equity returns tend to go to drug companies and a handful of top research universities. In the United States, we have seen this with the cancer drug Taxol; the antidepressant Prozac; the hypertension drug Capoten; and a number of HIV and AIDS therapies.

The upshot is that citizens often have to pay twice for pharmaceuticals and other medical treatments – first, as taxpayers who finance the research, and second, as consumers who pay monopoly prices for drugs. This is a pure giveaway because it's not even clear that companies need exclusive patent rights as an incentive to commercialize new drug research.

Corporations Loot Indigenous People's Knowledge

Multinational corporations are no longer content to simply claim ownership of commons knowledge at home. Now they scour the developing world-- in a practice known as biopiracy-- to claim patents on the botanical and ecological knowledge acquired by indigenous people through the centuries. They move into Madagascar, Brazil, Guatemala and other poor countries to find plants and microorganisms that might be used in making new medicines and genetically engineered crops. But as Seth Shulman writes in his book Owning the Future, "Who, if anyone, should be able to claim ownership rights to the globe's genetic and cultural inheritance?"

Sir John Sulston answers this question eloquently in his book, *The Common Thread*, which chronicles the race to decode the human genome. A private startup company, Celera, was aggressively trying to put genomic sequences in one big privatized database. That way, it would have a monopoly over future use of the genomic data by licensing access to its database. Fortunately, a coalition of public-sector scientists published the data first, which is why the human genome is now in the public domain. Sulston answers, quite rightly, that the human genome must be treated as the "common heritage of humankind."

Life Itself Can Now Be Owned

We dodged a bullet there when the publicly funded scientists won the race to decode human genome. Yet the threat of private ownership of essential knowledge for the sake of profits is not by any means over. Further attempts will by the logical culmination of a path first opened by the U.S. Supreme Court's Diamond v. Chakrabarty ruling in 1980, which authorized the patenting of live, genetically altered microorganisms. The patenting of living organisms opened the way for an ecologically and ethically dubious future in which the life forms that are part of the sacred web of life can be owned and treated as commodities. Knowledge is treated as private property, not as a public good.

One inevitable result of all these new ownership claims is the rise of new barriers to open sharing, collaboration and discovery among researchers and scholars. Patents are increasingly being granted for "upstream" research, which means that basic knowledge that everyone else must use for the field to advance, is becoming proprietary. Harvard, MIT and the Whitehead Institute, for example, have a patent on all drugs that inhibit something known as NF-kB cell signaling. Since this physiological process is believed to have something to do with many diseases such as cancer and osteoporosis, the patent deters anyone else from pursuing their own scientific investigations in this area.

Things were not always this way concerning valuable knowledge. Contrast these stories with Jonas Salk, the inventor of the polio vaccine. When journalist Edward R. Murrow asked him, "Who owns the patent on this vaccine?" Salk replied, "Well, the people, I would say. There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?" This story helps us remember that current notions about ownership of

knowledge are not inevitable and universal; they are the result of mounting market pressures to make our scientific and cultural commons into private property.

The privatization of knowledge has only intensified as the courts – in the United States, at least – have lowered the standards for obtaining patents while broadening the scope of what is patentable. It is now possible to own mathematical algorithms embedded in software programs. The very tools needed to conduct scientific research are now private property, available only for a steep fee.

Imagine what might have happened to biotechnology and computer science if contemporary patent rules had been in place in the 1950s and 1960s. Neither the biotech nor the computer revolution would have occurred in the first place. Too much fundamental knowledge would have been off limits due to patents.

Problem of the Anti-Commons

The over-patenting of knowledge sometimes results in what is called an "anti-commons" problem, in which property rights for a given field of research are so numerous and fragmented that it becomes very difficult to conduct research. The transaction costs for obtaining rights are simply too numerous and costly. For example, there are thirty-four "patent families" for a single malarial antigen, and those rights, applying to different pieces of the research agenda, are owned by different parties in many different countries. One reason that a malaria vaccine has been so elusive is because the patent rights are so complicated and expensive to secure.

It is worth noting that openness, sharing and the public domain do not harm the market. Quite the contrary. They invigorate it. In 2005, I co-hosted a conference called Ready to Share: Fashion and the Ownership of Creativity. It explored the power of openness in apparel design. Precisely because no one can own the creative design of clothes – they can only own the company name and logo, as trademarks – everyone can participate in the design commons. The result is a more robust, innovative and competitive marketplace. This is exactly the effect that Linux, the open-source computer operating system, had on the software sector. It has opened up new opportunities for value-added innovation and competition in a marketplace until then dominated by the Microsoft monopoly.

Yale Professor Yochai Benkler argues in his magisterial book, *The Wealth of Networks*, that a great deal of knowledge production is more effectively pursued through a commons than through markets. Questions of ethics aside, why doesn't money succeed at simply "buying" the knowledge it needs? Because money tends to subvert the social dynamics that make the knowledge commons work. It can sabotage self-directed inquiry. It undermines the social trust, candor and ethics that are essential to creativity and good research.

David Bollier is an author, activist, blogger and consultant. He is the founding editor of *On the Commons* in which this essay first appeared. His 2014 book, *Think Like a Commoner: A Short Introduction to the Commons* describes his thinking about the commons.



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3.2.6: Everything You Need to Know About the Radical Roots of Wonder Woman (Finke)

Her enigmatic creator believed women were destined to rule the world. 10 facts about the iconic heroine.

Christopher Zumski Finke

#heroes #artsandculture #reportinginformation #history



"Wonder Woman 03" by B. Baltimore Brown is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

All these things are true about Wonder Woman: She is a national treasure that the Smithsonian Institution named among its 101 Objects that Made America; she is a '70s feminist icon; she is the product of a polyamorous household that participated in a sex cult.

She comes out of the feminist movements of women's suffrage, birth control, and the fight for equality.

Harvard historian Jill Lepore claims in her new book, *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, that Wonder Woman is the "missing link in a chain of events that begins with the women's suffrage campaigns of the 1910s and ends with the troubled place of feminism fully a century later."

The hero and her alter ego, Diana Prince, were the products of the tumultuous women's rights movements of the early 20th century. Here are 10 essential elements to understanding the history and legacy of Wonder Woman and the family from which she sprung.

Wonder Woman first appeared in *Sensation Comics #1* in December 1941.

Since that issue arrived 73 years ago, Wonder Woman has been in constant publication, making her the third longest running superhero in history, behind Superman (introduced June 1938) and Batman (introduced May 1939).

Wonder Woman's creator had a secret identity.

Superheroes always have secret identities. So too did the man behind Wonder Woman. His name upon publication was Charles Moulton, but that was a pseudonym. It was after two years of popularity and success that the author revealed his identity: then-famous psychologist William Moulton Marston, who also invented the lie detector test.

William Moulton Marston was, as Jill Lepore tells it, an "awesomely cocky" psychologist and huckster from Massachusetts. He was also committed to the feminist causes he grew up around.

By 1941, Marston's image of the iconic feminist of the future was already a throwback to his youth. He saw the celebrated British suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst speak in Harvard Square (she was banned from speaking at Harvard University) in 1911, and from then on imagined the future of civilization as one destined for female rule.

Actually, the whole Marston family had a secret identity.

The Marston family was an unconventional home, full of radical politics and feminism. Marston lived with multiple women, including his wife, Sadie Elizabeth Holloway, a highly educated psychologist, and another lifelong partner, a writer named Olive Byrne, who was the niece of birth control activist Margaret Sanger. He had four children, two by each of the women, and they all grew up oblivious to the polyamorous nature of their parents' relationships.

Marston, Holloway, and Byrne all contributed to Wonder Woman's creation, a character that Marston explicitly designed to show the necessity of equality and advancement of women's rights.

Wonder Woman was an Amazon molded from clay, but she was birthed out of feminism.

Princess Diana of Themyscira, or Diana Prince (Wonder Woman's alter ego), comes from the land of the Amazons. In Greek mythology, the Amazons are an immortal race of beauties that live apart from men. In the origin story of Wonder Woman, Diana the is daughter of the queen of the Amazons. She's from Paradise Island (Paradise is the land where no men live), where Queen Hyppolita carves her daughter out of clay. She has no father.

Wonder Woman has been in constant publication, making her the third longest running superhero.

She comes out of the feminist movements of women's suffrage, birth control, and the fight for equality. When Marston was working with DC Comics editor Sheldon Mayer on the origins of Wonder Woman, Marston left no room for interpretation about what he wanted from his heroine.

"About the story's feminism," historian Lepore writes, "he was unmovable. 'Let that theme alone,' Marston said, 'or drop the project.'"

Wonder Woman fought for the people—all the people.

The injustices that moved Wonder Woman to action did not just take place in the world of fantasy heroes and villains, nor was she only about women's rights. She also fought for the rights of children, workers, and farmers.

In a 1942 issue of *Sensation Comics*, Wonder Woman targets the International Milk Company, which she has learned has been overcharging for milk, leading to the undernourishment of children. According to Lepore, the story came right out of a Hearst newspaper headline about "milk crooks" creating a "milk trust" to raise the price of milk, profiteering on the backs of American babies.

For the Wonder Woman story, Marston attributed the source of this crime to Nazi Germany. But the action Wonder Woman takes is the same as the real-life solution: She leads a march of women and men in "a gigantic demonstration against the milk racket."

There's a whole lot of bondage in Wonder Woman.

In the years that Marston was writing Wonder Woman, bondage was everywhere. "In episode after episode," Lepore writes, "Wonder Woman is chained, bound, gagged, lassoed, tied, fettered, and manacled." Even Wonder Woman herself expressed exhaustion at the over-use of being bound: "Great girdle of Aphrodite! Am I tired of being tied up!" she says.

She appeared on the first issue of Ms. Magazine, in 1972, with the headline "Wonder Woman for President."

There's little doubt that the sexual proclivities of the Marston family were in part responsible for this interest. A woman named Marjorie Wilkes Huntley was part of the Marston household—an "aunt" for the children, who shared the family home (and bedroom) when she was in town. Huntley was fond of bondage.

The theme was so persistent that an Army sergeant who was fond of the erotic images wrote to Marston asking where he could purchase some of the bondage implements used in the book. After that, DC Comics told Marston to cut back on the BDSM.

But that bondage was not all about sex.

The bondage themes in Wonder Woman are more complex than just a polyamorous fetish, though. Women in bondage was an iconic image of the suffrage and feminist movements, as women attempted to loosen the chains that bound them in society. Cartoonist and artist Lou Rogers drew many women in bonds, and Margaret Sanger appeared before a crowd bound at the mouth to protest the censorship of women in America.

Later, Margaret Sanger's *Birth Control Review* would use a similar motif. One cover image had a woman chained to the weight of unwanted babies.

Readers—boys and girls—loved Wonder Woman.

Despite the political and secretive history of Wonder Woman's creation, she was a wildly popular character. After Wonder Woman's early success, DC Comics considered adding her to the roster of the Justice Society, which included Batman and Superman and many other male superheroes. Charlie Gaines, who ran DC Comics, decided to conduct a reader poll, asking, "Should Wonder Woman be allowed, even though a woman, to become a member of the justice society?"

Readers returned 1,801 surveys. Among boys, 1,265 said yes, 197 said no; among girls, 333 said yes, and only 6 said no.

But Justice Society was not written by feminist Marston. After Wonder Woman was brought into the Justice Society, she spent her first episodes working as the secretary.

The feminist spirit of Wonder Woman waned for decades.

After the death of William Moulton Marston in 1947, DC Comics took the feminism out of Wonder Woman and created instead a timid and uninspiring female character. "Wonder Woman lived on," Lepore writes, "but she was barely recognizable."

The first cover not drawn by the original artist, Harry G. Peter, "featured Steve Trevor [Wonder Woman's heretofore hapless love interest] carrying a smiling, daffy, helpless Wonder Woman over a stream. Instead of her badass, kinky red boots, she wears dainty yellow ballerina slippers," Lepore observes. Without her radical edge, Wonder Woman's popularity waned until the rise of second wave feminism in the '60s and '70s, when Wonder Woman was trumpeted as an icon of women's empowerment.

Wonder Woman became president.

In a 1943 story, Wonder Woman is actually elected President of the United States. Marston was adamant that a women would one day rule the United States, and that the world would be better when civilization's power structures were in the hands of women instead of men.

Women in bondage was an iconic image of the suffrage and feminist movements.

Wonder Woman's popularity soared as the feminist movement picked up in the late 1960s. Wonder Woman appeared on the first issue of *Ms. Magazine*, in 1972, with the headline "Wonder Woman for President." At that time, Gloria Steinem said of Wonder Woman, "Looking back now at these Wonder Woman stories from the '40s, I am amazed by the strength of their feminist message."

The impact of Wonder Woman continues.

Wonder Woman is in for a great couple of years. *Ms. Magazine* just celebrated its 40th anniversary, and Wonder Woman is back on its cover. Jill Lepore's book has been getting wonderful coverage (see her on *The Colbert Report* below discussing the kinks of the Marston Family), and Noah Berlatsky's *Wonder Woman: Feminism and Bondage in the Marston/Peter Comics* will be published in January.

She's also gearing up for her first-ever theatrical film appearance: Wonder Woman will appear in Zack Snyder's 2016 film *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*. In 2017, she will be the star of her own film, to be directed by Michelle McClaren (*Breaking Bad*, *The Walking Dead*). Wonder Woman will be played by the Israeli actress Gal Gadot.

Let us hope that Gadot in the role conjures the spirit of the original creation of Marston, Holloway, and Byrne: a radical, independent, fierce woman and leader for all women and men to admire.

Christopher Zumski Finke blogs about pop culture and is editor of The Stake.

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3.2.7: Guardians of the Galaxy and the Fall of the Classic Hero (Lewis)

By A. David Lewis


The Guardians of the Galaxy – whose protagonists are a morally-gray motley crew – could be seen as a satire of the classic hero tradition. BagoGames/Flickr , CC BY

A beautiful assassin. A superstrong thug. A star-lost child of the ‘80s. A sentient tree. A gun-toting raccoon. Meet the morally gray protagonists of Marvel’s Guardians of the Galaxy, the film that raked in $770 million at the box office this past summer and was just released on DVD.

Guardians, I’d like you to meet 20th-century mythology theorist Joseph Campbell. Trust me, you’ll have a lot to talk about.

…Oh, what’s that? You already know Mr. Campbell? Ah, that’s right, I’d forgotten: you beat the *stuffing* out of his heroic monomyth in your movie this year.

For those unfamiliar with the term: Campbell’s monomyth, also known as the “Hero’s Quest” or “Hero’s Journey,” is a narrative pattern derived from his extensive analysis of myths and stories from all around the world. In his 1949 book The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Campbell outlines the pattern that nearly every “heroic” protagonist, going all the way back to ancient times, follows.

> *A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.*

In other words, the protagonist is placed outside of his or her comfort zone, and, after toiling through various obstacles and setbacks, emerges to beat the bad guys and change the world for the better.


Mythologist Joseph Campbell noticed a pattern in the character arc of hero protagonists. Joan Halifax/Wikimedia Commons, CC BY

Since the trailer of its newest installment was released last week, think of the original Star Wars as an example. George Lucas had Campbell in mind when he created Luke Skywalker, farmboy turned rebel hero. Lucas even paid attention to the finer points of

Campbell's model, giving Luke a teacher (Obi-Wan), helpers (Han Solo, the droids), a magic talisman or weapon (the light-saber), and, most importantly, a moment that Campbell calls "the Abyss."

It's this Abyss – also known as "The Belly of the Whale" – that's the low point in the monomythic cycle and vital to understanding what's so notable about Guardians of the Galaxy. In the original Star Wars, Luke Skywalker experiences – all things considered – an "easy" low point: he's sucked underwater in the Death Star trash compactor. In The Empire Strikes Back, things get a bit thornier: he gets his whole hand chopped off (rumored to be a plot point in JJ Abrams's The Force Awakens) and plummets from Cloud City. Basically, if a hero doesn't face an actual death, he or she has to (at least) deal with a metaphorical death before returning as a stronger, savvier version of himself.

But where was the Abyss moment in Guardians of the Galaxy? Was it when young Peter Quill loses his mother and is taken by aliens? Or, wait – maybe it's when he's thrown into that space prison and escapes? There's also that moment when his team is nearly killed by an explosion in the Collector's establishment. And Quill is all-but-dead when he leaves the safety of his ship to freeze and suffocate in exposed space while selflessly saving his teammate Gamora. And who can forget the scene when he is practically torn apart by wielding the Infinity Stone?

It's as if Quill and his Guardians are running in loops around Campbell's monomyth. Or, even better, the movie-makers are flagrantly disregarding it. They're nearly satirizing it.

If audiences step back a bit, it's easier to see how Guardians of the Galaxy might be a satire of the classic hero tradition. Villains are constantly interrupted mid-maniacal monologue, elaborate plans are impulsively overturned, and Quill, the movie's closest thing to a hero, challenges the film's protagonist to a dance-off. (Of course, there's also the fact that two of the main characters are a tree and a raccoon!)

This is not to write off Guardians of the Galaxy and claim it's a goof on Campbell's model. Instead, it could be seen as a reaction to just how predictable, how tired, and even how broken the monomyth is today. The Guardians, remember, are just as much rogues as they are good guys. As Quill asks his team of misfits, "What should we do next: Something good, something bad? Bit of both?"

What Guardians of the Galaxy will do next – presumably in their Summer 2016 sequel – is continue to challenge our modern notions of heroism. Campbell's monomyth was proposed just after World War II, at the dawn of the Cold War. It was a time when, in popular culture, the distinctions between heroes and villains were far more explicit.

Today, Quill and company are being presented to movie-going audiences at a time when when we're distancing ourselves from old models – when we sorely crave a new pattern. The pure hero, the "white hat" of the old Westerns, is largely lost to us. Brilliant actors like Robin Williams and Phillip Seymour Hoffman are done in by their own personal ghosts, musicians like Amy Winehouse and Whitney Houston succumb to their addictions, and politicians – like the four Illinois governors who have been sent to prison – continue to disappoint. The Dark Knight perhaps said it best: "You either die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain."

The monomyth is making its final orbit. Heroes are so yesterday. Welcome, instead, to the tomorrow of the Guardians: characters who are a little good, a little bad, and more unpredictable than ever.

A. David Lewis is an
Arts & Sciences Faculty Associate at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. He is the author of *American Comic Books, Literary Theory, and Religion: The Superhero Afterlife*, as well as the co-editor of both *Graven Images: Religion in Comic Books and Graphic Novels*, and *Digital Death: Mortality and Beyond in the Online Age*.His essay originally appeared in The Conservation.

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3.2.8: A Feminist's Guide to Rom-Coms and How to Watch Them (Sutriasa)

By Ayu Sutriasa



"Love's Messenger" by Marie Spartali Stillman, Delaware Art Museum is in the Public Domain

Valentine's Day is right around the corner, which means lots of chocolate, teddy bears, and single ladies being made to feel especially inadequate. Some might celebrate Galentine's Day instead, some might skip on acknowledging the holiday at all, and some, myself included, will be holed up watching romantic comedies.

The internet is filled with lists of which rom-coms will "get you through" Valentine's Day—the assumption seems to be that, otherwise, we singles would be festering alone in our living rooms, drinking vodka and singing "All By Myself" à la Bridget Jones. I enjoy the genre, but as a feminist I have some qualms.

Romantic comedies, particularly "the classics" of the genre, can be problematic by today's standards of feminism. Movies like Pretty Woman and Princess Bride tend to perpetuate harmful gender stereotypes and romanticize men's predatory behavior. Not to mention they are usually limited to depicting heterosexual relationships between an attractive cis man and an equally, perhaps even more, attractive cis woman. (LGBTQ folks: Here's a list of rom-coms that drown out the heteronormative noise.) Lastly, if rom-coms are marketed to single women, then why are they mostly written and directed by men? (That's a rhetorical question.)

Despite all this, rom-coms are stunningly popular. How do you reconcile your love of rom-coms with your staunch feminism?

Monique Jones, a pop culture critic and entertainment journalist, says that it's OK if you like problematic rom-coms. "That doesn't make us any less of an activist, it doesn't make us any less down for the cause. It's just being a human—and being part of a culture that has indoctrinated us to believe certain things, whether or not they're true," she says.

However, as feminists we do have to hold ourselves accountable, Jones says. Here are three tips on how to be a responsible rom-com consumer.

1. Be aware of how you're internalizing the underlying messages

One of the biggest problems with the genre is that it tends to reinforce problematic ideas of romance. Contrary to rom-com plots, it's actually not an outrageous notion for a man to love you "just as you are" (*Bridget Jones's Diary, Trainwreck, Pretty Woman, Grease*), but it actually is outrageous for a man to consistently ignore your rejections and relentlessly pursue you (*The Notebook, 10 Things I Hate About You, 50 First Dates, Breakfast at Tiffany's*).

"There are a lot of patriarchal things in society that we've grown up with that we've just assumed are normal. And those same ideals get stuck in these movies. That's why so many of them don't get called out as being problematic, even though they are indicative of larger problems in society," Jones says.

Once you're aware of the patriarchal underpinnings of these movies, you can more objectively decide what you believe is romantic. For example, maybe you don't think it's romantic to pretend to be someone's fiancée while they are in a coma and have no idea who you are. It's creepy, Sandra Bullock.

2. Be conscious of what/who you are supporting

This takes some research, but it's worth it (IMDB will be your new best friend). Jones suggests learning what you can about the movie: Who's the director? Who wrote it? Who acts in it? What's the premise? "If you don't feel offended, then I think it's fine to watch," Jones says.

And for the movies we don't feel good about—like anything involving Woody Allen—consider skipping it. "I can't justify having my head in the sand just to support somebody like Woody Allen," Jones says. She skips anything with his name attached to it.

"I never liked his movies anyway. They don't speak to me, first of all, as a woman, and second of all, as an African-American woman," she says. "I know all the film critics and film students that I have been in contact with say that Woody Allen is a master at doing this and that. But I don't align with anything that he does or is. And that's how I go about it. If what the person does doesn't align with my core values, then I just can't do it."

There are funnier, more romantic movies than *Annie Hall*, anyway.

3. Opt for rom-coms with fewer or zero problems

I know the classics are, well, classics, but why not watch a movie that takes a healthier approach to romance? "There are always movies that are smaller productions, and they might not have the big box-office dollars, but they're still well-crafted, well-made movies," Jones says.

Here's a list of five from Thought Catalog to get you started: *Warm Bodies*, *She's Out of My League*, *Celeste and Jesse Forever*, *My Best Friend's Wedding*,and *Kate and Leopold* (sarcasm).

So, my fellow feminist rom-comphiles, don't be discouraged.

There are still a lot of things people can enjoy about romantic comedies, Jones says. "With as much choice as there is out there, a person doesn't have to give up their romantic comedy love altogether."

Ayu Sutriasa is the digital editor for YES! Magazine. Her article is reprinted from YES!.

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3.2.9: Catwoman's Hyde- A Comparative Reading of the 2002 Catwoman Relaunch and Stevenson's Novella (Syn)

By Lesa Syn

#heroes #review #academic #analysis #artsandculture #descriptive #scholarly



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Abstract

This article advocates that the comic character of Catwoman is a comic incarnation of Robert Louis Stevenson's Edward Hyde. It does this first by problematizing Andreas Reichstein's reading of Batman as Hyde (1998). While the similarity between Bruce Wayne and Dr. Henry Jekyll is considerable (such as both being accomplished and affluent men of science who have nocturnal alter egos), Hyde embodies hedonistic desire and loss of control while Batman is the incarnation of discipline and control. This work then goes on to offer the numerous and stark similarities between Hyde and Catwoman, such as offering their counterparts animalistic freedom and the ability to achieve unification through embracing their darker halves. Because of her desire to embrace her dual human experience, the hero/villain Catwoman encapsulates the most human of comic characters.

Keywords: Catwoman , Batman , Hulk , Henry Jekyll , Edward Hyde , Ed Brubaker , Darwin Cooke , Robert Louis Stevenson , Andreas Reichstein , Identity Split , Hero/Villain , animalistic

Who is stronger, Catwoman or Hulk? In stark contrast to the Hulk, who is arguably the strongest comic-book character ever, Catwoman—like her beloved Batman—is one of the few comic-book characters that is "not super-powered, an alien, or a mutant," but rather entirely human (Orr 1984: 176–177). Well, almost entirely human. Therefore, comparing Catwoman to Hulk may as well be comparing a person to a natural disaster; however, Jason Ranker (2008) discusses a comparison of these dissimilar comic characters… and, believe it or not, the comparison is apt.

In his research, Ranker highlights how Catwoman and Hulk represent stereotypical versions of strength constructed along gender lines; however, there is a better reason to place these two in a category of their own. Unlike almost every other character in the comic book multiverse, these two characters are both heroes and villains, often at the same time. Hulk continues to be one of the greatest threats to Earth but he is also a founding member of The Avengers. Similarly, Catwoman is a villain on par with the rest of Forever Evil, but she is also a founding member of the new Justice League of America (see Figure 1): "Unfortunately, being a fence-sitter on the thin line separating good and evil doesn't make her a neutral party" (Beatty 2004: 36). These are ambivalent characters that are neither absolute good nor evil, but are constantly torn between both aspects—they are both modern and powerful Edward Hydes.



Figure 1: In 2013, Geoff Johns and David Finch offered Catwoman as both a Superhero and a Supervillain: Johns, G and Finch D (2013): Justice League of America 1 (New York: DC Comics) and Johns, G Finch D, and Friend R (2013): Forever Evil 1 (New York: DC Comics). Copyright © 2013 DC Comics.

Perhaps it can be argued that several villains have aspects similar to Robert Louis Stevenson's iconic Edward Hyde. Two-Face is a literal Janus figure and often physically depicts both good and evil, and Clayface's inability to fully control his transformation often results in Hyde-like horror in those around him. However, Two-Face does not suffer from his ambivalence, but simply relegates his dual nature to the fate of a coin flip. Clayface is not noble, like Jekyll, but rather is a disguised monster. Catwoman and her alter ego Selina Kyle, torn between both evil and good, are the only true Hyde and Jekyll of Gotham.

Adam Capitainio (2010) has thoroughly compared Marvel's Bruce Banner and the Incredible Hulk to Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, so this paper will move the discussion to the similar intellectual and emotional torment of DC's Kyle and Catwoman. To accomplish this task, this paper will first problematize Andreas Reichstein's (1988) reading of Batman as Mr. Hyde and then it will offer tangible evidence—especially from Brubaker, Cooke, and Allard's 2002 Catwoman relaunch—that, despite the physical dissimilarities of Kyle to Jekyll, Catwoman is a more complete version of a modern day Mr. Hyde.

Is Batman an American Mr. Hyde?

Reichstein (1998) makes a compelling argument that Batman's alter ego Bruce Wayne is an American Jekyll. Beyond the obvious comparisons of the successful, popular, and affluent bachelors, these are men of prominence and success who only transform into their alter egos at night. Reichstein highlights that despite both men being childless, Wayne and Jekyll have paternal affection for others: Wayne cares for his various wards and "Jekyll confesses how he had a father's concern for Hyde" (Reichstein 1998: 340). Reichstein also discusses how both Wayne and Jekyll spend the vast majority of their free time in their secret laboratories, conducting various chemical experiments.

However, the staunchest similarity between these two characters is their double lives. Reichstein explains, "Besides all these formal similarities between Wayne and Jekyll, the essential link between these characters lies in their basic trait: their double identity, their double personality" (Reichstein 1998: 343). As Philip Orr discusses, "[When] Bruce Wayne refers to the Batman, he is not referring to himself in the third person; rather he is referring to the other" (Orr 1995: 174). Rather than just one person with two aspects, Wayne and Batman are two distinct individuals who just happen to exist within a common body. Wayne even confesses this idea to a psychologist: "I guess, we're all two people—one in daylight and one we keep in shadow" (Batman Returns). Similarly, in his final confession, Dr. Jekyll writes, "With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth … that man is not truly one, but truly two" (Stevenson 1886: 77). Clearly, both of these men of science are all too intimately familiar with the dual nature of humanity, and their polarizing personalities. However, it is worth highlighting that the parallels between these two characters lie almost exclusively along the similarities of Wayne and Jekyll.

As such, while Wayne is an American Jekyll, what is the answer to Reichstein's (1998) titular question "Batman—an American Mr. Hyde?" Both Batman and Hyde are empowered shadows of their other selves, and are able to accomplish what neither Wayne nor Jekyll ever could. They achieve this power by embracing animalistic aspects of their personalities. Jekyll describes his other self as playing "ape-like tricks" (Stevenson 1886: 91) and possessing "ape-like spite" (93). Capitainio explains, "This suggests that Hyde, as the hidden side of Jekyll's personality, is representative of the animal past and behavior that human beings have necessarily repressed in their quest for 'civilization'" (Capitainio 2010: 250).

While Jekyll is an accomplished pinnacle of human evolution—generous, brilliant, scientific, attractive, and affluent—Hyde returns this character to his evolutionary ape-like past, which was a common theme in the Gothic novels of the 1890s (Reichstein 1998: 346). Regarding the newfound freedom and anonymity of becoming Hyde, Jekyll writes, "And thus fortified, as I supposed, on every side, I began to profit by the strange immunities of my position" (Stevenson 1886: 86). Batman too is able to tap into his primal animal form—in this case a bat—and uses this animal aspect to achieve his deepest desire for vengeance against the criminal element that orphaned him as a child. Batman also allowed Wayne to safely fulfill his desires for vigilantism.

While such similarities exist between Hyde and Batman, one of the most interesting parallels between these two characters is that both of them murder adversaries in their initial appearances. Mr. Hyde brutally assaults Sir Danvers Carew after a perceived insult: "And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway" (Stevenson 1886: 27). Similarly, in Batman's first appearance, he is holding the villainous Stryker when "… suddenly, Stryker, with the strength of a madman, tears himself free from the grasp of the Bat-Man…" (Finger and Kane 1939: 6). Stryker then pulls out a gun and shoots at Batman, but Batman punches Stryker, knocking him over the rail and into an acid tank, to which Batman comments, "A fitting end for his kind" (Finger and Kane 1939: 6). While both men have murdered an adversary, Hyde has killed an upstanding gentleman and must pay for his action with his life, while Batman has killed a murderer and deserves an accolade. Hyde must hide behind Jekyll or face the gallows, whereas Batman can continue crime-fighting, and be a vigilante without repercussion. Despite the consequences of these actions, Hyde only longs to kill, while Batman resolves to never take a life.

While *surface* similarities—such as the stark similarities between their alter egos, empowerment through animalistic disguise, and both having taken a life—exist between Hyde and Batman these characters are as dissimilar from each other as they are from their better halves. For Jekyll, becoming Hyde was embracing and savoring his dark side, "I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine" (Stevenson 1886: 79). Jekyll seems to use Hyde to indulge his baser desires. This is completely different from Batman whose "armor/costume harnesses the evil inside and outside of him, as well as protects against repressed sexual desires" (Reichstein 1998: 348). While Hyde is allowed to run rampant, participating in any debauchery that he comes upon, Batman focuses only on punishing criminals.

Most of all, Hyde embodies Jekyll's willing loss of control, while "Wayne/Batman is control" (Reichstein 1998: 347). After Hyde has killed Carew, Jekyll abandons the potion that unleashed his sinister self, but Hyde continued to reassert himself. Hyde manifests himself at first in dreams and then in reality by forcing the transformation unaided by any chemical concoction. Jekyll could not stop Hyde from taking over their body more and more. Batman, on the other hand, could be taken off at any time, cast aside. Reichstein explains, "He can don the costume/armor whenever he wants and drop it again to become Bruce Wayne" (Reichstein 1998: 348). Reichstein ultimately concludes, "Thus, Batman really is an American cousin of Edward Hyde" (Reichstein 1998: 350). However, this paper suggests that by Reichstein's definition, Hyde's familial relationship might as well just as easily include comic book characters such Green Arrow or Iron Man, both of whom are—beneath their masks—affluent playboy bachelor inventors who don costumes/armors to combat evil. While the similarities between Jekyll and Wayne are notable, Batman is not a complete Hyde.

No, but Catwoman Is

However, Catwoman, on the other hand, shares many similarities with Hyde. Jekyll describes the initial transformation into like this: "I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a millrace in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul" (Stevenson 1886: 78). Kyle too feels the strength and freedom of her alter ego: "That had been one of the reasons for the mask, initially. To help provide. That and the excitement… the adventure. Don't kid yourself that they weren't a big part of it, too" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 48). There is a youthful vibrancy and hedonistic abandonment to both Hyde and Catwoman. Catwoman is unbridled. Throughout Catwoman's history, she is known as thief, and she ultimately ignores societal rules while helping herself to whatever she desires. Ed Brubaker explains, "She was like Robin Hood, except she forgot to the money to the poor" (Beatty 2004: 6). Catwoman, like Hyde, is in it for the freedom and youthful thrill.

Jekyll and Hyde, Kyle and Catwoman are completely different people from their counterpart selves. Hyde has his own apartment and his own companions that exist in totally different circles than Jekyll. Similarly, as Beatty explains, "Aside from a few friends

and lovers, Selina and Catwoman are two different women moving in different worlds. And that suits them both just fine" (Beatty 2004: 19). Jekyll/Hyde and Catwoman/Kyle are in actuality two individuals who share one common body and one common memory, but share little else.

Hyde and Catwoman are impervious shields for their more noble halves. No matter the potential atrocities that Hyde could ever commit, Jekyll believes that at any moment he could dispense Hyde instantly and permanently:

> *Think of it—I did not even exist! Let me escape into my laboratory door, give me but a second or two to mix and swallow the draught that I had always standing ready; and whatever he had done, Edward Hyde would pass away like the stain of breath upon a mirror; and there in his stead, quietly at home, trimming the midnight lamp in his study, a man who could afford to laugh at suspicion, would be Henry Jekyll. (Stevenson 1886: 82).*

Through his potion, Jekyll could transform into his shadow self and fulfill his most monstrous desires. In the same vein, in The Dark End of The Street, Kyle embraces her bestial aspect, throwing off all moral, legal, and earthly limitations by transforming herself into a Cat-Woman. In this comic, The Cat-side is able to beat up her (masculine) enemies, climb tall buildings, and seemingly fly through the air (via her whip).

It is important to note in Catwoman history, she was known as "The Cat" and first appeared in the first issue of Batman in 1940. However, in 1950, ten years after "The Cat's" inception, the mild-mannered alter ego Kyle was named. It is a common misconception that Kyle came first—not a decade later—but this idea of the villainous side appearing before the sociality acceptable persona parallel's Stevenson's novella in which the story of Hyde accosting the young girl appears pages before the discussion of Jekyll. This argument will now go back to a previous quote from Jekyll, "I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine" (Stevenson 1886: 79). Jekyll seems to use Hyde to indulge his baser desires, but in reality the reverse is true—Hyde uses Jekyll for his own desires.

The problem is that these shielding personas eventually took on a life all their own. Hyde lashed out at his alter ego, punishing him through the destruction of Jekyll's belongings: "Hence the ape-like tricks that he would play me, scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books, burning the letters and destroying the portrait of my father" (Stevenson 1886: 91). In Brubaker, Cooke, and Allread's comic, Catwoman too began to have a life outside of Kyle, who says, "The mask is part of who I am now. But it's also part of the problem, too… because it became a person all on its own" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 54). Thus, while Hyde and Catwoman were created to liberate their alter egos and allowed them to achieve humanly-impossible, animalistic acts, these personas became whole persons in and of themselves. The animal-side uncontrollable and often exhibits behaviors that are outside of normative human roles. Catwoman is wild, something that Kyle struggles to understand (Figure 1). Furthermore, in Figure 1, this Cat-self bides for ownership of the body she cohabitates and eventually becomes intricately integrated and a fully realized being.

Ultimately, Hyde asserts himself and begins replacing Jekyll. The problem is that, with Carew's murder on his head, Hyde's only salvation lies in being Jekyll, but he could not condemn himself to perpetual torpor; as such, "Unable to compound the remedy that turns him into Dr. Jekyll again one day, Jekyll/Hyde kills himself" (Reichstein 1998: 339). Similarly, in this comic, Catwoman killed off both Kyle and then herself (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 16)… or at least Catwoman went through a lot of trouble to make it appear that way. Hired to find out if Catwoman truly was dead, Detective Slam Bradley asks the-very-much-alive Kyle, "But a while back, you killed off Selina Kyle… and a few months ago, you killed Catwoman, too… so, the question is—who's left to find?" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 33). Kyle reemerges and tries to live again, believing that Catwoman is dead and buried; however, Catwoman too refuses to stay dead. As Orr says, "[Catwoman] won't be killed" (Orr 1994: 181). Catwoman's immortality is in fact the sole attribute that Ranker's (2008) work offers as to why she is stronger than the Hulk. Beatty too notes, "Selina definitely has nine lives considering the number of times she has survived near-fatal catastrophes" (Beatty 2004: 25). While most often the nine lives of the Catwoman are seen in response to her battle with others, this immortality applies to her battle with Kyle as well.

The immortal Catwoman torments Kyle, much as Hyde tortures Jekyll: "And this again, that the insurgent horror was knit to him closer than a wife, closer than an eye; lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born" (Stevenson 1863: 91). Kyle struggles to control the beast within her, but unlike Jekyll who does not seek to understand Hyde—Kyle grapples with accepting Catwoman as a part of herself. Kyle waits a moment and then answers Bradley's question: "I don't know. Hopefully

someone who can look in the mirror without any pain" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 16). In the mirror here, Kyle sees all the pain that she has caused and that she has endured. Jekyll has a similar mirror experience, but his is all the more tragic because of the loss of control that it represents: "[and] bounding from my bed I rushed to the mirror. At the sight that met my eyes, my blood was changed into something exquisitely thin and icy. Yes, I had gone to bed Henry Jekyll, I had awakened Edward Hyde" (Stevenson 1886: 83).

It is important to highlight that mirrors denote the true representation of self. Christian Metz explains how it is only through a mirror that people can understand themselves and construct their egos: "Thus the child's ego is formed by identification with its like, and this in two senses simultaneously, metonymically and metaphorically: the other human being who is in the glass, the own reflection which is not the body, which is like it" (Metz 1975: 48–49). Metz underscores the duality of co-existence of each individual's two selves—the rational ego and the primal id. Thus, by a proverbial mirror, Kyle is able to be a full self, and it is in this mirror, that she understands the Cat's self. Another way to put it is that the animal-self allows Kyle the only way for her survive and to be a full and actualized person. Whereas the rest of humanity strives to deny the animalistic id inside them, Kyle realizes that she ultimately needs to embrace her Cat self into her life.

Whereas Jekyll embraced the concept of humanity's dual nature, he theorized that each person was in reality a conglomeration of individuals forced confined in uncomfortable cohabitation: "I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (Stevenson 1886: 78). In her nightmares, Kyle wrestles, not with Catwoman, but with the vast multitude of individuals that exist inside her: "Like everything I've ever been is struggling inside me… trying to find some place to fit themselves" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 44). On the surface, it is easy to focus simply on the duality, but for both Jekyll and Kyle, the double personalities that they battle are just the beginning, as if both these two—and everyone of us for that matter—could just as easily say, "My name is Legion; for we are many" (Mark 5: 9).

While Kyle and Catwoman embody just two persons that inhabit their body, there are multitudes of others. Ignoring the staunch differences in attitude and mannerisms between Kyle and Catwoman, both characters pronouncedly vacillate in skin tone and costume within themselves—even just within this single comic book. For instance, while the panels within the comic showcase a Catwoman who is very overtly a pale Caucasian brunette, the various covers from this same comic depict a darker complected Kyle that is clearly mulatto, Hispanic, or even Italian (see Figure 3, left side). However, even this ethnic alteration pales to the disguises that Kyle dons that make her unrecognizable, the staunchest of which is when Kyle goes undercover as a blond bombshell (see Figure 3, right side). Thus comic's art work is indicative of Kyle and Catwoman's personality and multiplicity. Despite all of her various incarnations, Kyle and Catwoman are always at their cores women: "She was a 'woman,' and all woman at that" (Madrid 2009: 248). Kyle summons up her female alter egos, uses them as tools, and discards them just as quickly. Kyle can control all these incarnations of herself—other than Catwoman.



Figure 2: In her dreams, Catwoman is separated from Kyle; Catwomen surround the helpless Kyle and burn away her humanity, leaving just Catwoman in her place: Brubaker, E Cooke, D, and Allred, M (2002: 43–44) Catwoman: The Dark End of the Street. (New York: DC Comics). Copyright © 2001, 2002 DC Comics.

Kyle's therapist asks her, "How long has it been now since you put on the [Catwoman] outfit?" to which Kyle replies, "The outfit? Oh, yeah… that. Almost six months" (Brubaker, Cooke, and Allred 2002: 45). Like Jekyll, Kyle has tried to repress her own Hyde by abandoning the hide of Catwoman. Also like Jekyll, Hyde (i.e.: Catwoman) fought back: "[But] I was still cursed with my duality of purpose; and as the first edge of my penitence wore off, the lower side of me, so long indulged, so recently chained down, began to growl for license" (Stevenson 1886: 87). Catwoman plagues Kyle with



Figure 3: The Many Faces of Catwoman, from darkly-completed brunette to blond bombshell: Brubaker, E Cooke, D, and Allred, M (2002: 39 & 103, panel 1) Catwoman: The Dark End of the Street. (New York: DC Comics). Copyright © 2001, 2002 DC Comics.

hellish dreams in which she is surrounded by Catwomen who set Kyle on fire, burning away her humanity and leaving only the silhouette of the Catwoman (see Figure 2). In this suffering, Kyle is like Jekyll: "I began to be tortured with throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom" (Stevenson 1886: 85). Kyle feels the Cat personality struggling for freedom. However, Kyle tries to avoid the temptation of becoming Catwoman—which is why she is seeing a therapist—but Catwoman refuses to let her get a moment's peace until Kyle acquiesces. Catwoman refuses to let Kyle be complete until Kyle fully embraces all of her aspects.

Conclusion

Reichstein tries to reduce Catwoman to little more than one of the "mostly bizarre array of villains in the Batman comics, like the Joker, the Penguin, the Catwoman … [who] reflect the purely bad side of Batman—like counterparts, or mirrors showing him what would happen to him if he lost control" (Reichstein 1998: 346–347). However, Catwoman should not be reduced to simply reflect the bad side of Batman. While Bruce Wayne is similar to a Dr. Henry Jekyll, Batman is not a complete Mr. Edward Hyde… but Catwoman is.

This argument suggests that Catwoman is such an integral part of Kyle and that her life is shattered—without her "other." While other critics have studied Batman and Hulk—no one has considered Catwoman as Hyde. It is interesting to note that Kyle logically and consciously puts on Catwoman and both co-habitat the same space. Again, this is very akin to Jekyll and Hyde, who—although different in body and manner—share the same memory (Stevenson 1886: 85) and handwriting (89). These are two parts of a cohesive whole, both vying for control over their life while staunchly rebelling against being controlled by any man (even a Batman) and any law.

Reichstein succeeds at linking Jekyll with Wayne, but she ignores the complexity of comparing Hyde to Batman. Thus, this work corrected that oversight by advocating Jekyll and Hyde story is about identity structure: the socially acceptable personality versus the uncontrollable and often intolerable. A close examination of Dark End of the Street reveals the identity problems in Stevenson's novella also manifest in Kyle and Catwoman. This comic reinforced the Jekyll side is about social conformity, whereas the Hyde represents the uncontainable and unacceptable. Thus, this paper argues that offering a critical approach to Catwoman as Hyde is the only way for freedom from social norms and offers independence from social conformity.

It is noteworthy that Kyle's Hyde self is not about a tortured individual who seeks to redeem herself from her alter ego, but about accepting that separate self and releasing it from the confines of societal rules. In other words, Catwoman is the ability for

humankind to negotiate life with a wild animalistic side. Catwoman's fictional personality offers readers a chance to enter a new sphere of identity understanding. However, instead of untamed mayhem or total anarchy, Catwoman tests the limits of what life would be like without the rules and limitations of social rules. The tragedy of Stevenson's novella is not the fall of a celebrity, but rather the fall of one of us. Jekyll is a friend and peer, not an estranged and obsessive recluse like Wayne. As such, Kyle is more like Jekyll—like all of us—in that she is a complex character torn between manifestations of good and evil. Catwoman, the Hyde-like heroic villain and villainous hero, and is one of the most humanistic comic characters of all.

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Lesa Syn is an instructor at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs and Community College of Denver. This article is reprinted from *The Comics Grid: Journal of Comics Scholarship.*

Catwoman's Hyde: A Comparative Reading of the 2002 Catwoman Relaunch and Stevenson's Novella by Lesa Syn is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 International License.

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3.2.10: Why Good People Turn Bad Online (Vince)

Gaia Vince

#technology #analysis #causalargument #systemanalysis #sharedvalues #research

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"No Trolls wanted here" by John Pons is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

On the evening of 17 February 2018, Professor Mary Beard posted on Twitter a photograph of herself crying. The eminent University of Cambridge classicist, who has almost 200,000 Twitter followers, was distraught after receiving a storm of abuse online. This was the reaction to a comment she had made about Haiti. She also tweeted: “I speak from the heart (and of cource I may be wrong). But the crap I get in response just isnt on; really it isnt.”

In the days that followed, Beard received support from several high-profile people. Greg Jenner, a fellow celebrity historian, tweeted about his own experience of a Twitterstorm: “I’ll always remember how traumatic it was to suddenly be hated by strangers. Regardless of morality – I may have been wrong or right in my opinion – I was amazed (later, when I recovered) at how psychologically destabilising it was to me.”

Those tweeting support for Beard – irrespective of whether they agreed with her initial tweet that had triggered the abusive responses – were themselves then targeted. And when one of Beard’s critics, fellow Cambridge academic Priyamvada Gopal, a woman of Asian heritage, set out her response to Beard’s original tweet in an online article, she received her own torrent of abuse.

There is overwhelming evidence that women and members of ethnic minority groups are disproportionately the target of Twitter abuse. Where these identity markers intersect, the bullying can become particularly intense, as experienced by black female MP Diane Abbott, who alone received nearly half of all the abusive tweets sent to female MPs during the run-up to the 2017 UK general election. Black and Asian female MPs received on average 35 per cent more abusive tweets than their white female colleagues even when Abbott was excluded from the total.

The constant barrage of abuse, including death threats and threats of sexual violence, is silencing people, pushing them off online platforms and further reducing the diversity of online voices and opinion. And it shows no sign of abating. A survey last year found that 40 percent of American adults had personally experienced online abuse, with almost half of them receiving severe forms of harassment, including physical threats and stalking. 70 percent of women described online harassment as a “major problem”.

The business models of social media platforms, such as YouTube and Facebook, promote content that is more likely to get a response from other users because more engagement means better opportunities for advertising. But this has a consequence of favouring divisive and strongly emotive or extreme content, which can in turn nurture online “bubbles” of groups who reflect and reinforce each other’s opinions, helping propel the spread of more extreme content and providing a niche for “fake news”. In recent months, researchers have revealed many ways that various vested interests, including Russian operatives, have sought to manipulate public opinion by infiltrating social media bubbles.



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Our human ability to communicate ideas across networks of people enabled us to build the modern world. The internet offers unparalleled promise of cooperation and communication between all of humanity. But instead of embracing a massive extension of our social circles online, we seem to be reverting to tribalism and conflict, and belief in the potential of the internet to bring humanity together in a glorious collaborating network now begins to seem naive. While we generally conduct our real-life interactions with strangers politely and respectfully, online we can be horrible. How can we relearn the collaborative techniques that enabled us to find common ground and thrive as a species?

“Don’t overthink it, just press the button!”

I click an amount, impoverishing myself in an instant, and quickly move on to the next question, aware that we’re all playing against the clock. My teammates are far away and unknown to me. I have no idea if we’re all in it together or whether I’m being played for a fool, but I press on, knowing that the others are depending on me.

I’m playing in a so-called public goods game at Yale University’s Human Cooperation Lab. The researchers here use it as a tool to help understand how and why we cooperate, and whether we can enhance our prosocial behaviour.

Over the years, scientists have proposed various theories about why humans cooperate so well that we form strong societies. The evolutionary roots of our general niceness, most researchers now believe, can be found in the individual survival advantage humans experience when we cooperate as a group. I’ve come to New Haven, Connecticut, in a snowy February, to visit a cluster of labs where researchers are using experiments to explore further our extraordinary impulse to be nice to others even at our own expense.

The game I’m playing, on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk online platform, is one of the lab’s ongoing experiments. I’m in a team of four people in different locations, and each of us is given the same amount of money to play with. We are asked to choose how much money we will contribute to a group pot, on the understanding that this pot will then be doubled and split equally among us.

This sort of social dilemma, like all cooperation, relies on a certain level of trust that the others in your group will be nice. If everybody in the group contributes all of their money, all the money gets doubled, redistributed four ways, and everyone doubles their money. Win–win!

“But if you think about it from the perspective of an individual,” says lab director David Rand, “for each dollar that you contribute, it gets doubled to two dollars and then split four ways – which means each person only gets 50 cents back for the dollar they

contributed."

Even though everyone is better off collectively by contributing to a group project that no one could manage alone – in real life, this could be paying towards a hospital building, or digging a community irrigation ditch – there is a cost at the individual level. Financially, you make more money by being more selfish.

Rand's team has run this game with thousands of players. Half of them are asked, as I was, to decide their contribution rapidly – within 10 seconds – whereas the other half are asked to take their time and carefully consider their decision. It turns out that when people go with their gut, they are much more generous than when they spend time deliberating.

"There is a lot of evidence that cooperation is a central feature of human evolution," says Rand. Individuals benefit, and are more likely to survive, by cooperating with the group. And being allowed to stay in the group and benefit from it is reliant on our reputation for behaving cooperatively.

"In the small-scale societies that our ancestors were living in, all our interactions were with people that you were going to see again and interact with in the immediate future," Rand says. That kept in check any temptation to act aggressively or take advantage and free-ride off other people's contributions. "It makes sense, in a self-interested way, to be cooperative."

Cooperation breeds more cooperation in a mutually beneficial cycle. Rather than work out every time whether it's in our long-term interests to be nice, it's more efficient and less effort to have the basic rule: be nice to other people. That's why our unthinking response in the experiment is a generous one.

Throughout our lives, we learn from the society around us how cooperative to be. But our learned behaviours can also change quickly.

Those in Rand's experiment who play the quickfire round are mostly generous and receive generous dividends, reinforcing their generous outlook. Whereas those who consider their decisions are more selfish, resulting in a meagre group pot, reinforcing an idea that it doesn't pay to rely on the group. So, in a further experiment, Rand gave some money to people who had played a round of the game. They were then asked how much they wanted to give to an anonymous stranger. This time, there was no incentive to give; they would be acting entirely charitably.

It turned out there were big differences. The people who had got used to cooperating in the first stage gave twice as much money in the second stage as the people who had got used to being selfish did. "So we're affecting people's internal lives and behaviour," Rand says. "The way they behave even when no one's watching and when there's no institution in place to punish or reward them."

Rand's team have tested how people in different countries play the game, to see how the strength of social institutions – such as government, family, education and legal systems – influences behaviour. In Kenya, where public sector corruption is high, players initially gave less generously to the stranger than players in the US, which has less corruption. This suggests that people who can rely on relatively fair social institutions behave in a more public-spirited way; those whose institutions are less reliable are more protectionist. However, after playing just one round of the cooperation-promoting version of the public goods game, the Kenyans' generosity equalled the Americans'. And it cut both ways: Americans who were trained to be selfish gave a lot less.

So is there something about online social media culture that makes some people behave meanly? Unlike ancient hunter-gatherer societies, which rely on cooperation and sharing to survive and often have rules for when to offer food to whom across their social network, social media have weak institutions. They offer physical distance, relative anonymity and little reputational or punitive risk for bad behaviour: if you're mean, no one you know is going to see.

I trudge a couple of blocks through driving snow to find Molly Crockett's Psychology Lab, where researchers are investigating moral decision-making in society. One area they focus on is how social emotions are transformed online, in particular moral outrage. Brain-imaging studies show that when people act on their moral outrage, their brain's reward centre is activated – they feel good about it. This reinforces their behaviour, so they are more likely to intervene in a similar way again. So, if they see somebody acting in a way that violates a social norm, by allowing their dog to foul a playground, for instance, and they publicly confront the perpetrator about it, they feel good afterwards. And while challenging a violator of your community's social norms has its risks – you may get attacked – it also boosts your reputation.

In our relatively peaceful lives, we are rarely faced with outrageous behaviour, so we rarely see moral outrage expressed. Open up Twitter or Facebook and you get a very different picture. Recent research shows that messages with both moral and emotional

words are more likely to spread on social media – each moral or emotional word in a tweet increases the likelihood of it being retweeted by 20 per cent.

“Content that triggers outrage and that expresses outrage is much more likely to be shared,” Crockett says. What we’ve created online is “an ecosystem that selects for the most outrageous content, paired with a platform where it’s easier than ever before to express outrage”.

Unlike in the offline world, there is no personal risk in confronting and exposing someone. It only takes a few clicks of a button and you don’t have to be physically nearby, so there is a lot more outrage expressed online. And it feeds itself. “If you punish somebody for violating a norm, that makes you seem more trustworthy to others, so you can broadcast your moral character by expressing outrage and punishing social norm violations,” Crockett says. “And people believe that they are spreading good by expressing outrage – that it comes from a place of morality and righteousness.

“When you go from offline – where you might boost your reputation for whoever happens to be standing around at the moment – to online, where you broadcast it to your entire social network, then that dramatically amplifies the personal rewards of expressing outrage.”

This is compounded by the feedback people get on social media, in the form of likes and retweets and so on. “Our hypothesis is that the design of these platforms could make expressing outrage into a habit, and a habit is something that’s done without regard to its consequences – it’s insensitive to what happens next, it’s just a blind response to a stimulus,” Crockett explains.

“I think it’s worth having a conversation as a society as to whether we want our morality to be under the control of algorithms whose purpose is to make money for giant tech companies,” she adds. “I think we would all like to believe and feel that our moral emotions, thoughts and behaviours are intentional and not knee-jerk reactions to whatever is placed in front of us that our smartphone designer thinks will bring them the most profit.”

On the upside, the lower costs of expressing outrage online have allowed marginalised, less-empowered groups to promote causes that have traditionally been harder to advance. Moral outrage on social media played an important role in focusing attention on the sexual abuse of women by high-status men. And in February 2018, Florida teens railing on social media against yet another high-school shooting in their state helped to shift public opinion, as well as shaming a number of big corporations into dropping their discount schemes for National Rifle Association members.

“I think that there must be ways to maintain the benefits of the online world,” says Crockett, “while thinking more carefully about redesigning these interactions to do away with some of the more costly bits.”

Someone who’s thought a great deal about the design of our interactions in social networks is Nicholas Christakis, director of Yale’s Human Nature Lab, located just a few more snowy blocks away. His team studies how our position in a social network influences our behaviour, and even how certain influential individuals can dramatically alter the culture of a whole network.

The team is exploring ways to identify these individuals and enlist them in public health programmes that could benefit the community. In Honduras, they are using this approach to influence vaccination enrolment and maternal care, for example. Online, such people have the potential to turn a bullying culture into a supportive one.

Corporations already use a crude system of identifying so-called Instagram influencers to advertise their brands for them. But Christakis is looking not just at how popular an individual is, but also their position in the network and the shape of that network. In some networks, like a small isolated village, everyone is closely connected and you’re likely to know everyone at a party; in a city, by contrast, people may be living more closely by as a whole, but you are less likely to know everyone at a party there. How thoroughly interconnected a network is affects how behaviours and information spread around it, he explains.

“If you take carbon atoms and you assemble them one way, they become graphite, which is soft and dark. Take the same carbon atoms and assemble them a different way, and it becomes diamond, which is hard and clear. These properties of hardness and clearness aren’t properties of the carbon atoms – they’re properties of the collection of carbon atoms and depend on how you connect the carbon atoms to each other,” he says. “And it’s the same with human groups.”

Christakis has designed software to explore this by creating temporary artificial societies online. “We drop people in and then we let them interact with each other and see how they play a public goods game, for example, to assess how kind they are to other people.”

Then he manipulates the network. “By engineering their interactions one way, I can make them really sweet to each other, work well together, and they are healthy and happy and they cooperate. Or you take the same people and connect them a different way and they’re mean jerks to each other and they don’t cooperate and they don’t share information and they are not kind to each other.”

In one experiment, he randomly assigned strangers to play the public goods game with each other. In the beginning, he says, about two-thirds of people were cooperative. “But some of the people they interact with will take advantage of them and, because their only option is either to be kind and cooperative or to be a defector, they choose to defect because they’re stuck with these people taking advantage of them. And by the end of the experiment everyone is a jerk to everyone else.”

Christakis turned this around simply by giving each person a little bit of control over who they were connected to after each round. “They had to make two decisions: am I kind to my neighbours or am I not; and do I stick with this neighbour or do I not.” The only thing each player knew about their neighbours was whether each had cooperated or defected in the round before. “What we were able to show is that people cut ties to defectors and form ties to cooperators, and the network rewired itself and converted itself into a diamond-like structure instead of a graphite-like structure.” In other words, a cooperative prosocial structure instead of an uncooperative structure.

In an attempt to generate more cooperative online communities, Christakis’s team have started adding bots to their temporary societies. He takes me over to a laptop and sets me up on a different game. In this game, anonymous players have to work together as a team to solve a dilemma that tilers will be familiar with: each of us has to pick from one of three colours, but the colours of players directly connected to each other must be different. If we solve the puzzle within a time limit, we all get a share of the prize money; if we fail, no one gets anything. I’m playing with at least 30 other people. None of us can see the whole network of connections, only the people we are directly connected to – nevertheless, we have to cooperate to win.

I’m connected to two neighbours, whose colours are green and blue, so I pick red. My left neighbour then changes to red so I quickly change to blue. The game continues and I become increasingly tense, cursing my slow reaction times. I frequently have to switch my colour, responding to unseen changes elsewhere in the network, which send a cascade of changes along the connections. Time’s up before we solve the puzzle, prompting irate responses in the game’s comments box from remote players condemning everyone else’s stupidity. Personally, I’m relieved it’s over and there’s no longer anyone depending on my cackhanded gaming skills to earn money.

Christakis tells me that some of the networks are so complex that the puzzle is impossible to solve in the timeframe. My relief is shortlived, however: the one I played was solvable. He rewinds the game, revealing for the first time the whole network to me. I see now that I was on a lower branch off the main hub of the network. Some of the players were connected to just one other person, but most were connected to three or more. Thousands of people from around the world play these games on Amazon Mechanical Turk, drawn by the small fee they earn per round. But as I’m watching the game I just played unfold, Christakis reveals that three of these players are actually planted bots. “We call them ‘dumb AI’,” he says.

His team is not interested in inventing super-smart AI to replace human cognition. Instead, the plan is to infiltrate a population of smart humans with dumb-bots to help the humans help themselves.

“We wanted to see if we could use the dumb-bots to get the people unstuck so they can cooperate and coordinate a little bit more – so that their native capacity to perform well can be revealed by a little assistance,” Christakis says. He found that if the bots played perfectly, that didn’t help the humans. But if the bots made some mistakes, they unlocked the potential of the group to find a solution.

“Some of these bots made counter-intuitive choices. Even though their neighbours all had green and they should have picked orange, instead they also picked green.” When they did that, it allowed one of the green neighbours to pick orange, “which unlocks the next guy over, he can pick a different colour and, wow, now we solve the problem”. Without the bot, those human players would probably all have stuck with green, not realising that was the problem. “Increasing the conflicts temporarily allows their neighbours to make better choices.”

By adding a little noise into the system, the bots helped the network to function more efficiently. Perhaps a version of this model could involve infiltrating the newsfeeds of partisan people with occasional items offering a different perspective, helping to shift people out of their social media comfort-bubbles and allow society as a whole to cooperate more.

Much antisocial behaviour online stems from the anonymity of internet interactions – the reputational costs of being mean are much lower than offline. Here, bots may also offer a solution. One experiment found that the level of racist abuse tweeted at black users could be dramatically slashed by using bot accounts with white profile images to respond to racist tweeters. A typical bot response to a racist tweet would be: “Hey man, just remember that there are real people who are hurt when you harass them with that kind of language.” Simply cultivating a little empathy in such tweeters reduced their racist tweets almost to zero for weeks afterwards.

Another way of addressing the low reputational cost for bad behaviour online is to engineer in some form of social punishment. One game company, League of Legends, did that by introducing a “Tribunal” feature, in which negative play is punished by other players. The company reported that 280,000 players were “reformed” in one year, meaning that after being punished by the Tribunal they had changed their behaviour and then achieved a positive standing in the community. Developers could also build in social rewards for good behaviour, encouraging more cooperative elements that help build relationships.

Researchers are already starting to learn how to predict when an exchange is about to turn bad – the moment at which it could benefit from pre-emptive intervention. “You might think that there is a minority of sociopaths online, which we call trolls, who are doing all this harm,” says Cristian Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, at Cornell University’s Department of Information Science. “What we actually find in our work is that ordinary people, just like you and me, can engage in such antisocial behaviour. For a specific period of time, you can actually become a troll. And that’s surprising.”

It’s also alarming. I mentally flick back through my own recent tweets, hoping I haven’t veered into bullying in some awkward attempt to appear funny or cool to my online followers. After all, it can be very tempting to be abusive to someone far away, who you don’t know, if you think it will impress your social group.

Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil has been investigating the comments sections below online articles. He identifies two main triggers for trolling: the context of the exchange – how other users are behaving – and your mood. “If you’re having a bad day, or if it happens to be Monday, for example, you’re much more likely to troll in the same situation,” he says. “You’re nicer on a Saturday morning.”

After collecting data, including from people who had engaged in trolling behaviour in the past, Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil built an algorithm that predicts with 80 per cent accuracy when someone is about to become abusive online. This provides an opportunity to, for example, introduce a delay in how fast they can post their response. If people have to think twice before they write something, that improves the context of the exchange for everyone: you’re less likely to witness people misbehaving, and so less likely to misbehave yourself.

The good news is that, in spite of the horrible behaviour many of us have experienced online, the majority of interactions are nice and cooperative. Justified moral outrage is usefully employed in challenging hateful tweets. A recent British study looking at anti-Semitism on Twitter found that posts challenging anti-Semitic tweets are shared far more widely than the anti-Semitic tweets themselves. Most hateful posts were ignored or only shared within a small echo chamber of similar accounts. Perhaps we’re already starting to do the work of the bots ourselves.

As Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil points out, we’ve had thousands of years to hone our person-to-person interactions, but only 20 years of social media. “Offline, we have all these cues from facial expressions to body language to pitch… whereas online we discuss things only through text. I think we shouldn’t be surprised that we’re having so much difficulty in finding the right way to discuss and cooperate online.”

As our online behaviour develops, we may well introduce subtle signals, digital equivalents of facial cues, to help smooth online discussions. In the meantime, the advice for dealing with online abuse is to stay calm, it’s not your fault. Don’t retaliate but block and ignore bullies, or if you feel up to it, tell them to stop. Talk to family or friends about what’s happening and ask them to help you. Take screenshots and report online harassment to the social media service where it’s happening, and if it includes physical threats, report it to the police.

If social media as we know it is going to survive, the companies running these platforms are going to have to keep steering their algorithms, perhaps informed by behavioural science, to encourage cooperation rather than division, positive online experiences rather than abuse. As users, we too may well learn to adapt to this new communication environment so that civil and productive interaction remains the norm online as it is offline.

“I’m optimistic,” Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil says. “This is just a different game and we have to evolve.”

References

The New Statesman tracked abusive tweets sent to women MPs in the run-up to the 2017 UK general election.

A 2017 Pew Research Center survey showed that 41 percent of Americans have experienced online harassment.

Researchers at University College London investigated what hunter-gatherers can tell us about social networks.

Research published in PNAS showed that emotion influences how content spreads online.

In 2016, Ars Technica reported a study showing how Twitter bots can reduce racist slurs.

Community Security Trust, a charity that protects British Jews from anti-Semitism, published a report about anti-Semitic content on Twitter in 2018.

Gaia Vince is a journalist, broadcaster and author specialising in science, the environment and social issues. Her article first appeared in Mosaic.



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3.2.11: The Black Muslim Female Fashion Trailblazers Who Came before Model Halima Aden (Wheeler)

By Kayla Renée Wheeler



Halima Aden,the first Muslim model to wear a hijab and burkini on the cover of the swimsuit edition of the Sports Illustrated. Photo: "Halima Aden at Paris Fashion Week Autumn/Winter 2019 Date" by Myles Kalus Anak Jihem is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Media reports have celebrated Halima Aden becoming the first woman to be featured in the Sports Illustrated annual swimsuit edition wearing a hijab or a burkini. In the past, she has appeared on the covers of Allure, British Vogue and Glamour Magazine.

As a scholar who studies black Muslim fashion, I often find that reporters covering Muslim women's fashion seem to have the notion that Islam and fashion are incompatible.

This attitude ignores the influence black people have had on Muslim fashion going back at least eight decades.

Early Islam in the US

First, it's important to understand the long history Muslims have in the United States.

According to the Pew Research Center, black Muslims account for one-fifth of all Muslims in the United States. Islam first came to the United States with enslaved Africans.

Their numbers were small, ranging from 30,000 to 40,000. However, as historian Sylviane Diouf notes, enslaved African Muslims left a lasting impact on black American culture, especially in the Sea Islands and Lowcountry region, the coastal area stretching from North Carolina to northern Florida.

The first Islamic text in the United States, the Bilali Document, was written by an enslaved African living on Sapelo Island named Bilali Muhammad in the 19th century. It includes rules about daily prayers and a list of beliefs of Muslims.

Another important text – perhaps the only known narrative by an enslaved person in Arabic – was written by Omar ibn Said in 1831, who lived as a slave in North Carolina. In it, he recounts his life in Senegal, including his religious education. The autobiography also includes several Muslim prayers.

Clothing as identity

In the 20th century, black Americans were reintroduced to Islam through several people and organizations.

These included the Moorish Science Temple of America and the Nation of Islam. The Moorish Science Temple of America was founded by a Moorish American, Noble Drew Ali, in 1913 in Newark, New Jersey.

Drew Ali taught his followers that they were not Negros or Ethiopians, rather they were Moors and that Islam was their true religion. According to Drew Ali, Moors are descendants of the ancient Moabites who founded Mecca, one of the most important cities in Islam.

W.D. Fard Muhammad, who founded what would become known as the Nation of Islam in 1930 in Detroit, Michigan, also taught his followers that they had forgotten their true identity as Asiatic Muslims and members of the lost tribe of Shabazz. The term Asiatic referred to black people and other people of color.

Clothing played a central role in constructing a unique black Muslim identity. Black Muslim women used their dress to challenge American beauty standards, which typically holds thin young white women as the ideal beauty. Their dress practices also challenged beliefs that Islam was only an Arab religion by encouraging members to develop their own local dress practices.



"Moorish Science Temple of America inc" by *swanksalot* *is licensed under* *CC BY-NC-SA 2.0*

In the Moorish Science Temple of America, male members wore fezzes or turbans and women wore turbans often paired with long shift dresses as part of their everyday wear.

Men in the Nation of Islam dressed in tailored suits and bow ties or ties. Women donned a Muslim Girls Training uniform. The Muslim Girls Training included lessons for women and girls on the rules and beliefs of the Nation of Islam as well as how to cook, clean, raise children and practice self-defense. The uniform included a high-neck tunic that came down to the thigh. It was paired with either loose-fitting pants or a skirt that came to the ankles.

Black Muslims

In my forthcoming book, I argue that Nation of Islam and the Imam W.D. Mohammed community have played an important role in developing the modest fashion industry in the United States. Imam W.D. Mohammed took over the leadership of Nation of Islam in 1975, following the death of his father Elijah Muhammad, who had succeeded the founder W.D. Fard Muhammad.

These organizations and their members have organized fashion shows and operated clothing stores centered on Islamic modesty since the 1960s. The models were usually volunteers from the local community.Elijah Muhammad discouraged female members from embracing the fashion trends of the day.

The fashion shows were a means of highlighting the creative ways Nation of Islam women could dress modestly and maintain the unique aesthetic, while still looking beautiful. They featured diverse head coverings such as berets and fezzes, color-block outfits and different takes on the classic Muslim Girls Training tunic.

Imam W.D. Mohammed and his members would continue to encourage women's fashion ventures. They incorporated Afrocentric inspired designs and clothing, like the dashiki and kente cloth.

For a decade, starting in the 1960s, when the oldest daughter of Elijah Muhammad, Ethel Muhammad Sharrieff led the Muslim Girl's Training, clothing became a way of building a self-sustaining black Muslim community.

A clothing factory she managed produced the official Muslim Girl's Training uniform. Members were encouraged to buy the uniform from the factory. Temple #2 clothing, a store in Chicago, Illinois, sold a wide range of products including shoes, lingerie and jewelry.

Fashion shows

This May, I attended the Sealed Nectar Fashion Show, an annual fashion show hosted by the Atlanta Masjid of al-Islam in Atlanta, Georgia. It is one of the longest-running Muslim fashion shows in the United States, with 2019 marking its 33rd anniversary.

The fashion show was founded in 1986 by Amira Wazeer, an Atlanta-based designer, as a means of celebrating beauty and modesty. This year's theme, "World Traveler," featured six black Muslim women designers from the United States, Tanzania and Kenya.

More recent ones include in cities such as Washington D.C., Houston and an upcoming one in Philadelphia.



"Moslema in style fashion show at PWTC." by Firdaus Latif is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The fashion shows and bazaars highlight black women's creativity and diverse definitions of Islamic modesty. This includes different styles of wrapping head scarves – turbans and buns that leave the neck and ears exposed to show off jewelry – as well as multiple clothes layering techniques, like wearing a pair of skinny pants under a short dress.

Black Muslim models

What Aden has been able to accomplish in three years is certainly worth celebrating. She has opened the doors for other hijabi models like Ikram Omar Abdi, who was featured on the cover of Vogue Arabia along with Aden and another Muslim model, Amina Adan.

However, in my view, it is important to place Halima Aden within the larger history of black Muslim fashion in the United States. Unless we do that, there is a risk of erasing the black Muslim fashion trailblazers who came before her and made her rise possible.

Kayla Renée Wheeler an Assistant Professor of Area & Global Studies and Digital Studies at Grand Valley State University. Her essay first appeared in The Conversation.

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3.2.12: “That time the Internet sent a SWAT team to my mom’s house” by Caroline Sinders

When I set out to research the out-of-control harassment problem in gamer culture, I never dreamed my mother would be caught up in the middle of it all.



I opened my inbox and saw an email from a reporter for a New Orleans newspaper. *“I came across your name today while researching an article,”* he wrote. I assumed he was writing an article about online harassment and had reached out to me because I was a budding researcher in the field and a New Orleans native. I was excited that a local newspaper was interested in the topic, and flattered that the reporter had reached out to me. Then I kept reading:

“….about a fairly unusual incident on [my mother’s street] this weekend. A hoax call about a threat at a home there prompted a large police response,” I recognized this immediately as the harassment tactic known as ‘swatting,’ born out of the online gaming community.

I felt my face go very, very flush, and I felt my chest get very, very tight; everything seemed to get very, very heavy.

“After searching public records,” the email continued, *“I discovered that the home targeted appears to be registered in your mother’s name, and from there I found your websites — which overlap in interests with some of the other female designers who have been targeted in swatting incidents in the recent past.”*

I stopped reading after that.

My mom had been swatted and it was my fault.

Swatting is a “prank” in which a person places a call to the victim’s local police department, saying a violent crime has occurred, often involving hostages, so the SWAT team will show up and bust down their door. It’s happened to a few female game developers, and a games store in New Jersey during an event.

I called my mom right away, still staring at the email. She was so excited that I had called. She had so much news; my cousin had gotten a new job, and my sister had started dating someone new. But she didn’t mention the swatting. I cut her off five minutes into our conversation. “Mom,” I asked, “did the SWAT team come to your house?” She laughed and said it was a harmless prank by some hooligan. She told me a bunch of very attractive young men in gear came to her house to look around. She probably offered them wine, because that’s the kind of hospitable Southern mother I have.

“Mom,” I started again, “Have you heard of Gamergate?” She stopped laughing.

She got deadly silent when I told her what swatting was, and about the online harassment campaigns against feminists on Twitter perpetrated by a group called Gamergate. She asked what we could do in terms of legal action, and I told her probably nothing. Local police stations don’t track incoming calls and that’s where the SWAT team had been notified. Even if the number had been tracked, it was probably from an iPad (a regular swatting tactic) or a dummy number.

My mom asked what I had said to make people so angry, and what I had done to upset strangers so badly.

I’ve never felt worse about myself.

Ihad spent the past six months researching online harassment and how it works, but that hadn’t answered any questions of how to stop it while maintaining an active online presence, and without making your accounts private. As of now, the only real way to avoid being contacted by strangers (which opens the door to harassment) is to make your account private, but there should be a middle ground. The idea that to be safe from online harassment a person has to make their account private is akin to the idea that to

be safe from rape a woman should not walk home alone at night. The problem is security in the system, not vulnerability in the user, so I'd been researching ways to safely (and publicly) interact online.

When I realized that there are very few systems in place for protecting people from online harassment, and the systems that do exist (like Block Together, which allows users to share block lists, or robust privacy settings that a user has to manually and painstakingly seek out on Facebook) are just scratching the surface, I decided to come up with a solution myself. I tried to come up with more advanced filter settings than "public" or "private" for Twitter and other social media sites, to protect users while allowing them to stay visible.

Apparently someone hadn't liked my work. Every tweet I'd ever written about online harassment flashed through my mind as I tried to figure out what in particular I had said to piss someone off enough that they'd target my mother, and who it could have been.

It's very hard to determine who's harassing you online, unless the harassment comes from a single user and happens consistently, but that's not usually how it works online. More often, online harassment is perpetrated by a mob. Brianna Wu, head of development at games studio Giant SpaceKat, has been harassed and threatened with rape and murder on Twitter, but not much has been done because the harassment is coming from a large number of users, who are difficult to track and stop. Online harassment techniques are incredibly different from offline harassment, and law enforcement is not yet used to dealing with it. Legally, it's hard to prove the actionable threats of someone saying to another person "I'm going to kill you" online. It's hard to get court-ordered documents to track people down for harassing online, and laws vary from state to state, so it's necessary to know where the threat originated to know how to proceed.

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I called the reporter who had originally informed me about the "prank" against my mother and asked him to give me all of the details he could.

The call came in to my mother's local precinct, not 911. This is the norm for swatting calls — most local precincts don't record calls, so there is no way to trace the "prank." The caller, a male, said he had shot his girlfriend, barricaded himself in the house, was heavily armed, and his girlfriend's daughter was in house with him, currently alive. He was planning to shoot any police who approached the house.

He gave my mother's address, and he hung up.

The local precinct thought this was highly unusual — there had never been a domestic abuse call from that address before. They wondered whether it was a real call or a prank. But given the intensely violent nature of the call, and the potential hostage situation, the SWAT team was deployed.

Their armored vehicle arrived on my mother's street at around ten at night and the SWAT team deployed, surrounding her house. My mother's neighbors came out, some were confronted, and told to put their hands up in the air.

Still unsure if the call had been real or fake, the police called my mother's house phone. My mother didn't answer.

They decided to call one more time.

This time she answered. They asked if she was okay; she was.

If she hadn't answered, they would have broken down the door, thrown my mother to the ground and violently searched the house.

But she answered her phone. And instead, she opened her door, and the SWAT team calmly searched her house, found nothing, and left.

It was a prank, they decided.

As the reporter recounted all of this to me, I was living my research in real time. I was well-versed in the mechanics of a prank like this, but that didn't abate the anxiety attacks I was having.

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I'm a user-experience designer and design researcher for a very large technology company. That means I interview people about specific problems with certain tech products they use, and then I design solutions. But my fascination with the way people interact

with technology and with each other doesn't end when I leave work. I spend a lot of my free time observing user trends online, and I write down my observations. This leads me to notice digital patterns, such as hashtags that will be trending when they haven't yet, and interaction patterns like how people create cliques online in spaces that don't support that kind of socializing, like Twitter.

This is how I first noticed Gamergate in August of 2014.

There had been a trend growing for a while, especially in the indie games scene, but spilling over into mainstream games and games journalism. The idea of the young, white, male "gamer" was dead; everyone plays games now. If your mom plays candy crush and solitaire, she's a gamer. If you're a fan of Kim Kardashian Hollywood, you're a gamer. And women now outpace men in playing and consuming games.

This shift in gamer demographics didn't sit well with some people. There was still this idea that games were and should be a specific thing, talked about in a specific way, reviewed in a specific fashion and played by specific people. Tensions were already high with this territorial sentiment popping up all over the Internet, and then game developer and designer Zoe Quinn's ex posted a scathing, harassing rant online in which he made false allegations about her sex life, her game development, and their relationship. He painted her as a conniving, cheating girlfriend, and credited her supposed affair with a games journalist as the reason for the success of her game, Depression Quest. With this act of online harassment and the anti-woman conspiracy theory it contained, Gamergate was born.



The group of people involved with Gamergate think of themselves as activists, saving video games from feminists out to push a "feminist agenda," also known as wanting more female characters that are clothed and have developed plot lines. They congregate online, mainly on social media board-based sites where users post to start conversations and debate, like Reddit and its less-famous and more-explicit cousins, 4chan and 8chan. They interact with each other and others on Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #gamergate.

What started as a group of die-hard gamers commiserating about the changing landscape of their subculture turned into a band of trolls roving the Internet using harassment tactics such as Swatting (sending the SWAT team to someone's home, like they did to my mom), doxxing (the release of someone's private/personal documents such as a social security number, phone number or address), dog piling (people sending a lot of tweets to one singular person to overwhelm that person, often the tweets are of harassing nature, and sea lioning (someone asking another person over and over again for proof), mainly against women, people of color, and trans people who made games or spoke up about feminism or the gender problems in mainstream games.

Since most of my friends, real-life and online, are affiliated with the indie game scene in one way or another, I watched Gamergate unfold in real time.

Using the hashtag in a tweet became akin to saying "Bloody Mary" three times in a mirror, except Bloody Mary actually showed up and she brought a bunch of friends. People, particularly women in games, couldn't talk about Gamergate publicly without getting harassed, so they just stopped talking about it on Twitter. Even tweeting about #feminism or #letwomenspeak brought about large bouts of Twitter harassment.

I, having not yet been directly attacked, decided to fly a little close to the sun. I retweeted anti-Gamergate tweets that featured the Gamergate hashtag, began watching and documenting nearly daily what Gamergate was up to.

Then some of my friends started to get harassed, not on the level of fleeing their homes like the game developers Zoe Quinn and Brianna Wu or the games critic Anita Sarkeesian, but enough to go private on Twitter, and to become silent in general, especially on the topic of Gamergate. It was enough for people to contemplate leaving the industry, and a few women did.

I started tweeting using the hashtag #g00bergate instead of #gamergate — this way I could still voice my opinion, but my tweets wouldn't be searchable through the Gamergate hashtag, and so I would be much less likely to be found and targeted. It worked. My tweets on the subject, such as "writing about g00bergate as a twitter UX design flaw," received a few likes from my followers but no outside interaction from gamer gaters. I felt safe enough.

Despite my fundamental disagreements with Gamergate, I found them fascinating, particularly the way they communicate. They engage with strangers in a very specific way that's different from the average social-media user; they treat Twitter as if it were a board-based platform like Reddit, 4chan or 8chan. In a board-based community, a user creates a board about a given topic. When you create that board, you're the moderator. Reddit has specific rules (including new anti-harassment rules), but the moderator, for the most part, is in charge. This communication style differs from Twitter, because if a person posts on the board they expect a response, it's an ongoing conversation. Twitter, on the other hand, is like sending text messages out into the ether and hoping someone sees it. Communication threads don't last long, they disappear or get shortened, so unless someone really searches, it's hard to see and contextualize a communication thread. And people tend to interact only with their friends and followers (except in the case of celebrity, where a higher percentage of interactions are with strangers). Gamergaters, however, use Twitter as if it was a board-based community, searching out tweets related to topics they care about and launching a thirty-person debate, which can look a lot more like an attack.

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As I watched Gamergate gather more mass and momentum, I questioned not why it was happening, but how. As a user-experience designer, I was interested in how the system design of Twitter allowed for this. I wondered if there were ways to protect users while preserving the integrity of the conversation style Twitter had designed, or, if it was possibly to have both safety and a feeling of openness.

Twitter didn't offer a way to stymy interaction with users other than to go private, it was either all interaction or none. They did allow users with public accounts to manually block individual, harassing users, but trolls easily got around this by creating new accounts. Their security was clearly insufficient.

Twitter recently enacted an algorithm for verified users to automatically weed out potentially harassing accounts, changed their platform rules to more harshly punish harassers, and allowed for shared block lists. This is all major progress, but the fight for safe, shared online space is far from over.

I decided to approach the problem as if Twitter had hired me as a user experience designer to fix its harassment problem, and see what I could come up with.

I looked at text-messaging, blocking people via email, spam filters for email, I played around with Periscope, Google+, Instagram, Kinja commenting system for Gawker Media, Metafilter, Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan to see how privacy settings and filtering played out on each of these platforms. I listened to moderated discussions and read scholarly papers about online harassment, online harassment law, the history of trolls, Anonymous, political uses of social media, and took notes on what I was seeing in my own social media spheres. I read about Twitter's algorithms, and I even met with someone from Twitter to hear how they view their security.

I interviewed five journalists and media theorists. I asked three developers how they would affect change in Twitter and what steps they would take. I interviewed fifteen people who had been affected by Gamergate, large-scale harassment like doxxing, sustained digital stalking, daily rape and death threats and swatting attempts, to smaller blips like a handful of death and rape threats or regular harassing tweets along the lines of "go fuck yourself, you're dumb."

And I dug into other online harassment campaigns and I saw they were using the same tactics as Gamergate. This is where my research took a huge turn. These online harassment techniques had been around for a while, and had been used in these earlier hate campaigns—Gamergate wasn't the first, they were just the biggest.

Operation Lollipop, for example, was a 4chan-initiated hate campaign started in 2013 that was designed to cause dissent in feminist circles, particularly between white feminists and feminists of color. The harassers created dummy accounts to impersonate women of color on Twitter and interact with activists and feminists. The real women caught up and started a campaign using the hashtag #yourslipisshowing to weed out these dummy accounts. Many received death threats, for trying to call out the trolling. #Freebleeding, another organized hate campaign designed to cause dissent and disrupt feminist activism, also came around at this

time. Dummy accounts were created to use the recent #Transracial hashtag to argue with journalists. Essentially, if there is a way to troll and disrupt, especially during times of heated emotional discussion, then there will be trolling and targets.

In the spring of this year, my research was getting to a point where I needed to start designing. I came up with a few user-interface design interventions, just in time to put them to the test when I started being harassed myself.

In February, the public Twitter account of game critic and Gamergate-target Anita Sarkeesian retweeted me and I had to block over sixty accounts because of harassing tweets, people telling me to never procreate so I could keep my "stupidity" contained, calling me a dumb feminist bitch, and a handful of strangers just wanting to engage in a debate. It was overwhelming to have all of those interactions at once, from the innocuous "hi I just want to chat about X" to the "you're a dumb bitch" over and over again. Erring on the side of caution, I blocked every account that was a stranger—if we didn't have a friend in common, and I thought a tweet to me was antagonistic, I would immediately block.

I checked to see how many accounts would have made it through if I had been able to quickly enact the filtering system I'd created—none of them would have. If my system was in use on Twitter, I would have been sheltered from the harassing comments without having to block each account manually, or going private. My filtering systems would allow the user to seem public, but be able to select a variety of filters to be harder to reach. Right now my system is just an idea, but I'm in the process of developing a series of Google Chrome extensions that will make it available to Twitter users.

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There are a lot of digital "truths" that have been instilled in our society about accessibility and findability, meaning we were taught, as users, that we needed to be trackable, we needed a visible footprint to exist in society, such as credit, a listed address, etc. Being trackable, and being "seen" meant safety. But online harassment has proven otherwise.

Unfortunately, when my research started to piss people off, this meant that my mother was also easy to find. The answer is not to stay quiet, go private, or hide online, or get offline because harassment, like bullying, will still occur. Being hidden may have the aura of safety but it does not solve the problem. The answer is to create policy, better filtering systems that users can choose to enact, and community guidelines to stymy harassment. The answer is to better inform police forces that swatting is a trend in pranks.

I generally tweet fairly innocuous things, like "I'm eating goldfish in bed BC it's nearly the weekend and I give zero fucks." I Instagram, I have a Facebook. These are normal things to have in our digital society, and the answer to my safety is to not give them up. I want to have the ability to be funny and serious, but most of all, to be myself online. I should not have to give that up just to be safe. The solution is for social media sites and the police to take threats or jokes about swatting, doxxing, and organized crime seriously. Tweeting about buying a gun and shooting up a school would be taken seriously, and so should the threat of raping, doxxing, swatting or killing someone.

Privacy issues and online harassment are directly linked, and online harassment isn't going anywhere. My fear is that, in reaction to online harassment, laws will be passed that will break down our civil freedoms and rights online, and that more surveillance will be sold to users under the guise of safety. More surveillance, however, would not have helped me or my mother. A platform that takes harassment and threats seriously instead of treating them like jokes would have.

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About the Illustrator: Natalie Kassirer is a relatively young life-form and artist currently located in New York City. In her art, she is interested in exploring pop culture, human interaction, and nature's relationship to humanity. She enjoys walking in the woods,

loitering in coffee shops, cute robots, and good music. *@NatalieKassirer*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Sinders is a researcher, interaction designer and artist. She tweets about mozzarella sticks, feminism, culture, and online harassment @carolinesinders

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3.2.13: “The Relationship Between Cell Phone Use and Academic Performance in a Sample of U.S. College Students” by Andrew Lepp, Jacob E. Barkley, and Aryn C. Karpinski

Abstract

The cell phone is ever-present on college campuses and is frequently used in settings where learning occurs. This study assessed the relationship between cell phone use and actual college grade point average (GPA) after controlling for known predictors. As such, 536 undergraduate students from 82 self-reported majors at a large, public university were sampled. A hierarchical regression (R^2 = .449) demonstrated that cell phone use was significantly (p < .001) and negatively (β = −.164) related to actual college GPA after controlling for demographic variables, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, self-efficacy for academic achievement, and actual high school GPA, which were all significant predictors (p < .05). Thus, after controlling for other established predictors, increased cell phone use was associated with decreased academic performance. Although more research is needed to identify the underlying mechanisms, findings suggest a need to sensitize students and educators about the potential academic risks associated with high-frequency cell phone use.

Introduction

Cell phones are an integral part of college life and culture. Even a casual observation of today’s college students will reveal cell phones being used, both overtly and covertly, in every possible campus setting, including the classroom. Research suggests that college students frequently use the cell phone during class time despite rules against doing so (Tindell & Bohlander, 2012). As cell phone technology continues its rapid development, the device appears capable of contributing to student learning and improved academic performance. For example, modern “smartphones” provide students with immediate, portable access to many of the same education-enhancing capabilities as an Internet-connected computer, such as online information retrieval, file sharing, and interacting with professors and fellow students (Bull & McCormick, 2012; Tao & Yeh, 2013). Conversely, recent research suggests that many college students perceive the cell phone primarily as a leisure device, and most commonly use cell phones for social networking, surfing the Internet, watching videos, and playing games (Lepp, Li, & Barkley, 2015; Lepp, Barkley, Sanders, Rebold, & Gates, 2013). If typically utilized for leisure rather than education, then cell phones may disrupt learning within academic settings (Levine, Waite, & Bowman, 2007). Thus, the potential relationship between cell phone use and academic performance is not clear.

In support of the “cell phone as disrupter” hypothesis, a recent study by our group (Lepp et al., 2013) found that cell phone use was negatively associated with an objective measure of cardiorespiratory fitness in a sample of typical U.S. college students. Interview data collected for the study explained the negative relationship by suggesting that cell phone use disrupts physical activity and encourages sedentary behavior. Unpublished interview data collected as part of the same study suggest that cell phone use may also disrupt behaviors conducive to academic success. For example, when asked to describe cell phone use habits, one participant stated, “I usually go on my phone if I’m bored sitting there in class. Or during homework I’ll take little Twitter breaks.” Another student said, “If I’m in class and I’m bored then I’ll use my phone to look on Facebook. I think it’s just kind of a habit now that I have, which probably isn’t a good one. But, it’s just that I always have it [the phone] on me.”

Across the interviews, such statements were more common among high-frequency cell phone users than among low-frequency users. These statements suggest that some students, particularly high-frequency users, may have difficulty regulating their cell phone use during academic endeavors such as class participation, homework, and studying. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between cell phone use and academic performance in a large sample of U.S. college students.

Literature Review

Although the cell phone is likely to be on hand while college students are in class and studying, research investigating its relationship to academic performance is limited. In an early study of the phenomenon, Sánchez-Martínez and Otero (2009) used a

combination of self-reported monthly cell phone expenses and frequency of use data to identify intensive cell phone users in a large sample of Spanish high school students. In the study, intensive cell phone use was related to school failure as well as other negative behaviors such as smoking and excessive alcohol use. More recent studies operationalize cell phone use as calling and texting while utilizing a variety of measures for academic performance. For example, Jacobsen and Forste (2011) identified a negative relationship between calling, texting, and self-reported grade point average (GPA) among university students in the United States. Similarly, Hong, Chiu, and Hong (2012) found that calling and texting were positively correlated with a self-reported measure of academic difficulty among a sample of female, Taiwanese university students. While these studies provide a starting point for understanding the relationship between cell phone use and academic performance, they neither use objective measures of academic performance nor do they take into account the cell phone's expanding capabilities beyond calling and texting.

Modern cell phones enable users to access a variety of electronic media at almost any time and any place. Popular activities such as playing video games, surfing the Internet, and monitoring social media sites are now all easily accomplished with most cell phones. Researchers have linked each of these activities, independent of cell phone use, to academic performance. For example, heavy video game playing has been associated with lower GPAs (Jackson, von Eye, Fitzgerald, Witt, & Zhao, 2011; Jackson, von Eye, Witt, Zhao, & Fitzgerald, 2011). Also, low levels of Internet use have been associated with improved academic performance (Chen & Peng, 2008).Chen and Tzeng (2010) found that among heavy Internet users information seeking was associated with better academic performance, while video game playing was associated with lower levels of academic performance. Several recent studies have identified a negative relationship between social-networking site use (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Twitter) and academic performance (e.g., Rosen, Carrier, & Cheever, 2013; Stollak, Vandenberg, Burklund, & Weiss, 2011). In particular, Kirschner and Karpinski (2010)demonstrated that Facebook users have a lower self-reported GPA and spend fewer hours per week studying than nonusers. Likewise, Junco (2012a, 2012b) found a strong, negative relationship between time spent on Facebook and actual cumulative GPA. These negative relationships have been found in populations across the world, including North America, Europe, and Asia (e.g., Chen & Tzeng, 2010; Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott, & Ochwo, 2013).

Recently, multitasking has emerged as a possible explanation for the negative relationship between electronic media use (including cell phone use) and academic performance (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011; Junco & Cotton, 2011;2012; Karpinski et al., 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Rosen et al.,2013; Wood et al., 2012). Indeed, several studies reveal that students frequently report using a variety of electronic media including cell phones while in class, studying, and doing homework (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011;Junco & Cotton, 2012; Sánchez-Martínez & Otero, 2009; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012). Several recent studies, using a variety of methods, identify a negative relationship between multitasking and academic performance. First, Wood et al. (2012) measured the influence of multitasking with an array of electronic media on students' ability to learn from typical, university classroom lectures. Emailing, MSN messaging, and Facebook use via computer were all investigated as was cell phone texting. Results showed that multitasking with any of the technologies was associated with lower scores on follow-up tests compared with students who did not multitask. Second, Junco and Cotton (2012) used a hierarchical regression to determine the power of multitasking to predict actual cumulative college GPA. Results showed that Facebook-multitasking and texting-multitasking were significantly and negatively related to college GPA after controlling for sex, actual high school GPA, time preparing for class, and a student's Internet skills. Finally, Rosen et al. (2013) observed the study behaviors as well as study settings of a sample of middle school, high school, and university students. Participants were observed for 15 min with on-task and off-task behavior recorded every minute. Results showed that participants typically became distracted by media such as Facebook and texting after less than 6 min of studying. Furthermore, measurements of daily Facebook use and daily texting behavior predicted off-task behavior during study periods as well as self-reported GPA.

In review, emerging research suggests that texting, Internet use, email, and social-networking sites such as Facebook can potentially increase multitasking and task-switching during academic activities and decrease academic performance. Notably, all of these previously investigated activities can now be accomplished with a single, Internet-connected cell phone. Therefore, measurements of cell phone use should not be limited to only texting and calling but should take this wide array of activities into account. Furthermore, and in consideration of the ubiquity of the cell phone, the relationship between this expanded definition of cell phone use and academic performance warrants investigation.

Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Academic Performance

In addition to improving the way cell phone use is measured, a better understanding of the relationship between cell phone use and academic performance requires incorporating additional, well-established predictors into any statistical models designed to assess

this relationship. An abundance of research suggests that self-efficacy beliefs are among the strongest predictors of academic performance (for a comprehensive review, seePajares, 1996). Generally speaking, self-efficacy describes an individual's belief in his or her capabilities to organize and execute the behaviors necessary for success; as such, self-efficacy beliefs are a key mechanism in human agency (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy beliefs are domain specific; thus, research has identified self-efficacy beliefs pertinent to academic performance (Pajares, 1996). The strength of academic self-efficacy constructs is their influence over behavior. Students who report high academic self-efficacy apply greater effort to academic pursuits, are more persistent in the face of obstacles, and exhibit a greater interest in learning (Schunk, 1984, 1989). In addition, research illustrates that academic self-efficacy can mediate the effects of academic ability (Pajares, 1996). As a result, academic self-efficacy is positively correlated with virtually all measures of academic performance, including semester grades, cumulative GPA, homework, test scores, and writing assignments (Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991; Pajares, 1996).

Research has demonstrated that efficacy beliefs are often better predictors of academic performance than other commonly used social-psychological variables (e.g., Klomegah, 2007; Paulsen & Gentry, 1995; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). For example, self-efficacy proved to be the strongest predictor of college student's academic performance in a model including task value, goal orientations, metacognitive self-regulation, self-regulation, and learning strategies (Al-Harthy & Was, 2010). Two self-efficacy constructs in particular have received much attention for their ability to predict academic performance (Pajares, 1996). These are self-efficacy for self-regulated learning (SE:SRL) and self-efficacy for academic achievement (SE:AA;Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). SE:SRL concerns an individual's belief in his or her capabilities to proactively regulate his or her learning on the path to academic achievement. This includes belief in one's ability to resist distractions while learning and to create study environments conducive to learning. As such, it is an important variable to consider when exploring the relationship between potential distractors such as cell phones or other new media and academic performance (LaRose & Eastin, 2004;LaRose, Lin, & Eastin, 2003; LaRose, Mastro, & Eastin, 2001; Odaci, 2011). A related construct is SE:AA, which describes an individual's belief in his or her capabilities to learn material from specific content areas such as math, science, and history. As originally conceived and validated byZimmerman et al. (1992), SE:SRL influences SE:AA, which in turn influences final academic achievement. As predicted by the original model and subsequently verified, previous academic performance can influence both SE:SRL and SE:AA (Caprara, Vecchione, Alessandri, Gerbino, & Barbaranelli, 2011).

Research Question

Considering the existing research, as well as the unpublished interview data presented in the introduction of this article, it is hypothesized that cell phone use and academic performance are related. However, in assessing this relationship, there is a need to consider important statistical controls such as SE:SRL, SE:AA, and previous academic performance (i.e., high school GPA). Similarly, research suggests that choice in academic major, as well as demographic and behavioral factors, may also be predictive of academic performance and should, therefore, be considered. This study considered four such factors: sex, cigarette smoking, class standing, and undergraduate major. Indeed, there are well-established sex-related differences in college students' academic performance (Peter & Horn, 2005). Likewise, cigarette smoking has been associated with problematic cell phone use and poor academic performance (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004; Sánchez-Martínez & Otero, 2009). Class standing and undergraduate major may also be potential predictors (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Sulaiman & Mohezar, 2006). In addition, there is a need to operationalize cell phone use more broadly (i.e., assess total cell phone use) in consideration of the device's increased functionality. Finally, there is a need to use objective measures of academic performance such as students' official cumulative GPA. This study fulfills these many needs by answering the following question: What is the relationship between total cell phone use (i.e., calling, texting, video games, social networking, surfing the Internet, software-based applications, etc.) and academic performance (i.e., actual college GPA) after controlling for previously identified predictors of academic performance (i.e., actual high school GPA, SE:SRL, SE:AA, sex, cigarette use, class standing, and academic major)?

Method

The dependent variable for this study, academic performance, was objectively assessed using participants' actual cumulative college GPA. In addition, actual high school GPA was used as a statistical control. Because these are sensitive data, and collecting them involves accessing participants' official academic records, participants were assured that data collection, storage, and reporting would guarantee confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were recruited during class time from courses that typically attract students from a diversity of undergraduate majors. Representative courses include introduction to sociology, general biology,

American politics, human nutrition, and world history. During class time, the principal investigators explained the methods to all students present, answered questions, addressed concerns, and ensured that the informed consent document was read, understood, and signed. After this, a survey was distributed and completed during class by all students who consented to participate in the study. On the survey, students provided their university email address, which was later used to access their academic records. If students did not consent to have their GPA retrieved, they did not participate in the study. This method produced an initial sample size of 536 undergraduate students from 82 self-reported majors.

Measures

The survey took approximately 10 min to complete. Students first provided basic demographic and lifestyle information. Students completed the validated SE:SRL (Zimmerman et al., 1992) and SE:AA scales (Zimmerman et al., 1992). Participants also provided information regarding their cell phone use as operationalized by Lepp et al. (2013) and, finally, their email addresses. Email addresses were used to access each student's official academic records from which college and high school GPAs were collected.

SE:SRL is an 11-item scale that measures how well students believe that they can use a variety of self-regulated learning strategies such as finish homework assignments by deadlines, study when there are other interesting things to do, concentrate on school subjects, and arrange a place to study without distractions (Zimmerman et al., 1992, p. 668). SE:AA is a nine-item scale that measures how well students believe that they can achieve success in important academic domains such as reading, writing, English grammar, mathematics, science, social studies, and computer use. For the items in both self-efficacy measures, students used a seven-point Likert-type scale to rate their perceived capability to do well (i.e., 1 = *not too well* to 7 = *very well*). Responses for the items in each scale were summed, thereby producing a total score. Higher scores indicate greater self-efficacy. Both scales have been previously validated and found to have strong internal consistency (coefficient α = .87 and .70, respectively; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Since their development, both have been consistently shown to be reliable predictors of academic performance in variety settings (Pajares, 1996). Likewise, the SE:SRL and SE:AA scales demonstrated strong internal consistency with this study's sample of undergraduate students (coefficient α = .84 and .73, respectively; N = 536).

Total daily cell phone use was measured using the following item: "As accurately as possible, please estimate the total amount of time you spend using your mobile phone each day. Please consider all uses except listening to music. For example: consider calling, texting, sending photos, gaming, surfing the Internet, watching videos, Facebook, email, and all other uses driven by "apps" and software."

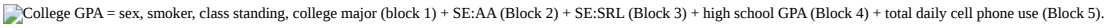
Participants provided best estimates for hours of cell phone use per day and minutes per day. Total use in minutes was calculated for each participant as hours × 60 + minutes. In developing this measure of total cell phone use, two focus groups of undergraduate students reviewed the question for content validity criteria, including (a) clarity in wording, (b) relevance of the items, (c) use of standard English, (d) absence of biased words and phrases, (e) formatting of items, and (f) clarity of the instructions (Fowler, 2002). Most students provided feedback from the criteria categories of (a), (b), (c), and (f). Appropriate alterations were made to the survey based upon the responses and suggestions. In consideration of this measure's construct validity, participants' daily text messaging and daily calling were assessed as this is how cell phone use has been operationalized in previous research (e.g.,Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Total daily cell phone use (calling, texting plus all other uses such as Internet browsing and games) was positively correlated with daily texting (r = .430, p < .001) and daily calling (r = .210, p < .001), suggesting that the measures are related but not identical. In addition, we assessed construct validity in a small group (N = 21) of undergraduate college students at the same university from which the present sample was culled. Self-reported total cell phone use (minutes) as assessed by this measure had a large, significant correlation (r = .510, p = .018) to objectively measured cell phone use (minutes) obtained by accessing students' actual cell phone records (unpublished data). Thus, this self-report measure was carefully developed to assure content validity, while subsequent testing provided evidence of construct and criterion validity.

Data Analysis

All analyses were performed using SPSS for Windows (Version 18.0, SPSS Inc, Evenston, Illinois). First, independent samples t tests were used to examine differences in GPA between males and females and smokers and nonsmokers. Likewise, ANOVA was used to examine differences in GPA between class (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) and a categorization of students based on the college that houses their major (i.e., education, health, and human services; arts and sciences; business and communications). Second, Pearson's correlations were performed to examine the relationships between the following variables:

college GPA, SE:SRL, SE:AA, high school GPA, and total cell phone use. Third, hierarchical regression was used to answer this study's central research question:

- **Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between total cell phone use and academic performance after controlling for known predictors? Toward this end, the following model was initially proposed:


College GPA = sex, smoker, class standing, college major (block 1) + SE:AA (Block 2) + SE:SRL (Block 3) + high school GPA (Block 4) + total daily cell phone use (Block 5).

The categorical variables of interest were assessed in the first block of this model: sex, cigarette smoking, class, and college. Blocks 2 to 4 in this model are identical to the model developed by Zimmerman et al. (1992) and supported by others (e.g., Caprara et al., 2011) to predict academic performance. Block 5 added cell phone use to the model and thereby tested whether or not daily cell phone use uniquely predicted college academic performance (GPA) after controlling for these other, previously established variables.

Finally, to further illustrate the relationship between cell phone use and GPA, a tertile split for cell phone use was performed. Students in this final sample (N = 518) were divided into the following groups: low cell phone use group (M= 94.6 min per day, SD = 41.0, n = 180), moderate use group (M = 235.1 min per day, SD = 45.2, n = 173), and high use group (M = 601.3 min per day, SD= 226.8, n = 164). An ANOVA was then utilized to compare mean GPA across the three cell phone use groups (high, moderate, low). Post hoc t tests were performed for any significant main effect.

Results

Assumption Checking, Descriptive Statistics, and Preliminary Analyses

Before conducting any descriptive or inferential statistics, an examination of outliers (i.e., cell phone use, GPA, age, SE:SRL, SE:AA) was conducted. Following the method of Rosen et al. (2013), total cell phone use values that were more than 3 standard deviations from the mean were truncated to exactly 3 standard deviations from the mean. This procedure was applied to measures of total cell phone use for seven participants. Outliers on any of the remaining variables were removed from the study. This procedure resulted in 18 cases being removed and yielded a final analysis sample of 518 students. The age range of the data set was 18 to 28, with a mean of 20.28 (SD = 1.78). The data set was evenly distributed by class (freshmen = 132, sophomores = 139, juniors = 134, and seniors = 113). Females comprised 69% of the data set (n = 360), which is greater than the percentage of females (59%) in the overall undergraduate student body of the University.

From this data set, the assumptions of regression were examined, and a preliminary analysis was performed to assess the linearity of the relationship between the study's independent continuous variables (SE:SRL, SE:AA, high school GPA, total cell phone use) and college GPA. Using a Lack of Fit Test, the assumption of linearity was upheld (p = .906). The assumptions of normality and homoskedasticity were also met using residual scatterplots.

On average, students reported spending 300 min per day using their cell phones (SD = 243). The sample's mean GPA was 3.03 (SD = 0.60). Independent sample t tests demonstrated significant differences between males and females (p < .001) and smokers and nonsmokers (p < .001). Females' GPA (M = 3.09, SD = 0.63) was significantly higher than males' (M= 2.88, SD = 0.62), and nonsmokers' GPA (M = 3.07, SD = 0.64, n = 432) was significantly higher than smokers' (M = 2.80, SD = 0.58, n = 85). An ANOVA demonstrated significant differences in mean GPA between the four classes (p < .001). Freshmen had a mean GPA of 3.21 (SD = 0.67), sophomores had a mean GPA of 2.93 (SD = 0.64), juniors had a mean GPA of 3.02 (SD = 0.55), and seniors had a mean GPA of 2.94 (SD = 0.48). Finally, the 82 self-reported majors were categorized into three groups based on the college housing the major (education, health, and human services; arts and sciences; business and communications). An ANOVA found no significant difference in mean GPA between these three groups (p = .081). Thus, this variable was not included in further analysis.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the continuous variables used in this model. Table 2 illustrates the results of Pearson's correlations. There are several significant correlations worth noting. There was a significant, negative correlation between cell phone use and college GPA (p < .001). There was a significant, positive correlation between both measures of self-efficacy (SE:SRL, SE:AA) and college GPA (p < .001). There was a significant, negative correlation between both measures of self-efficacy (SE:SRL, SE:AA) and cell phone use (p ≤ .041). Finally, high school GPA was significantly and positively correlated with college GPA (p < .001).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

	N	*M*	*SD*
College GPA	518	3.03	0.601
High School GPA	483	3.22	0.473
SE:SRL	518	56.42	8.96
SE:AA	518	44.44	7.07
Cell phone use	518	300.55	243.52

Note. GPA = grade point average; SE:SRL = self-efficacy for self-regulated learning; SE:AA = self-efficacy for academic achievement.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients (r).

	College GPA	*High School GPA*	*SE:SRL*	*SE:AA*
High School GPA	.611***			
SE:SRL	.341***	.242***		
SE:AA	.200***	.275***	.456***	
Cell phone use	-.234***	-.168***	-.90*	-.239***

Note. GPA = grade point average; SE:SRL = self-efficacy for self-regulated learning; SE:AA = self-efficacy for academic achievement.
*p < .05. ***p < .001.

Hierarchical Regression

As described above, the preliminary analysis supported testing the following hierarchical regression model:

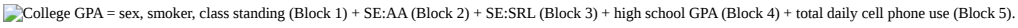

College GPA = sex, smoker, class standing (Block 1) + SE:AA (Block 2) + SE:SRL (Block 3) + high school GPA (Block 4) + total daily cell phone use (Block 5).

Table 3 provides the model summary results for the hierarchical regression predicting college GPA with total cell phone use as the final block in the model. Each block significantly added to the prediction of the criterion variable. In Block 1, females had a significantly greater GPA than males (β = .120, p = .007), nonsmokers had a significantly higher GPA than nonsmokers (β = .155, p = .001), and class standing proved significant as well (β = −.111,p = .013). In Block 2, there was a significant, positive relationship between college GPA and SE:AA (β = .210, p < .001). In Block 3, there was a significant, positive relationship between college GPA and SE:SRL (β = .289,p < .001). In Block 4, there was a significant, positive relationship between college GPA and high school GPA (β = .553, p < .001). Finally, there was a significant, negative relationship between total daily cell phone use and college GPA (β = −.164, p < .001). This total model explained 44.9% of the variance in college GPA (R^2 = .449).

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Predicting College GPA: Model Summary.

	Sex/class/smoke Block 1	*SE:AA* Block 2	*SE:SRL* Block 3	*HS GPA* Block 4	*CP use* Block 5
R^2	.058	.101	.165	.425	.449
ΔR^2	.058	.043	.064	.259	.024
ΔF	9.755	22.922	36.580	213.86	20.454
ρ	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Note. GPA = grade point average; SE:SRL = self-efficacy for self-regulated learning; SE:AA = self-efficacy for academic achievement; HS = high school; CP = cell phone.

Finally, the ANOVA comparing GPA across the three cell phone use groups (low, moderate, high) revealed a significant main effect (F = 11.70, df = 2, p < .001). Specifically, the high cell phone use group had a GPA (M = 2.84, SD = 0.61) that was significantly lower (p < .001) than both the moderate use group (M = 3.06, SD = .61) and the low use group (M = 3.15, SD = 0.45). There was not a statistically significant difference between the low use and moderate use groups (p = .175).

Discussion

This study was exploratory in nature. Therefore, the findings are best understood as initial steps into a new line of inquiry. The study's aim was to assess the relationship between cell phone use and academic performance after controlling for known predictors of academic performance. A hierarchical regression was used for this purpose allowing for the development of a model which used sex, cigarette smoking behavior, class standing, SE:AA, SE:SRL, and high school GPA to predict college GPA. Each of these variables were significant predictors of college GPA. Females, as has been the recent trend, had higher GPAs than males (Peter & Horn, 2005). Smokers, as suggested in previous research, had lower GPAs than nonsmokers (DeBerard et al., 2004; Sánchez-Martínez & Otero, 2009). Class was a significant predictor as well, with freshmen and juniors doing slightly better academically than sophomores and seniors in this sample. As expected, SE:SRL, SE:AA, and high school GPA were all positively associated with GPA (Zimmerman et al., 1992). Finally, total cell phone use (min/day) was added to the end of this regression model. After controlling for the previously established predictors of academic performance, total cell phone use was found to be a significant negative predictor of GPA. These results suggest that given two college students from the same university with the same class standing, same sex, same smoking habits, same belief in their ability to self-regulate their learning and do well academically, and same high school GPA—the student who uses the cell phone more on a daily basis is likely to have a lower GPA than the student who uses the cell phone less.

Previous research suggests that college students' cell phone use may be a distraction in academic settings (Levine et al., 2007). Two previous studies using large random samples of college students found that 89% (N = 302) and 83% (N = 251) of the students surveyed perceived the cell phone primarily as a leisure device rather than as an educational tool (Barkley & Lepp, 2013; Lepp et al., 2013). Because the cell phone is ever-present and commonly used for leisure, it is likely that it occasionally distracts from learning in class, in the library, in the dormitories, and in any other setting utilized by students for academic purposes. In addition, there is a growing amount of research that suggests electronic media in any form encourages multitasking (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011; Junco & Cotton, 2011, 2012;Karpinski et al., 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010; Wood et al., 2012) and task-switching (Rosen et al., 2013), both of which are negatively related to academic performance.

Considering these explanations, it is likely that the modern cell phone creates a temptation to surf the Internet, check social media (e.g., Facebook), play video games, contact friends, explore new applications, or engage with any number of cell-phone-based

leisure activities, which some students fail to resist when they should otherwise be focused on academics. As such, the negative relationship between cell phone use and academic performance identified here could be attributed to students' decreased attention while studying or a diminished amount of time dedicated to uninterrupted studying. Indeed, a similar argument has been proffered to explain the negative relationship between general social-networking site use or Facebook use and academic performance (Karpinski et al., 2013; Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010). Future research should examine the many potential underlying reasons for the negative relationship identified here, including time spent studying and multitasking. Of course, this line of research has demonstrated only relationships and not causality. Thus, there is a need to explore these relationships over time and with experimental designs.

There is also a need to better understand how specific cell phone uses are related to academic performance. While this study found that cell phone use as a whole was negatively associated with academic performance, the relationship may vary with particular uses. In other words, contrary to the findings presented here, there may be specific uses that are positively related to academic performance. For example, Norris (1996) found that while TV watching as a whole was negatively associated with political participation, watching TV news and public affairs programming was positively associated with political participation. Likewise, Chen and Tzeng (2010) found that using the Internet for information seeking was associated with better academic performance, while using the Internet for video game playing was associated with lower levels of academic performance. Finally, Junco (2012a) found that the total amount of time college students spend on Facebook, as well as the total number of times students check Facebook, were negatively associated with campus engagement. However, some Facebook activities such as creating events and RSVPing for events were positively associated with campus engagement. Thus, assessing cell phone use as a whole is likely to provide only a partial understanding of an undoubtedly complex relationship. Additional research assessing time devoted to specific cell phone uses such as gaming, social networking, information search, and the use of educational software (apps) is needed.

While these findings build upon and extend previous research in this area, there are limitations. First, cell phone use was self-reported. Although the self-report measure used in this study was carefully developed to assure content validity and a subsequent test provided evidence of criterion validity, research by Boase and Ling (2013) illustrates that continuous, open-ended self-report cell phone measures are at risk of over reporting use. In lieu of objective data, future studies may seek to further validate this measure. Furthermore, future studies should assess the time devoted to common specific uses such as social networking, gaming, and information search, in addition to measuring overall use as was done here. Second, the sample consisted of undergraduate college students from a single, large, public university in the Midwestern United States. Although the behavioral norms governing cell phone use appear to be consistent among today's college students (Anderson & Rainie, 2011; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012), attempts to generalize these results to other populations should be made with caution. Therefore, future research should include college students from different types of universities and from different geographic regions. In addition, high school and junior high school students should be studied as recent research suggests that the relationships identified here may be evident in younger students as well (Rosen et al., 2013).

Conclusion

This research utilized a more holistic measure of cell phone use than previous studies. The measure accounts for the cell phone's expanded capabilities in the realm of social networking, gaming, and Internet use. After controlling for SE:SRL, SE:AA, and other important predictors such as actual high school GPA, this measure of cell phone use was a significant and negative predictor of college students' academic performance, objectively measured as cumulative GPA. Presently, cell phone use is a dominant and defining characteristic of this generation of college students and often occurs during class time, while completing homework, and while studying (Smith, Raine, & Zickuhr, 2011; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012). Therefore, more research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship. Even so, educators and administrators in higher education may wish to carefully consider policies regarding cell phone use in the classroom, laboratories, and other settings where learning occurs. Undoubtedly, the capability of the cell phone to entertain, connect, and inform will continue its rapid development. As such, cell phones and related devices will only increase in popularity and use. Therefore, there is a need to better understand how this technology can be harnessed to make a genuine contribution to student learning. We may discover conditions where learning is enhanced by having the cell phone on; likewise, we may discover conditions where learning is enhanced by having it off.

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Author Biographies

Andrew Lepp, PhD is an associate professor at Kent State University in the College of Education, Health and Human Services (EHHS). He teaches in EHHS's Recreation, Park and Tourism Management program. His research interests include "new media" (e.g. smartphone, internet) and young people's lives.

Jacob E. Barkley, PhD is an associate professor of Exercise Science in the College of Education Health and Human Services at Kent State University. Dr. Barkley's research focuses on examining factors related to physical activity and sedentary behaviors.

Aryn C. Karpinski, PhD is an assistant professor at Kent State University in the College of Education, Health and Human Services (EHHS) in the Department of Foundations, Leadership, and Administration (FLA), in the Evaluation and Measurement program. She teaches research methods, measurement, and advanced statistics courses. Her research interests involve technology and social media in education.

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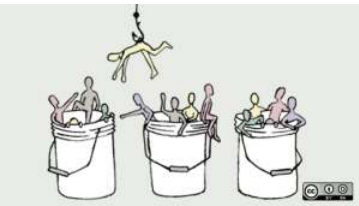
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3.2.14: “Call to All Open Source Communities- Emphasize Inclusion” by Meg Ford



As a woman in open source, I have found that the values of community, open development, and flat organizational structure appeal equally to both men and women. The ability of local organizers to freely define what type of culture they are building allows them to adapt in order to appeal to the surrounding culture, while striving to improve access.

The gender balance in the field of design is the opposite of the FOSS community, because the majority of visual artists are female. In art, gender is discussed openly as an aspect of the theory used to explain visual communication. For example, part of the typical peer-review process is critique, the goal of which is to contextualize visual communication by discussing the culture, gender, identity, economics, and psychological factors which influenced the artwork, so the artist can understand how they personally fit into the community in which they practice. I began as an outsider to both technology and the FOSS community, so it was both interesting and frustrating to realize that much of the communication and organization of FOSS communities was framed without acknowledgement to the diversity of communication styles and the backgrounds of potential community members.

In 2011, I was accepted to the OPW to work on high contrast icon themes for the GNOME desktop. This started my deep dive into the fascinating world of Linux. Having access to an open code base, sharing my work in the open, and receiving constant feedback from the community was overwhelming at first. The learning curve was steep, but the excitement I felt about having access to open knowledge, the support of a community dedicated to sharing knowledge freely, and to pushing the boundaries of what we did kept me coming back for more even on the most frustrating days.

My OPW internship brought me into the FOSS community. It also taught me to talk freely about my experiences as a woman in the computer science field, and sometimes that means knocking on the same doors over and over until you are let in. Sometimes it means acknowledging that communication styles needs to shift in order to *emphasize inclusion*. Other times it means speaking up about what your community values and how to allocate resources to benefit all participants equally. OPW was the first door to open for me, and my involvement showed me that persistence, hard work, and enthusiasm can bring success no matter who you are or where you start from.

As time went on I became involved in coding for GNOME. In 2012, I started to contribute to GNOME’s Documents application, which was the first application to be developed in the new GNOME 3 style. Because the style is still in its early stages, the themes and widgets are being prototyped in the applications before they are integrated into GTK+ (the widget library) and the standard desktop themes. Last summer I wrote my own GNOME application: a sound recorder for the desktop. I started by planning my code to fulfill the requirements of a series of mockups by a community member. I went on to code the application as a Google Summer of Code (GSoC) project.

During the initial development phase I worked with Reda Lazri (the original designer), Sebastian Dröge (a GStreamer core maintainer who mentored me), Hylke Bons, and Garrett LeSage (both of whom are community members and design for GNOME). GSoC allowed me to immerse myself in GNOME’s developer community and learn about the code base from core contributors.

When a fellow GNOME contributor, Jim Campbell, suggested that we start a group to focus on GNOME and GNU/Linux, I saw it as a way to give back to my community and work to increase diversity. The FOSS community in Chicago is small, and for the first year I was the only woman who attended our events. From the beginning we emphasized that our group was open to anyone who was interested in participating by adopting a code of conduct. As time went on our community began to grow and started to be more representative of the larger community here in the city. Engaging women has happened slowly but without any special intervention on our part.

We invite members to bring their projects to hackfests and share their knowledge by giving talks. People have come to work on GTK+ bindings for the Go programming language, documentation for Gedit, the fundraising campaign for MediaGoblin, and the website for the Open Science Framework, among other things. Talks have ranged from a recent SaltStack tutorial, which our

members participated in using their own four-server demo environments running on server space donated by Rackspace—to talks on Wayland, Emacs, and personal data security. All of the projects and presentations center around the use of open source technologies. Our role as organizers is to encourage participation and free exchange of ideas and resources among participants.

Being a woman in computer science is both an exciting and challenging experience. To me it means being exposed to emerging technologies, solving new and difficult problems, and working to promote Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in my local community.

I think that outreach can be successfully addressed using the same template as other questions in open source: by recognizing diversity as a key element of success, by facilitating transparency and equal access to knowledge, and by letting the community organize itself around a shared vision. Having women who are visibly engaged in and promoting involvement in the community seems to be one way to send a clear message that women can participate and succeed in FOSS.

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3.2.15: “Piracy Gave Me A Future” by Daniel Starkey

Poverty traps its victims in intellectual dead zones. I don’t pirate games anymore, but when I needed it, it gave me access to the literature and artistic inspiration of my generation.



As a kid, I stole from everyone.

An unattended purse in a restaurant? Easy $5. Pokémon cards at Target? Pocketed. I even marked my best friends, waking up early on days I’d sleep over to rifle through their house to see what I could nab.

“I need this,” I’d tell myself.

For a time, that thin justification worked. My family didn’t have any money, and when the Pokémon craze hit, I wanted in. Everyone else had massive collections, but all I had was a single starter deck I’d coaxed my babysitter into buying me (it was the one with Ninetails). Ashamed to pull out my paltry collection in front of the other kids, jealousy fueled me.

After each snag, I’d put on airs and feign ignorance long enough for suspicion to drop. I was, after all, just a kid. Few suspected how much I’d taken. Eventually, I stopped stealing, at least in such direct, aggressive ways. I didn’t outgrow that class consciousness, though. I knew when others had something I didn’t, and I was still jealous.

It was more than just jealousy, of course. Being poor and acutely aware of that fact as a child is a strange experience. You know enough to understand that there’s injustice, but you don’t yet know why or how it happened. Much less what you can do about it. I had a hard time understanding that it wasn’t my fault, and to a large degree not my mom’s either. Instead, it left me feeling less valuable than my other classmates. Their access to art, books, movies and games that I couldn’t afford left me feeling alone and confused: Was I somehow less deserving? So I exercised the one bit of agency I had in my life. I stole.

Things started to change for me in middle school. I was accepted into a charter school, founded with the purpose of lifting kids up out of poverty with education. We were required to learn Latin and wear school uniforms, but most of us were still from the inner city. Classmates often came from broken homes, and many, like me, didn’t know their fathers. I felt comfortable, oddly secure for the first time in my life.

That year was also the same that my mom got her first computer. On the few occasions she’d give up control of the PC, I’d scour the internet looking new things to learn. I had an insatiable appetite for ideas, though I’d spent most of my life with limited ways to feed it. Even before I started stealing Pokémon cards, I would often just sit down and read encyclopedias when I got the chance. I was desperate, starved for knowledge and culture.

The Internet said I didn’t have to be hungry; it was a tool that opened up the world. I didn’t need money to read books through Project Gutenberg, or search the web for answers to questions I’d always been afraid to ask. And, I soon discovered, I didn’t necessarily need money to play computer games either, so long as I was willing to pirate them.

In a way, downloading games didn’t feel that different from searching the web for information. The internet held out the promise of free and equal access to information, and piracy seemed like a natural extension of my quest for knowledge. I wanted to experience art and culture that spoke to me just as much as I wanted answers to my questions. And suddenly I could have them all: I was a nameless, faceless entity, free of the chains of my economic class. Piracy was freeing.

A couple years later, my mom had an accident and ended up taking more than a year off from work. Money got tighter than ever, and there was no way she could afford to replace her computer as it aged into obsolescence. Soon it was too out of date to play

newer games, and I felt alone again, unable to participate in the culture building and growing around me. I wasn't yet old enough to hold a job myself, and when I asked my mom for an allowance, she responded with a somber look that said, "With what money?" It wasn't that she didn't want to give me more—every parent does—she simply couldn't. So I went back to stealing.

Before too long I had $300 as well as a spare monitor and case, enough to build a basic system. My first pirated PC game was *Deus Ex*. I'd heard about it a few times, and it sounded interesting. "A game about politics," was how a friend pitched it to me, though it's also been described as a "cyberpunk-themed action role-playing video game." Within a few hours I had it running on my cobbled together PC, and it was a revelation.

Deus Ex was the first game I'd seen that listed its primary influences, which included philosophers like Hobbes, Voltaire, Locke. They were wealthy men, to be sure, but learning about their work set me on the path to learning about sociology, about history, about how much all media is one long chain of slightly modified ideas, with each new link adding a new twist or perspective. The game's themes also spoke to some of the most personal concerns of my life, including economic class, injustice, about the disempowered fighting against a wealthy ruling class.

It was also a game where actions had serious consequences, and taking the quick, easy path could cause enormous harm to innocent bystanders. It was a message I took to heart. Playing through *Deus Ex* helped me realize that there are always consequences you can't quite see, and that my thefts over the years had surely left a wake of victims who had suffered—particularly the ones where I had taken physical goods and money. If they worked for minimum wage, even my quick, pilfered fiver could have been an hour or more of their life.

But what I learned from the game also helped solidify my belief that online piracy, at least in the context of my own circumstances, was still justified. Yes, downloading an illicit digital work can cause a sort of a harm to the creators or corporations that aren't receiving revenue, particularly independent developers, but when I weighed it against the desperation of my poverty and the worthlessness it made me internalize, there was no comparison.

Even in independent games, piracy isn't always as cut and dry as it seems. While it can have big impacts on some games, other small developers have discovered counterintuitive benefits to piracy, embraced it, or at least become more empathetic to it.

Some, perhaps most, people in industrialized countries have the luxury of seeking out media they care about and stories that speak to them, and they can afford to support that work with their money. But for others like me, it can feel like a seemingly insurmountable struggle. To live even in relative poverty deprives of you new ideas; it deprives you of the tools and education you need to escape. In the most severe cases, it locks you out of society—out of voting, out of socializing, and out of connecting with others.

Poverty is often cyclical because it traps its victims in intellectual dead zones. We know that without stimulation and without challenge, the mind, like the belly, starves.

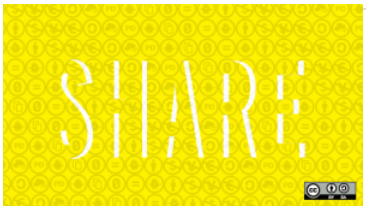
I don't pirate games anymore, and I don't support pirating games if you can afford to buy them. But when I needed it, piracy gave me hope. When I considered dropping out of high school, giving up on my future, and damning myself to repeat the cycle of poverty, I was able to look back on the sea of literature and countless games I'd downloaded for answers and inspiration. They not only helped me realize that I wasn't as alone as I thought, but allowed me to develop the fluency necessary to start making informed, critical works of my own.

I wasn't just taking the easy way out by pirating, because the way I had to travel wasn't easy any way you look at it. I was trying to equalize a playing field that I knew was stacked against me. Piracy helped do that, by giving me access to art and books and games that allowed me to better myself, and inspired me to become who I am today.

Piracy gave me a future.

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3.2.16: “What I Learned While Editing Wikipedia” by Noopur Raval



I was introduced to the Wikimedia movement primarily as a communications consultant for Wikimedia Foundation’s first Global South project that began in India in 2011. My work with the Wikimedia Foundation and editing Wikipedia has helped me take a hard look at myself as a woman of colour from India in technology.

After my initial stint with Wikipedia editing, I increasingly realized that the English version of Wikipedia lacked articles on Indian writers, famous personalities, cultural artefacts, and more. The problem is multi-layered and includes poor coverage of everything relating to non-western societies as well as to women within those societies. Once, I created article on Wikipedia about an Indian, female writer named Bama. She is from the lowest caste community called Dalits in India; and while the author is a celebrated writer of stories on the subject of *double oppression* (which is oppession of women by people of higher castes and oppression by men within their own communities), Wikipedia almost naturally had no record of her work. Sadly, within minutes of my creation of her article it was nominated for deletion. I then quickly added more references while simultaneously starting a discussion about why it should not be deleted. At that point, another Indian editor jumped in and helped with the explaination; the next day the deletion tag was removed.

Similarly, many articles on crafts and oral traditions that we tried to create as a part of our GLAM activity at the National Crafts Museum in Delhi underwent gruesome scrutiny because they were clearly not the usual subjects of Wikipedia additions and editing. This abysmal gap motivated me to start editing almost only just to fill these lacunae. Since then, I’ve also created articles on violence against women and female authors from India. My commitment only grown and gained momentum to do what I see as helping Wikipedia fullfill its mission to be “completely open and free.”

The question I ask myself now everyday is whether merely enabling access through infrastructure and providing free platforms like Wikipedia can help us resolve uneven digital geographies created in the process.

As part of the Women in Free Software and Culture in India group, I recently led a hackathon group to edit sexual violence out of Wikipedia. The group is a voluntary organization of women working in free software in India; we have a corresponding mailing list where we share news, have discussions, and organize events. One member of the group is a free software consultant who identifies as transgender. She is trying to educate people about transgender rights, including living and pay conditions, and supports the transgender community by being open about her sexual orientation. About her role and outlook on women in free software: “I have been looking into building ground level feminist perspectives into free and open source software (FOSS) to make the FOSS space more inclusive, expand it and free it from the impositions of the patriarchy. Towards this I have tried to educate quite a few FOSS and other activist groups on aspects of gender inclusiveness, diversity, combating sexism, micro-aggression, and rape culture.”

Through my work with the Wikimedia Foundation, editing Wikipedia, and becoming a part of that *Wiki-verse*—as well as through conversations I’ve had with many women in technology at conferences like AdaCamp—I’ve realized that it’s not only gender but also a configuration of other identities like race, class, and colour that emerge as players in the dynamics of groups working on collaborative projects. For some they are obstacles, for others they are interesting aspects that enrich the process.

I also believe that there is a solid need to re-articulate these differences of gender, colour, discrimination, and most of all, the privileges given to bridge the gender gap. It is obviously not a question of allocating more resources to women but also of striving to create safe-spaces and the necessary support structure that can help women resist personal attacks, hostility, and confrontations without having to appear more masculine or justify their existence in open source and free knowledge communities.

Watch this video of Noopur Raval talking about editing Wikipedia.



of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/temp/?p=768

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3.2.17: “Wikipedia Is Good for You!?” by James Purdy

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3.2.18: “The Zombie as Barometer of Capitalist Anxiety” by D.T. Robb

The modern incarnation of the zombie, as seen strewn across pop culture horror novels and films in ever-increasing numbers, is easily recognized and radically different from its historical roots; any member of our modern Western culture can spot the gray, often rotting flesh, the black eyes, the dishevelled appearance, the shuffling gait, the wretched moaning, and, of course, the bloody mouths flecked with fresh flesh and detritus. However, the zombie goes beyond cheap thrills; zombies, as well as other variations of horror monsters, represent a fear that pervades society as a whole, a collective nervousness of destruction at the hands of a seemingly invulnerable foe.



According to Peter Dendle, in his essay, “The Zombie as Barometer of Cultural Anxiety,” the zombie has “…tapped into a deep-seated anxiety about society, government, individual protection, and our increasing disconnectedness from subsistence skills.”1 Dendle states that the prevalence of the zombie in pop culture correlates to society’s fear that any sudden jolt of the status quo, undead or otherwise, would result in mass chaos, that people would be unable to protect themselves or to survive on their own.

Yet one may take the thought of this collective anxiety a step further to discern one of the underlying causes and major contributions to the general nervousness of the public and the widespread appearances of zombies in films and literature: capitalism.

Past to Present

According to Dendle, “the zombie, a soul-less hulk mindlessly working at the bidding of another, thus records a residual communal memory of slavery: of living a life without dignity or meaning, of going through the motions.”1 Here we see the zombie’s origins, as corpses reanimated by bourgeois landowners or factory foremen through some rites of magick for the sake of performing menial labour without demanding fair wages, hours, and treatment, never tiring or making mistakes.

This is one of the earliest iterations of the zombie, and the origin of the capitalist metaphor. The proto-capitalist economy of nineteenth century America was dependent on slave labour, and pro-slavery politicians of the time argued that the economy of the South would have collapsed entirely should slavery be outlawed. Here it is evident how a fear and disdain of capitalism would have been imprinted on the minds of the enslaved Africans and Haitians, from whose culture the zombie originated. They were slaves because slavery was profitable, vital to economy and thus not morally bankrupt to the slave owners, and an implicit resistance to this system would have been planted.

From here the zombie transformed from a worker drone to a bloodthirsty monster, personality vanished, flesh rotting off of bone, an insatiable hunger for long pig, and most importantly a horde—one capable of the annihilation of human society. Zombies went from a cheap work force to a full-blown apocalypse, and they had never been more popular as capitalism conquered the world.

The capitalist metaphor came to a head with George Romero’s 1978 film Dawn of the Dead, in which the main characters attempt to escape the zombie apocalypse by finding sanctuary in a shopping mall. When the survivors find temporary safety, they return to their consumer roots and ransack the mall for products, and, after observing his comrades and the encroaching zombies, one character remarks, “They’re us.”2

Later, much more subtle hints at the metaphor of consumer capitalism occur in the Resident Evil cycle and many other films and books, where the zombie outbreak is, directly or otherwise, the result of illicit business practices of faceless corporations. This possibly stems from a mistrust of large conglomerates whose GDPs began to exceed entire nations’; Wal-Mart currently has more purchasing power than Saudi Arabia does.

In Max Brooks’ World War Z, a critique of capitalism is offered in the form of Phalanx, a vaccine manufactured to prevent “rabies” and sold as a solution to the developing zombie crisis; Phalanx was pushed through the FDA by the government (and the corporations that control it) despite a lack of testing and evidence regarding the zombie virus, for the sake of keeping the populace

calm while earning unprecedented profits at the expense of the victimized masses. According to Breckenridge Scott, the character responsible for Phalanx:

“It protected them from their fears. That’s all I was selling. Hell, because of Phalanx, the biomed sector started to recover, which, in turn, jump-started the stock market, which then gave the impression of a recovery, which then restored consumer confidence to stimulate an actual recovery!”3

This passage shows how the bourgeois businessman Scott justified selling his snake oil to the masses, in that the mass production of Phalanx and its widespread sales led to an economic recovery, and the reader is presented with the conflicting viewpoints between economic recovery and the deaths of millions of misled humans. The reader is presented with the question of whether the economy should take precedent over the well-being of the people, and while the choice is obvious, it shows the reader that corporations will sacrifice lives for their bottom lines.

And so, as zombies enter the world of prime-time television dramas, so too does our anxiety grow.

Anxiety Disorder

The zombie as we know it today, by its very nature, is a mindless creature which was once a human being, a sentient individual with a name and free will, but has been warped to become a ravenous consumer without thought or emotion. It meanders through city streets, around small towns, and along highways with no thought or desire but to consume anything and everything it can—namely, human flesh.



If one listens to the cries of anti-capitalist dissenters, an eerie similarity between zombies and members of capitalist economies appears, at least in terms of behavior; the masses go out from their homes and flock to shopping centers and department stores, willingly giving away the fruits of their labour in exchange for luxury items, and often really don’t know why.

A defining feature of the zombie is the loss of the individual’s sentience once transformed into the undead, just as a loss of sentience occurs in the individual within a consumer capitalist culture, at the hands of mass marketing and advertising. On the subject of the loss of free will, author Chuck Palahniuk wittily writes:

“Experts in ancient Greek culture say that people back then didn’t see their thoughts as belonging to them. When ancient Greeks had a thought, it occurred to them as a god or goddess giving an order… Now people hear a commercial for sour cream potato chips and rush out to buy, but now they call this free will. At least the ancient Greeks were being honest.”4

Here Palahniuk’s anti-capitalist sentiments can be translated to the parallel between zombies and consumers, as both experiences a loss of sentience, and of the individual. The zombie is a monster of majority, unlike its vampiric and lupine counterparts, as those in our society who are given to the consumer instinct are a majority and the few individuals who criticize capitalism from within it are persecuted and defamed in the way that zombies will swarm and attack an uninfected human. In addition, the zombie is a mechanism of annihilation; while vampires are a small minority living in the underground of a human world, feeding to survive, the zombie horde exists only for the purpose of consuming or converting all humans until the species is extinct and the paradigm shifts to a world inhabited only by zombies.

This is similar to the cries of the left wing, who accuse the right—the upholders of laissez-faire capitalism and unwavering nationalism—of demanding conformity of all to their belief systems and ways of living (if you don’t like America, well you can just get out).

However, Dendle postulates that while zombie apocalypse films and novels capitalize on the anxiety of the masses, the underlying purpose of zombie culture is not to display the end of the world but to illustrate how the world may be profoundly changed for the better by means of the old world’s destruction. Dendle states: “Post-apocalyptic zombie worlds are fantasies of liberation: the intrepid pioneers of a new world trek through the shattered remnants of the old, trudging through the shells of buildings and the husks of people.”1

In World War Z, the sundering of the zeitgeist in the United States shatters the pre-existing capitalistic and highly individualized philosophy of the masses and opens up the populace, through their vulnerability, to survival only through communal life and cooperation. However, even Brooks' profound statements regarding cooperation are contradicted within his novel, in the example of socialist Cuba becoming a booming post-war capitalist force. One can infer from the critiques of both capitalism and communism that Brooks supports neither in his writing, adding another layer to the zombie-capitalist.

I believe that the impact of Brooks' novel regarding our economic anxiety can be summarized by this statement of a Japanese character late in the novel: "His generation wanted to rule the world, and mine was content to let the world, and by the world I mean [the United States], rule us. There has to be a better way, a middle path where we take responsibility…"2 This is a powerful line, as it transforms the novel from a simple metaphor for capitalism to a statement that the world must take a path between capitalism and communism in order to survive and prosper, and that this path is now available as the world has an opportunity to rebuild. This is the ultimate function of the zombie, beyond cheap thrills of a horror film and beyond a criticism of the right-wing and consumer capitalism; the zombie functions to clean the slate and enable the world to rebuild anew.

1. Dendle, Peter. "The Zombie as Barometer of Cultural Anxiety." 45-55. Print.
2. Brooks, Max. World War Z. Print.
3. Ramero, George A. Dawn of the Dead. Film.
4. Palahniuk, Chuck. Lullaby. Print.

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3.2.19: “Zombies vs. animals? The living dead wouldn’t stand a chance” by David Mizejewski

National Wildlife Federation naturalist David Mizejewski explains how nature would deal with a zombie outbreak: brutally, and without quarter.

With *The Walking Dead’s* fourth season premiere and Halloween upon us, the living dead are back in full-force.

Zombies are scary. We humans are evolutionarily pre-programmed to abhor the dead bodies of our own species. It’s a natural reaction, helping healthy individuals avoid fatal pathogens.

The thought of being eaten alive is a natural fear, and when it’s your own species doing the eating, it’s even more terrifying.

Relax. Next time you’re lying in bed, unable to fall asleep thanks to the vague anxiety of half-rotten corpses munching on you in the dark, remember this: if there was ever a zombie uprising, wildlife would kick its ass.

To enjoy zombie horror, you suspend disbelief and put aside some of science’s rules. That said, if we assume zombies can’t spread whatever is causing them to reanimate to other species, and that they are relatively slow moving—both true (*so far! — Ed.*) of Walking Dead zombies—there are more than enough wild animals out there to dispatch the undead.

That’s because zombies are essentially walking carrion, and Mother Nature doesn’t let *anything* go to waste.

Carrion is on the menu for a vast number of species, from tiny micro-organisms to the largest carnivores.

Here’s just some of the North American wildlife that would make short work of a zombie horde.

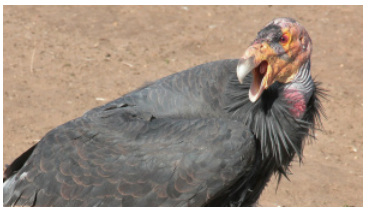


Photo: USFWS Pacific Southwest Region (cc)

BIRDS: WINGED ZOMBIE ANNIHILATORS

Many birds feed themselves by scavenging on dead things. The two vulture species native to North America, the turkey vulture and the black vulture, flock up to make short work of any corpses they find. Both vulture species are dwarfed by the massive California condor, whose wingspan can reach 10 feet and which relish carrion. A sluggish zombie wouldn’t stand a change against one of these giants or a flock of vultures. California condors are endangered, so a zombie apocalypse could really give a boost to their population by providing them with an abundance of food.

This video shows a juvenile California condor ripping the heart out of a dead carcass, surrounding by ravens picking up scraps. Ravens are not small birds—just look at the size of this baby condor in comparison.



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Ravens, crows, and magpies are expert scavengers as well, in addition to being bold and extremely intelligent. Many species of gulls, known for their brash behavior when it comes to scoring a meal, would also gladly feed off slow-moving zombies in coastal areas. These birds usually require other animals to break through or break down the tough skin and hide of their carrion meals. So they'd have to wait until the zombies decomposed a bit, or were dismembered by others animals, before they tucked in. But once started, nothing would stop them from devouring the undead with gusto.



Raven Symmetry by ingridtaylar

Despite being expert hunters, eagles are not above scavenging. Bald eagles make carrion a regular part of their diet, and with their huge talons, they're not afraid to dispatch animals that are near-death—or undead. The slightly larger golden eagle is no stranger to scavenging, either, and has also been documented attacking and killing animals as large as deer. A torpid zombie wouldn't pose much of a challenge.

Watch these bald eagles and crows strip a deer carcass down to nothing in 48 hours.



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MAMMALS: ZOMBIE DISMEMBERMENT CREW

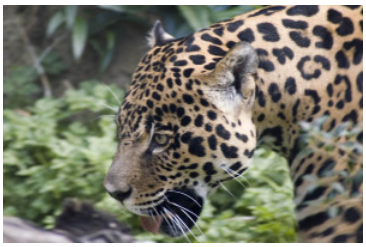
North America's large mammal predators would be more than a match for zombies. We have two bear species, brown (or grizzly) and black bears. Male brown bears can weigh in at 1,000 pounds. They are not afraid of humans. They can deliver a bite of 1200 pounds per square inch and have long, sharp claws designed to rip open logs and flip boulders in search of insects and other small critters to eat. They would easily tear apart rotting zombie flesh. Black bears are much smaller and typically run from humans, but even a black bear, when approached or cornered, would make short work of a zombie. Both bear species have an incredible sense of smell and both love to eat carrion, so even if zombies didn't approach them, the bears eventually would learn that these walking bags of flesh make good eating.



Grizzly Bear by Scott_Calleja

Like black bears, gray wolves are very shy of humans and typically run away at the first sight of us. Nor are they strangers to scavenging. They'd soon take advantage of the easy pickings presented by lumbering zombies. Coyotes are far less shy than wolves and can happily live alongside humans, including in the heart of our cities. These intelligent canids would quickly learn that they could take down zombies one by one, especially the eastern populations of coyote, which are larger and bolder due to past interbreeding with wolves and domestic dogs.

Unlike bears, wolves and coyotes, mountain lions prefer fresh meat and don't typically feed on carrion, other than what they kill themselves. Like all cats, they hunt by stealth and are irresistibly attracted to signs of weakness in potential prey. Unlike most other North American predators, mountain lions can put humans on the menu. Any zombie shuffling through mountain lion territory (which can be surprisingly close to our cities) would trigger those feline predatory instincts, and would likely end up with one of these big cats sneak-attacking from behind and delivering a spine severing bite to the back of the neck.



Jaguar Woodland Park Zoo by symonty

Even bigger and more powerful than mountain lions are jaguars, which range through Mexico and are still sometimes found in the desert southwest of the United States. Jaguars also hunt by stealth, and have a special technique to quickly dispatch their prey: a skull crushing bite to the head, delivered with their huge canine teeth. A jaguar bite delivers 2,000 pounds of pressure per inch, the most powerful mammalian bite on the continent. That, combined with a killing technique perfect for dispatching zombies, makes the jaguar its natural predator.

Watch this video of a jaguar making short work of a caiman. A zombie wouldn't stand a chance against these big cats.



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It's not just mammalian carnivores that would take apart zombies. On *The Walking Dead*, Rick's horse fell victim to a horde of zombies in season one, but I can only chalk that up to the fact that it was a domestic beast that didn't view humans (even undead

ones) as a threat. Wild hoofed mammals would not be so passive as to let zombies to get close enough to swarm and overwhelm them.

In fact, hoofed mammals are more dangerous to humans than carnivores. Moose attack and kill more people than bears do every year. They consider humans a threat, but as the largest living deer species, they are not afraid of human-sized creatures. If a zombie got too close, a moose would stomp it into an immobile pile of gore without a second's hesitation.

This video shows moose fighting technique, which involves delivering powerful blows with their sharp hooves.

https://youtu.be/gu_zMTQkM1s

And moose are nothing compared to bison. Bison are a ton of muscle, horn, and hide. They do not tolerate being approached, and would effortlessly gore and trample as many zombies as dared approached them. Watch this video of what a bison can do to a car with a flick of its head, and think about what a zombified human body would look like on the receiving end of its wrath.

https://youtu.be/ULBuLedK2Nw

Speaking of hoofed mammals ramming cars, this video of bull elk will give you some perspective on the size of this large deer species and their aggression during the breeding season. Bull elk are armed with giant antlers with spear-like tips—perfect to impale and dismember a pack of zombies.

https://youtu.be/tEv-hwjhEiE

Mountain goats would probably not encounter too many zombies, simply due to the inaccessibility of the steep mountain slopes they call home. Every so often, however, they do head down to more manageable terrain. Even though they are not large, they can be fierce and are armed with dagger-like horns, just as this unfortunate hiker learned.



mountain_goat_myatt by Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

REPTILES: SCALY ZOMBIE CLEAN-UP COMMITTEE

Most North American reptiles—small lizards, turtles and snakes—wouldn't pose much threat to zombies. Ironically, it would probably be venomous rattlesnakes that would be at most risk from zombie attack. When camouflage fails them, their survival tactic is to draw attention to themselves with a loud rattle, and then hold their ground, striking out at anything that approaches them. With no circulatory system or living tissue, snake venom wouldn't have any effect on zombies, and they'd easily be able to pick up the snake and eat it.



Western Diamondback Rattlesnake (Crotalus atrox) by rarvesen, on Flickr

That said, we do have a few reptiles particularly suited for zombie clean-up. Two crocodilian species call North America home: the American alligator and the American crocodile. American crocodiles are extremely endangered and found only in limited areas of Florida, but like California condors, they could benefit from an influx of slow-moving, half-rotten, staggering prey to their wetland habitat.

Alligators are far more numerous and are found throughout Florida, west to Texas, and along the coastal plain wetlands as far north as the Carolinas. Once almost totally wiped out, alligators are now numerous due to protections under the Endangered Species Act, and they sometimes even show up in people's backyards. 'Gators can grow to be 13 feet long and deliver an extremely powerful bite, with over 2,000 pounds of pressure per inch.

Both species are stealth hunters, and can burst from the water at surprising speeds to pluck large prey from the shoreline. They are quite capable of tearing a human-sized meal into bite sized chunks of meat with their toothy, vice-like mouths. Soft zombie flesh would melt in their mouths like butter.



Alligator 1, by Bogeskov

Any zombie that lumbered into fresh water ponds, lakes streams or swamps would likely fall prey to aquatic turtles too, who, with their beak-like jaws, would feast on zombie flesh. Painted turtles, river cooters and sliders of all sorts make carrion a part of their normal diet. To the undead, it would be a second "death by a thousand bites." The ubiquitous common snapping turtle specializes in carrion-eating. As the name suggests, it can tear off substantial chunks and swallow them whole. Snapping turtles are even used by police to find corpses underwater due to their relish for dead flesh.

Common snapping turtles are dwarfed by the alligator snapping turtle, which is the world's largest freshwater turtle. They can weigh in at more than 200 pounds. Disguised to look like rotten leaves, resting in the murky depths which they live, they are the perfect foil for any zombie that ends up in the water. Check out the massive head on this one.



alligator snapping turtle by me and the sysop

DECOMPOSERS: MASTERS OF THE ZOMBIE BUFFET

Ultimately, it's not the North America's mega-fauna that pose the most threat to zombies. In nature, there are a whole host of tiny creatures whose main purpose is to feed upon and break down the flesh of the dead: the decomposers. Zombies, with their rotting flesh, are obviously not immune to these decomposers (what do you think causes the rotting effect?), many of which are too small to see with the bare eye. Bacteria, fungi, molds, insects such as fly maggots or flesh-eating beetles, and other invertebrates, all make up nature's diminutive clean-up crew. And it can obliterate a dead body in surprisingly little time. The clumsy undead wouldn't have the dexterity to pick off these decomposers, even if they could see or feel them. It would just be a matter of time. Stripped off all soft tissue, including brains, the zombies would be reduced to hollowed-out skeletons.

Not convinced? Check out this video of a rabbit being consumed down to the bone, by wildlife decomposers, in just a week.



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Here is a time-lapse video showing Dermestid flesh-eating beetles consuming the flesh off a series of birds for the Natural History Museum of London. These beetle are easy to raise in captivity and only feed on (un)dead flesh, so they pose no harm to the living. Survivors of a zombie apocalypse could raise these beetles by the millions, and drop them onto zombies to do their work. It might take a few weeks per zombie, but they'd get the job done.



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Here are some maggots going to town on a carcass. Flies produce millions of grotesque larvae in no time at all. There would be no way for zombies to escape these flying insects—or avoid being engulfed utterly by writhing, insatiable maggots.



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ZOMBIES NO MATCH FOR WILDLIFE, WILDLIFE NO MATCH FOR HUMANS

There you have it. Even if zombies managed to feed on smaller, slow-moving animals, or mob and overtake a few individuals of the larger species, it's pretty clear that they're no match for much of North America's wildlife…at least not on a one-on-one basis. In reality, however, the battle between wildlife and *living* humans is not going so well for the wildlife.

Sadly, much of our continent's wildlife has disappeared, and many species continue to decline. Habitat loss, invasive species and climate change are just some of the human-induced challenges our wildlife are facing. You can get involved protecting wildlife with the National Wildlife Federation and help make sure that we have a future filled with these amazing species.

PUBLISHED 12:30 PM MON, OCT 14, 2013

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Mizejewski is a naturalist and media personality with the National Wildlife Federation.

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3.2.20: Student Writer at Work- Gretchen Panzer's Feminist Response to F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby may be the one novel that a majority of readers have read. It's taught in high school and college classrooms alike and it's read for pure enjoyment. In other words, *The Great Gatsby* is a cultural icon, at least for American readers.

Gretchen is a meticulous planner of her papers, as the focus on her process demonstrates. Originally, Gretchen wrote a journal entry exploring possible topics for her paper, particularly related to key symbols in the novel.

GRETCHEN'S PROCESS

Exploratory Journal Entry

I definitely want to write about Gatsby, and my favorite scene is when he tosses the shirts about and Daisy starts crying. So I think I'm going to link the shirts scene to the scene with Owl Eyes and the books. Depending on what I find when I start researching, my thesis will be that the shirts and books are symbolic of Gatsby himself: real, but unopened. Like his possessions, Gatsby is authentic in some sense, or Nick wouldn't respect him. But his potential is diminished by the people around him; they know nothing of his past/innermost thoughts and therefore see only the shiny cover.

With this tentative focus in mind, Gretchen skims through the novel, copying quotes that relate to her original idea as well as other passages that catch her interest. Reading her list, she finds that she is more interested in exploring the genre of "love story" and the way the story is cast as a dream or fantasy of Gatsby's, who tries to "buy" Daisy's love with material objects. After revising her thesis, finding secondary sources on her topic, and creating a new outline, Gretchen is ready to start composing her essay. The following is her first draft, which she brought to class for a peer-review workshop.

First Draft

Gretchen Panzer

John Pennington

Great American Novels

May 1, 20–

Before the tragic sequence of events begins to unfold in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, the novel almost seems as if it could be a perfect love story—one that will end not with death and disillusionment but with the promise of "happily ever after" for Jay Gatsby and the girl of his dreams. However, it is precisely because Daisy Buchanan is the girl of his dreams that their relationship is destined to fail. By simultaneously turning his dream-Daisy into an impossible ideal of love and a cheap symbol of material wealth, he loses any connection he might have had with the real, flawed person she truly is. Gatsby's famous idealism should not be considered an admirable trait; it is, in fact, a product of his blatant sexism.

The way in which Gatsby constructs his dream world is made evident in Fitzgerald's symbolism. Material possessions become the physical embodiment of the perfect love Gatsby pursues. Since he believes he cannot win Daisy's affections unless he is a man of means, he devotes his life to accumulating objects, disregarding their value even as he hopes it will transfer to his person. Two types of objects are particularly obvious in their symbolic value: the books in Gatsby's library and the array of shirts he displays for Daisy's benefit. Both collections reveal Gatsby's obsessive need to show off his wealth and seemingly paradoxical indifference to the objects themselves. Though the books are, as Owl Eyes points out, "[a]bsolutely real—have pages and everything" (Fitzgerald 50), they have never been read. Gatsby feels no need to actually make use of his library, for all the "thoroughness … [and] realism" he exhibits by purchasing actual books rather than those made from "a nice durable cardboard" (Fitzgerald 50). Clearly, Gatsby is more concerned with appearances than reality when it comes to his library—as long as his guests are impressed by its grandeur, the specific titles on its shelves are of no consequence.

As is the case with the books, Gatsby purchases vast quantities of clothing in order to impress Daisy. As part of the tour he gives Daisy, Gatsby tosses his expensive shirts in the air—a colorful display reminiscent of a peacock flashing bright feathers at a potential mate. Gatsby cannot take credit for their fashionable colors, however. He is not interested in personally selecting his own clothing, but delegates his shopping to an unnamed man in England (Fitzgerald 97). Mundane details such as color, cut, or fabric

are immaterial to Gatsby, just as title and author make no difference in his selection of books. It is instead the books' and shirts' contribution to the general splendor of his home, and therefore their part in his scheme to win Daisy, that gives them value. As Barbara Will asserts, "[w]hat motivates Gatsby is not the desire for material betterment … but the evanescent and the intangible" (Will 131). That material betterment can be used to achieve the evanescent, intangible ideal of love is the aspect which interests Gatsby.

Using material objects, Gatsby builds his dream of being with Daisy. Each book, each shirt symbolizes a step he is taking to realize his dream, as evidenced by Fitzgerald's use of a brick motif. The shirts are "piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high" (Fitzgerald 97)—tangible building blocks of an intangible dream. Despite their abundance, the dream-bricks create an unsteady edifice, as Nick learns when Owl Eyes hastily places the book they have been examining back on its shelf, insisting that "if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse" (Fitzgerald 50). Because Gatsby constructs his life using dreams and meaningless material objects, it is structurally unsound, too fragile to reach the lofty heights he wants to attain. Ignoring this, he takes his idealism to such an extreme that he is unable to cope with the impossibility of his dream being realized—any forced confrontation with reality topples his tower of dream-bricks.

Yet confrontation with reality is inevitable. The dream-Daisy transcends all human limitations; Daisy could never live up to Gatsby's expectations, if only because she *lives* in the first place. To be human is to be flawed, to be dynamic rather than static—a concept Gatsby does not seem to grasp. He spends years waiting to be reunited with the girl he remembers, only to be disappointed when she does not measure up to the memory he has stretched and distorted into an impossible ideal. This phenomenon is explained as Nick observes the lovers' reunion:

There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. (Fitzgerald 101)

By continuously embellishing his memory of Daisy with his own creative touches, Gatsby unintentionally ensures that the memory, or more accurately the dream, will surpass the reality and leave him disappointed and confused. The confusion sets in when Gatsby encounters the green light for the first time after he is reunited with Daisy:

the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. (Fitzgerald 98)

The green light, which in Gatsby's eyes signifies the dream-Daisy he is separated from, becomes another inconsequential material item. Like the books and shirts, it is a tangible object valued by Gatsby not for its own worth, but for the deeper meaning it holds. Yet the green light is inescapably linked to money itself—the green paper currency that enables Gatsby to present himself to Daisy.

Fitzgerald's use of the color green to symbolize both Daisy and material wealth recurs throughout the novel, perhaps most interestingly when Daisy says to Nick, "'If you want to kiss me any time during the evening, Nick, just let me know and I'll be glad to arrange it for you. Just mention my name. Or present a green card. I'm giving out green—'" (Fitzgerald 111). With this statement, the connection between Daisy and material wealth loses its innocence. Money is no longer just a means for Gatsby to attain the loftier, more beautiful dream of love; it has an allure of its own. The "green card" Daisy mentions as a joke buys only kisses, but Gatsby's cash (as he supposes) can be used to purchase Daisy herself. Though she is the inspiration for Gatsby's dream, she becomes another brick in his architecture, one of the objects he uses to chase after his dream-Daisy. Gatsby's collection of "enchanted objects" has decreased not by one, but two—the green light and the real Daisy.

Demoted to the status of "object," Daisy becomes a symbol of the very substance Gatsby uses to win her over: money. Her vibrant charm, the source of which Nick could never discern, is falsely linked to material wealth. Nick, enthralled by Gatsby's idealistic vision, eventually agrees with his abrupt conclusion that "[h]er voice is full of money … that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it" (Fitzgerald 127).

No longer awestruck by her mysterious charm, "Nick and Gatsby progressively devitalize Daisy's symbolic meaning until she exists as a vulgar emblem of the money values which dominate their world" (Person 255).

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As Gretchen writes her paper in light of the feedback she's received from her peer-review partner and her professor, she discovers that the focus on "blatant sexism" seems overly obvious—and as she delves into the evidence, she keeps repeating the same idea about sexism. She realizes, after immersing herself in some feminist literary criticism, that a key concept is that of "voice"—that is, how women are often denied their voice in fiction, particularly in works written by men. Consequently, Gretchen takes what she has already written on Daisy's voice and rethinks her paper.

We told you that Gretchen was a meticulous planner, so she went through the novel again and constructed a detailed outline of evidence that will guide her as she revises her paper with the new focus. Here is the final draft of Gretchen's paper. Note that the opening of the paper is two paragraphs, and it will be useful to compare her introduction in the final version to the original introductory paragraph. Gretchen's process demonstrates how papers develop: initial ideas are modified, first drafts become exploratory drafts where writers discover ideas while writing, and revisions highlight the intellectual development of a paper.

Final Draft

Gretchen Panzer

John Pennington

Great American Novels

May 1, 20–

A Lost Voice: Sexism in *The Great Gatsby*

A typical reading of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* focuses on Jay Gatsby's supposedly universal appeal. He is considered an "everyman," representative of all determined, idealistic young Americans seeking the elusive American dream. Though this interpretation has some merit, its flaw lies in the assumption that Gatsby's famous idealism is indeed admirable. While Gatsby may truly be an "every*man*," his quest for romantic idealism has disastrous effects upon the women in the novel. Gatsby seeks a "happily ever after" ending with the girl of his dreams, Daisy Buchanan. He worships this dream-Daisy as an impossible ideal of love and devotes himself to achieving wealth and status in order to win her affection. Ironically, his idealism prevents him from achieving his goal. By simultaneously distorting Daisy into an ideal of love and a cheap symbol of material wealth, he loses any connection he might have had with the real, flawed person she truly is. Gatsby's idealism should not be considered an admirable trait; it is nothing more than ill-disguised sexism.

As the novel progresses, Daisy loses her voice—literally and metaphorically—when it is overwhelmed by the incessant clamor of the more forceful males. Initially revered as a romantic ideal, Daisy's beautiful, captivating voice is increasingly stifled by the competing voices of the two men in her love triangle: her husband and Gatsby. Reduced to a symbol, and then to a sham of a symbol, Daisy is devalued by men even as they claim to love her. Fitzgerald's dialogue and vivid descriptions of the characters' voices make it abundantly clear that Gatsby's "everyman" dream of winning a woman's heart is rooted in the notion of male superiority.

From the beginning of the novel, Daisy's voice is established as an instrument of self-expression. Nick's first description of his cousin focuses on the beautiful, but disturbing, quality of her voice. He remarks that, "I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean in toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming." (Fitzgerald 13). The irony of this statement is subtle but very present; as Judith Fetterley points out in *The Resisting Reader*, "the criticism is not irrelevant or Nick wouldn't mention it, and indeed it does make Daisy less charming for it implies that the quality of her voice is simply something put on in order to gain an advantage over others" (84). Even as Nick admits that Daisy's voice is beautiful, he is driven by

masculine insecurity to negate its power. By assuming that she is manipulative, he devalues her "charming" manner of speaking and defines vocal expression as a method of obtaining power over others. While Nick is certainly justified in recognizing the power of a voice, the idea that Daisy, of all people, desires control over others is laughable. She is not attempting to lure hapless men into a deathtrap with her siren-song—she only wants to preserve what remains of her own voice, and ultimately is unable to even accomplish that. Her voice is indeed a weapon, but she does not use it as such; instead, it is used against her by Gatsby, Tom, and Nick.

Gatsby's assault against Daisy's voice begins innocently enough. They are long-lost lovers, reunited after years of separation, and he positively worships her. But Gatsby's admiration for Daisy is unhealthy; she is no longer a real person to him, but an impossible ideal. Even Gatsby cannot ignore his own impracticality, as his reunion with Daisy illustrates:

There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. (Fitzgerald 101)

By continuously embellishing his memory of Daisy, Gatsby unintentionally ensures that the memory—or more accurately, the dream—will surpass any possible reality and disappoint him. Yet something about Daisy's voice calls him back. As Nick watches:

His hand took hold of hers and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most with its fluctuating, feverish warmth because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song. (Fitzgerald 101)

A human voice cannot be immortal, but Gatsby's overactive imagination persists in viewing Daisy as superhuman: flawless, timeless, and "deathless." As Barbara Will points out in "*The Great Gatsby* and the Obscene Word," he does not concern himself with reality, but with "the evanescent and the intangible" (131). Because he is obsessed with the intangible, the ideal, Gatsby attributes the appeal of Daisy's voice to the wrong source. There is nothing magical or mythic about it—its "fluctuating, feverish warmth," a very human characteristic, is the true source of its power. For all his professions of love, Gatsby fails to comprehend the emotive power of the human voice. He does not notice how Daisy's irrepressible emotions draw him in, how "a stirring warmth flowed from her as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words" (Fitzgerald 19). When Daisy sings, she tips into the air her "warm human magic" (115), not the cold, implacable power of a goddess. By clinging to the impossible ideal he has created, Gatsby fails to recognize the true source of Daisy's charm: her real, human emotions.

These emotions are essential to one particularly telling scene: when Gatsby tosses his shirts into the air to show off his wealth. As the pile grows, Daisy is struck by the force of her emotions: "Suddenly with a strained sound Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily. 'They're such beautiful shirts,' she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. 'It makes me sad because I've never seen such—such beautiful shirts before' (98). While part of this emotional outburst may be attributed to "her unexpected joy" at being reunited with Gatsby (94), her grief cannot be ignored. As Leland S. Person argues in "'Herstory' and Daisy Buchanan," "[t]he important point to recognize is that Gatsby is as much an ideal to Daisy as she is to him" (253). As Gatsby flaunts his material wealth in front of her eyes, Daisy begins to understand his motives, and subsequently feels the loss of her ideal lover. The beautiful shirts upset her because she realizes that they are representative of herself: desirable, but material. Gatsby believes that he wants to be with Daisy, but he actually wants to *have* Daisy—a very different goal. That Daisy's voice is "muffled in the thick folds" of Gatsby's shirts shows that already his voice is beginning to smother her own, and her dream of Gatsby as a perfect lover is an illusion. Gatsby is oblivious to Daisy's despair, misinterpreting what she tries to express.

As the novel progresses, Gatsby's misinterpretation of Daisy's voice becomes less accurate and more destructive. Eventually, like Nick and Tom, he views her as nothing more than a material object—a symbol of power, but herself powerless. Before Tom and Gatsby do verbal battle over Daisy, she desperately tries to calm them, using her beautiful voice. "Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, moulding its senselessness into forms" (Fitzgerald 125), but instead of preventing the argument, it acts as a catalyst. Tom is incensed when Daisy's voice betrays what her words do not. When she tells Gatsby, "[y]ou always look so cool," everyone in the room is aware that "[s]he had told him that she loved him" (125).

At this moment, both Tom and Gatsby realize that neither can feel secure in his relationship with Daisy without seizing total control over her voice. Both men find it nearly impossible to speak after Daisy's lapse. Tom does not answer when his wife addresses him directly, and Gatsby "started to speak, [but] changed his mind," only speaking "with an effort" when Tom forces him to (126). It is

not the tension between the two men that makes it hard for them to converse, but their helplessness in the face of Daisy's power. Gatsby tells Nick, "I can't say anything in his house, old sport"—yet it was Daisy, not Gatsby, who gave away their secret. Nick recognizes this, commenting on Daisy's "indiscreet voice" (127). To restore his sense of control, Gatsby joins this attack on Daisy's voice, and the two conclude that "[i]t was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it.… High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl" (127).

With this, as Person notes, "Nick and Gatsby progressively devitalize Daisy's symbolic meaning until she exists as a vulgar emblem of the money values which dominate their world" (255). First painted as a portrait of perfection, Daisy is now reduced to a crude symbol of power in its most vulgar form: money. As Person argues, she "is victimized by a male tendency to project a[n] … ultimately dehumanizing image on woman" (Person 257). Her beautiful voice is no longer a human quality, or even a superhuman quality. Instead, it is a mere object: something to be bought, sold, and fought over. By objectifying Daisy, the men can fight for control; whoever suppresses her voice most completely will be the winner.

Though the confrontation between Tom and Gatsby affects Daisy most of all, she cannot participate. The men take it upon themselves to speak for her, leaving her powerless. Whichever man she chooses—and choosing neither is never suggested as a possibility—will overpower her voice with his own. Fetterley is correct in noting that "Daisy's choices amount in reality to no more than the choice of which form she wishes her oppression to take" (100). Both men speak for her without once asking how she feels. At one point, Gatsby answers when Tom addresses Daisy directly (Fitzgerald 138). Daisy's only contribution to the conversation is to "helplessly" (137) interrupt them with pleas to stop and to reluctantly say whatever they want to hear. The erasure of her voice is complete when Gatsby launches into a lengthy defense of his good name:

with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room. The voice begged again to go. (142)

Not only must Gatsby face the death of his dream, but also Daisy. She, too, had hoped that their love would be perfect, and now she must face Gatsby's imperfection. As he struggles to control her by smothering her voice with his own, he destroys the very quality he has always found most alluring in Daisy. Her voice—her identity as a human being—is "lost" forever. Fitzgerald does not write that "*Daisy* begged again to go"; the plea is made by "*the voice*," a disembodied, dehumanized entity. With this, Gatsby's part in the annihilation of Daisy's voice is complete. Even after he has lost her, Gatsby still insists that Daisy never loved Tom, that "she hardly knew what she was saying" when she made her final decision (Fitzgerald 159). He refuses to believe that she might be capable of knowing—and speaking—her own mind. And he is right in that respect: after all he and Tom have done to stifle her voice, how could she speak for herself?

The last time we see Daisy, she is both literally and metaphorically mute:

[Tom] was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement. (152)

She does not utilize her beautiful voice but communicates nonverbally, and then only to agree with Tom's words. Once revered as a perfect being, the ideal of love, Daisy is ultimately reduced to a "dead dream." In forcing Daisy to possess the symbolic value he desires, Gatsby *de*-values her. She is no longer a captivating woman with a beautiful voice; Gatsby, aided by Nick and Tom, has destroyed that voice forever. Gatsby will never achieve his "happily ever after"—not because he loses Daisy to Tom, but because he ensures that Daisy is lost to herself. She cannot give of herself when her voice, her identity, is stolen and destroyed by male tyranny. Perhaps it is this unjust, sexist ending that makes Fitzgerald's novel a story of the American "everyman." Though Gatsby's treatment of Daisy is not admirable, it is certainly typical of American gender relations.

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3.2.21: Student Sample Paper- Carrie Obry's "Homoerotic Impulses in Willa Cather's 'Paul's Case'"

Carrie's paper is guided by queer theory, which challenges the heteronormative way that readers often respond to a text. Carrie was interested in a queer reading of Willa Cather's "Paul's Case,"Willa Cather, *The Troll Garden and Selected Stories* (Project Gutenberg, 2009), http://www.gutenberg.org/files/346/346-h/346-h.htm#2H_4_0013. which you can read at Project Gutenberg (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/346/346-h/346-h.htm#2H_4_0013).

Carrie was intrigued by discovering that Cather's biographer, Sharon O'Brien, had labeled Cather a "lesbian writer" who focuses on gay and lesbian issues. Queer readings of texts often challenge the accepted interpretations of texts and open up the literary work to new critical debate. Carrie's paper certainly does do that, as she explores how Paul is forced into compulsory heterosexuality when his desires are anything but that.

Carrie Obry

Professor Pennington

Literature and Writing

April 17, 20–

Homoerotic Impulses in Willa Cather's "Paul's Case"

In Victorian culture, discussing sex was inappropriate, so literature from the period could not use sexually explicit language or ideas; if it did, it would risk not being well-received, or even published. During this time, "proper women were supposed to blush at the slightest allusion to sexuality; references to sex in literature were commonly bowdlerized" (Dynes 1344). Although Willa Cather is a modernist in literary terms, her writing emerges in an age that Victorian morality shaped, a time when sexuality was a thing not discussed. Larry Rubin claims that "Paul's Case," Cather's "minor masterpiece," appeared in 1905 "at the height of the period of Victorian repressiveness," so we almost expect that Cather "found it necessary to avoid altogether a direct confrontation with the question of her protagonist's sexual nature" (127). Consequently, Rubin says, many scholars have either "overlooked" or "ignored" it. Only after the 1970s did certain circles begin to recognize the homoerotic undertones of "Paul's Case," which had previously and consistently been labeled merely a contrast between a passionate and bourgeois lifestyle.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick claims that as a result of overlooking or ignoring the sexual temperament of authors and their characters, readers condemn literature to remain in the field of power that misinterpreted it. Her "Epistemology of the Closet" presents the idea that virtually every important epistemological core of 20th-century Western thought has been marked by issues of modern male homosexual and heterosexual definition. The very texts that "mobilized and promulgated the most potent images and categories for the canon of homophobic mastery" (182) simultaneously act as the lesser-known foundational texts of modern gay culture. She claims that landmark texts such as *Dorian Gray* and *Billy Budd* enact this double sexual identity. Although they both depict same-sex, erotic love, traditional interpretations veil the texts with a pretense of heterosexuality and integrate them into the literary canon as such. Contemporary thought, especially Sedgwick's field of gender studies, develops a more sensitive approach to understanding homoerotic issues; many scholars attempt to reorder past political inequities by reconsidering those who were previously excluded.

Larry Rubin interprets "Paul's Case" in this enlightening manner. He notes how the lifting of "social taboos" in the discussion of sex leads to highly evocative reinterpretations of literature. "Particularly in homosexuality," he says, "this newly unfettered approach to the libidinous urges of various literary characters" has helped to reinterpret "certain dark and previously unmentionable aspects of the psychological motivation of those characters and even the overall vision of authors involved" (127). Willa Cather is one such author; the protagonist in "Paul's Case," the story that established Cather's artistic maturity, is one such character. Both Cather's artistic style and life vision have become involved, even entangled, in the web of identity-politics, largely due to her non-traditional and often elusive sexual identity.

Since Cather was very particular about transmitting her personal information and writing into the public sphere, retrieving particular insight leads to an array of conflicting images. James Woodress, who has written a significant amount about Cather, argues that "documentary evidence does not exist to dispose of the question in one way or another … [so] whether she was [a lesbian] or not will have to remain moot" (86). Yet Karla Jay, in *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions*, depicts Cather as a radical lesbian by citing biographical pictures of "Willie the cross-dresser" trying to "come out" to a society that was unwilling to

notice. Moreover, contemporary aspects of literature include Cather as an essential author within gay and lesbian anthologies. The certainty by which many interpretations claim Cather as a lesbian rely on her long-standing, intense female relationships and her avoidance of marriage proposals from various men. Cather famously befriended Isabelle McClung and Edith Lewis, who helped form Cather's personality, and perhaps her lesbianism. In view of this fact, and of Cather's avoidance of marriage, Woodress claims: "It seems perfectly clear that she had no need for heterosexual relationships" (86).

Considering these conflicting ideas, scholars have more successfully shifted from speculation of sexual preference to examining the social implications of her adoption of a masculine persona. From age 14 through her first two years at the University of Nebraska, Cather cropped her hair short, wore the clothes of a young man, and called herself William, Willie, or Will (Begley 2). Evidently, creating a "female self" in the late Victorian era proved difficult. Sharon O'Brien states that Cather's attempt "to fashion a female self that could be compatible with the artist's role" may have been futile because there were "no acceptable models for identity and vocation in the late-Victorian culture" (qtd. in Thomas 8). "Paul's Case" emerges as a literary manifestation of Cather's non-conformity and her assuming of a male identity. Yet Cather is not sexually explicit; she imbues the story with innuendo that signals, perhaps unmistakably, a homosexual identity of the narrator, and also a homophobia inherent in the passionless life of Cordelia Street, both of which are to blame in Paul's impending suicide.

Before analyzing the story, understanding the innuendo of "Paul's Case" is paramount. Primarily, the sexual implicitness of the story demonstrates reticence in two important ways. It shows the difficulty of writing about homosexuality in 1905. As Claude Summer states, "1905 discourse on homosexuality was couched almost exclusively in terms of criminality and psychopathology" (109). Foucault's *History of Sexuality* concentrates on the idea that we produce modern sexuality from past historically distinctive discourse; hence modern thought arises from these dogmas. Foucault locates the genesis of "homosexual" definition and discourse around 1905, a time when "nineteenth-century psychiatrists entomologized … all those minor perverts" by giving them strange names such as "sexoesthetic introverts" (43). He formulates the history of homosexuality as follows:

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood … [His sexuality] was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away … [T]he psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensations" can stand as its date of birth—less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility … the homosexual was now a species. (43)

At this point in history, homosexuality was no longer act-specific; it became a type of personality, rather than perverse recreation. At the turn of the 19th century, homosexuality was realized, so people were just beginning to struggle with the new idea of "homosexual identity."

The implicitness of "Paul's Case" also shows Cather's penchant for insinuation in her literature. A passage from her exploratory essay "The Novel Démueblé" demonstrates Cather's tacit approach to writing and particularly illuminates, along with Foucault, an exploration of "Paul's Case":

Whatever is felt upon the page without being specifically named there—that, one might say, is created. It is the inexplicable presence of the thing not named, of the overtone divined by the ear but not heard by it, the verbal mood, the emotional aura of the fact or the thing or the deed, that gives high quality to the novel or the drama, as well as to poetry itself. (Cather 41–42)

From the inception of "Paul's Case," the reader begins to comprehend from the page what Cather has not "specifically named there." Paul consistently suppresses a truth from his teachers, his father, and perhaps from himself and the San Francisco boy he meets while sojourning in New York. What is Paul lying about? It is not his contempt for his teachers "which he seemingly made not the least effort to conceal" (Cather 260). It is his homosexuality, subdued not only in literary discursive forces and in Cather's life, but also at the most rudimentary level, in the psychology of an author's creation.

Cather mysteriously introduces Paul by referring to his "various misdemeanors" and to his father's own "perplexity" about him. His teachers are also perplexed. They say: "Paul's was not a usual case. It was scarcely possible to put into words the real cause of trouble" (260). Paul detects the apprehension people have of him; he "was always smiling, always glancing about him, seeming to feel that people might be watching him and trying to detect something" (260). He feels his homosexuality in Foucault's terms: "everywhere present in him … [and] written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away."

Although Paul cannot address his homosexuality in a direct, verbal way, he demonstrates it through his disposition: “There was something of the dandy about him, and he wore an opal pin in his neatly knotted black four-in-hand” and a “scandalous red carnation” in his buttonhole (259). Besides his choice in clothing, Paul’s eyes contribute a great deal to his personality. “His eyes were remarkable for a certain hysterical brilliancy” which he “continually used … in a conscious, theatrical sort of way, peculiarly offensive in a boy” (259). Cather associates the “glassy glitter” of his eye with a “belladonna,” giving Paul a distinct effeminate quality.

Paul’s adornments and flashy countenance render him an especially flamboyant boy. He dresses in the fashion of “dandyism” reflective of Oscar Wilde and the late 19th-century aesthetes, who above everything attempted to dress elegantly and fashionably. As Richard Dellamora states, “dandyism also reflects a loss of balance between the dual imperatives of leisure and work incumbent upon Victorian gentlemen. The dandy is too relaxed, too visible, and consumes to excess while producing little or nothing” (199). Here occurs a divide between the middle-class gentleman and the Wildean dandy, a dualism Cather enacts by repeatedly contrasting “boy” with “man.” She contrasts the relaxed Paul, who produces little or nothing, and the structured, “successful” men of Cordelia street. Paul is a “mere boy”; while his disposition is “the defiant manner of the boy’s” and “his boyish mirthfulness.” A “man,” however, is quite a different person. On the street “where all the houses were exactly alike … business men begot and reared large families of children … all of whom were exactly like their homes, and of a piece with the monotony in which they lived” (263). The “young man” of Cordelia Street whom the neighborhood likens Paul to mirror “was of a ruddy complexion, with a compressed, red mouth, and faded, nearsighted eyes” (265): an unpleasant sounding gentleman. Yet, Cordelia street imagines him, unlike Paul, “a young man with a future” who works for a “chief” in the iron and railroad industry. Paul wants none of the capitalistic success of “the iron kings.” Rather, he wants to hear their “legends,” their “stories of palaces in Venice, [and] yachts on the Mediterranean” (265). He could care less about the kings; Paul “was interested in the triumphs of cash-boys who had become famous” (265).

The “boy” Paul has the same contempt for “men” of the classroom: “the prosy men who never wore frock coats, or violets in their buttonholes” (267). They never adorn their austere image with violets, while Paul splashes violet water on his body. Finally, the only acquaintance of any importance to Paul is the “wild San Francisco boy” who offers to show Paul the night life of New York City. The two click intensely: “the two boys went off together after dinner, not returning to the hotel until seven o’clock the next morning” (271). Paul traverses New York City, taking in the energy that only people like himself, the “cash-boys” and the “San Francisco boys” desire. Hence, Paul defies the strict societal codes for “masculinity” by not only his fashion sense but also by his passionate leisure life.

The “verbal mood” and “emotional aura” (in Cather’s terms) of “Paul’s Case” also have an undeniable sexual essence. Besides Paul’s disposition, the passionate glitter in his eye “that drug does not produce,” the language Cather uses to describe his surroundings is clearly delineated. “Paul never went up Cordelia Street without a shudder of loathing” (263). This “every-day existence” is “but a sleep and a forgetting” for Paul. Cather uses *hopeless*, *sinking*, *defeat*, *ugliness*, *commonness*, *physical depression*, *odours*, *repulsion*, *colourless mass*, and *morbid* to describe Paul’s monotonous home. While Cather confines the description of this bourgeois mundanity to Cordelia Street, aspects of the passionate and theatrical world Paul yearns to enter, akin to the famous triumphs of the cash-boys, are scattered throughout the story. Cather uses *gay*four times; also, *airy*, *exhilarated*, *flourishes*, *suppression*, *charming*, *exotic*, *glistening*, *perverted*, *tempt*, *corrupt*, *thronged*, *fag*, and *fagged* charge the story with energy. Moreover, Paul, when in New York, “burnt like a fagot in a tempest” (270), which seems to describe the pinnacle of Paul’s secret world where he can play out his true sexual identity.

Although Cather’s language never directly describes sexuality, it creates a mood that signals the homosexuality of Paul. She writes, “In Paul’s world, the natural nearly always wore the guise of ugliness” (266). Paul’s world is Pittsburgh, a city of steel-like reality where his natural identity, if revealed, would wear the guise of ugliness. Paul cannot “come out” to a society unable or unwilling to accept his sexuality. Hence, both the rigidity of Cordelia street and Paul’s secrecy of his sexuality are at fault when we analyze his suicide. His passion should be able to transform his cut-out, “proper” relationships and insensitive surroundings in more just and loving directions. Instead, he gives in, hurtling himself in front of a moving train. Paul’s sexuality overcomes him. He “dropped back into the immense design of things” (274).

Of writing, Cather said: “Out of the teeming, gleaming stream of the present we must select the eternal material of art” (41). She evokes the sentiment that the present is gleaming and streaming; it stops for no one and yields no second consideration. But art is eternal material; it can capture an issue or idea and allow present critics to return to a given historical point to reconsider previous

discrimination, like bias against homosexuality. Although Cather did not explicitly argue issues of gender equality, her implicit response is equally as forceful.

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3.2.22: Student Sample Paper- Duncan Raunio's "The Tragedy of Performing Gender in Kate Chopin's The Awakening"

Duncan's paper is a gender analysis that uses feminist and masculinity studies as a way to explore the dynamic between Edna and Robert, the "secret" lovers in *The Awakening*. Duncan explores how Edna and Robert are trapped into performing heterosexual behaviors defined by a heteronormative society, when they might have homoerotic desires that doom their relationship from the start.

Duncan Raunio

Professor Karlyn Crowley

Literature and Writing

May 5, 20–

The Tragedy of Performing Gender in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*

While there are many possible interpretations of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, perhaps the most common is that Edna commits suicide in the end due to her unrequited love for Robert Lebrun. This is of no surprise, as Edna tells Robert that "I love you … only you; no one but you" (Chopin 132) at the peak of what would seem to be their secret affair. Edna seems to be completely enthralled with Robert, and her freedom through a life of sensuality can only be obtained by being with he who awakened her, so it seems natural, at least on the surface, that she is devastated when he decides to leave her in the end. With nothing to do but to go crawling back to her husband and demanding children, Edna is defeated. Unable to go on, she throws herself into the sea to die.

While this is a valid way of seeing *The Awakening*, it is perhaps overly narrow and superficial. By saying that Edna can only achieve her freedom through a romantic attachment to Robert Lebrun, one is implying that a woman can only achieve her freedom through attachment to a man and not by herself. Trying to get past the traditional view that a woman needs a man is where looking at *The Awakening* from a gender criticism approach can prove to be particularly helpful. In his essay "Gender Criticism and *The Awakening*," Ross C. Murfin states that one of the goals of gender criticism is to "criticize gender as we commonly conceive of it, to expose its insufficiency and inadequacy as a category" (224). He explains that many gender critics see gender as merely a construct of society, and that we are born into pre-existing notions of what "males" and "females" are supposed to be. By applying the ideas of gender criticism to *The Awakening*, the motives of some of the characters, most importantly Edna and Robert, become much deeper, as do the possible intentions Chopin had for her work. When one starts to examine what the "traditional" gender roles are for male and female, it becomes apparent that Robert and Edna exhibit behavior that is atypical, bordering on the homoerotic. Indeed, Edna can be seen as a "metaphorical lesbian." Robert, in turn, often displays homosexual tendencies. If one considers the possibility of Edna and Robert having homosexual tendencies, then their coming together seems less of a romantic passion than it is a confused search for understanding–understanding of sexual identity. While on the surface they are drawn together sexually because society tells them that they should be, on a deeper level they connect because they know the truth about each other's struggle. By having them separate in the end, Chopin is saying that society is not ready for homosexual love to be accepted as normal behavior, much less as a "gender."

Elizabeth LeBlanc explores the notion of Edna Pontellier as a "metaphorical lesbian" in her essay "The Metaphorical Lesbian: Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening*." What she means by this is not that Edna is a "tragically closeted dyke who dies because she cannot accept her orientation or because she has not 'found the right woman'", but rather she explores "the presence of lesbian motifs and manifestations" which allows one to "examine the strategies and tactics by which Edna attempts to establish a subjective identity" (237). Edna finds herself isolated from the group of "mother women" on Grand Isle, especially from Madame Ratignolle, who, when seen from the male perspective, is the ideal woman. Karen Simon explains how Edna finds Madame Ratignolle "incomprehensible" in some ways, especially when she does things like flirt with Edna's father. Yet Edna still remains connected to her female contemporaries; she in fact shares a strong bond with them, but only as individuals. Edna seeks to break away from the traditional notion of femininity, but she also makes sure to not isolate herself from the women around her. It is through her associations with other women that she feels the most alive and inspired, such as the sensuous beach scene with Madame Ratignolle, or the many times that Madame Reisz plays piano for her. These interactions help Edna to define herself, and

while she does not have any sexual encounters with any of the women, they lead her to the conclusion that a romantic life with a man will not satisfy the cravings inside of her.

If Edna can be seen as a metaphorical lesbian, then perhaps it follows that other characters can be seen in a homosexual light. In particular, Chopin's depiction of Robert Lebrun raises many questions as to what his real motivations are. Perhaps he too can be seen as a homosexual character. Suzanne Disheroon-Green in "Mr. Pontellier's Cigar, Robert's Cigarettes: Opening the Closet of Homosexuality and Phallic Power in *The Awakening*" explores this often overlooked possibility in detail. She does so by comparing Robert, the "homosexual male, who is figuratively emasculated by his heterosexual acquaintances" with Mr. Pontellier, the "overbearing, yet emotionally absent, traditional husband" (184). In her analysis, Disheroon-Green explains that Chopin makes the distinction between the heterosexual male and the homosexual through the "manipulation of phallic images" (184). As the traditional heterosexual male, Mr. Pontellier must show that he has control over his wife. He often "exerts his masculine supremacy over his wife … while smoking a cigar," which "serves as a phallic symbol, illuminating his patriarchal attitudes toward his wife" (184). This is in stark contrast to the more gentle personality of Robert Lebrun. The cigar can now be seen as an "emasculation image" when it is in association with Robert, the "single male figure in the novel who does not expect to be treated as a superior creature simply because of his masculinity" (184). Indeed, Robert is much more tender compared to Mr. Pontellier, and he is "effeminate and more comfortable in the beautiful world of women than in the smoke-filled clubs of men" (184).

This association with women is key to what makes him seen as a homosexual character. In *The Awakening*, we are told that "each summer at Grand Isle [Robert] had constituted himself the devoted attendant of some fair dame or damsel" (31). But what is important to note is that the type of women that he associates with were "married women, older widows, or girls too young to be considering marriage, but never women of the age to be seeking a husband" (Disheroon-Green 187), or, in other words, safe women. As a homosexual, he cannot identify with his fellow heterosexual male counterparts, so he creates friendships with the more sensually inclined women that he encounters on the island. Yet he is careful to choose whom he associates with, as he would not want his attachments to be mistaken as having a sexual agenda.

Mr. Pontellier seems to be on to Robert's deviance from the heterosexual norm, and he often treats Robert as an inferior man. In the scene where Edna and Robert are returning from the beach, Mr. Pontellier treats Edna as a "valuable piece of personal property" (Chopin 24), and, doing so in front of Robert, he seems to be saying that Robert is "not enough of a man to look after her properly" (Disheroon-Green 186). Also, there is only one instance in which Mr. Pontellier addresses Robert as anything but "Robert," again "indicating Mr. Pontellier's superiority" (187). Lastly, Disheroon-Green points out that in "contrast to Mr. Pontellier, Robert smokes cigarettes, ostensibly because he cannot afford cigars; the effeminate male smokes the smaller, more frail counterpart of the cigar" (188).

If one then considers both Edna and Robert to be characters with homosexual tendencies, or perhaps characters who rebel against other aspects of heteronormative femininity and masculinity, the reason for their closeness is not a sexual one at all. It may be that they are actually seeing this struggle against gender norms in each other, wishing to become closer because they both understand what the other is experiencing. However, society demands that they be involved with each other sexually, and they seemingly submit to this at first. While they symbolically seem to be converging on some new form of sexuality, the fact they are still "male" and "female" separates them indefinitely, and they do not wish to be together in the way that society says they should be. This is why Chopin has them separate in the end; her society was not ready for this sort of deviation from the gender norms. By having Edna and Robert stay together, they would eventually have had to admit their true sexual preferences to each other. While she seems to be hinting at this in *The Awakening*, she could not have explicitly stated it without her book causing a scandal.

A concept that Murfin brings up in his summary of gender criticism is the notion that "it is also possible … for women to read as men, men as women" (Murfin 227), and also that there can be gender to one's writing as well. If one can indeed read or write from a gender perspective, could one then perhaps love someone else from the perspective of a specific gender? Could a man love a woman the way a woman would love a woman, and vice versa? Chopin may have been hinting at this by having Edna and Robert seemingly converging on one gender to become, at least, symbolic lovers. This becomes more clear in the light of the recent developments of gender criticism, and also now that we as a society are able to be more accepting of homosexuality in the dawn of more liberal times. While a deviant sexual lifestyle was not acceptable in Chopin's time, it is much more "normal" today. Yet there is still much to find out about why and how. we love each other.

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3.2.23: Student Sample Papers- Todd Goodwin's "Poe's 'Usher'- A Mirror of the Fall of the House of Humanity" and Amy Chisnell's "Don't Listen to the Egg!- A Close Reading of Lewis Carroll's 'Jabberwocky'"

The following paper by Todd Goodwin is on Edgar Allan Poe's oft-read and discussed "The Fall of the House of Usher,"Edgar Allen Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," in *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: AMS, 1979; University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center, 1995), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/PoeFall.html. which you can access at http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/PoeFall.html.

After reading the story, do the following:

1. List at least three topic areas that you could explore for a close reading of the story.
2. Read the following paper by Todd.
3. Compare your ideas with Todd's.
4. Discuss Todd's paper. Does he make a compelling argument? Why or why not?

Todd Goodwin

Professor Stan Matyshak

Advanced Expository Writing

Sept. 17, 20—

Poe's "Usher": A Mirror of the Fall of the House of Humanity

Right from the outset of the grim story "The Fall of the House of Usher," Edgar Allan Poe enmeshes us in a dark, gloomy, hopeless world, alienating his characters and the reader from any sort of physical or psychological norm where such values as hope and happiness could possibly exist. He fatalistically tells the story of how a man (the narrator) comes from the outside world of hope, religion, and everyday society and tries to bring some kind of redeeming happiness to his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher, who not only has physically and psychologically wasted away, but is entrapped in a dilapidated house of ever-looming terror with an emaciated and deranged twin sister. Roderick Usher embodies the wasting away of what once was vibrant and alive, and his house of "insufferable gloom" (273), which contains his morbid sister, seems to mirror or reflect this fear of death and annihilation that he most horribly endures. A close reading of the story reveals that Poe uses mirror images, or reflections, to contribute to the fatalistic theme of "Usher": each reflection serves to intensify an already prevalent tone of hopelessness, darkness, and fatalism. It could be argued that the house of Roderick Usher is a "house of mirrors," whose unpleasant and grim reflections create a dark and hopeless setting. For example, the narrator first approaches "the melancholy house of Usher on a dark and soundless day," and finds a building which causes him a "sense of insufferable gloom" which "pervades his spirit and causes an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart, an undiscerned dreariness of thought" (273). The narrator then optimistically states: "I reflected that a mere different arrangement of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression" (274). But the narrator then sees the reflection of the house in the tarn and experiences a "shudder even more thrilling than before" (274). Thus the reader begins to realize that the narrator cannot change or stop the impending doom that will befall the house of Usher, and maybe humanity. The story cleverly plays with the word *reflection*: the narrator sees a physical reflection that leads him to a mental reflection about Usher's surroundings.

The narrator's disillusionment by such grim reflection continues in the story. For example, he describes Roderick Usher's face as distinct with signs of old strength but lost vigor: the remains of what used to be. He describes the house as a once happy and vibrant place which, like Roderick, lost its vitality. Also, the narrator describes Usher's hair as growing wild on his rather obtrusive head, which directly mirrors the eerie moss and straw which cover the outside of the house. The narrator continually longs to see these bleak reflections as a dream, for he states: "Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building" (276, emphasis in original). He does not want to face the reality that Usher and his home are doomed to fall, regardless of what he does.

Although there are almost countless examples of these mirror images, two others stand out as important. First, Roderick and his sister, Madeline, are twins. The narrator aptly states just as he and Roderick are entombing Madeline that there is "a striking similitude between brother and sister" (288). Indeed, they are mirror images of each other. Madeline is fading away

psychologically and physically, and Roderick is not too far behind! The reflection of “doom” that these two share helps intensify and symbolize the hopelessness of the entire situation; thus, they further develop the fatalistic theme. Second, in the climactic scene where Madeline has been mistakenly entombed alive, there is a pairing of images and sounds as the narrator tries to calm Roderick by reading him a romance story. Events in the story simultaneously unfold with events of the sister escaping her tomb. In the story, the hero breaks out of the coffin. Then in the story, the dragon’s shriek as he is slain parallels Madeline’s shriek. Finally, the story tells of the clangor of a shield, matched by the sister’s clanging along a metal passageway. As the suspense reaches its climax, Roderick shrieks his last words to his “friend” the narrator: “Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door” (296).

Roderick, who slowly falls into insanity, ironically calls the narrator the “Madman.” We are left to reflect on what Poe means by this ironic twist. Poe’s bleak and dark imagery, and his use of mirror reflections, seem only to intensify the hopelessness of “Usher.” We can plausibly conclude that indeed the narrator is the “Madman,” for he comes from everyday society, which is a place where hope and faith exist. Poe would probably argue that such a place is opposite to the world of Usher because a world where death is inevitable could not possibly hold such positive values. Therefore, just as Roderick mirrors his sister, the reflection in the tarn mirrors the dilapidation of the house, and the story mirrors the final actions before the death of Usher. “The Fall of the House of Usher” reflects Poe’s view that humanity is hopelessly doomed.

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Paper Model Two: A Return to the Looking-Glass

Read this paper in light of our discussion of close reading and Humpty Dumpty’s interpretation of “Jabberwocky” that he performs for Alice.

Amy Chisnell

Professor Laura Neary

Writing and Literature

April, 20—

Don’t Listen to the Egg!: A Close Reading of Lewis Carroll’s “Jabberwocky”

“You seem very clever at explaining words, Sir,” said Alice. “Would you kindly tell me the meaning of the poem called ‘Jabberwocky’?”

“Let’s hear it,” said Humpty Dumpty. “I can explain all the poems that ever were invented—and a good many that haven’t been invented just yet.” (Carroll 164)

In Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass*, Humpty Dumpty confidently translates (to a not so confident Alice) the complicated language of the poem “Jabberwocky.” The words of the poem, though nonsense, aptly tell the story of the slaying of the Jabberwock. Upon finding “Jabberwocky” on a table in the looking-glass room, Alice is confused by the strange words. She is quite certain that “*somebody* killed *something*,” but she does not understand much more than that. When later she encounters Humpty Dumpty, she seizes the opportunity at having the knowledgeable egg interpret—or translate—the poem. Since Humpty Dumpty professes to be able to “make a word work” for him, he is quick to agree. Thus he acts like a New Critic who interprets the poem by performing close reading of it. Through Humpty’s interpretation of the first stanza, however, we see the poem’s deeper comment concerning the practice of interpreting poetry and literature in general—that strict analytical translation destroys the beauty of a poem. In fact, Humpty Dumpty commits the “heresy of paraphrase,” for he fails to understand that meaning cannot be separated from the form or structure of the literary work.

Of the 71 words found in “Jabberwocky,” 43 have no known meaning. They are simply nonsense. Yet through this nonsensical language, the poem manages not only to tell a story, but also to give the reader a sense of setting and characterization. One feels, rather than concretely knows, that the setting is dark, wooded, and frightening. The characters, such as the Jubjub bird, the Bandersnatch, and the doomed Jabberwock, also appear in the reader’s head, even though they will not be found in the local zoo.

Even though most of the words are not real, the reader is able to understand what goes on because he or she is given free license to imagine what the words denote and connote. Simply, the poem's nonsense words *are* the meaning.

When Humpty interprets "Jabberwocky" for Alice, then, he is not doing her any favors, for he actually misreads the poem. Although the poem in its original is constructed from nonsense words, by the time Humpty is done interpreting it, it truly does not make any sense. The first stanza of the original poem is as follows:

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;

All mimsy were the borogroves,

An the mome raths outgrabe. (Carroll 164)

If we replace, however, the nonsense words of "Jabberwocky" with Humpty's translated words, the effect would be something like this:

'Twas four o'clock in the afternoon, and the lithe and slimy badger-lizard-corkscrew creatures

Did go round and round and make holes in the grass-plot round the sun-dial:

All flimsy and miserable were the shabby-looking birds

with mop feathers,

And the lost green pigs bellowed-sneezed-whistled.

By translating the poem in such a way, Humpty removes the charm or essence—and the beauty, grace, and rhythm—from the poem. The poetry is sacrificed for meaning. Humpty Dumpty commits the heresy of paraphrase. As Cleanth Brooks argues: "The structure of a poem resembles that of a ballet or musical composition. It is a pattern of resolutions and balances and harmonizations" (203). When the poem is left as nonsense, the reader can easily imagine what a "slithy tove" might be, but when Humpty tells us what it is, he takes that imaginative license away from the reader. The beauty (if that is the proper word) of "Jabberwocky" is in *not* knowing what the words mean. By translating the poem, Humpty takes that privilege from the reader. In addition, Humpty fails to recognize that meaning cannot be separated from the structure itself: the nonsense poem reflects this literally—it means "nothing" and achieves this meaning by using "nonsense" words.

Furthermore, the nonsense words Carroll chooses to use in "Jabberwocky" have a magical effect upon the reader; the shadowy sound of the words create the atmosphere, which may be described as a trance-like mood. When Alice first reads the poem, she says it seems to fill her head "with ideas." The strange sounding words in the original poem *do* give one ideas. Why is this? Even though the reader has never heard these words before, he or she is instantly aware of the murky, mysterious mood they set. In other words, diction operates not on the denotative level (the dictionary meaning) but on the connotative level (the emotion they evoke). Thus "Jabberwocky" creates a shadowy mood, and the nonsense words are instrumental in creating this mood. Carroll could not have simply used *any* nonsense words.

For example, let us change the "dark," "ominous" words of the first stanza to "lighter," more "comic" words:

'Twas mearly, and the churly pells

Did bimble and ringle in the tink;

All timpy were the brimbledimps,

And the bip plips outlink.

Shifting the sounds of the words from dark to light merely takes a shift in thought. To create a specific mood using nonsense words, one must create the new words from old words which convey the desired mood. In "Jabberwocky," Carroll mixes "slimy," a grim idea, "lithe," a pliable image, to get a new adjective: "slithy" (a portmanteau word). In my translation, brighter words were used to get a lighter effect. "Mearly" is a combination of "morning" and "early," and "ringle" is a blend of "ring" and dingle." The point is that "Jabberwocky's" nonsense words are created specifically to convey this shadowy or mysterious mood and are integral to the "meaning."

Consequently, Humpty's rendering of the poem leaves the reader with a completely different feeling than does the original poem, which provided us with a sense of ethereal mystery, of a dark and foreign land with exotic creatures and fantastic settings. The mysteriousness is destroyed by Humpty's literal paraphrase of the creatures and the setting; by doing so he has taken the beauty away from the poem in his attempt to understand it. He has committed the heresy of paraphrase: "If we allow ourselves to be misled by it [this heresy], we distort the relation of the poem to its 'truth' … we split the poem between its 'form' and its 'content'" (Brooks 201). Humpty Dumpty's ultimate demise might be seen to symbolize the heretical split between form and content: as a literary creation Humpty Dumpty is an egg, a well-wrought urn of nonsense. His fall from the wall cracks him and separates the contents from the container, and not even all the King's men can put the scrambled egg back together again!

Through the odd characters of a little girl and a foolish egg, "Jabberwocky" suggests a bit of sage advice about reading poetry, advice that the New Critics built their theories on. The importance lies not solely within the strict analytical translation or interpretation, but in the overall effect of the imagery and word choice that evokes a meaning inseparable from those literary devices. As Archibald MacLeish so aptly writes: "A poem should not mean / But be." Sometimes it takes a little nonsense to show us the sense in something.

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3.2.24: Student Writers at Work- Jenn Nemec's Jungian Psychoanalytic Reading of "The Birthmark," Susan Moore's Freudian Reading of "The Birthmark," and Sarah David's Lacanian Reading of "The Birthmark"

Literary theory provides a lens through which we view a literary work, be it in a New Critical close reading of a short story, a feminist or gender reading of a poem, or a reader-response interpretation of a dramatic play. In fact, the theory we apply to a literary work will partly determine what we find in the work and how we interpret that work. For this chapter, you will see how theory guides your interpretation. The three papers below, which came from the same class, focus on Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" (serialized in a magazine in 1843; published in a story collection in 1846). Jenn found Jungian theory fascinating, Susan was intrigued by Freud, while Sarah was challenged by Lacan's psychoanalytic theory of language.

You can access "The Birthmark" at etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin...id=HawBirt.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=1&division=div1.

In this section we trace Jenn's writing process.

JENN'S PROCESS

Exploratory Journal Entry

Aylmer, the central character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark," attempts to attain what Carl Jung calls syzygy, or wholeness of personality. To achieve syzygy, one must integrate the four parts of the individual self termed shadow, anima, animus, and spirit, respectively. Despite his efforts, the gifted Aylmer fails to achieve this quaternion, for not only does he err in identifying his shadow, but he lacks the necessary wisdom of the spirit.

Aylmer misjudges his shadow, or the moral problem challenging his whole ego-personality. Although it is Aminadab, Aylmer's faithful servant, who represents all the aspects of Aylmer's personality which he would like to reject, Aylmer identifies Georgiana's birthmark as the source of the evil he wants to deny and devotes all of his efforts to its elimination. Aylmer projects all his negative feelings upon his wife and recognizes her birthmark as the origin of imperfection rather than himself. The existence of the birthmark possesses Aylmer, who in turn becomes obsessed with it and its disposal.

The manifestations of both Georgiana's animus and Aylmer's anima are factors which contribute to the unattainability of syzygy. Georgiana's dependence upon Aylmer as her source of logos allows her husband to administer whatever treatment he deems necessary to rid the couple's life of the wretched birthmark. Additionally, Georgiana's quest for logos draws her to the book in which Aylmer has documented all of his failed experiments. Through Georgiana's discovery of Aylmer's scientific blunders, readers learn that the removal of Georgiana's birthmark is Aylmer's ultimate opportunity to "touch reality, to embrace the earth and fructify the field of the world" (Jung 671), thereby satisfying his anima's desire to possess the chaste White Lady side of Georgiana. Unfortunately, the encounter between Georgiana's animus and Aylmer's anima proves fatal—the woman's reliance upon her husband's ill-reasoning as he pursues his desire demonstrates that "when animus and anima meet, the animus [Aylmer] draws his sword of power and the anima [Georgiana] ejects her poison of illusion and seduction [the birthmark as blemish]" (Jung 673).

Even if the ambitious Aylmer had successfully perceived Aminadab to be his shadow rather than Georgiana's birthmark, the scientist still would have faltered in his steps toward achieving syzygy, for he lacked the necessary component of spirit, or what Jung called the Wise Old Man or Woman. Although Aylmer is described as spiritual in opposition to the earthly Aminadab, "The Birthmark" concludes that despite Aylmer's philosophical intelligence, he was by no means wise ("Yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life the selfsame texture with the celestial").

Working Thesis (Gleaned from the Exploratory Journal Entry)

Despite his efforts, the gifted Aylmer fails to achieve the balance of the self, for not only does he err in identifying his shadow, but he lacks the necessary wisdom of the *spirit*.

Notes: Mapping of Ideas

Shadow	Anima
birthmark	Eros/desire
possesses Aylmer, who	Aylmer: Georgiana
is obsessed by it	Science
Aminadab: shadow	Georgiana: feminine side of Aylmer

Animus	Self/Spirit
logos, reason	Aylmer (ego) + Aminadab science, scientist (shadow) + Georgiana (anima)
Georgiana as object of experiment—Aylmer's	Aylmer ≠ shadow + anima
	Rejects shadow in name of anima
	Science projects feeling of imperfection onto G
	(birthmark)

Aylmer: In pursuit of syzygy\quaternion symbolizing wholeness fails because he misjudges his shadow and deludes himself into thinking science (reason) is pure and good for its own end—rejects wife (part of himself) for science while rejecting part of himself (his shadow). End must be tragedy.

Revised Thesis

Since Aylmer gravely blunders in identifying his shadow and is incapable of recognizing his dark side and integrating it with the other three archetypes—the anima, animus, and spirit—the scientist fails in his unconscious efforts to achieve syzygy, a complete Self in balance with itself. Thus Aylmer allows science to control his desire for perfection, which leads to tragedy—the death of Georgiana.

Final Draft

Jenn Nemec

Professor John Pennington

Literary Theory and Writing

February 26, 20–

"Beyond the Shadowy Scope": A Jungian Reading of Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"

In "Young Goodman Brown," Nathaniel Hawthorne describes Goodman Brown's night journey of the soul, where Brown sees that all humans are tainted by original sin, even his wife Faith. The story ends with Brown's death: "They carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone, for his dying hour was gloom." Hawthorne suggests that Brown's inability to recognize the sinful nature of humankind leads to his miserable life, for humans must recognize the sinful side of the self. Carl Gustav Jung remarked that "it is quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognize the relative evil of his nature, but it is a rare and shattering occurrence for him to gaze in the face of absolute evil" (670). Aylmer, the central character in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark," refuses to acknowledge the dark side of the self, symbolized in his servant, Aminadab, his *shadow*, or the "demonic image of evil that represents the side of the self we reject" (Richter 644). Instead, Aylmer projects his negative feelings onto his wife, Georgiana, and the hand-shaped birthmark upon her cheek. Since Aylmer gravely blunders in identifying his *shadow* and is incapable of integrating this phenomenon with the other three principle archetypes—the *anima*, *animus*, and *spirit*—the scientist fails in his unconscious efforts to achieve *syzygy*, "a quaternion symbolizing wholeness, the quality of which people are usually in search" (Richter 644). "The Birthmark," like "Young Goodman Brown," shows the tragedy that can happen when people are unwilling to recognize sinful

(or the dark) side of the self, for, as Hawthorne writes, Aylmer "failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and, living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present" (224).

Jung argues that the *shadow* is "the 'negative' side of the personality, the sum of all those unpleasant qualities we like to hide" (Storr 87). Thus Aylmer rejects the notion that he has a shadow, this shadow symbolized by his laboratory servant Aminadab. If Aylmer recognizes Aminadab as part of his self, then he must recognize "the dark aspects of the personality as present and real" (Jung 669); therefore, Aminadab's existence poses "a moral problem that challenges [Aylmer's] whole ego-personality" (Jung 669). Although Aylmer wishes to believe the two men are very different, "The Birthmark" offers evidence that the amalgam of the two creates an eerie whole: "With his [Aminadab's] vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that encrusted him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature; while Aylmer's slender figure, and pale, intellectual face, were no less apt a type of the spiritual element" (Hawthorne 216). The text likewise offers proof that unconsciously, Aylmer recognizes Aminadab as the part of himself he chooses to deny. The scientist exclaims after the "success" of his ultimate experiment, "Ah, clod! ah, earthly mass! … you have served me well! Matter and spirit—earth and heaven—have both done their part in this!" (223). Aylmer subconsciously acknowledges that the two men are halves of his whole self—Aminadab comprises the earthly portion while Aylmer embodies the heavenly part.

Despite the unconscious recognition of Aminadab as his *shadow*, Aylmer projects his fears of the shadow onto Georgiana, insisting that her birthmark is to blame for his feelings of discord: "Selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death, Aylmer's somber imagination was not long in rendering the birthmark a frightful object, causing him more trouble and horror than ever Georgiana's beauty … had given him delight" (Hawthorne 213). Aylmer becomes possessed with the birthmark and likewise obsessed with its disposal. Because Aylmer cannot come to terms with his failures as a man of science, he projects his negative feelings onto Georgiana and her birthmark; consequently, the blemish becomes a symbol for Aylmer's own imperfections. The fault "appears to lie, beyond all possibility of doubt, in the other person [that is, Georgiana]" (Jung 670), and Aylmer's "projections change the world into the replica of [his] unknown face" (Jung 669). By striving to eliminate Georgiana's birthmark, Aylmer endeavors to "cleanse" himself of his own imperfections.

Aylmer's inability to correctly perceive his *shadow* leads to his difficulties with integrating the contents of Georgiana's *animus*, "the masculine side to the female self" (Richter 644), with his *anima*, "the feminine side of the male self" (Richter 644); these factors further inhibit him from achieving the quaternion of *syzygy*. According to Jung, "The *animus* corresponds to the paternal *Logos* [reason, logic] just as the *anima* corresponds to the maternal *Eros* [love, desire]" (672). Following this theory, Georgiana's dependence upon Aylmer as her source of *logos* allows her husband to administer whatever treatment he deems necessary to rid the couple's life of the wretched birthmark. Additionally, Georgiana's quest for *logos* draws her to the book in which Aylmer has documented all of his failed experiments: "Much as he had accomplished, she could not but observe that his most splendid successes were almost invariably failures.… It [the folio] was the sad confession and continual exemplification of the shortcomings of the composite man… and of the despair that assails the higher nature at finding itself so miserably thwarted by the earthly part" (220). Through Georgiana's discovery of Aylmer's scientific blunders, readers learn that the removal of Georgiana's birthmark is Aylmer's ultimate opportunity to fulfill his "desire to touch reality, to embrace the earth and fructify the field of the world" and break his cycle of "no more than a series of fitful starts" (Jung 671), the culmination of his life's work. In Aylmer's glorious attempt to rid Georgiana of her imperfection, he tries to satisfy his *anima's* desire to possess the chaste "White Lady" *imago*. Unfortunately, the encounter between Georgiana's *animus* and Aylmer's *anima* proves fatal—the woman's reliance upon her husband's ill reasoning as he pursues his desire demonstrates that "when animus and anima meet, the animus [Aylmer] draws his sword of power and the anima [Georgiana] ejects her poison of illusion and seduction [the birthmark as blemish]" (Jung 673). Aylmer is left alone with his *shadow*, Aminadab, whose "hoarse, chuckling laugh [is] heard again" (Hawthorne 224) at Georgiana's death as the chilling tale of "The Birthmark" concludes.

Had Aylmer recognized Aminadab as his *shadow* rather than projected his disgust onto Georgiana and her birthmark, and had he successfully integrated the contents of both his wife's *animus* and his *anima*, the scientist still would have faltered in his steps toward achieving *syzygy*: for he lacked the necessary component of *spirit*, what Jung believed the presence of a wise old man or woman symbolized (Richter 644). Although Aylmer was a scientist of great philosophical intelligence and enormous potential, "The Birthmark" concludes that he was by no means wise. The closing lines of Hawthorne's story read, "Yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life the selfsame texture with the celestial" (224). Aylmer's misguided projections onto Georgiana led him to "an autoerotic or autistic condition in which

one dreams a world whose reality remains forever unattainable" (Jung 670). Each part of Aylmer—the scientist, the husband, the lover—lost its sustenance in the death of Georgiana, for Aylmer "failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time and, living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present" (Hawthorne 224).

Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark" spins a psychological web in which central character Aylmer becomes entangled. Riddled by obsession with his wife's birthmark, a man of superb intelligence fails to recognize his dastardly *shadow*, which his ominous servant, Aminadab, embodies. The encounter between Georgiana's *animus* and Aylmer's *anima* proves disastrous, for when the contents of the two cannot be integrated, death and destruction arises. In addition to these failures, Aylmer lacks the vitally important *spirit*; consequently, he cannot achieve the quaternion of *syzygy* which he unconsciously seeks. Jung remarked, "It is often tragic to see how blatantly a man bungles his own life and the lives of others yet remains totally incapable of seeing how much the whole tragedy originates in himself" (670). Aylmer's demise is a testament to Jung's observation, for Hawthorne's character is but a pathetic example of how the intricacies of personal evil can blind the most enlightened man of science and leave him muttering in the dark corners of his soul.

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3.2.25: Student Sample Paper- Susan Moore's "The Desire for Perfection in Hawthorne's 'The Birthmark'"

Susan Moore

John Pennington

Literary Theory and Writing

February 26, 20–

The Desire for Perfection in Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"

"Beauty is only skin deep," or so people say. If so, then the presence of a birthmark should not affect how its owner is viewed, for nothing the person did warranted the mark: he or she just happened to be born with this natural blemish, symbolic of human's original sin. However, in Nathaniel Hawthorne's tale "The Birthmark," a small mark on a woman's face becomes the obsession of her husband, who insists upon removing it with his scientific expertise. Because of his passionate pleas, the woman gives in to his demands, thus dying. A psychoanalytic interpretation of the plot adds a new dimension to the literal level of the story. Freud's division of the mind into three elements (the id, ego, and superego) plays an enormous role in a psychoanalytic interpretation of "The Birthmark." The id contains all human passions and desires that lead to pleasure, conforming to Freud's "pleasure principle." The superego, the id's opposite, follows the "reality principle," for it is the moral conscience of the individual that is created by parents' rule and society's laws. The ego is a mediator between the two, as it directs the pleasure principle to the reality principle, telling the person how to act properly.

What happens when the ego fails to do its job? "The Birthmark" is a sobering example. When the scientist Aylmer lets his desire for perfection loose upon his wife (under the guise of his superego, science), he kills Georgiana (thus killing the symbolic id of himself). The ego, represented by his servant Aminadab, fails to be the mediator necessary for balance. Hawthorne suggests that a competent ego is necessary to prevent the devastating consequences of Aylmer's behavior. Without the ego's balancing effects, either the id or the superego will take control of a person, shutting out the other half with horrible results.

In this dark tale, science acts as a pseudo-superego. Science strives to find through rigorous experimentation the answers to all of nature's mysteries. Science represents the rational and permissible, and the scientist, hoping to help perfect life, is permitted to experiment to help benefit humanity. Science is exact—the scientist continues to strive for that exact, perfect answer that will satisfy him or her. Aylmer lives and breathes science: "He had devoted himself … too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second passion" (Hawthorne 212). Aylmer is therefore an agent of the superego science, giving himself over to the search for perfection. Through this rational mode of thinking Aylmer strives for the flawlessness the superego symbolizes. He says to his wife, Georgiana, that she has led him even farther into science than his previous experiments. To this he adds: "I feel myself fully competent to render this dear cheek as faultless as its fellow; and then, most beloved, what will be my triumph when I shall have corrected what Nature left imperfect in her fairest work" (215).

What is it about this flaw that so repulses the superego side of Aylmer? The birthmark, as little as it is, could represent the "evil" or impulsive id-like side of a person. It is red and hand-shaped, similar to the mark that would remain if someone slapped another on the face. Maybe the presence of this mark calls forth the same sort of reprimand by the superego that slapping someone would; the evil in that person is pointed out. However, the blemish appears on the face of an otherwise beautiful woman, so perhaps Hawthorne's symbolic meaning is that such a small blemish should not really matter, for we are all "blemished" in a small way. Furthermore, the mark is natural, and so it should not be condemned. If the blemish represents imperfection, then science as superego has permission to eliminate the blemish in the name of science. If the blemish, however, represents the impulses of the id, science as superego will be naturally opposed to it, trying to "kill" it, even though the ego needs the balance of the id and superego.

The fact that the mark is so tiny shows just how obsessed the superego can become with perfection. Aylmer feels driven to remove even this small reminder of the human his wife is: "But seeing her otherwise so perfect, he found this one defect grow more and more intolerable with every moment of their united lives" (213). As his wife is a part of him through the symbolic union of marriage, he sees the mark as a reflection of himself—imperfect. Consequently, he wants to repress or hide in his unconscious the reminder that his wife is not perfect, for if he cannot make her perfect, he would have to admit his own humanity and ultimate failure as a scientist. Thus he is tempted by his superego to achieve perfection: "No, dearest Georgiana, you came so nearly perfect

from the hand of Nature that this slightest possible defect, which we hesitate whether to term a defect or a beauty, shocks me, as being the mark of earthly imperfection" (212).

Despite her overwhelming beauty, Aylmer feels an almost neurotic need to remove the mark from Georgiana's face and, ironically, this need seems simultaneously a function of the id. Georgiana's beauty, then, can be seen as desire, for Aylmer wants her as wife (a perfect desirous object) and as specimen (the perfect scientific object). The pressure his wife feels from his id-superego-induced shame is enormous. Bowing to his overwhelming desires, she allows Aylmer free rein to perform any experiment he wishes, as long as the hateful mark is erased. She falls so under his influence that she no longer has any regard for her physical safety: "Danger? There is but one danger—that this horrible stigma shall be left upon my cheek!… Remove it, remove it, whatever be the cost or we shall both go mad!" (221). Georgiana as the id, beautiful to the narrator but flawed to Aylmer, gives way to the demands of the superego. Tragedy results.

This tragedy results because the ego does not balance the id-superego of Georgiana and Aylmer, a responsibility of the servant, Aminadab, the story's ego. Hawthorne describes Aminadab in earthy terms: "With his vast strength, his shaggy hair, his smoky aspect, and the indescribable earthiness that encrusted him, he seemed to represent man's physical nature" (216). Aminadab seems a perfect mediator between the abstract scientific superego and the uncontrolled passions of the id. His appearance is founded on the earth, as should be his actions. However, his status as Aylmer's servant indicates trouble. Hawthorne instantly defines the relationship between the two as one of master-servant (i.e., the superego as master, the ego as servant). Aminadab as ego should perform his duties, but he should balance the id with the superego. Yet he follows only Aylmer's monomaniacal drive for Georgiana's perfection: "[He] was admirably fitted for that office by his great mechanical readiness, and the skill with which, while incapable of comprehending a single principle, he executed all the details of his master's experiments" (216).

At one point Aminadab does try to assert himself, but his actions are too little too late. Hearing of his master's plan, Aminadab should object. Unfortunately he waits until ordered to "Throw open the door of the boudoir" (216). The door opening is symbolic of throwing open the door into the domain of the id (Georgiana), a place the superego should never directly see. The bedroom as symbol for the id's desire is reinforced by the dream-like, beautiful description of the room as containing gorgeous curtains draped around the room to give it a heavenly effect: "For aught Georgiana knew, it might be a pavilion among the clouds" (216). This contrasts sharply with Aylmer's domain of the scientific lab in which "the atmosphere felt oppressively close, and was tainted with gaseous odors which had been tormented forth by the processes of science" (220). The id and superego are represented by these separate rooms. However, Aminadab acquiesces to Aylmer's request to open the door, offering only a mumbled, "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark" (216). While his last statement may reflect the ego-like voice (a woman's life should not be put at risk for a small birthmark), the statement is spoken too softly to be heard by Aylmer, symbolic of Aylmer's demented drive for scientific perfection. If the remark had been made earlier and more forcefully—as symbolic of the ego's balance of the id and superego—the ensuing tragedy might have been avoided. Aminadab could have been the voice of reason, informing Aylmer that no matter the spiritual or physical depth of Georgiana's birthmark, it did not detract from her beauty.

Ironically, Aylmer destroys what is truly beautiful just because there is no force telling him he is acting inappropriately. As his wife was part of him and a reflection of him through marriage, the loss of her is the same as losing an essential piece of himself. Georgiana is now perfect, and the scientific quest is completed but unsuccessful, "yet, had Aylmer reached a profounder wisdom, he need not thus have flung away the happiness which would have woven his mortal life of the selfsame texture with the celestial" (224). If Aylmer had realized that acceptance of the "fault" (of the birthmark, of the id) would be possible in this world, he could have been happy. Like the scientist Rappaccini, who poisons his daughter to make her beautiful, Aylmer commits the Hawthornian unpardonable sin: he allows his zealous desire for scientific perfect to overtake his humanity. From a Freudian perspective, Aylmer, operating with faulty ego, is unwilling to acknowledge his id (Georgiana, her beauty, and her blemish) by destroying it by his superego.

The part Aylmer lost in Georgiana should have been united with him in spirit if the symbolic ego, Aminadab, had performed properly. Perhaps Aminadab's inaction is intentional as an attempt to teach Aylmer his tragic lesson. When Aylmer thinks that his last scientific treatment is working to remove the birthmark, he hears Aminadab laughing: "Ah, clod! ah, earthly mass!' cried Aylmer, laughing in a sort of frenzy, 'you have served me well! Matter and spirit—earth and heaven—have both done their part in this!'" (223). Aylmer thinks the chuckle is a result of the servant's happiness for his master's success. Aminadab's last laugh when Georgiana dies indicates differently. It comes right after Aylmer knows his wife is dead: "The parting breath of the now perfect woman passed into the atmosphere, and her soul, lingering for a moment near her husband, took its heavenward flight. Then a

hoarse, chuckling laugh was heard again!" (224). Aminadab seems to laugh at Aylmer's expense, and at his loss. The scientist discovers what life that strives solely for perfection, or is controlled solely by the superego, will be like. Hawthorne in "The Birthmark" creates a cautionary tale about the limits of reason and passion.

As the story suggests, a life lived with only superego-like tendencies will lead to tragedy. One part cannot exist without its opposite, and both need to be accepted and mediated by the ego to realize the full potential of life. A balance needs to be struck between the drive for perfection and the drive to satisfy more "base" desires. If one element gains control, then it will destroy the other, thus destroying part of the person. A rational (superego-like) world would be dull and dangerous and an irrational (id-like) world would be chaotic and equally dangerous. Why kill a part that could complement and balance the other? Hawthorne's answer seems that many people are unable to recognize the need for such a balance.

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3.2.26: Student Sample Paper- Sarah David's "A Lacanian Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's 'The Birthmark'"

Sarah David

John Pennington

Literary Theory and Writing

April 5, 20–

A Lacanian Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark"

The focal point of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Birthmark" is a mysterious mark: "In the center of Georgiana's cheek there was a singular mark.… Its shape bore not a little similarity to the human hand, though of the smallest pygmy size. Georgiana's lovers were wont to say that some fairy at her birth had laid her tiny hand upon the infant's cheek … to give her such sway over all hearts" (Hawthorne 170). However, Aylmer sees the birthmark very differently from other men, "selecting it as the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death" (170). This discrepancy confuses the reader and causes him or her to examine the true meaning of the birthmark. As the reader examines Aylmer's struggle to define the birthmark, his quest to rid Georgiana of her birthmark takes on new meaning.

Aylmer's quest to create perfect aesthetic beauty in his wife's appearance is analogous to Jacques Lacan's idea of searching for unity through language. Jacques Lacan is a student of Freud; however, he examines psychoanalysis through its relationship with language. Essentially he takes Freud's beliefs and applies them to language. While he agrees people are driven by their desires, he thinks problems stem from our inability to create a stable language. Lacan believes that everyone starts off in a pre-linguistic unified state because one cannot separate the self from others. This unified state only lasts until the child learns that he or she is separate from others, thus entering Lacan's Symbolic stage. After realizing he or she is a separate entity, the person then tries to identify images using language. However, since a signifier, a word, triggers the signified, an image or context represents language, and according to Lacan since there is no stability for signifiers, confusion occurs over the signifier representing one specific image. This confusion causes the person to feel a sense of loss. He or she then wishes for that wholeness or unity he or she had before and longs for the pre-linguistic state. This search for wholeness or the Real stage is ultimately unattainable. Reading "The Birthmark" from a Lacanian point of view, the reader can see that Aylmer's confusion over the signifier of the birthmark and his desire for unity, both of the signifier and the separateness of his loves, lead him to try to create perfect beauty in his wife as a way to regain his lost unity.

Language is a signifier that triggers the signified, but Lacan only acknowledges the signifier. He believes that "there is nothing that a signifier ultimately refers to" and "because of this lack of signifieds … the chain of signifiers … is constantly sliding and shifting and circulating" (Klages 2). Georgiana's birthmark becomes the signifier in Aylmer's search for unity. To Aylmer the birthmark is "the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and death"; however; some of Georgiana's former "lovers were wont to say (the birthmark gave) her such sway over all hearts," thus seeing the birthmark in a positive light (Hawthorne 170). Aylmer's apprentice, Aminadab, even tells him, "If she were my wife, I'd never part with that birthmark" (175). Because the birthmark, the signifier, does not result in one specific meaning, it causes confusion for Aylmer.

Since Aylmer realizes that signifiers do not always signify one meaning, he begins to feel fragmented. He also feels fragmented by the separateness of his love for science and his love for Georgiana. Hawthorne writes: "It was not unusual for the love of science to rival the love of a woman" (169). This sense of separation occurs in Lacan's Symbolic stage. Language occurs in this stage because as the person is able to differentiate between the self and others he or she struggles to define the differences with words. Aylmer was already able to differentiate between what the birthmark meant to him and what it meant to others and since the meaning is not the same he feels a sense of separation over this lack of unity. His "awareness of separation … creates an anxiety, a sense of loss" (Klages 3). This feeling of separation of his two loves adds to the feeling of loss over the lack of a stable signifier for his wife's birthmark. He then wants, as Lacan would say, "to stabilize, to stop the chain of signifiers so that stable meaning … becomes possible" (Klages 2). Aylmer begins his search for unity, which can only be found in the Real stage, but realizes it can only be reached by "intertwining itself [the love for his wife] with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to his own" (Hawthorne 169).

As previously mentioned, the Symbolic stage is where language happens and a person begins to separate the self from others as well as beginning to differentiate language. This sense of loss creates a longing to return to the wholeness of the pre-linguistic stage. A person would then be in search to find this unity in the Real stage, and although "you can never get back" to that unity "you always want to" (Klages 7). Aylmer relates finding his unity to ridding his wife of her birthmark and his desire becomes so strong that the birthmark "trifling as it at first appeared, it so connected itself with innumerable trains of thought and modes of feeling that it became the central point of all" (Hawthorne 171). Aylmer thinks he finds an opportunity to find unity by attempting to create something that will remove Georgiana's birthmark.

Aylmer believes that by uniting his love of science with his love for his wife he will end the separation he feels between the two loves, and by removing the birthmark he will also remove the confusion over the signifier. Aylmer begins his search for unity, the Real stage, by trying to remove the birthmark. He attempts several times, all inevitably resulting in failure as the Real stage is unattainable. He first surrounds her with beautiful holograms, then presents her with a plant, which she kills, and thirdly tries spraying the air with perfume. All of these attempts fail, but Aylmer does not give up hope that he will be able to remove the birthmark and therefore find unity. Aylmer's desire for unity causes him to believe he can achieve unity once again and keeps him persevering to find a "cure" for Georgiana's imperfection and therefore the Real stage. Finally Aylmer mixes a drink, telling his wife, "The concoction of the draught has been perfect.… Unless all my science have deceived me, it cannot fail" (178). Georgiana drinks the potion and falls asleep. Aylmer watches her until he notices that the birthmark "is well-nigh gone!" (179) Aylmer is elated with his success, believing he has found the perfect beauty, his wholeness, for which he was searching only to hear his wife cry out, "Aylmer, dearest Aylmer, I am dying!" (179) He comes to her side "as the crimson tint of the birthmark … faded from her cheek … and her soul, lingering a moment near her husband, took its heavenward flight" (179). Aylmer's experience of this perfect beauty, his unity, was fleeting because just as the birthmark was fading away, true wholeness or reaching the Real stage is short lived and unattainable. In the end Hawthorne shows Lacan's claim that "the ideal concept of a wholly unified and psychologically complete individual is just that, an abstraction that is simply not attainable" (Bressler 129).

Aylmer's confusion over the birthmark, the signifier, coupled with the separation of his loves, eventually lead him on his unsuccessful quest for unity in perfecting Georgiana's beauty. Aylmer's confusion caused by the unstable signifier, the birthmark, is presented along with the impossibility of returning to the pre-linguistic wholeness everyone desires. Since "language shapes and ultimately structures our unconscious and conscious minds and thus shapes our self-identity," Alymer's distress over language manifests itself as his desire to get rid of the birthmark (Bressler 129). By reading "The Birthmark" from a Lacanian point of view, the reader is able to define Aylmer much differently than in other readings. Instead of seeing Aylmer as evil and striving for ultimate perfection or reading into the evils or dangers of science, the reader sees Aylmer as a more humane, regular person in the Symbolic stage searching to find unity in the Real stage. This also allows the reader to understand why he tries so desperately to cure—but ultimately kills—his wife over something as seemingly insignificant as a birthmark.

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3.2.27: Student Writer at Work- Monica Platten's "'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'- An Allegory for a Young America"

Now that we've reviewed Monica's introduction in detail, you should read her entire paper. As you read, keep in mind the principles of argument we have already discussed.

Monica Platten

Professor Ryan Cordell

Introduction to Literature

December 17, 20–

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow": An Allegory for a Young America

When one hears the title "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," they might shiver a little and think of the infamous spectre, "the apparition of a figure on horseback without a head … known, at all the country firesides, by the name of The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow" (Irving 966). It is this legendary phantom that grants Washington Irving's tale the label of ghost story. As such, readers would expect the legend to be overflowing with superstition and opposing forces—good vs. evil, known vs. unknown, supernatural vs. reality. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" can be read as a tale of opposing forces, but not in the same way as ghost story. It is a legend of rivalry, a rivalry between the characters Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt. Readers may benefit by understanding that the opposing forces presented here are these two characters, the victim and the victor, the underdog and the front-runner—not those of supernatural and reality—in order to understand a major significance of Irving's tale. Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its "motherland," Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and these opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand a central message behind Irving's tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America.

The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America. It is a little valley in which "a small brook glides through [it], with just murmur enough to lull you to repose, and the occasional whistle of a quail, or the tapping of a woodpecker, is almost the only sound that ever breaks in upon the uniform tranquility" (956). This place is tranquil and beautiful, just as the new land of America was perceived by all who settled there. Not only is the beauty ample, but the natural resources are overflowing: there are "fat meadow lands, the rich fields of wheat, of rye, of buckwheat, and Indian corn, and the orchard burthened with ruddy fruit" (971); in this place "nature wore that rich and golden livery which we always associate with the idea of abundance" (976). Sleepy Hollow is a valley of bounty, a land of plenty. But like any other wild and largely uncharted territory, this land possesses an air of mystery. "A drowsy, dreamy influence seems to hang over the land, and pervade the very atmosphere" (965), and any who dally long enough while passing through or decide to call the place home "begin to grow imaginative—to dream dreams, and see apparitions" (966). Likewise, the first settlers in America came as dreamers, searching for a new world, a new life, riches, and freedom.

Ichabod Crane is essential to this allegory of the new nation, because he is the representation of the American nation itself. The description of this character does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog: "He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and leg, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for shovels, and his whole fame most loosely hung together" (967). He is not a well-built man but an awkward one. As a schoolteacher he is intelligent, but does not hold a prestigious position in society; this reflects the rank of the new nation in a world order of countries. Nonetheless, he is optimistic and determined: "He had, however, a happy mixture of pliability and perseverance in his nature; he was in form and spirit like a supple jack—yielding, but tough; though he bent, he never broke; and though he bowed beneath the slightest pressure, yet, the moment it was away—jerk!—he was as erect, and carried his head as high as ever" (973). The personality of Ichabod Crane reflects the same qualities of the newly independent states of America—he is, like they are, an optimistic underdog.

The personality of Ichabod Crane also reflects the status of the American nation in his want for maturity. Crane, although a grown man, displays certain qualities of youth in his superstitious beliefs and his "his appetite for the marvelous, and his powers of digesting it, [which] were equally extraordinary" (969). These traits imply that he is still young and childish, not yet mature like an

adult: “No tale was too gross or monstrous for his capacious swallow” (969). Nothing pleases him more than to “listen to marvellous tales of ghosts and goblins, and haunted fields and haunted brooks, and haunted bridges and haunted house, and particularly of the headless horseman” (969). Terence Martin breaks these ideas down: “By fitting the notion of gullibility into the dominant metaphor of Ichabod’s oral preoccupation, Irving emphasizes the childlike quality of his protagonist. Ichabod can swallow and digest anything; therefore he is always and increasingly gullible.… Irving couples the oral stage and imaginative indulgence; both signify childhood” (143). The young colonies of America are certainly lacking the wisdom and maturity of their relative, Great Britain; “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” published in 1820, just over 40 years after the Declaration of Independence, is set in “a remote period of American history, that is to say, some thirty year since” (Irving 967).

Martin agrees that “America … was a new nation which saw itself … [as] fresh and innocent” (137), but explains that it wanted to become an “adult” as quickly as possible, and therefore needed to stay away from child-like obsessions of fancy and the imagination. “A childish (primitive) society might legitimately take an interest in things imaginative; such a society, however, was precisely what America wanted not to be” (Martin 139). Washington Irving obviously shared this belief, because in the end of his tale, Crane’s excessive imagination leads to embarrassment and failure. This is, in a way, a warning for adolescent America. Martin concurs: “It would appear that for Irving there is no place, or a very limited place, for the hero of the imagination in the culture of early America. A nation of [Rips and] Ichabods, Americans might reason, would soon be no nation at all” (144).

Crane and the American nation have in common one more imperative attribute: ambition. This ambition is demonstrated in many ways. Just as the colonists of this new nation hungered for a better life, Ichabod Crane hungers: “In his devouring mind’s eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with a pudding in its belly, and an apple in its mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes” (Irving 971). Delicious food is not the only luxury Crane hungers for; he longs for material possessions, too, such as land and the many animals that provide his scrumptious meals: “His heart yearned after the damsel who was to inherit these domains, and his imagination expanded with the idea, how they might be readily turned into cash, and the money invested in immense tracts of wild land, and shingle palaces in the wilderness.… He beheld himself bestriding a pacing mare, with a colt at her heel, setting out for Kentucky, Tennessee, or the Lord knows where”! (971).

This desire and ambition to possess and expand reflects the American initiative of Manifest Destiny. Crane is ambitious and confident that he is meant to fulfill these big plans: “He could not help, too, rolling his large eyes round him as he eat, and chuckling with the possibility that he might one day be lord of all this scene of almost unimaginable luxury and splendor” (977). Lloyd Daigrepont states that “Ichabod [also] represents the modern debasement of imagination by materialism, a pious utilitarianism, and the idea of progress, particularly as these were supported in early 19th-century America” (72) and goes so far as to call Crane himself “a representative of progress” (73). However, this ambition and desire for progress borders on greed. Crane is overly confident that he will one day acquire for himself the beautiful daughter and land of Baltus Van Tassel, a wealthy Dutch farmer. His motives for this possession are not supported by any reasons but personal desire. This same kind of greed and personal desire was demonstrated by the American states, as their motives for Manifest Destiny (although the particular term had not been coined quite yet) transformed from those of exploration and expansion to dominance and control over the native people and their land.

Brom Van Brunt, nicknamed appropriately Brom Bones, represents the strength of America’s motherland, Great Britain. He is a formidable man, “a burley, roaring, roystering blade … the hero of the country round, which rung with his feats of strength and hardihood” (Irving 972). He is powerful and skilled, always coming out on top: “He was famed for great knowledge and skill [in horsemanship] … he was foremost at all races and cockfights, and with the ascendancy which bodily strength always acquires in rustic life, was the umpire of all disputes” (972). This strength, knowledge, and skill—along with his competing interest in Katrina Van Tassel, the “apple” of Crane’s eye—makes him “the formidable rival with whom Ichabod Crane had to contend” (973). And although he is respected and admired—“The neighbours looked upon him with a mixture of awe, admiration, and good-will” (973)—he can be a bit of a bully, especially in said rivalry:

Ichabod became the object of whimsical persecution to Bones, and his gang of rough riders. They harried his hitherto peaceful domain; smoked out his singing school, by stopping up the chimney; broke in to the school-house at night, in spite of its formidable fastening of withe and window stakes, and turned everything topsy-turvy, so that the poor schoolmaster began to think all the witches in the country held their meetings there. But what was still more annoying, Brom took all opportunities of turning him into

ridicule in the presence of his mistress, and had a scoundrel dog, whom he taught to whine in the most ludicrous manner, and introduced as a rival of Ichabod's, to instruct her in psalmody. (974)

This list of grievances against Ichabod is reminiscent of the list of grievances claimed in the Declaration of Independence. Brom Bones is the powerful, respected rival of Crane, the slightly awkward underdog. And just as Great Britain used its power and strength to worry the colonies and then later the young American states, Brom uses his to harass Crane.

Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of the aforementioned Baltus Van Tassel, completes this allegory of an adolescent America because she is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor, respect, and abundant resources. She is described as "blooming … plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy cheeked as one of her father's peaches, and universally famed" (970). The land of America is likewise copious in beauty, nature and wildlife abounding, the land is lush, fresh, and immense. People from all around the world would soon be immigrating to this new world in hopes of building a better life. "So tempting a morsel" (970) she was, yes, but also difficult to conquer: "Ichabod … had to win his way to the heart of a country coquette, beset with a labyrinth of whims and caprices, which were forever presenting new difficulties and impediments, and he had to encounter a host of fearful adversaries of real flesh and blood … keeping a watchful and angry eye upon each other" (972). Not only did many different countries and groups of people lust over the ample land, but this new world also created a struggle for power. Great Britain, the motherland, had been disowned by its young child. The American colonies decided to break away from this unfair and oppressive parent and start a life of their own, as a new nation. This budding nation, youthful and inexperienced as it was, found it necessary to work its way up in the world. This adolescent American had proved its ambition to be free, but now hoped to gain the respect of the world, power in the world order, pride in itself, and a sense of nationalism to infuse its people. Great Britain, however, was struggling to maintain its own pride and power after its defeat to the adolescent America; this once all-powerful empire wanted to uphold the respect it had earned throughout history. Which country would ultimately prove itself to be superior? This was the rivalry between the two nations. And that is the rivalry between Ichabod Crane and Brom Bones: who is the better man, who will win the girl and all her treasures, the respect, and the power?

While it appears clear that Irving's tale is an allegory for a budding America and the rivalry between this underdog and its stronger, older relative Great Britain, some would disagree. Many critics, in fact, depict the rivalry as one between the regions and cultures in New England, and label *Ichabod* as the "threat," or the bully. Donald Ringe boldly claims that "Ichabod Crane is clearly a Connecticut Yankee invading—and threatening—a New York Dutch society" (455). Following suit, Daniel Hoffman calls Brom Bones Irving's "realistic Dutch frontiersman, who meets and bests a Yankee" (427). Their idea of Irving's tale is summed up by Lloyd Daigrepont, who argues that "Brom is no musclebound bully, but rather a vigorous youth with a puckish spirit and a joyful exuberance for life" (75), who simply "wishes to rid Sleepy Hollow of the threat of Ichabod Crane" (76–77).

This claim that Brom Bones is the story's hero and Crane the threatening force, while intriguing, seems misguided, especially as Irving himself described Bones as Crane's "formidable rival" (973), as previously mentioned. In addition, Jeffrey Insko points out that Irving's "body of work includes 'serious' histories (notably, biographies of George Washington and Christopher Columbus) and fictional sketches—among them 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'—that are themselves deeply concerned with matters historiographical" (609). Regional conflicts in an adolescent America's New England were much more recent and current for Irving's time than conflicts between America and Great Britain. Levine and Krupat note these concerns: "There was a sense during the 1790s and early 1800s … that American nationalism was provisional, vulnerable, fragile. The War of 1812, which emerged from trade disputes with England, can therefore be seen as a war that, at least in part, spoke to Americans' desires to put an end to such anxiety by in effect reenacting the American Revolution against England and winning a victory once and for all" (931). Although the rivalry between America and its overseas lineage was indeed current and ongoing, it extended a bit farther back into history. Before there could be conflict between regions of the American nation, it had to become a nation. The first major conflict was between America and Great Britain.

When readers understand that the rivalry in Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy of Hollow" is not only between the opposing forces of two characters, but also between an underdog and a powerful bully, then they can understand a central allegory of the story: an allegory of a young and developing America. Irving meant his tale to convey a warning to the budding nation: it is a reminder of its vulnerability, its problems, and the obstacles and hardships that stand in the way of its success. While Irving and other members of "the American literary nationalism of the 1820s … ultimately raised tough questions about the nation's future, about its strengths and vulnerabilities, and about its character and potential as a democratic republic" (Levine and Krupat 934), these questions and criticisms, along with "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," are not without a sense of hope or optimism. Readers should remember that

“Ichabod is not ultimately the loser in this legend. All he has lost is a farm girl’s love and a measure of self-respect; the former was no real passion, the latter can be repaired” (Hoffman 433–34). The American nation, like Ichabod, has the potential to succeed: to grow up, to learn from mistakes, and then to thrive against all odds.

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3.2.28: Understanding the Body of Monica's Argument

Remember that the primary question readers ask of writers is "What do you think?" Because claims are specific and debatable, however, writers cannot simply state their claim. They must anticipate their readers' new questions: "Why do you think that?" and "How do you know?" To explain why she thinks as she does about "Sleepy Hollow," Monica begins each section of her paper with a subclaim, which is a specific, debatable statement that supports the global claim from the introduction. Let's pull the subclaims out of the body of Monica's paper so we can look at them more closely:

- SC1: "The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America."
- SC2: "Ichabod Crane is essential to this allegory of the new nation, because he is the representation of the American nation itself. The description of this character does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog."
- SC3: "Brom Van Brunt, nicknamed appropriately Brom Bones, represents the strength of America's motherland, Great Britain. He is a formidable man … powerful and skilled, always coming out on top."
- SC4: "Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of the aforementioned Baltus Van Tassel, completes this allegory of an adolescent America because she is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor, respect, and abundant resources."

Each of these subclaims advances one aspect of the global claim, helping round out the ideas that Monica broaches in her introduction. Monica believes that Irving's story "is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America" because "the description of [Ichabod] does not conform to one of a strong favorite, but to that of an underdog." She also believes as she does because "Katrina Van Tassel…is the prize, the treasure coveted by each nation—she represents power, honor, respect, and abundant resources." We could say the same thing about Monica's other subclaims. None of these statements is self-evidently true; like the global claim in the paper's introduction, the subclaims are debatable statements.

Your Process

1. Do you sometimes struggle to move beyond your introduction and begin writing the body of an assigned paper? Do you struggle with organizing your thoughts over several pages? Jot down some thoughts about the elements of writing that you struggle with.
2. You can practice developing effective reasons using the modules "Distinguish between Reasons and Evidence" (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...t/LRSintheWild) and "Choose a Parallel or Sequential Order for Your Reasons" (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...g/LRSintheWild)

Now that Monica has answered her readers' questions, "What do you think?" and "Why do you think that?" she must explain how she knows her ideas are true. To answer "How do you know?" Monica supports each of her subclaims with a range of evidence, both primary evidence (quotations from "Sleepy Hollow" itself) and secondary evidence (quotations from scholars writing about the story or its historical period). To demonstrate Ichabod's "ambition," for instance, Monica quotes from Irving's story directly: "'In his devouring mind's eye, he pictured to himself every roasting pig running about with a pudding in its belly, and an apple in its mouth; the pigeons were snugly put to bed in a comfortable pie, and tucked in with a coverlet of crust; the geese were swimming in their own gravy; and the ducks pairing cosily in dishes'" (Irving 971). This textual evidence grounds Monica's claims, helping readers see why she thinks what she thinks about Irving's tale.

You should think carefully about how the evidence you quote supports the subclaims you make. While the connections between your claims and evidence may seem self-evident to you they may not be evident to your readers. Imagine, for instance, if a report came out saying students from a particular school were underperforming on their standardized tests. One person might see the report as evidence the school needs more funding. Another person might see the same report as evidence the school should be closed and its students sent elsewhere. Still another might see the report as evidence that the system of standardized testing doesn't fairly evaluate students and should be changed. Readers interpret evidence in light of their social, political, religious, and cultural values and assumptions. Writing scholars call these underlying values and assumptions **warrants**. When you use evidence, you should consider how different readers might interpret it, and if you foresee dramatic differences, you should carefully explain how you arrived at the connections you've drawn.

The following is one example that will show you how warrants provide the logical connection between claim and evidence. Most warrants are not directly stated but implied, which makes it useful for you to articulate your warrants so that you can concretely see

the logical connection between claim and evidence:

Thesis Claim: "…Ichabod Crane and Brom Van Brunt are meant to be more than just two characters with a rivalry—they are actually representations of the young American nation and its 'motherland,' Great Britain. When these allegories are understood, and these opposing forces are revealed, readers will finally be able to understand a central message behind Irving's tale—it is an allegory for the goals, the problems, and the livelihood of an adolescent America."

- SC1: "The glen of Sleepy Hollow itself embodies the characteristics of the fresh, new land of America."
- Warrant: The glen symbolizes the new America, which is central to the thesis since landscape, the geography, is essential to the allegory of Crane as representative of the new America.

In addition, Monica supplements her direct textual evidence in her paper with insights from other scholars, which also become counterclaims to her argument: "Lloyd Daigrepont states that 'Ichabod [also] represents the modern debasement of imagination by materialism, a pious utilitarianism, and the idea of progress, particularly as these were supported in early 19th-century America' and goes so far as to call Crane himself 'a representative of progress' (72, 73)." Secondary evidence grants authority to Monica's argument, demonstrating that she has studied scholarly conversations around this work and is now engaging in those conversations in her own writing.

Your Process

1. You can practice incorporating evidence into your writing using the modules "What Counts as Evidence" (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...s/LRSintheWild) and "Explain Your Evidence" (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/evi...explain/see-it).

The word "conversation" tells us quite a bit about why Monica's argument works so well. She maintains a tone of engagement with other scholars throughout the paper, even when she disagrees with their ideas. In short, she answers yet another question readers are likely to ask of writers: "Have you considered this other point of view?" Note the way Monica explains potential objections to her argument, anticipating her readers' skepticism about her argument.

While it appears clear that Irving's tale is an allegory for a budding America and the rivalry between this underdog and its stronger, older relative Great Britain, some would disagree. Many critics, in fact, depict the rivalry as one between the regions and cultures in New England, and label *Ichabod* as the "threat," or the bully. Donald Ringe boldly claims that "Ichabod Crane is clearly a Connecticut Yankee invading—and threatening—a New York Dutch society" (455). Following suit, Daniel Hoffman calls Brom Bones Irving's "realistic Dutch frontiersman, who meets and bests a Yankee" (427). Their idea of Irving's tale is summed up by Lloyd Daigrepont, who argues that "Brom is no musclebound bully, but rather a vigorous youth with a puckish spirit and a joyful exuberance for life," who simply "wishes to rid Sleepy Hollow of the threat of Ichabod Crane" (75, 76–77).

As in her introduction, Monica outlines an alternative argument carefully and fairly. She quotes directly from scholars she disagrees with. Doing this doesn't undermine the points Monica wants to make about "Sleepy Hollow." Instead, by demonstrating her awareness of other possibilities, Monica demonstrates that her argument comes from close consideration of the story and many potential interpretations. Because Monica demonstrates her thorough research in the paragraph just quoted, her rebuttal of those opinions in the following paragraph has more force and authority.

This claim that Brom Bones is the story's hero and Crane the threatening force, while intriguing, seems misguided, especially as Irving himself described Bones as Crane's "formidable rival" (973), as previously mentioned. In addition, Jeffrey Insko points out that Irving's "body of work includes 'serious' histories (notably, biographies of George Washington and Christopher Columbus) and fictional sketches—among them 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow'—that are themselves deeply concerned with matters historiographical" (609). Regional conflicts in an adolescent America's New England were much more recent and current for Irving's time than conflicts between America and Great Britain. Levine and Krupat note these concerns:

There was a sense during the 1790s and early 1800s … that American nationalism was provisional, vulnerable, fragile. The War of 1812, which emerged from trade disputes with England, can therefore be seen as a war that, at least in part, spoke to Americans' desires to put an end to such anxiety by in effect reenacting the American Revolution against England and winning a victory once and for all. (931)

Although the rivalry between America and its overseas lineage was indeed current and ongoing, it extended a bit farther back into history. Before there could be conflict between regions of the American nation, it had to become a nation. The first major conflict was between America and Great Britain.

An effective academic writer considers multiple points of view in his or her writing. Such writers persuade their readers to follow their opinions about literature through carefully considered, well-organized claims, subclaims, and evidence.

Your Process

1. You can practice responding to alternative points of view in your writing using the modules “Accommodate Alternative Points of View” (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/Aan...natives/see-it) and “Respond to the Substance of Readers’ Objections” (http://redschoolhouse.org/drupal/?q=...s/LRSintheWild).

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3.2.29: Student Writer at Work- Ashley Eckhardt's Postcolonial Paper in Action

In her Introduction to Literature class, Ashley read *Heart of Darkness* and Achebe's "An Image of Africa." She was intrigued by Achebe's argument, and wanted to delve deeper into the postcolonial implications of Conrad's novella. As you read Ashley's paper, take note of the different kinds of sources she uses and how she incorporates these sources into her argument. In ethnic and postcolonial critiques, scholars often use both **primary sources** (which include historical documents as well as literary works) and **secondary sources** (texts written by scholars about a particular literary work, time period, or other topic). With this in mind, let's begin reading Ashley's paper.

Ashley Eckhardt

Professor John Pennington

ENGL 150: Introduction to Literature

April 20, 20–

The Convergence of Races: 19th Century Imperialism and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Europe in the 19th century experienced a rash of imperialistic sentiment as nations competed to gain political and economic control of the African continent while supposedly civilizing the African people. The scientific developments of the time contributed to the concept of white supremacy as social Darwinism grabbed hold of the European population and turned the colonizers into saviors and reformers of inferior and backward barbarians. Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*, published in 1899, explores the effects this mad rush to conquer Africa had on the African natives and the land itself as colonizers enslaved the natives and depleted their natural resources which they so valued. This "Scramble for Africa" caused European society to deteriorate as well, as nations became embittered against one another in their pursuit of more territory and economic success in Africa, resulting in brutality towards one another and the native populations within Africa and the European continent. Conrad portrays how the colonizers' original philanthropic intentions turned to brutality and exploitation through the character of Kurtz, who creates a monopoly on the ivory trade in the Congo and subjugates the native tribes in his region through fear and violence.

Contemporary critics argue that Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* embraces the racist viewpoints of the 19th century through its use of derogatory descriptions of the African natives Marlow encounters in the Congo. The racism that ran rampant in 19th century Europe changed for some after Darwin's publication of his theory of natural selection in 1859. Some scientists and thinkers applied Darwin's ideas to society, in a movement known as social Darwinism, allowing people to justify their racism on the basis that certain races, like certain animals, were genetically designed to be superior to others. To the European mind-set, this meant that "white" Europeans were superior to all other races, particularly the "yellow" Asians and "dark" Africans (de Gobineau 167–68). Through the use of these misdirected scientific developments, many Europeans regarded the imperialistic activity of their governments as either their natural right as the superior race or as a civilizing mission to save the inferior and backward populations of Asia and Africa. It was this mind-set that led to King Leopold of Belgium's mission to the Congo at the end of the 19th century to "improve the well-being' of the inhabitants of the Congo" (Hawkins 292). Conrad shows the hypocrisy of this mission in Heart of Darkness as much of Marlow's journey through Africa takes place in the Belgian-controlled region surrounding the Congo River. Marlow describes these "civilizing" Europeans as "they wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it" (Conrad 44). To Conrad, these European philanthropists were hiding their true greed and self-righteousness behind the mask of civilization and enlightenment, one of the most disgusting and hypocritical aspects of imperialism, yet Conrad himself had difficulty in detaching himself from the social practices of his time. Joseph Conrad's main purpose in writing his novella *Heart of Darkness* was to relate the atrocities of 19th century, but he unconsciously succumbed to his own inherent Eurocentrism, allowing the stereotypes propagated by social Darwinism and racism to become evident within his work.

Let's take a quick break from Ashley's paper to look more closely at how she's putting these ideas together.

ASHLEY'S PROCESS

1. Note how Ashley combined several ideas into her introductory paragraphs. In her class they discussed colonialism (the "scramble for Africa") and also the way that social Darwinism shaped social thought at the time. Ashley creates a new argument

by bringing together different threads that she has not seen combined in the secondary sources she's read.

Your Process

1. Does the idea of writing a "surprising" claim sometimes seem daunting? Rather than coming up with a world-changing, completely unique idea for your postcolonial paper, how might you bring together several ideas to create something new?
2. Create a list of different ideas you've discussed in class around the work you hope to write about (ideas like "social Darwinism" or "civilization," as Ashley discusses in her paper). Do you spot connections between these concepts? Feel free to draw arrows between them, group them in a separate note, or otherwise indicate the connections you see.

Now let's turn back to Ashley's paper.

Conrad explores the treatment of Africans by the colonists in *Heart of Darkness* in an attempt to relate the atrocities committed by the European colonizers to the populace in Europe. Conrad was agitated over the brutal treatment of the native populations under European control and determined that the entire 19th-century imperialist system was immoral and needed to be abolished. Conrad saw imperialism as a system that brutally exploits native populations for greed and national pride, and he believed that such systems should not have been allowed to remain a mainstay in the governments of apparently civilized and enlightened countries. In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow witnesses this unjust system in action immediately upon stepping onto the African continent as he watches a chain gang coming toward him:

Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. Black rags were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro like tails. I could see every rib, the joints of their limbs were like knots in a rope; each had an iron collar on his neck, and all were connected together with a chain whose bights swung between them, rhythmically clinking.… [T]hey were called criminals, and the outraged law, like the bursting shells, had come to them, an insoluble mystery from over the sea (Conrad 33).

Conrad, like Marlow, was greatly affected by this sight of imperial might and brutality and thus devoted himself to speaking out against the institution. His audience, however, was already imbued with racism against non-European cultures, making his task extremely difficult, as "Conrad's objection to imperialism on the grounds that it disrupted indigenous cultures was unusual in an era that failed to see the worth of those cultures" (Hawkins 294).

The population within Europe itself fully believed in the good intentions of their colonial missions, being equally saturated with the ideas of social Darwinism and the racism that followed from it. They gave their full support to these expeditions, as seen when Marlow's aunt commends him for his effort at "weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (Conrad 28). Even Kurtz's original intention, when he first began his expedition in the Congo, was to enlighten the Africans. It was only after he had been within the continent for some time that the temptation of immense wealth and power overcame him and he transformed into the greedy and self-serving despot that Marlow discovered on his own journey through the Congo. Conrad took it upon himself to alert the European populace to the vulgarities of the imperialistic actions they so admired. Conrad "came to believe that it was his task as a novelist to unmask society, to look below its surface to discern its essential character," and what he "discerned [was] a rapacious colonialism" (Raskin 120). With all the scientific justifications of imperialism, Conrad certainly had an arduous task before him, one that was made even more challenging by the numerous political and economic benefits acquired through this nefarious system.

ASHLEY'S PROCESS

1. Note how Ashley modifies the ideas of writers like Achebe. While Achebe simply calls Conrad "racist," Ashley attempts to navigate a middle ground. She acknowledges the deep racism of Conrad and his society but also recognizes that Conrad at least believed he was writing against imperialism.
2. When Ashley disagrees with the ideas of other scholars, she doesn't dismiss them outright. Instead, she incorporates the ideas she agrees with and respectfully counters those she sees as misguided, overstated, or incomplete. This kind of respectful disagreement is the foundation of most academic discourse.

Your Process

1. It can be tempting to simply write arguments that agree with the secondary research you read. After all, the people writing those articles are likely professors, and you are just a student. However, English professors value students who are unafraid to counter the status quo, so long as they do so using good primary and secondary evidence.
2. Have you read any criticism that you feel didn't quite get the novel, story, poem, play, or essay you're writing about right? Perhaps you didn't disagree with the entire essay, but you did disagree with one or two points that it made. Jot down those areas of disagreement.

Behind the façade of a civilizing mission lay the real motivations for European imperialism in the 19th century: political and economic control of these territories. As nationalism grew within the countries themselves, the European nations became increasingly competitive with one another. The acquisition of colonies became a symbol of national pride as well as of superiority. Conrad, despite his opposition to imperialism, remained unconsciously influenced by this sense of nationalism; a concept espoused by Fredric Jameson in the "ideology of the form," in which a contradiction exists between the content of the writer's work and the social conventions of the writer's time (Jameson 1957). It became necessary to be in control of colonies somewhere within the world to be considered among the great nations of Europe, and those that held numerous, and especially large and lucrative territories, reigned supreme. Political leaders of the time stressed the importance of imperialism to ensure their nation's prosperity. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu shares these sentiments when he states that "a people which colonizes is a people which projects into the future the foundations of its grandeur and eventual supremacy" (178).

Marlow witnessed the extent these colonizers were willing to go to achieve political and economic dominance in Europe, as they subjected their colonies to devastation and virtual rape of resources in their attempt to become the wealthiest and most powerful nation in Europe. Kurtz reflects the selfish desires for wealth and power that was common to many of the imperialists; "he desired to have kings meet him at railway-stations on his return from some ghastly Nowhere, where he intended to accomplish great things. 'You show them you have in you something that is really profitable, and then there will be no limits to the recognition of your ability,' he would say" (Conrad 110). The colonizers not only stole the natural resources of the territories they conquered, but imposed their own culture and industry onto the existing populations. The chain gang that Marlow witnessed at the outset of his experiences in the Congo portrays how the legal system was used within Africa, condemning Africans, who were completely innocent within their own cultures, but were now branded as criminals by the European invaders. The attempt to build a railroad along the Congo to aid the Europeans in their desire to move goods from within the interior of Africa to the coast was not for the benefit of the African natives either, but rather to expedite the colonizers' shipments so they could become more prosperous more quickly. Greed and self-righteousness led to the devastating destruction of the virgin forests and rivers of Africa, which, in Conrad's opinion, was pointless and shameful; the construction of the railroad that Marlow observes is described as "objectless blasting," and seemed to be devoid of any purpose or progress whatsoever (Conrad 33).

The destruction of the native populations in Africa and Asia led to the similar destruction of European society as it became inundated with the immoral and selfish actions of the colonizers, justifying them through social Darwinism. Conrad wished to prevent this decline by preaching against the evils of imperialism through works like Heart of Darkness. He foresaw the negative effects imperialist actions would have, and were already beginning to have, on Europe itself. "The European conquerors sundered the tribes to make Africans serve alien material aims. In doing so, Conrad indicates, imperialism destroyed the cultural integrity not only of Africa but of Europe as well" (Hawkins 296). The competition between the nations often led to bitter resentment and even warfare. The Boer War in South Africa, for example, occurred between the Dutch and the British over territory and diamonds. The British were jealous that the Dutch occupied the land with the majority of the diamond deposits and were thus driven by greed and national pride to acquire portions of that land for themselves. Similar situations occurred between other European nations throughout Africa and Asia in the 19th century, although not all came to the extreme consequence of war.

Imperialism was also destroying individual Europeans psychologically, as many people blamed the brutal actions of the colonizers on their barbaric environment. To many Europeans, including Conrad himself, Africa epitomized the idea of savagery; consequently *Heart of Darkness*expresses "the fear of the Victorian English that if whites were to be isolated from their secure environment and its refinement, they would degenerate into abominable savagery and become beasts of unspeakable lust" (Okafor 19). Kurtz appears to be the victim of his environment as this originally moral and upright citizen succumbs to the animalistic nature of Africa, turning to a life of violence, greed, and gratification. Even Marlow feels his surroundings are changing him as he

recollects the European doctor's desire to witness the mental changes of individuals during their sojourn in Africa and he determines that he is suddenly "becoming scientifically interesting" after being in the Congo for only a few weeks (Conrad 40). This portrayal of Africa as savage and subversive led many contemporary critics of *Heart of Darkness* to consider it racist and a reflection of Conrad's Eurocentrism.

ASHLEY'S PROCESS

1. As she read various secondary sources, Ashley noticed that most postcolonial criticism focused on the experience of the colonized. Ashley wanted to expand these ideas and to think about the detrimental effects of colonialism on the colonizers. You can see those ideas developing here, as Ashley extends typical critiques of colonialism to discuss the novel's meaning for its European readers.

Conrad, despite his lofty ideal of persuading the European population to terminate their imperialistic activities, was unconsciously a product of the very system he was preaching against. Jameson claims that a "host of distinct generic messages" can be detected in a text, "some of them objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory." As a result, *Heart of Darkness* suffers from Conrad's rejection of imperialism and yet his inability to fully eradicate his own personal racial biases (Jameson 1958). Many of his descriptions of Africa and its population were negative or derogatory, hindering the effect it had on his European audience. Africa is portrayed "as a land of savages who do not have any worthwhile culture or civilization," propagating this stereotype to an audience that fully accepts this perception of the continent and its people (Okafor 20). To this audience, it is Africa itself, in its wild and savage ways, that corrupts the white Europeans and makes them commit the atrocious acts that they did; inevitably they turn Conrad's message on its head, the Europeans only became brutal and selfish once they were within Africa and under the "heavy, mute spell of the wilderness—that seemed to draw [one] to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions" (Conrad 106–07). As a result, Conrad's novella encouraged many of the stereotypes that propagated the imperialist movement within Europe in the 19th century. One particular example is the comparison between Kurtz's Intended and his African lover. Kurtz's Intended represents the chaste, moral, and flawless character that self-defined Europe at the time; "her forehead, smooth and white, remained illumined by the unextinguishable light of belief and love" (Conrad 120). Kurtz's African lover, however, was "savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent; there was something ominous and stately in her" (Conrad 99). Both women symbolize the stereotypes of races in the 19th century; the white race was considered perfect in morals while the "dark" races where considered animalistic and wild, with a sense of danger about them. Conrad was unable to avoid these stereotypes within his writing, flawing his ability to portray the evils of imperialism, as he was unable to free himself from the racism that fueled it.

ASHLEY'S PROCESS

1. In the following section, note how Ashley weaves extratextual primary sources (Conrad's letter to his cousin) and secondary sources (Parry's book) into her argument.

Conrad also remained ambivalent about imperialism itself throughout his life, further detracting from his ability to persuade European society of its evils. He appeared to laud British imperialism, as he once wrote to his cousin about the Boer War, "that they —the Boers—are struggling in good faith for their independence cannot be doubted; but it is also a fact that they have no idea of liberty, which can only be found under the English flag all over the world" (Hawkins 293). This uncertainty about his own views regarding imperialism is found within Marlow as well. He is clearly agitated over Kurtz's conduct in the Congo, but still remains faithful to him and protects his reputation. Marlow lies to Kurtz's Intended about his last words and his actions while in Africa; as a result, his failing to recognise the import of the real lie when he protects Kurtz's reputation in Europe with evasions and by deliberate deception abets the exalted fantasies of the Intended, is the fiction's means of showing up Marlow's capacity for self-delusion and the strength of a commitment to Europeanism which blinds him to the act as one that is a betrayal of his principles. (Parry 36)

Marlow, like Conrad, cannot completely eradicate his Eurocentrism, weakening his argument against the institution of imperialism within Europe in the 19th century.

Joseph Conrad wrote *Heart of Darkness* during the high point in European imperialism of the 19th century. His purpose in writing the novella was to speak out against the system of imperialism that he felt was corrupting both the colonized populations as well as Europe itself. Conrad lived in a period of rampant racism, justified by social Darwinism, which supported the "civilizing"

expeditions to Africa and Asia, and later the brutal exploitation of the native people of those regions. The political and economic benefits that resulted from imperialistic endeavors also contributed to the popular support that surrounded the vicious system. As a result, Conrad's attempt to persuade the European people of the detriments of imperialism was hampered by his unconscious Eurocentrism, as seen in his savage descriptions of Africa and its people in relation to the purity of the Europeans. Despite this setback, however, Conrad's novella did much to enlighten his European audience to the true nature of imperialism and "inspired the reformers who eventually ended [King] Leopold's rule" (Hawkins 293). *Heart of Darkness* is still important one hundred years after it was written to portray the atrocities of 19th century imperialism to a contemporary audience.

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Ultimately, Ashley's paper extends the insights of postcolonial critique, arguing for a more nuanced understanding of the novella's attitudes toward race while, for the most part, agreeing with postcolonial critics like Achebe that the text displays a deeply problematic racism. What's more, Ashley ties these postcolonial ideas to the historical subtext of social Darwinism, which adds a new dimension to her postcolonial analysis.

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3.2.30: Student Writer at Work- Stefanie Jochman's African American Studies Paper in Action

In her Introduction to African American Literature class, Stefanie read Charles Chesnutt's late nineteenth-century novel *The Marrow of Tradition*. Chesnutt was an African American writer born to free black parents during slavery. His writing focused on the aftermath of slavery at the turn of the twentieth century. *The Marrow of Tradition* fictionalized and commented on the 1898 race riot in Wilmington, North Carolina. The story explores the lives of both white and black characters, and Stefanie was interested in the ways these communities are represented in conflict and cooperation around the character of Dodie Cartaret, the infant son of a prominent white family in the novel's fictional town, who must be saved by Dr. Miller, a young black man.

Your Process

1. As we've suggested throughout this text, these process papers will make more sense if you are familiar with the literary work under discussion. For this section, you should (ideally) read Charles Chesnutt's 1901 novel *The Marrow of Tradition*, which is available for free from the University of North Carolina's *Documenting the American South* project. A summary of the novel can be found at http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnuttmarrow/summary.html and the full text at http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnuttmarrow/chesmarrow.html.

Here is Stefanie's proposal. You can see that she's not yet developed a detailed claim about Dodie but is working with complex ideas that will lead her to a rich, debatable, and engaging claim later in her writing process.

Stefanie Jochman

Paper Proposal #2

EN309

Dr. Crowley

October 1, 20–

Paper Proposal #2

1. I am working on Chesnutt's use of Dodie Carteret as a symbolic character because I want to show how Dodie affects major points of the novel, especially those involving racial conflict and its possible resolutions, in order to prove that Dodie represents the opportunity for racial equality in America.
2. Evidence that will help to solve my "problem."

   The Carterets' love for Dodie instigates many instances of racial conflict.

   - Dr. Miller faces Maj. Carteret's bigotry when he comes to Dodie's aid (92).
   - When Dodie almost falls out of the window, Olivia blames Janet. "Twice within a few weeks her child had been in serious danger, and upon each occasion a member of the Miller family had been involved" (111).
   - Major Carteret assembles the Big Three in part to defend the property he believes Dodie should inherit and also to provide his son with a white-ruled Wellington.

   Dodie is, for the Carteret's, a reassurance of their superiority.

3. When Olivia finally gives birth to a child, she feels as though she is no longer threatened by her more fertile half-sister.

   Dodie's fever serves as an equalizer for Carteret and Dr. Miller.

   - "In the agony of his own predicament…for a moment the veil of race prejudice was rent in twain, and he saw things as they were, in their correct proportions and relations…Miller's refusal to go with him was pure, elemental justice… In Dr. Miller's place, he would have done the same thing" (241).
   - "It was his fault!" (242)

   In order to save Dodie or, in the symbolic case, American society, the Carteret's must appeal to the Millers.

4. The line “There’s time enough, but none to spare,” contextually refers to the time allowed to save Dodie’s life. However, this statement also acts as Chesnutt’s message to white Americans that they can help solve the problem of racial violence and inequality if they work with their black brothers and sisters rather than against them; such action must be taken quickly.
5. After examining *The Marrow of Tradition*, I have come to the conclusion that Theodore “Dodie” Carteret serves as a symbol of American society during the Reconstruction in that Dr. Miller’s ability to heal him could initiate a peaceful union of black and white society. Not only is Dodie symbolic, his life also mirrors the life of Wellington itself; his birth coincides with the birth of a white supremacist movement, his fever reflects the heat of the riot, and his undetermined fate represents the malleability of Wellington after the race riot with its biggest supremacist enlisting the aid of a black doctor. By giving a white infant so much significance in the story, Chesnutt is inferring that the race “problem” must be solved by whites as well as blacks.

As Stefanie develops her paper in response to her instructor’s comments, she hones in on precisely what Dodie symbolizes and how he “affects major points of the novel.” Eventually she develops that vague idea into a well-honed introduction with a specific, debatable claim:

At first glance, it may seem that Dodie, an infant, has little to say about racism in American society. However, as a baby, Dodie is symbolic of the potential for a new birth in American racial relations. Once readers pay attention to Dodie’s presence in the novel, they can recognize how his health parallels the tumultuous life of Wellington and thus grasp an understanding of how racism affects a community. Furthermore, by observing Dodie’s relationship to characters like his mulatto cousin or situations like his expectoration of an old rattle, readers reveal Chesnutt’s underlying themes of racial identity and his suggestions for how societal change can be made.

Keeping that claim in mind, let’s look at Stefanie’s entire paper:

Stefanie Jochman

Professor Karlyn Crowley

EN309A

November 5, 20–

Dodie Carteret and *The Marrow of Tradition*: “The Burden of the Nation” On An Infant’s Shoulders

During the time of the American Reconstruction, many whites believed that racial inequality was solely a “Negro problem.” However, in his collection of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*, W. E. B. DuBois argues that “the burden belongs to the nation,” meaning that blacks and whites are both responsible for creating a more equal society. In *The Marrow of Tradition* author Chesnutt echoes DuBois’s message of interracial cooperation with the story arch surrounding Theodore “Dodie” Carteret, the infant son of the novel’s primary white characters, Major Phillip and Mrs. Olivia Carteret. While many critics have focused on the importance of the novel’s adult characters, they have neglected the importance of baby Dodie Carteret. At first glance, it may seem that Dodie, an infant, has little to say about racism in American society. However, as a baby, Dodie is symbolic of the potential for a new birth in American racial relations. Once readers pay attention to Dodie’s presence in the novel, they can recognize how his health parallels the tumultuous life of Wellington and thus grasp an understanding of how racism affects a community. Furthermore, by observing Dodie’s relationship to characters like his mulatto cousin or situations like his expectoration of an old rattle, readers reveal Chesnutt’s underlying themes of racial identity and his suggestions for how societal change can be made. Finally, by accepting the importance of Dodie to *The Marrow of Tradition*, readers also accept their responsibility to promote social change and equality for all races.

Born in the first chapter of the novel and near death in the last, Dodie Carteret lives in tandem with the novel’s plot. Dodie’s birth sets into motion Major Carteret’s plan for white supremacy. That movement causes the fictional Wellington race riot, an event based on an actual riot in Wilmington, North Carolina, that is central to the novel’s plot. Dodie also plays a role in the heated confrontations between the Carterets and the Millers, two couples who represent the white and black races, respectively. Near the conclusion, Dodie develops a fever when Wellington erupts in the flames of racial violence. The events of Dodie’s life mirror those occurring in Wellington, and by constructing such parallels between Dodie’s life and Wellington’s racial climate, Chesnutt magnifies the effects of racism on a community. For example, shortly after Dodie’s

christening, Major Carteret meets with Captain McBane and General Beaumont to establish the white supremacy campaign. Here, Dodie's birth coincides with the birth of changes in the social structure of Wellington. Major Carteret's family lost their fortune in the Civil War; now that he has a son to receive inheritance and power, Carteret desires to create a world in which African American businesses and causes will not threaten Dodie's chances of wealth and happiness (44). Carteret's scathing articles about African Americans in his newspaper create violence and hatred in a once ideal community.

Dodie not only symbolizes the birth of a new era in Wellington history; his arrival also indicates the death of an old one. Dodie is part of a new generation that has never experienced slavery, and thus he would be unfamiliar with plantation life and its demoralizing attitude towards African Americans. How he and other children react towards the attitudes of the past will help to determine the future of Wellington and American society. Charles Chesnutt uses this aspect of Dodie's character to his advantage. He constructs a symbolic event centering on Dodie in which the baby's reaction to his own near-death experience hints at Chesnutt's desires for the new generation. At Dodie's christening, Polly Ochiltree gives her great-nephew an old rattle. Aunt Polly Ochiltree is one of Chesnutt's characterizations of the "Old South,"–the era of pre-Civil War history immortalized in plantation fiction. She upholds the "Old South" mentality of supporting black inferiority and submission. When Dodie is born she declares "I shall leave my house and land to this child! He is a Carteret—he would never sell them to a negro" yet she inadvertently threatens her bequest by giving Dodie the rattle. Dodie begins gasping for air after he chokes on a piece of Aunt Polly's rattle. He is physically strangled by a figurative piece of the "Old South" (123). When Dodie finally spits out the rattle on his own, Chesnutt is making an important statement. In order to breathe, society—like Dodie—must discharge that which is strangling it.

A further parallel between Dodie and Wellington is created when Dodie contracts croup near the end of the novel. Throughout *The Marrow of Tradition*, Dodie suffers from colds and other common childhood infections; he recuperates from each and continues growing and developing. Similarly, life in Wellington remains relatively quiet as the supremacist movement grows and develops. Then, when Carteret's campaign gets out of hand and the riot ensues, life in town is disrupted. At the same time Dodie, Carteret's son, contracts the croup. The croup is an inflammation of the bronchi that involves congestion, mucus, and a high fever. Such symptoms are comparative to the intense heat and congested streets of the riot. During the riot, fire silences screams; the streets run red with the blood of blacks and whites; an angry mob tramples citizens; and, when the riot reaches fever-pitch, Dr. Miller's hospital is burned to the ground.

When Dr. Miller encounters the riot, he describes its emotional heat as one in which "friendship, religion, humanity, reason, all shrivel up like dry leaves in a raging furnace" (217). Such a furnace could only reside in Hell, to which Wellington's riotous state bears similarities. In her haste to escape the danger of the hellish riot, Dodie's nurse leaves him near the draught of an open window, so he catches cold and develops the croup (235). Dodie's croup and Wellington's riot share the same root cause: Major Carteret's white supremacist movement, which brought Hell to earth. Chesnutt's narrator observes how even Carteret is surprised by the damage his movement has done. "'Is it serious?'…He had always thought of the croup as a childish ailment, that yielded readily to proper treatment; but the child's evident distress impressed him with sudden fear" (236). The major's amazement, while directed toward his son's illness, also infers that Carteret realizes he can no longer control the riot and fears that he will suffer for his part in it. Indeed, Dodie "burns" with fever over the flames of his father's earthly Hell. Since Dodie is Chesnutt's symbol for future generations of white Americans, his fever warns white readers that, though African Americans are the ones attacked during the Wellington riot, the white race will pay for their sins if racial violence continues.

Chesnutt's decision to construct parallels between Wellington and Dodie, the white child of upper-class parents, is important to the novel's overall message of interracial cooperation. It would be easy for readers to identify the effects of racism and racial oppression upon an African American child; that child is on the receiving end of the oppression. When Chesnutt focuses on a white child amidst an environment of racial oppression and inequality, however, readers recognize the negative effects of supremacy on the oppressors. Furthermore, readers can observe how whites' prejudice towards blacks endangers them and their children. Major Carteret expects Dodie to live a life of ease, free from "Negro domination," because he, as Dr. Price informs Dr. Miller, "has certain principles…certain inflexible rules of conduct by which he regulates his life. One of these…forbids the recognition of the Negro as a social equal" (88). However, Carteret's efforts to protect Dodie by upholding the "purity and prestige of [his] race" are worthless (89). By showcasing Dodie's swallowing of the rattle, his near-tumble from the window, and his deathly bout with croup, Chesnutt proves the futility of Major Carteret's white supremacist

movement. Carteret establishes the campaign in an effort to protect his son and any assets his son would inherit; yet that campaign does nothing to shield his progeny from the clutches of disease or the violence of a town riot.

Continuing with his examination of the effects of white supremacy Chesnutt highlights the invisibility of African Americans as well as their undetermined future by naming the white child, Dodie, while leaving the black child, the Millers' son, to die nameless and unknown to readers. Early in the novel, Chesnutt's narrator makes it a point to describe in detail the naming of Dodie Carteret, saying, "they named the Carteret baby Theodore Felix…Having thus given the child two beautiful names, replete with religious and sentimental significance, they called him—'Dodie'" (50). The sarcastic tone with which Dodie's nickname is introduced suggests not only are the white traditions of naming and nicknaming silly and self-degrading but also that Dodie is, from birth, a spoiled child. However, it is when Dodie is being doted upon—whether being given a new toy, held near the window to see a mockingbird, or cared for by a nanny—that his well-being is threatened. In this way, Chesnutt suggests that a coddled society has the potential to die young.

In contrast to his spoiled cousin, the Millers' son is never given a name by the narrator. He is rarely mentioned other than when he is seen traveling with his mother, and his life has little significance to the narrative until he dies. Even then, he and his mother are lumped among the dead bodies in the streets after the riot. They are nameless, faceless, and lost until Dr. Miller finds them near a lamppost (227). The mob's cruelty towards African American women and children speaks to the dehumanizing nature of racism and its devastating consequences. Furthermore, the namelessness of the Millers' son in comparison to the publicized life of Dodie subtly hints at the invisibility most African Americans suffered during the Reconstruction Era. Here, the neglected society also dies young. By juxtaposing the two children, Chesnutt implies that a happy medium must be met in which both children—and both races—are given equal attention in order for them to survive.

The comparison and contrast of Dodie and his African American cousin can be extended into the relationship between their parents, the Carterets and the Millers. While Dodie's parallel to Wellington is important to the message of *The Marrow of Tradition*, Dodie serves the novel best as the thread which sews together the Millers' and the Carterets' fates. Initially, Dodie is a source of pride and achievement for the Carterets in their desire to be superior to the Millers. At the beginning of the novel Dodie is as much a welcomed miracle as he is a status symbol, because his birth reestablishes Major Carteret's position as a dominant male in Wellington. Indeed, Major Carteret is able to gain General Beaumont and Captain McBane's attention after the birth of his son, because, as Beaumont remarks, "now that you have a son, major…you'll be all the more interested in doing something to make this town fit to live in" (63). During the Reconstruction Era, a child was a symbol of biological wealth: one's ability to "go forth and multiply." A childless man was left without an heir to his fortune or his family heritage, leaving him in a weakened state compared to fellow businessmen with children to control their future assets. As Chesnutt's narrator informs readers, "One cloud had marred the otherwise perfect serenity of [the Carteret's] happiness. Olivia was childless. To have children to perpetuate the name of which he was so proud, to write it still higher on the roll of honor had been [Major Carteret's] dearest hope" (44–45). To make matters worse in Major Carteret's mind, the African American Miller family has already been blessed with a son and is thus more biologically wealthy than he; a man whom Carteret refuses to acknowledge as a social equal has a greater chance of being remembered and accumulating a fortune. Dodie's birth assures Major Carteret that his name—the family's legacy and position in Wellington society—will not be lost to history. Instead, Dodie will be the heir "to take a place in the world commensurate with the dignity of his ancestors" (62). Carteret is no longer threatened with social inequality amongst his peers. If his plan for white supremacy succeeds, his family will have as much of a chance to succeed as those of the other old "names" and their progeny.

While Dodie pits Major Carteret against Dr. Miller, he is also the answer to Olivia's desires and the cure for her jealousy towards her half-sister, Janet Miller. As the Carteret family's servant Mammy Jane points out "de wust of all, w'iles Mis' 'Livy ain' had no child'en befo', dis yer sister er her'n is got a fine-lookin little yaller boy, w'at favors de fam'ly, so dat ef Mis' 'Livy 'd see de chile anywhere, it 'd mos' break her heart fer ter think 'bout her not havin' no child'en herse'f" (49). Though she does not admit it verbally, Olivia is extremely jealous of Janet's fertility. Since, in her mind, she is superior to Janet and more entitled to her family's heritage–including its physical likeness—Olivia considers Janet's baby to be a trump card: a wealth that Janet, as Olivia's half-sister and the product of a socially taboo relationship, should not receive before Olivia. Aunt Polly poisons Olivia's already poor view of Janet's mother Julia by telling the story of Julia and Mr. Merkel's secret marriage. Thus, Olivia fears that "her father had…preferred another to her" (202). Since she, like her husband, associates love and legacy with wealth she goes to desperate lengths to protect Dodie's inheritance, the majority of her

father's estate. While the size of her family is now equal to Janet's, the Merkel inheritance will ensure Olivia's son's social superiority to any of Janet's children.

At first, Dodie's life fuels his parents' greed and prejudice as they struggle to remain superior to the Millers. In the novel's conclusion, however, Dodie is made to be the olive branch of atonement—a reparation of injustice—and peace for both the families and their races. The atonement for the riot begins when Dodie falls ill with the croup and Carteret reluctantly runs to Miller, a man whose aid he previously refused on the basis of color, for help. Upon arriving, Carteret observes the angry doctor gesturing toward the body of his son, saying "'dead, his little life snuffed out like a candle, because you and a handful of your friends thought you must override the laws and run this town at any cost…as you have sown so may you reap!" Miller finally speaks for his race and demands that Carteret atone for the deaths he caused by watching Dodie die. Recognizing in Miller the same pain he is feeling for Dodie, Carteret admits "Miller's refusal to go with him was pure, elemental justice…In Dr. Miller's place he would have done the same thing." In fact, the connection is so powerful, that Carteret experiences an "involuntary admiration" for Dr. Miller, and, admitting he was wrong for having turned away Miller's services, takes the blame for his child's impending death (241). At this moment, Carteret is changed. By recognizing the pride and love both he and Miller have for their sons, he can no longer fully separate himself from African Americans or believe "The Negroes have themselves to blame…I wash my hands of them" (233). He recognizes his part in the riot, and in shouldering that burden, emphasizes W. E. B. DuBois's claim that "the hands of none of us are clean" (*The Souls of Black Folk* 72).

When Olivia makes her appeal to the Millers to spare Dodie's life, she also acknowledges the dirt on her hands while empowering her half-sister Janet. Chesnutt's narrator acknowledges the way Dodie's croup has, to paraphrase Polly Ochiltree, turned the world upside-down: "Death, the great leveler…wrought a marvelous transformation on the bearing of the two women. The sad-eyed Janet towered erect, with menacing aspect, like an avenging goddess. The other, whose pride had been her life, stood in the attitude of a trembling suppliant" (125, 244). Olivia, who avoided confronting her half-sister out of fear, pride, loathing, and greed, must finally confront the woman her family wronged in order to save Dodie. Olivia is even willing to reveal her deepest secret; Janet is her legal sister. While Janet thought that being considered a Merkel was what she had always desired, when she hears Olivia's proclamation, she develops another of her own: "I throw back your father's name…but that you may know that a woman may be foully wronged, and yet may have a heart to feel, even for one who injured her, you may have your child's life" (246). As if speaking for an entire race thought to be in want or desire of the life of a white citizen, Janet rejects name, estate, reputation, and relation, but, in doing so, affirms her equality with Olivia as a human being, mother, and citizen of Wellington. Furthermore, both Janet and her husband's reactions to the Carterets' pleas suggest that, in times of racial conflict, African Americans must be willing to take a stand, but they must also be willing to work with whites—rather than against them—to obtain equality

The Carterets level themselves with the Millers and, in doing so, take a step toward accepting racial equality, but their responsibility to society is far from over. In *The Marrow of Tradition*, Dodie Carteret and the Millers' son represent Wellington's future generations, but at the novel's conclusion Dodie is suffering and his cousin is dead. Thus, the new generation is forcing the old one to reckon with its racial division. Like DuBois's theory concerning racial equality, Dodie's only chance at survival depends on the cooperation of both races, and, as his attending physician Dr. Evans emphasizes, "There's time enough, but none to spare" (246). However, even if Dodie survives, the absence of his cousin forces him, previously the representative for the new white generation, to represent all races, and thus work towards a society of equals. Here, at the last page of the novel, Dodie ceases to be an ailing white child and becomes a symbol for America's ailing society. Chesnutt wrote *The Marrow of Tradition* in order to bring attention to the societal consequences of race riots and oppression. Dr. Evans' last remark is intended to spur readers into action as much as it hastens Dr. Miller. Once readers recognize Dodie's importance to Charles Chesnutt's *The Marrow of Tradition* as a symbol of Wellington, racial relations, and the future of American life, they can understand the urgency of "there's time enough but none to spare" and rush to shoulder W. E. B. DuBois' burden of the nation.

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3.2.31: Student Writer at Work- Hannah Schmitt's Ethnic Studies Paper in Action

Now we'll look at a paper drawing on many of the same themes as Ashley's and Stefanie's paper but discussing a modern American novel about the Native American experience. In her modern American literature survey, Hannah read the novel *Tracks* by Native American writer Louis Erdrich.Louis Erdrich, *Tracks* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004). Hannah is particularly interested in the character Pauline, who attempts to erase her Native American identity and assimilate into white culture, particularly through her devotion to the Catholic religion. Hannah's paper investigates many topics common to postcolonial and racial criticism, particularly the idea of mimicry. Hannah skillfully explicates the complex motives behind Pauline's mimicry in the novel. Hannah demonstrates sympathy for Pauline while explaining the damaging social forces that led her to think as she does about her native culture.

Your Process

1. As we've suggested throughout this text, these process papers will make more sense if you are familiar with the literary work under discussion. In most sections, we've provided links to public, electronic editions of the texts under discussion. The following paper, however, discusses a modern work that is still under copyright, Louise Erdrich's novel *Tracks*. The interpretive moves in the paper should make sense whether you've read the novel or not, but we highly recommend that you buy and read the novel to accompany your work with the sample paper. You can buy *Tracks* at Amazon (www.amazon.com/gp/product/006...ryacorsonlhom-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=0060972459).
2. As you read Hannah's paper, keep Ashley's *Heart of Darkness* paper in mind. Jot down your ideas about how the two compare. Keep in mind that while *Heart of Darkness* was written by an author from the imperial culture, *Tracks* was written by a minority writer. How does this difference shape the two arguments written about the works? Can you spot common concerns between the two papers? Where do they diverge?

Hannah Schmitt

Professor John Neary

ENGL 236: U.S. Literature II

3 April 20–

"Kill the Indian … and Save the Man"

Pauline Puyat and the Fragmenting Force of the U.S. Government in Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*

In 1892, Capt. Richard H. Pratt delivered a paper, "The Advantage of Mingling Indians with Whites" at the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction. In this speech, Pratt infamously proposed to "Kill the Indian … and save the man" (Pratt 261). Pratt's argument would become the most notorious summary of the mission of government-sanctioned Indian boarding schools, which attempted to forcibly assimilate Native American children into white culture. From the 19th into the early 20th century, the United States actively sought to destroy Native cultures through forced assimilation and, as Pratt requoted in his speech, believed "that the only good Indian was a dead one" (260).

Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* unfolds in the 1910s, in the midst of Pratt's boarding school culture. The Ojibwe characters in *Tracks* must respond to the United States' threat to their culture and attempt to sort out their own cultural identities in the midst of profound racial tension. The two narrators of the text, Nanapush and Pauline, deal with the intense racism they encounter in different ways. Nanapush, the fairly stable, reliable narrator, rejects white culture and attempts to preserve Ojibwe culture despite social pressures to abandon it. Pauline takes a different approach. Unlike Nanapush's voice, Pauline's narrative structure is erratic, full of wild assumptions and bizarre occurrences. Pauline is at times cruel, manipulative, guilty, masochistic, morose, cunning, illogical, and, above all, highly religious. In light of Pauline's many failings, readers may be tempted to view Pauline as the unmitigated villain of the story, and dismiss her story as irrelevant. Such a dismissive reading of Pauline overlooks the novel's historical context, particularly the pervasiveness of discrimination against Native Americans and the arid cultural climate created by the United States' boarding school programs. If audiences read Pauline without considering these crucial factors, Pauline's character loses its essential historical commentary. While Pauline's flaws are indeed substantial, they are not entirely her fault. Unlike Nanapush, who firmly believes in the value of his Ojibwe roots and rejects the racism of encroaching white culture, Pauline listens to the United

States government's stance on Native Americans. She comes to believe that in order to be accepted by the surrounding white society she must indeed kill her inner Indian to save her white identity. Over the course of *Tracks*, then, Pauline attempts to erase her Ojibwe identity through her extreme, conservative Catholicism. Herein lies the significance of Pauline's character. As her quest to assimilate into white society and therefore ease her guilt over her identity continues, Pauline—and, through Pauline, her audience—discovers that she cannot assimilate the way the United States government wants her to. Pauline's connection to her Ojibwe heritage runs so deep that when she attempts to "kill" it she inadvertently fragments her own existence and plunges into a frantic insanity. Through Pauline's experiences, readers learn that the United States' attempt to "kill the Indian … and save the man" is not only unethical, but impossible.

Pauline's guilt over her racial identity causes her to distance herself from her culture by rejecting its values, specifically reproduction. Even before Pauline enters the convent, she attempts to reject reproduction in favor of death, recognizing that if she procreates, she will continue her Ojibwe line. Unlike Fleur, who celebrates reproduction, Pauline seeks out death and shows no interest in perpetuating her culture. While Fleur and Nanapush embrace their culture and see it as something desirable which ought to be preserved, Pauline only sees her guilt, and has absorbed the criticisms against her society. In Pauline's eyes, her heritage should not be preserved. Whenever Pauline finds herself in a position which traditionally places her in control of preserving life (and, therefore, culture), Pauline attempts to deny or subvert her role. Pauline becomes a midwife for her community, but transforms this life-giving role so she becomes a symbol of death. When Pauline becomes pregnant, she sees her pregnancy as the continuation of an identity from which she distances herself. The other Ojibwe characters in the text celebrate new children as a hope for life in their rapidly shrinking community: they pamper Lulu and celebrate Fleur's pregnancies despite their misgivings about Fleur herself. To Pauline, however, bearing children solidifies her bond to a community she feels ashamed of, and therefore attempts to abort her pregnancy. When Pauline feels Marie move later in her pregnancy, Pauline describes how "the fists of hate took me so hard that I wept" (133). At Marie's birth, Pauline frantically attempts to stop her labor, afraid that if she gave birth she "would be lonelier … an outcast … a human being who could be touched by no other human" (135). Pauline rejects Marie because she continues a cultural identity. As a mother, Pauline would always be tied to her Ojibwe roots because she has helped perpetuate their society.

In order to stem her association with reproduction—and with it, her Ojibwe heritage—Pauline rejects not only procreation but also her own sexuality. After she banishes her sexuality, Pauline attempts to fill the sexual void she has created with voyeurism and manipulation, alternatives which never fully satisfy her repressed sexual longings. Pauline describes her own sexual encounters with Napoleon as unfulfilling, and rejects her own sexual tensions. Instead, Pauline contents herself with watching other couples have sex and manipulating the sexuality of those around her. When Pauline finds herself drawn to Eli, she responds by manipulating him and Sophia (another character Pauline oversexualizes) into having sex. Pauline takes the sexual expression which her culture values and attempts to turn it into something negative, by stigmatizing Sophie and threatening the relationship between Fleur and Eli. Pauline wants to punish the other characters in the novel for their sexual urges.

At the same time, though, Pauline seems to envy other characters' freedom of sexual expression, and attempts to achieve her own sexual satisfaction by living vicariously through them. Even as she exploits Sophie and Eli, "pitiless" and declares that "they were not allowed to stop" (84), Pauline "shrank backwards into their pleasure" (83). When Pauline describes how "Sophie shuddered [and] her eyes rolled to the whites," she also presents readers with the image of Sophie's "skirt floating like a flower" (83). Pauline distorts the sex Eli and Sophie have, but she almost subconsciously slips traditionally beautiful metaphors into her otherwise coarse descriptions. Similarly, when Eli and Fleur make up in the winter, Pauline describes how the ice fishers outside their cabin celebrated their relationship and drew hope from Fleur and Eli (130). After Pauline fails to prevent Fleur's miscarriage, her description of the end of Fleur's pregnancy shows her ambivalence towards child-rearing. Though Pauline rejects sexual activity of her own, she nonetheless attempts to relieve her repressed sexuality, and at times seems envious of the other characters.

By becoming a nun, then, Pauline rejects cultural pressure to reproduce, but at the cost of her already-tortured sexuality. She enters into a way of life which discourages its followers from expressing sexual energy. By joining a community which forbids sexual congress, Pauline avoids confronting her heritage. Pauline can refuse to perpetuate her heritage without justifying her actions, because the rule of her religious order expressly forbids sexual activity. Rather than creating her desire to refrain from sexual relationships, Pauline's decision to join a religious order justifies for her actions.

Besides allowing her an outlet with which to express her own sexual guilt, Pauline's commitment to a religious order also helps her erase her guilt over her existence. Unlike Nanapush and Fleur, Pauline is genuinely ashamed of her Ojibwe identity. By becoming a

nun, Pauline seeks to create anonymity in order for her to dispel her guilt about her heritage, and hopes to craft a new identity for herself where others would define her according to her lifestyle rather than her race. By joining a community where the members share a common dress, abide by common rules, and worship in a common way, Pauline seeks anonymity and, with it, a reprieve from her own self-loathing. Furthermore, the comparative isolation of a religious community provides Pauline with a buffer between herself and the highly racialized world outside the convent. She finds, however, that not even religious life erases her identity enough to make her forget her own racialized existence. Though Nanapush, Margaret, and Fleur treat Pauline "as they would a white" (145), the whites with whom Pauline longs to belong refuse to accept Pauline on the basis of her religious commitment, and they continue to evaluate Pauline in terms of her race. Towards the end of the text, Pauline's convent declares that it will not accept any more Native Americans and, in doing so, clearly reaffirms the racial separation between Pauline and the white nuns at her convent (138). Pauline realizes that actually becoming white is the only way she can release herself from the shame she feels about her own identity. Catholicism, then, offers Pauline the chance to change her own genealogy.

Historically, Catholicism has revered mysticism as a plausible and, for certain people, a natural experience. Rather than reconciling herself with her guilt by learning to appreciate her native culture, Pauline tries to change her race. Pauline cannot erase her own racial identity, but, because of Catholicism's acceptance of mysticism, she is able to reject it by having Jesus declare her "not one speck of Indian but wholly white" (137). Through her conversations with Jesus (real or imagined), Pauline attempts to actually change her own race by having Christ create a new one. Unfortunately for Pauline, characters cannot typically change their race at will, and Pauline gradually loses touch with the world around her. As Pauline's struggle to create a white identity for herself intensifies, she finds herself edging towards insanity, and begins communing with statues, insisting on her own magical capabilities, and conversing with visions. Catholicism, though, allows Pauline to have these experiences and even provides theological justification for her actions. In the eyes of mystical Catholicism, Pauline's religious extremism becomes not only possible but perhaps even encouraged. Even though Pauline's extremism psychologically damages her, Catholicism encourages her to continue delving into her mystical experiences. Through her mystical experiences, Pauline is able to conform to the dictates of her society and believes she can create a new, white identity.

Catholicism also allows Pauline to justify her masochism and, in doing so, lends itself to Pauline's self-destruction. Just as her insanity can be understood through the lens of Catholicism as mysticism, Pauline's self-inflicted suffering can be seen as religious asceticism. Like mysticism, asceticism has historically held a prominent place in Catholic history—many saints (particularly from the Middle Ages) practiced "mortification of the flesh." Just as Pauline's desire to lose her identity and her visions are encouraged under some forms of Catholicism, Pauline's masochism gains religious significance when she filters it through a religious lens. Pauline's willingness to hurt herself reaches extremes in the novel, and she engages in clearly self-destructive behavior in an attempt to alleviate her guilt. Over the course of the text, Pauline scrubs her hands raw, takes to wearing potato sack drawers, and starves herself. Pauline regulates her most basic bodily functions—such as urination—in order to alleviate her guilty conscience. Though even the Mother Superior of her convent discourages her practices, the religious heritage of Catholicism makes Pauline's practices more acceptable, and she is seen as overly devout rather than as psychologically unwell. Pauline releases her guilt by hurting herself while lessening her stigma.

However, Pauline also distorts the message of Catholicism. As Pauline attempts to scour her Ojibwe heritage from her life, she alters the traditional images of Catholicism to support her outlandish attempts to achieve racial superiority. As she delves deeper into Catholicism, she recognizes the hypocrisy of the racism she encounters and manipulates traditional Catholic prayers and images to express how angry and ostracized she feels. Pauline cannibalizes her religion in a desperate bid to make Catholicism once again relate to her. When she and Fleur encounter Margaret after Fleur's miscarriage, Pauline imagines Margaret scolding her: "she jabbered at me, finding the blood, the cold ashes, how it was my fault, my fault, and my most grievous fault" (163). Pauline takes the *mea culpa* line from the Confiteor, a part of the traditional Catholic Mass, and changes it from a means of expressing her guilt to releasing herself from it. By invoking these words as Margaret accuses her instead of recording the actual charge Margaret brings against her, Pauline paradoxically attempts to step-side her guilt by drawing on overtly religious language to establish her own spiritual superiority. Margaret threatens Pauline because Margaret, like Nanapush, becomes a whole, healthy individual by embracing her culture. She reminds Pauline that Pauline psychologically unstable. To counteract her misgivings about herself, Pauline refuses to assign weight to Margaret's accusations. Even the verbs Pauline uses seem to doubt the legitimacy of Margaret's concerns: she depicts Margaret as "jabbering" at her instead of scolding her. The religious imagery Pauline uses creates a moral high ground—just as becoming a nun creates distance between Pauline and the other Ojibwe characters, Pauline relies on her religious knowledge to establish superiority over Margaret.

Pauline's guilt, though, also makes her angry at the religion to which she belongs, and her prayers gradually develop a sardonic edge as she realizes she cannot become whole. As Fleur desperately attempts to save her child, Pauline prays to the "God who bound my wrists, who tripped me, [the] Lord and Author of all Lies" (158). Later on, as she lies ill at the convent, she prays, "Dark from dark … True God from True" (195). In both these instances, Pauline takes traditional religious imagery and reverses it, applying typically negative imagery to the Catholic God. In the first instance, God takes on a traditional title for Satan and becomes the "Author of all Lies." The Catholic God has failed to assuage Pauline's guilt and has created a world in which she cannot achieve the unracialized (read: white) existence she longs for. Pauline has attempted to erase her heritage with her faith, and realizes that even her religious vocation cannot free her from the racism of the society around her. The second prayer, which she adapts from the Nicene Creed, changes the Creed's "light from light" to "dark from dark," thereby reversing God's origin story. The God Pauline trusted in to provide her with equality betrays her, and she realizes that not even her deity seems able to forget her race. Pauline's religious commitment changes then, and she declares that "Christ was weak" (192). Her comparatively devout tone at the beginning of her religious quest gives way to her distrust in the promises of her religion, and she eventually rejects the religious belief in the superiority of Christ entirely.

Pauline, though, is not the only character to draw from her spirituality in order to deal with her racial identity. Nanapush recognizes Pauline's struggle because he has worked through similar issues. He, however, ultimately accepted his Ojibwe heritage, and can therefore develop into a healthy, fulfilled adult. As an older man, Nanapush has already dealt with his own misgivings about his identity, and has developed his own philosophy for dealing with encroaching white society. At the beginning of the novel, Nanapush recounts witnessing the deaths of his relatives and friends. By this time, he is familiar with white society—in his youth, he served as a guide for buffalo hunters (139). When the novel begins, then, Nanapush is acutely aware of the racism of surrounding white society. Unlike Pauline, though, Nanapush has decided that the best way to confront discrimination is not to assimilate and attempt to erase his cultural heritage but rather to hold true to his cultural heritage and reject the pressures of white society. Nanapush does not ignore racism; rather, he acknowledges white society and then manipulates it to his advantage. Like a traditional trickster, Nanapush slyly waits until he has an opportunity to exploit the system which oppresses him, then strikes. Because of his own background Nanapush recognizes Pauline's struggle to deal with her guilt and, in his own trickster way, attempts to convince her that she cannot find fulfillment by rejecting bits of herself. Nanapush is observant, and takes it upon himself to point out Pauline's actions to others. When Pauline begins wearing her shoes on the wrong feet, Nanapush declares "God is turning that woman into a duck," and draws everyone's attention to Pauline's feet (146). When Pauline takes to wearing potato sack drawers and bars herself from urinating during the day, Nanapush cleverly pokes fun at her practices by plying her with liquids and then telling a story about water (149). By constantly drawing attention to Pauline's practices, Nanapush turns her devotional practices into a joke, and attempts to show Pauline how ridiculous her actions are. However, Pauline cannot or will not accept the alternative Nanapush offers to her own guilt, because she is unwilling or unable to recognize the goodness of her own culture.

Though, Pauline wants to "kill the Indian … and save the man," she discovers that this approach to dealing with her identity not only fails to assuage her guilt but also drives her insane. Over the course of *Tracks*, readers watch Pauline unsuccessfully try to separate herself from her Ojibwe heritage. As Pauline slips into insanity, readers realize that Pauline cannot develop into a healthy individual without first accepting herself.

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3.2.32: Student Sample Student Paper- Alyce Hockers's "The Slavery Metaphor of Moby-Dick"

This final sample paper by Alyce examines the practice of whaling in Herman Melville's novel *Moby-Dick* as a metaphor for and critique of African American slavery in the mid-nineteenth century.Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale* (1952; University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, 1993), http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/Mel2Mob.html. The links that Alyce points out are perhaps less obvious than in other works about slavery, but the surprise of her argument is partly what makes it so successful. Many critics have discussed Melville's construction of race in *Moby-Dick*, and Alyce draws on those critical voices to make her case. By linking ideas of race in the novel with ideas about the whaling industry, however, Alyce connects the central activity of the novel (hunting for whales) to a central social and political issue of the day, slavery.

Your Process

1. As we've suggested throughout this text, these process papers will make more sense if you are familiar with the literary work under discussion. For this section, you should (ideally) read Herman Melville's 1852 novel, *Moby-Dick*. *Moby-Dick* is a long novel, however. For an initial reading, you might instead consider Robert A. diCurcio's "Nantucket's Tried-Out *Moby-Dick*," which provides a summary of the novel along with a selection of "core chapters" that will help you understand the broad strokes of the work. Before you get started, read diCurcio's "Note to the First Time Reader" (http://www.melville.org/diCurcio/bib.htm).Robert A. diCurcio, ed., *Nantucket's Tried-Out* Moby-Dick*: Robert A. diCurcio's Companion Reader to Melville's Masterpiece* (Nantucket, MA: Aeternium, 1996), http://www.melville.org/diCurcio/bib.htm.
2. Again, keep the previous three papers in mind as you read this final peer paper. What points of convergence and divergence do you see among the four?

Alyce Hockers

Professor Ryan Cordell

English 235: U.S. Literature 1

April 14, 2011

"The Slavery Metaphor of *Moby-Dick*"

"Who aint a slave? Tell me that … [H]owever the old sea-captains may order me about—however they may thump and punch me about, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it is all right; that everybody else is one way or other served in much the same way either in a physical or metaphysical point of view" (Melville 23–24). The issue of slavery, although not discussed explicitly in Herman Melville's Moby-Dick, is criticized subtly in a parallel of the industries of whaling and slavery. During the time that *Moby-Dick* was written, whaling and slavery were two of the biggest sources of economy in America, and it is therefore not surprising that the two had some striking commonalities. When readers of *Moby-Dick* in the mid-19th century picked up the novel, they were expecting a high-seas adventure tale about whaling. Instead they were subtly handed an interpretation of slavery, which was an incredibly debated topic, thanks in part to the recent publishing of the Fugitive Slave Laws, which was at the forefront of American minds during the period of the publishing of the novel. It is important for the modern reader to understand the subtle metaphor comparing slavery and whaling; not only does it help us grasp the history of both institutions, but it also helps us gain insight into the fact that Melville could very well have been against white supremacy. It was difficult to discuss views on the institution of slavery at the time period, so Melville may have been using his novel as a subtle message into his insights on the issues of the industry. Throughout the entirety of Melville's novel, the business of whaling is used as an extended metaphor of slavery and the pursuit, capture, and killing of runaway slaves to help readers understand the brutal and unethical nature of the institution of slavery.

The chasing of whales through the vast oceans is analogous to the chase of runaway slaves after they had escaped from their masters. The chase was about dehumanizing the hunted group; in this case: the whales or the slaves. Although the whale is already non-human, men treated them like they were an object rather than a life form. Both whales and slaves were not only hunted mercilessly, but also all for profit. Whaling was an incredibly profitable enterprise if you survived the journey to bring home the

spoils of the hunt. The hunting of slaves, albeit much less dangerous, was also profitable. Wealthy landowners gave extremely large sums of money (at least for the time period) in return for the capture and return of their runaways. Landowners needed their slaves, just as America needed sperm oil, and both enterprises would reward money to whomever could supply them with their means to their desired end. When looking for runaway slaves, wanted posters often gave descriptions of the runaways that included various scars and marks that were on the bodies as a means of identification. Fred Bernard comments that "[i]mportant to the capture of runaways were their various marks, some natural, others inflicted" (396). Slaves were scarred from many things, including various beatings by their masters. One advertisement said this in the description of a runaway slave: "has had the upper lid of his right eye torn, and a scar on his forehead" (Advertisement). The same can be said for whales. Many of the animals escaped after having been marked by whalers, but not entirely captured. "Not a few are captured having the deep scars of these encounters,—furrowed heads, broken teeth, scolloped fins; and in some instances, wrenched and dislocated mouths" (Melville 349). This effectively gave them scars that could be used to identify them, most notably seen when the book is discussing Moby Dick. Captain Ahab repeatedly remembers every scar on the white whale, including his deformed jaw, and uses those to identify the whale to other men during his search.

There are also strong parallels with whaling and slavery in direct regard to color. Other than Moby-Dick himself, who is part white (the implications of which will be discussed in the subsequent paragraph), most whales are entirely black. The narrator of Moby-Dick comments, "blackness was the rule amongst almost all whales" (Melville 139). And Captain Ahab is considered, by most interpreters, to be white, as were most whaling captains of the time. This vision of whites (whaling captains) chasing blacks (whales) immediately conjures up illusions of slavery. With such an obvious parallel, Melville's brashness with his views of slavery, during a time period in which the institution was highly debated, is quite surprising.

There is an obvious and glaring issue with the story of whaling as an extended metaphor for chasing slaves. Throughout this article, we have talked about whites chasing blacks. But in *Moby-Dick*, isn't the Pequod a black ship and Moby Dick, notably, a white whale? Why is this all turned around? Fred Bernard thinks that it is because Moby Dick serves to represent a black trying to pass as a white, which makes him all the more pursued because of it (392). During the time, whites tried to keep blacks as completely separate from them as possible. Mulattos were frowned upon and tortured even though they were part white. Moby Dick, although often portrayed as white, is actually only partly white. His hump is albino while the rest of his body is black, like the rest of the members of his species. I think, at the very least, that the discrepancy in the metaphor only serves as irony and makes the metaphor even more profound. Everything is the same between whaling and the chasing of slaves. The chase, the torture, the killing, and the aftermath all have strong parallels in both industries. The only difference is that the roles have been reversed. What if it were the blacks (the black ship) chasing the whites (the white whale)? The irony gives more food for thought and attacks the ethics of the institution of slavery. I think that the switching of the colors of the chaser and chasee in *Moby-Dick*, rather than being a reason against the story as a metaphor, actually supports it. The metaphor itself makes you think about slavery, but the switching of the roles makes you evaluate the ethics of it.

Both the whales portrayed in *Moby-Dick* and the slaves of America fought vehemently against whaling and slavery, respectively, although the fight was unfair and seemingly futile. The whales that the *Pequod* would harpoon would drag the boats across the ocean for hours before giving up to capture. In the chapter "Stubb Kills a Whale," the narrator comments that "whole Atlantics and Pacifics seemed passed as they shot on their way, till at length the whale somewhat slackened his flight" (Melville 256). And the vast amount of slaves that did run away from their masters is a testament to their "resistance to servitude." Graham Russel comments of the implications of the wanted poster advertising runaway slaves: "First and foremost, runaway notices are evidence of slave resistance" (Russell xiii-xiv). There were steadfast rules regarding slavery and regarding whaling. The fast-fish, loose-fish rules were similar to the fugitive slave laws. If someone else caught a whale (or slave) that already belonged to someone else, they couldn't claim it for their own (Ellickson 89). But, if no one had laid claim to that particular whale yet, it was fair game for anyone. This is similar to how blacks were plucked from Africa and used as slaves when they hadn't been purchased yet. After a slave had already been purchased, though, another white man could not take the slave as his own. And even if the slave ran away, other whites were obligated to return them to their original master. "The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 mandated that states to which escaped slaves fled were obligated to return them to their masters upon their discovery and subjected persons who helped runaway slaves to criminal sanctions" ("Fugitive Slave Act"). Examples abound of court cases where slaves were awarded back to their masters after running away. Although whaling cases were usually settled out of court, the ideas were the same. An ironic intersection of the two industries occurred in April of 1851. Escaped slave Thomas Sims was brought to court and awarded back to

his master. The judge that handed down the decision just so happened to be Melville's father-in-law (Pisano 12–13). The relation between Melville and slavery at the time gives weight to the novel's interpretation as an epic metaphor.

Slaves and whales were also only known superficially to their chasers during the time period. At the time, whites treated blacks as if they were a different species. They could describe them physically, but they didn't know the true character of the race. The same can be said for the whaler's knowledge of whales. Ishmael goes into great detail describing how whales cannot be accurately described because they can't be taken out of their element without ruining what they really are. "The living whale, in his full majesty and significance, is only to be seen at sea in unfathomable waters; and afloat the vast bulk of him is out of sight … and out of that element it is a thing eternally impossible for mortal man to hoist him bodily into the air, so as to preserve all his mighty swells and undulations" (Melville 239). Africans taken out of Africa and turned into slaves weren't the same beings as they were in their home country. They were out of their element and they had been changed, which is analogous to whales who are removed from their watery homes. Without water to hold them up, they are not the same and cannot be accurately understood or depicted. On the same note of the concept of foreign species, there was also a language barrier in both industries. There is the obvious language barrier between whales and humans, but blacks also spoke their own language, while it may still have been a version of English. We can see this notably when the cook, Fleece, gives his sermon to the whales using the slave dialogue of the time, which is in stark contrast to the tongue of the white man: "Cussed fellow-critters! Kick up de damndest row as ever you can; fill your dam bellies 'till dey bust—and den die!" (Melville 281). The communication barrier between the two allowed for hostility between the groups. Had the whales or the slaves been able to speak the same language as the whalemen or the white man, they may have been on more even playing fields and the group dynamics may have been less like predator and prey.

The ferocious capture and brutal killings of whales portrayed in Moby-Dick parallel the captures and killings of slaves during the 19th century before emancipation. In contrast to the aforementioned chasing being about dehumanizing the prey, the killing was about domination by the hunter. Although the exact details regarding whales and slaves aren't the same, seeing as they were happening on completely different terrains, the big picture is extremely similar. Just as whales were chained to the sides of boats after capture, so, too, were slaves chained after being apprehended. Moses Roper, a slave, writes in his autobiography that a white man "chained me down in a log-pen with a 40 lb. chain, and made me lie on the damp earth all night" (13). The white man also chained him to another slave and, Roper goes on, "He kept me chained to her during the week, and repeatedly flogged us both while thus chained together, and forced us to keep up with the other slaves, although retarded by the heavy weight of the log-chain" (15). This was either in preparation for death or to be brought back to their masters. Also, as described before, slaves were mercilessly whipped as punishment for anything, an action which sometimes led to death. Whales were continually stabbed with harpoons to capture them and kill them. The abuse continues after the killing of the first whale aboard the Pequod. Stubb orders a piece of the whale to be cut away and cooked for him for dinner. David Cope comments that this "displays a tyrannical streak directly connected to [Stubb's] role on the ship and indirectly to the assumption that, as a white man, he may abuse blacks without repercussion." This is paralleled further as the scene goes on. As Stubb is physically abusing the whale by eating his flesh, he is also verbally abusing Fleece, an African American. He mocks this black cook as he devours the whale, strongly showing a correlation of the abuse by white men of blacks and whales (Melville 264–65).

The aftermath of the killings wraps up the ongoing whaling metaphor of slavery during the 19th century. After killing whales, the whalemen tied them to the boat as a symbol of their accomplishments. They also beheaded them and skinned them. The whale's head was the most valuable piece of the creature's body, so it was often hung by beams from a whaling ship, like the Pequod, not only to harvest the profitable pieces but also as a symbol of the domination of the ship and the men on board. Fred Bernard discusses a reward poster reprinted by William Lloyd Garrison in the *Liberator*, an anti-slavery proponent of the time period, in which a sum of money is offered for the return of a slave, but even more money is offered for the slave's head. "Tying this analogue to Melville is the fact that these slave heads, like those of the sperm whale … were worth more than the mere bodies of the victims" (398). The head was a symbol of the creature's life force; the part that identified the animal and gave it its essence. The white man taking control of the head was like taking control of the core of the creature, which both industries were aiming to do. In the end, both industries led to near extinction. The hunting of whales led to dwindling numbers and near extinction of the creatures. The hunting of escaped blacks led to uproar in terms of ethics, which ultimately and eventually led to emancipation: the extinction of slavery.

A discrepancy lies in the economics of both industries. Although both industries involved killings, one industry got their profits from a dead animal, while the other got theirs from live ones. This anomaly, rather than discrediting the validity of the metaphor,

actually helps us understand the motivations of white hunters. Whales were more profitable dead than they were alive, but slaves were more profitable alive than they were dead. Indeed, an individual slave was more profitable living as a worker, but had slaves been allowed to get away with escaping from their owners, the industry would have quickly crumbled. Killing a runaway slave, although not initially a great monetary decision, sets an example for other slaves to keep their place.

Herman Melville's Moby-Dick acts as an extended metaphor to parallel the whaling industry with the institution of slavery and the chasing of escaped slaves. We may never know Melville's true views of slavery, but shouldn't we take a hint from the fact that Moby-Dick, analogous to a runaway slave, was the ultimate victor? During the 19th century, Melville's possible views against white supremacy would not have been well received by the masses, so Moby-Dick could have been a front to subtly portray his thoughts on slavery. Although not as racially motivated as some other books of the time, or even other books of Melville's, Moby-Dick has strong racial themes that, although not at first apparent, critique racial inequalities of the time and question the ethics of slavery.

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4.3: Peer Review Sheets

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4.3.1: Chapter 2- Close Reading

Organization Feedback: Outline of a Close-Reading Paper

Paper Writer's Name: _____

Peer Reviewer's Name: _____

If you are still unsure of the paper's direction (or feel the paper isn't well organized), you may want your classmates to use *organization feedback* to give you some structural/organizational ideas. By using organization feedback, the peer reviewer looks for the general overall structure of your paper.

The key to such peer review centers on the paper having clear organization and support: (1) the writer must present a clear thesis that makes a thematic claim about the literary work, and (2) the paper must then provide support for that thesis by demonstrating how the work artistically achieves that theme using psychoanalytic theory.

Guidelines

1. Read the paper carefully to gain a **general impression**.
2. Reread the paper, concentrating on the **overall structure/organization**.
3. Create an **outline** or **"skeleton"** of the paper by doing the following:

Thesis

Restate the writer's thesis:

Evaluate the thesis:

Describe the close-reading approach the writer uses:

Support

Outline the points made to support the thesis by restating the main idea of each paragraph, listing the examples the writer uses in each paragraph, and describing how each paragraph relates to the thesis (i.e., supports the thesis).

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support (from Chapter 1):

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

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- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

General Comments

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4.3.2: Chapter 3- Psychoanalysis

Organization Feedback: Outline of a Psychoanalytic Paper

Paper Writer's Name: _____

Peer Reviewer's Name: _____

If you are still unsure of the paper's direction (or feel the paper isn't well organized), you may want your classmates to use *organization feedback* to give you some structural/organizational ideas. By using organization feedback, the peer reviewer looks for the general overall structure of your paper.

The key to such peer review centers on the paper having clear organization and support: (1) the writer must present a clear thesis that makes a thematic claim about the literary work, and (2) the paper must then provide support for that thesis by demonstrating how the work artistically achieves that theme. In other words, the writer must show how the literary work under examination is an artistic and thematic well-wrought urn.

Guidelines

1. Read the paper carefully to gain a **general impression**.
2. Reread the paper, concentrating on the **overall structure/organization**.
3. Create an **outline** or **"skeleton"** of the paper by doing the following:

Thesis

Restate the writer's thesis:

Evaluate the thesis:

Describe the psychoanalytic approach the writer uses:

Support

Outline the points made to support the thesis by restating the main idea of each paragraph, listing the examples the writer uses in each paragraph, and describing how each paragraph relates to the thesis (i.e., supports the thesis).

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support (from Chapter 1):

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

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- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

General Comments

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4.3.3: Chapter 4- Feminist and Gender

Organization Feedback: Outline of a Feminist and Gender Paper

Paper Writer's Name: _____

Peer Reviewer's Name: _____

If you are still unsure of the paper's direction (or feel the paper isn't well organized), you may want your classmates to use *organization feedback* to give you some structural/organizational ideas. By using organization feedback, the peer reviewer looks for the general overall structure of your paper.

The key to such peer review centers on the paper having clear organization and support: (1) the writer must present a clear thesis that makes a thematic claim about the literary work. and (2) the paper must then provide support for that thesis by demonstrating how the work artistically achieves that theme using feminist and/or gender theory.

Guidelines

1. Read the paper carefully to gain a **general impression**.
2. Reread the paper, concentrating on the **overall structure/organization**.
3. Create an **outline** or **"skeleton"** of the paper by doing the following:

Thesis

Restate the writer's thesis:

Evaluate the thesis:

Describe the feminist or gender approach the writer uses:

Support

Outline the points made to support the thesis by restating the main idea of each paragraph, listing the examples the writer uses in each paragraph, and describing how each paragraph relates to the thesis (i.e., supports the thesis).

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support (from Chapter 1):

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

General Comments

_____

_____

_____

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4.3.4: Chapter 5- Race and Ethnicity

Organization Feedback: Outline of a Race and Ethnicity Paper

Paper Writer's Name: _____

Peer Reviewer's Name: _____

If you are still unsure of the paper's direction (or feel the paper isn't well organized), you may want your classmates to use *organization feedback* to give you some structural/organizational ideas. By using organization feedback, the peer reviewer looks for the general overall structure of your paper.

The key to such peer review centers on the paper having clear organization and support: (1) the writer must present a clear thesis that makes a thematic claim about the literary work, and (2) the paper must then provide support for that thesis by demonstrating how the work artistically achieves that theme using race and ethnicity theory.

Guidelines

1. Read the paper carefully to gain a **general impression**.
2. Reread the paper, concentrating on the **overall structure/organization**.
3. Create an **outline** or **"skeleton"** of the paper by doing the following:

Thesis

Restate the writer's thesis:

Evaluate the thesis:

Describe the race or ethnicity approach the writer uses:

Support

Outline the points made to support the thesis by restating the main idea of each paragraph, listing the examples the writer uses in each paragraph, and describing how each paragraph relates to the thesis (i.e., supports the thesis).

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support (from Chapter 1):

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

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- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

General Comments

_____

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4.3.5: Chapter 6- Reader Response

Organization Feedback: Outline of a Reader-Response Paper

Paper Writer's Name: _____

Peer Reviewer's Name: _____

If you are still unsure of the paper's direction (or feel the paper isn't well organized), you may want your classmates to use *organization feedback* to give you some structural/organizational ideas using reader-response theory.

The key to such peer review centers on the paper having clear organization and support: (1) the writer must present a clear thesis that makes a thematic claim about the literary work, and (2) the paper must then provide support for that thesis by demonstrating how the work artistically achieves that theme. In other words, the writer must show how the literary work under examination is an artistic and thematic well-wrought urn.

Guidelines

1. Read the paper carefully to gain a **general impression**.
2. Reread the paper, concentrating on the **overall structure/organization**.
3. Create an **outline** or **"skeleton"** of the paper by doing the following:

Thesis

Restate the writer's thesis:

Evaluate the thesis:

Describe the reader-response approach the writer uses:

Support

Outline the points made to support the thesis by restating the main idea of each paragraph, listing the examples the writer uses in each paragraph, and describing how each paragraph relates to the thesis (i.e., supports the thesis).

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support (from Chapter 1):

    _____
- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
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  - Warrant for support:

    _____
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  - Warrant for support:

    _____
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  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

_____

- Main Idea:
  - Examples:
  - Support for thesis:
  - Warrant for support:

General Comments

_____

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_____

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