6

RECOGNIZING THE MANY VOICES IN A TEXT

In our reading we usually attribute a single point of view or single voice to the author. But that voice is only one voice of many, including the reader's, that may speak in the writing. Each writer is likely to use the voices of many people in creating his or her own text. A writer can use other people's voices directly through quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Other voices enter a text indirectly as background. Most deeply, a writer's own mode of expression springs from the language, meanings, and patterns of thought learned from others over a lifetime. By coordinating all such voices to serve his or her purposes, a writer creates the author's perspective in a text. Grasping the structure of voices an author uses in writing helps one avoid confusing the author's point of view with that of other voices the author may draw upon. The essay analyzing voices will help you develop the skills to sort out the voices in a text and will introduce you to one form of analytical writing. Your ability to recognize how voices may be orchestrated to create one single voice of authority will enable you to draw upon and control effectively a number of voices in your own writing.

The Voice of Authority and Our Voice

When we read, we usually attribute a single point of view to a text. That single point of view, expressing a coherent statement of a single individual, we identify with the author's voice. We recognize in a voice the sound of a single person talking. We take the disembodied print on the page and recreate the person making the statement.

When we respond to our reading, we talk back to the author. We agree or disagree with what Robert Bell says about friendship. Sociologists' discussions of social mobility prompt us to reflect on our family and personal history. By adding our own voice to that of the writer, by becoming authors of our own comments, we engage in a dialogue with the voice of the text. Authority (the power of being an author, of making a statement) is no longer limited to the author of the printed word. As readers, we share the power with the author.

Even while challenging an author's position or point of view, we may still grant the writer much respect and authority, for whatever wisdom, knowledge, or accuracy is evident in the text. Indeed, the fact that the author's words are published indicates that at least some people found enough merit in them to warrant publication. Publication in itself, nevertheless, does not turn a writer's ideas into unchallengeable truths. Developing awareness of a writer's voice gives readers a sense of the person writing. Identifying the voice of the writer helps us avoid being intimidated by the impersonal authority of the printed page. We will not be afraid to question ideas in print if we can see that they are authored by real people. Furthermore, seeing how other people express themselves in writing also helps us gain control of our own written voices. We will see how to voice our thoughts confidently on the page so our ideas will be heard and respected by our readers.

In this chapter, we will begin working on the analysis of texts. Through analysis, we gain greater understanding of what we read and of techniques we can use in our own writing. By analyzing how texts work, we are more likely to respect texts that treat readers intelligently and fairly. We are less likely to be influenced by texts that do not respect us as readers. The *essay analyzing voices* will, in particular, help us sort through the confusing multiplicity of voices that appears in many texts. As a result, we will be better able to recognize who holds which opinion and what exactly the author believes. The *essay analyzing voices* is one of a number of types of analysis in this book.

The Many Voices of a Text

A writer's voice is often composed of many voices, which the writer brings together in a conversation. The writer's voice emerges in the way she calls on all the voices and combines them in making an overall statement. In order to identify the dominant voice of any text, as readers we need to hear distinctly all the voices that the writer calls on. As examples of how texts use many voices, we will examine a series of newspaper and magazine articles concerning major political decisions about increasing U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War during 1965 and 1966.

Obvious Voices Under the Writer's Control

The most obvious way a writer brings another voice into a text is by direct quotation. The quotation marks signal that someone else's words are erupting into the text, changing temporarily the voice speaking. However, in the words surrounding the quotation, the writer creates perspective for the quoted material. Thus the writer influences how the reader will

interpret the quotation, and the writer retains control of the other person's voice, making it serve the overall meaning of the passage.

Similar, but a little less obvious, is indirect quotation, where the writer paraphrases the words of the other voice but clearly identifies the other voice as the source of the ideas. Through the paraphrase the writer can interpret the meaning of the indirectly quoted material and focus attention on details most relevant to his or her own point. Thus in indirect quotation the writer can exert even more control over the other voice than in direct quotation.

As an example of the way a writer can use directly and indirectly quoted voices, let us consider the September 3, 1965, *Time* magazine report of President Lyndon Johnson's announcement of the decision to build up U.S. troop strength in Vietnam. In this article the writer first seems to let the president's voice overpower anything the writer has to say.

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The unidentified author of this piece speaks with the voice of *Time* magazine. That voice says, "This is what happened; this is the news of the week." As clearly identifiable is another voice, that of the then president of the United States, Lyndon Baines Johnson. We know Johnson's voice by the description of him speaking and by his words within quotation marks. We also hear President Johnson's ideas paraphrased. For example, "That, he said, symbolized U.S. power." The second voice, President Johnson's, is so powerful that it dominates the paragraph. The voice of *Time* merely repeats the president's words.

Some details in the report let readers know that the author is there, gathering information at first hand and developing an impression of the situation. The throwaway phrase of the second sentence, "assuming a pose and a phraseology he has been using a lot in private," reminds us that the author has direct, private, authoritative knowledge of the president's manner and thoughts. The colorful description of President Johnson's clenched fists and of his punches in the air shows the writer's effort to re-create his feelings on seeing the president.

The next paragraph presents more directly the point of view of an interpreter. The author, speaking as *Time* magazine, explains the significance of the president's words and behavior.

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In subsequent paragraphs the voice of the author becomes dominant, passing judgment on President Johnson's words and actions.

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Reading *Time* magazine's report, we hear two clear predominant voices. The voice of the president of the United States in the opening paragraph soon gives way to the authority of the writer's commentary. If we were to read the article simply as one authoritative voice, that of the president or of *Time* magazine reporting the facts of what actually happened on September 3, 1965, we would miss the meaning and drama of the piece.

Voices Behind Voices

Frequently behind the obvious voices represented in a text are less obvious voices that are not as clearly identified. These hidden voices are part of the drama created in the text, for they reveal the entire world of characters the writer is representing. The more fully you can identify this web

of less obvious voices that lie behind the obvious voices, the more you can perceive the full picture the writer is creating.

To see how a text creates a drama of multiple voices, some obvious and others not so obvious, consider a short section from the transcript of President Johnson's press conference in early September 1965, as printed in the *New York Times*. Newspaper transcripts, although prepared by individuals, are printed by newspapers without an attributed author. Thus the newspaper presents the impression of an impartial record of events.

> **Q.** Mr. President, the Russians are reported to be saying that North Vietnam might be willing to start negotiations if there is another cessation of U.S. bombing. Do you credit these reports? And if so, are there any plans for another temporary halt of the bombing?
>
> **A.** I don't know where the reports are. I haven't seen them and we hear a lot of reports but as far as I'm aware, there's nothing official about them. I expect some newspaperman is speculating.

The voice of a reporter engages the president's voice in a dialogue. At a press conference the voice of the president of the United States clearly is more powerful than that of any reporter. The president answers questions and gets to voice the last word on any topic. Reporters raise subjects in their questions. Their only power is to try to make the president address issues he might like to avoid. In fact, President Johnson's response to the first question allows him to avoid entirely the second one about military plans, a subject no military leader would be likely to discuss in public.

Behind the voices of a reporter trying to learn information and of a president controlling the information revealed, other, more shadowy voices may be heard. There are voices of the Russians (that is, of Soviet government leaders) and of an unnamed source reporting what Soviet leaders are saying. Further in the background are voices of the North Vietnamese (that is, of that country's political leaders), whose words and ideas are filtered through the voices both of the Soviets and of the anonymous news source. The reporter identifies this chain of voices and asks the president to respond to the Vietnamese voice at the end of the chain. Johnson skirts the question by not accepting the news source as authoritative. He thereby eliminates the voices of both the Russians and the North Vietnamese. By silencing them, the president does not need to respond to them. This tactic means he does not even have to discuss whether the Soviets can speak for the Vietnamese, whether the words of either as reported are reliable, or what an appropriate U.S. response to this hypothetical international dialogue would be. Unless we as readers are able to identify and to understand the interactions of all the voices in such an exchange, we will not be able to understand what is going on in what we read.

Writers' Positions, Interests, and Biases

In representing their story in a particular way, writers create a point of view or perspective. They have us look upon the characters (and the words of those characters) in a way that influences us to see the story the way they want us to see it. Often that point of view is part of a set of attitudes or beliefs the writer has about the subject because of personal conviction, an institutional role, or a personal advantage to be gained. Thus an ecological activist is likely to portray the voices expressing the need to preserve our forests as wise and informed, but the voices of supporters of the logging industry as greedy, short-sighted, and socially irresponsible. Similarly, the president of the logging company is likely to represent the words of his company's reports in a favorable light while portraying the activists as un-informed about economic realities, the needs of consumers, and the quiet social responsibility of all the workers in the company.

The attitudes or biases of writers appear, then, in the ways in which they present the other voices they use. The more clearly a writer separates the voices represented into a good guy, bad guy opposition, the more clearly that writer is aligning himself or herself with one side or the other. Such choosing of sides is particularly likely to occur on controversial issues on which strongly opposing positions have solidified, as on the abortion issue or, in the late 1960s, the issue of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. On such passionate issues with strongly divided oppositions, writers may express distaste and even disrespect for members of the opposition, as in the following selection from the prowar *National Review* of January 25, 1966. In this selection only those voices that clearly support the war receive favorable treatment.

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Constructed Conversations

Whether people are deeply divided and holding entrenched positions or are carrying on an open exchange of ideas, each speaker in a face-to-face discussion will grasp the conversation from a personal perspective. Comments reflect each speaker's private interpretation of the conversation. In making a new comment, a speaker may even explicitly express opinions about comments made by previous speakers.

In a small group, though each participant interprets the conversation from a personal point of view, everyone present has an opportunity to hear what others have had to say. When a conversation is carried on in writing, not every writer involved can rely on all readers to be familiar with past discussions of the subject or to agree with the writer that the same material is relevant background. The discussion in writing does not take place where all participants can watch one another enter and leave. Writers, therefore, need to refer explicitly to previous comments by other people that they feel are relevant to the subject at hand. Writers must describe, interpret, and evaluate the background statements that they decide are essential to the discussion.

As already discussed, these interpretive and evaluative decisions depend on the interests, ideas, knowledge, and point of view of an individual writer. A Marine officer will view disagreement over military involvement in Vietnam differently from a student leader. Both will view the matter differently from a member of Congress, or a news analyst. It is not just that their opinions on policy may differ. Each of these people organizes experiences around different concepts and is concerned about different issues. A military officer wonders how the war can be won. A student leader wonders whether young people will or should be required to lose their lives for the cause. A member of Congress considers whether the war ought to be fought at all. Thus when each person considers the conversation, each will construct it from a personal point of view.

Here follows the December 4, 1965, comments of TRB, an anonymous columnist writing in the *New Republic,* who talks of himself in the plural “we” to adopt the role of a general observer.

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TRB, who purposefully emerges in the piece as an opponent of the official policy, portrays the various speakers in the ongoing policy debate and assesses their thinking and contribution. The columnist tries to make it appear that the side espoused in the column is more reasonable than that of prowar opponents. The writer does this in part by comparing various views against the

expressed opinion that the expanding war is likely to get even larger and unlikely to end soon. On the other hand, TRB recognizes that prowar sentiment is growing among powerful political leaders, who are disparagingly termed "warhawks." We get one writer's view of what everyone else said; we read TRB's construction of what the conversation has been. In reading any such account you must always make your own judgments as to whether a writer's construction of the beliefs, wisdom, and authority of the voices in a debate is fair and accurate.

TRB's typically explicit construction of the state of conversation is a common form of political analysis because politics is very much a conversation of voices negotiating for dominance as the final authority. People in political battles are always thinking about who says what and why. In other controversial situations each writer will present a personal view of the background to set the tone for new arguments. In the academic world, reviews of a discipline's literature (see Chapter 11) and literature discussions in other essays (see Part 3) are important ways academic disciplines assess the state of a scholarly inquiry, establish what is known, and prepare the way for new contributions. When you read, you need to pay attention to how a writer constructs a conversation, both to understand how the writer is trying to contribute to the conversation and to evaluate whether you construct the conversation in the same way the writer does.

Deeply Embedded Voices

As already mentioned, the voices of different people and different groups are not always reported by direct quotation, nor are the voices always clearly identifiable. Some voices may even fade into a familiar background of a long-term discussion. When a writer uses the words *right to life* or *freedom of choice,* we know the author has not coined these phrases. We hear in them echoes of two decades of debate on abortion and even wider echoes from past centuries' discussion of individual liberties and rights. Opinions, phrases, and catchwords become resources for all writers. Each use of them reverberates with the many voices of those who have used the terms previously. The more we as readers recognize such echoing voices, the more we are able to grasp about how a writer enters a discussion and what the writer contributes to it. We grasp that all statements float upon the depths of language used by those who have come before.

Consider, for example, the opening of a *New York Times* editorial for January 21, 1966, which considers what move the United States should next make in the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam Decision

> Failure of the Johnson peace offensive thus far to bring about formal negotiations with Hanoi inescapably raises the question: What course should the United States now follow?
>
> Much depends on Washington's evaluation of Hanoi's ambiguous public and private replies and on the official estimate of how long it is safe to keep the bombers grounded. Is Hanoi holding out for concessions? Or is Hanoi seeking to avoid a conference out of the conviction that the United States will get tired and withdraw? President Johnson expressed the latter belief yesterday. But his conclusion from this remains unclear, since he also said: "The door of peace must be kept wide open."
>
> Many factors counsel patience. The two-month absence of North Vietnamese Army units from combat in South Vietnam-which may signal a Hanoi desire to continue the diplomatic exchanges—is one such factor. Far more important is the fact that the military balance in South Vietnam has been fundamentally transformed in the past year.

The Times editorial, while directly quoting President Johnson, relies too on many unattributed opinions, statements, and long-standing points of discussion. The first six words—"Failure of the Johnson peace offensive"—rely on readers having consumed many news reports on U.S. military efforts to force North Vietnam into peace negotiations, on the current

temporary halt to U.S. bombing of North Vietnam to encourage peace negotiations, and on the continued lack of peace negotiations. The opening words also count on readers' familiarity with presidential statements about the purposes of U.S. military and diplomatic moves as well as with political commentators' evaluations arguing that diplomatic moves have failed.

Sometimes background voices may be so deeply embedded that they can be recognized only by people who have followed an ongoing conversation for a long while. We recognize when our brother starts sounding like our father or when a teacher uses an idea or phrase voiced earlier by a student. A newcomer to either conversation would not hear those echoes of other views.

We build our repertoire of knowledge, language, and ideas from what we have heard and read, whether or not we are conscious of this process. For example, after I read an author with a distinctive style, my writing may be affected. I start using images, phrases, sentence patterns, or ways of reasoning characteristic of the writer. If I find the writer's ideas powerful, they float through my mind and influence my thinking. At first the writer's influence may be quite pronounced, but after a time the influences mix with what I have gathered elsewhere, so that the effect may no longer be particularly noticeable.

This deep embedding of other voices in ours makes our language and thinking richer. Recognizing how writers make use of the wealth of other voices, we can become more aware of how to take advantage of this resource in our own writing. Whether we are directly quoting an expert who supports our views, characterizing a position we wish to oppose, or indirectly echoing the phrases of other writers, we can learn to use others' voices to shape our own original statements.

Maintaining Control of Voices

As we become aware of multiple voices in our reading and writing, there is always the danger of losing track of who is saying what, of whose voice is in control. Unintelligible voices risk running into each other, and we can get lost in a tower of Babel. When we read, we need to recognize how a writer controls various voices within a text to fit them together into a coherent statement. When we write, we need to exert control over the voices we use so that we say what we want to say and present readers with a coherent point of view. As a writer, you must establish an authority over all the voices you use. If you fail to do so, readers will not know what you are saying.

As I was writing an analysis of an excerpt about the Vietnam War for this chapter, I thought of the words of the literary critic Bakhtin, who discussed voices in novels. You might have wondered where my analysis was leading if I had interrupted my analytic passage to quote a few of Bakhtin's abstractions, as follows:

> The word in language is someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent.

An abrupt introduction of Bakhtin's comment would confuse you because it is a new voice from another conversation. If I made the connection to the quotation from Bakhtin clear, I would be introducing Bakhtin's words gradually into the chapter's conversation about writing. In Bakhtin's terms, I would have populated his words with my intention.

Just as we must make clear how our controlling voice is making use of all the other voices we bring in when we write, when we read we must recognize how a writer's voice dominates the many voices evoked in the text. Sometimes an author makes it easy for readers to see what his or her stance is and how the other voices in the text relate to it. A decade after the end of the Vietnam

War, U.S. Army General William Peers, looking back at the pivotal 1965 political period, passes unmistakable judgment on the many voices of that time.

> In mid-1965, the decision was made to send U.S. combat forces to South Vietnam. We should have immediately committed sufficient ground, air, and naval forces so as to end the conflict in the shortest possible time. Such a commitment would have saved countless lives and injuries, avoided the no-win situation in which our forces became involved, and greatly reduced the inner conflict which so divided this nation.
>
> But the U.S. did not do that. American leaders did not mobilize the armed forces, federalize the National Guard, or call reserve units to active service. War industries, the economy, and the population were not mobilized. Nor were funds provided for deploying sufficient combat forces to do the job quickly and get it over with. Instead, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara made the decision, with the approval of the president, to fight a war of gradualism, a piecemeal kind of war, employing an initial minimum force and adding to it bit by bit as the situation dictated. As a result, it became a Pentagon war, not a people's war, and dragged on for eleven years, much to the disillusionment of the American people.

General Peers clearly wishes that government leaders would have said unequivocally in 1965 to the military, industry, and the general public that we should win the war. The writer believes the Vietnam War failed because leaders sent conflicting messages to all groups. The antiwar opposition of the American people Peers sees only as the result of U.S. leaders' faulty communications.

Sometimes, however, authors stand in complex relation to voices in a text. For example, the military historian Alexander Cochran, writing in 1984, does not pass immediate judgment on the voices of 1965. Instead he tries to piece together how important decisions were made. Below Cochran discusses the fifth of what he identifies as eight crucial decisions made during a short period.

> The fifth decision for war came in late July 1965, one that George Herring has called "the closest thing to a formal decision for war in Vietnam."[1] The internal debate leading to President Johnson's decision of 28 July 1965 to deploy the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) plus other support troops to Vietnam has been extensively studied, thanks to *The Pentagon Papers* and a remarkable collection of National Security Council papers entitled "Troop Deployment of U.S. Forces" at the Johnson Library.[2] For this analysis, only a few comments are important. The July decision was based upon recommendations submitted to the president by McNamara after the Honolulu meetings of late April 1965 and, even more important, upon a new estimate submitted by General Westmoreland which dramatically revised upwards his March 1965 requirements for American ground forces because of declining South Vietnamese battlefield strength. He now concluded that "the South Vietnamese Armed Forces cannot stand up to [North Vietnamese reinforcements and a Viet Cong offensive] ... without substantial U.S. combat support on the ground."[3] This report played to McNamara's earlier warning about a "spectacular defeat." Despite George Ball's protestation, the option of withdrawal was not seriously considered. The sheer inertia created by the earlier decisions proved overwhelming.

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[1] George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1970-75* (New York: Random, 1979) 142.

[2] Deployment of Major U.S. Forces to Vietnam, Jul 65, National Security Council Histories, NSF, LBJL. The best treatment of this debate is Larry Berman, *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (New York: Norton, 1982), which is based extensively on the cited NSC history.

[3] Westmoreland to Sharp, 14 Jun 64, in Gareth Porter, ed., *Vietnam: The Definitive Documentation of Human Decisions,* vol. 2 (Stanfordville, N.Y.: Earl M. Coleman, 1979) 378-82.

> The July decisions to increase troop deployments were keyed to the numbers recommended by McNamara in April. In the midst of the July debates, the president had sent McNamara to Vietnam for a final assessment. The secretary of defense had wired Westmoreland before his arrival that he wanted his "recommendations for forces to year's end and beyond," thus indicating that Washington's interest now went beyond 1965.[4] Westmoreland did just that, expanding his earlier March request, though, as he later candidly admitted, "it was virtually impossible to provide the Secretary with a meaningful figure."[5]
>
> The significance of the July decisions was vast. The massive application of American ground combat power was now the key ... with the exception of calling up the reserves, President Johnson accepted McNamara's recommendations of quantitative numbers rather than military strategy. Thus the decision for war was based upon numbers not strategy.

Alexander Cochran does not take any position on the merits of the Vietnam War itself or agree or disagree with what any particular person said about the war. The historian is concerned in this excerpt with the way historical decisions were made ("the option of withdrawal was not seriously considered"), what kinds of comments were made, and what information was considered in the course of the decision-making process. The voices heard in Cochran's text are presented as evidence of what happened during the historical event. Cochran is not involved in a debate over how the Vietnam War should have been fought. He is part of a debate among historians as to how the war was conducted. Cochran has used political and military voices as part of his historian's statement within a conversation among historians.

To glean the full meaning from a text, as readers we need to recognize the various voices in a text, how they relate to one another, and how the author uses each of them to create the overall statement. If we are unaware of the author's control of the text's voices, we may think the author agrees with an opinion he or she actually opposes. Understanding a text requires understanding the drama in which the author is engaged and the role he or she plays in it. When we write, we must let readers know where we stand in the drama we present and where the other voices we use fit in. Otherwise, we do not get our message across.

Questions to Ask About Voices in a Text

1. Are there any voices quoted directly? Why were the particular passages selected for quotation? What framing perspective does the writer give to these quoted voices?
2. Are there any indirectly quoted voices? How does the paraphrase suggest a specific interpretation?
3. Are there any obvious voices hidden behind the obvious voices? Do any of the voices represent institutions or official roles rather than just the thoughts of an individual?
4. Do any of the words or phrases suggest a background of long-term discussion within which the text fits? How does the new text statement fit in with this long-term discussion?
5. What attitude does the writer have towards the various obvious and hidden voices? Does the writer clearly favor one group of voices over others? How does the writer put the various voices into a single argument?

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[4] Sec Def to Am Emb, Saigon, Deftel 5319, 7 Jul 65, NSF, LBJL.

[5] William C. Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 142.

FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

For the selections below discuss the various voices that appear, how those voices are used, what patterns of voices each author uses, and how the author's voice emerges in relation to the others in the piece.

1. John Muir's discussion of the need for national parks on pages 38-39.

2. M. Thomas Inge's consideration of *Peanuts* as American culture on page 65.

3. J. Larry Brown's article, “Hunger in the U.S.,” on page 65.

4. Lilian Katz's editorial, “Reading, Writing, Narcissism,” on page 74.

5. Yale Kamisar's argument against active euthanasia on page 74.

6. The anonymous essay “It's Over, Debbie” on page 74.

7. Any article from today's newspaper.

8. The article below from the *New York Times,* dated January 28, 1966. (President Johnson had ordered a halt to U.S. bombing of North Vietnam on December 24, 1965, to encourage peace negotiations. When the negotiations did not materialize, bombing was resumed on February 1, 1966. This was one of the longest and most complete of sixteen such bombing halts during the Johnson administration.)

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Multiple Voices in Your Own Writing

Once you start to see the different voices represented in your reading, you will become more careful in how you write about those texts. You must notice whether the idea you are responding to is the author's or belongs to someone the author quotes or discusses. Otherwise, you may get yourself into battles where none exist. Similarly, if you use someone else's writing to support your position, mistaking one of the voices in the text for the author's controlling voice, you will weaken your case rather than strengthen it.

Understanding the voices in your reading will also help you understand how to use other people's words, views, and attitudes in your own writing to enlist experts' support for your own purposes. Part 2, which discusses the research paper, follows up on this theme. The research paper is a way of using the voices of library sources to answer questions and convince your readers about what you have to say on subjects important to you. Part 3 examines how writers contribute to the organized conversations of academic disciplines. Control over the many voices evident in the literature of any discipline is important if a writer is to make well-focused new contributions to knowledge. In writing response essays, synthesis essays, reviews of a field's literature, library research papers, professional arguments, legal briefs, and other types of academic and professional writing, you will need to orchestrate many voices to establish your own position. Whether you enter politics or business, archeology or medicine, your writing will need to take into account the many voices that together produce the knowledge of your field.

Writing short essays analyzing the various voices in individual texts will increase your ability to identify the structure of voices within any text and will help you understand better how to control such voices in your own writing. Your analysis of these voices will also introduce you to writing analytical essays.

Writing an Essay Analyzing Voices

The Essay of Analysis

When writing an *essay of analysis* you must have a very clear idea of your analytic purpose so that your essay will not be mistaken for nonanalytic writing and so that you do not lose sight of the perspective you are taking as a writer. In an essay of analysis you look at a text, an object, or an event from a very particular point of view. You consider how specific concepts apply or work within the text, object, or event undergoing analysis.

In writing an essay of analysis, your main purpose is not to describe or summarize. Your task is to *break the subject of your analysis into parts* according to appropriate categories or concepts. If the analytical concepts or categories are appropriate, they will help you identify the subject's underlying structure or meaning. To explain, support, or explore how your analysis applies to the subject under analysis, you will probably need to discuss details, which you may choose to describe, quote, or summarize in passing. These specifics of your subject must only serve to support your analysis. If you let a description, quotation, or summary dominate, you will lose sight of your analytical purpose. The writer-analyst's primary attention must not wander. In the essay analyzing voices, for example, every sentence must help readers understand how voices are used in a text. Simply repeating what the voices say would change the essay writer's focus to summary.

This chapter concerns a particular kind of textual analysis: pulling a text apart to examine the structure of one aspect of it, its voices. There are many other kinds of textual analysis. Chapter 7 explores the *analysis of purpose and technique* (sometimes called *rhetorical analysis)* in which you consider how an author uses a variety of methods to achieve a particular purpose. Chapter 9 discusses how to analyze and evaluate disagreements between texts. Chapter 13 presents the interpretive analysis often used in literary studies arid other disciplines in the humanities. In any form of textual analysis you look at the text from a very specific perspective. If your perspective shifts, your analysis is likely to lose focus. For advice on other specific types of analysis, see pages 104-126, 147-158, and 241-243.

Thinking Through Your Analysis

Before you begin writing any analysis, you must pull apart the text you are analyzing according to analytic categories to see how the parts fit together or what the text's substructure is. If you have a clear analytical view of the text before you begin writing, you are less likely to slip into a description, summary, or paraphrase. In analyzing voices, you must identify the voices that appear in the text, see how they fit together, and understand how the author uses those voices to create his or her own voice and to make his or her own statement. Once you have developed an understanding of the structure of voices in the text, you will be able to analyze that structure in your essay. Following the steps below will help you develop your analysis of a text's voices.

First, *identify the voices that appear in the text.* In your notes list the names of individuals or groups of individuals whose voices explicitly and directly make a statement in the text. Next to

each name write a few words summarizing each voice's main message. Leave blank space next to each entry for your later comments on how the author relates to or uses each of these voices.

In addition, list the names of other individuals or groups that play an indirect role in the text's drama. These voices may be represented by the direct voices in the text or they may be familiar background figures in the text's discussion. Next to each name summarize the voice's implied message. Leave space for your notes to come.

Second, *see how the various voices relate to the author's overall voice or statement.* In the space you have left in your notes as described above, comment on where the author of the text stands with respect to each message from the voices listed. What does the writer think about the various messages? How are they used in the text? Does the author approve or disapprove of the messages? Does the author battle against one or more voices or use them as support? Does the author use voices in a less direct way?

Third, *find patterns in the way the author uses the voices.* When you have a sense of where the writer of the text stands with respect to each of the individual voices heard, you can consider the pattern the writer has designed for voices. Are there political opponents of the author's position, all of whom are obviously disapproved of? Are statistical voices used to provide factual background? Are friendly voices cited for their wisdom or insight? The patterns may emerge more clearly if you diagram the relations between voices or shuffle your list around, perhaps by listing all voices the writer agrees with in one column, all voices the writer opposes in another, and all those used only for evidence, or background, in a third.

Fourth, *draw general conclusions about how the author uses and controls all the voices.* Only when you have a sense of the general pattern of voices can you confidently say how the author orchestrates these voices to make a point. This overall pattern reveals the text's substructure exposed by your analysis and points to the main conclusion you will draw from your analysis. To help you collect your thoughts, write a sentence or two expressing your general analytic conclusions. These conclusions will become the core of your essay. The rest of your essay will explain and support your conclusions.

Guidelines for Thinking Through an Analysis of Voices

1. Identify voices that appear in the text.
2. See how the various voices relate to the author’s overall voice or statement.
3. Find patterns in the way the author uses the voices.
4. Draw general conclusions about how the author uses and controls all the voices.

Writing Up Your Analysis

The main purpose of your analytical essay is to describe the underlying structure of voices in a text and show how the author uses these voices to create a dominant voice of authority.

The introduction to the essay announces your analytic purpose by identifying both the text under scrutiny and your analytical concentration on its voices. It should clearly state the main pattern of voices found in your text. You can base this statement on the sentence or two you wrote as the fourth step in your thinking process, when you expressed your general analytic conclusions. These analytic conclusions will become the thesis statement for your whole essay. Placing them in the last sentence or two of your opening paragraph will make clear their importance to the details in your essay. In the student essay written by Marie Pacione that begins on page 184, the thesis statement appears in the final sentences of the introductory paragraph:

"As she traces the history of the media's coverage of Hillary Clinton during the campaign, those who defend the press and those who criticize the press are set up in a point-counterpoint structure with the critics always getting the last and strongest word. In this article we hear a debate, but where one side clearly comes out the winner."

The body paragraphs of your analytical essay should focus on the individual voices, and the order in which you discuss them should reflect the pattern of voices you have identified. For example, Marie divides the body of her essay into four paragraphs: two devoted to voices that defend followed by two devoted to critical voices. The sequence of her body paragraphs reflects the "point-counterpoint" pattern of voices in Corcoran's article that Marie has identified in her thesis statement. The essay's structure leads naturally in the concluding paragraph to a discussion of Corcoran's voice in relation to the two groups of voices.

As this student sample illustrates, you need to discuss within each of your body paragraphs what a particular voice or group of voices represents, how the author of the text related to the voice, how the author uses the voice, and how it fits into the pattern of voices in the text. Using specific examples and evidence to explain, support, and develop your discussion of each voice or group of voices will make your argument coherent and convincing. Use Marie's essay as a model for developing your analysis of the voices or groups of voices in the text you have chosen to write about.

The conclusion of your analytical essay should draw together the pattern of voices to discuss the text's underlying structure, as revealed through your detailed presentation in the body paragraphs. That substructure of voices should tell you something new about the effects of the text on readers and explain how the author creates coherence from many voices. Your concluding paragraphs should reflect your opening statement of analytic conclusions, as they reveal the insight you have gained from your detailed analysis. Just as the opening statement of analytic conclusions acts as a signpost for your readers, showing them where your essay is headed and what to look for as they read, your concluding statements help them understand the meaning and implications of the analytical journey you have guided them through. For example, in her next to last paragraph, Marie emphasizes how Corcoran orchestrates the two opposing groups of voice in the text to make her argument indirectly. Then, in a final paragraph, Marie suggests how that structure of opposing perceptions helps us see through stereotypes that confuse and distort, so that the article goes beyond criticizing the press to help us hear with less distortion and confusion the voices of women in public life.

Sample Essay Analyzing Voices

Pilloried Clinton," by Katherine Corcoran

In her article "Pilloried Clinton," on media coverage of Hillary Clinton during the 1992 presidential campaign, Katherine Corcoran asks the question "Were the women who covered Hillary Clinton during the campaign guilty of sexism?" One way of thinking about this question is to ask whether these reporters presented Hillary in an unbiased way, letting her voice come through clearly, or whether they presented her through one or another inappropriate stereotypes that made her voice sound like it came from a kind of person she is not. While Corcoran early in the article, particularly in the fourth and fifth paragraphs, does present her own view that reporters frequently misrepresented Hillary Clinton through stereotypes, for the most part she uses the voices of defenders and critics of the press. Even though she does let defenders of the press, including some of those reporters who wrote stories criticized in the article, speak for themselves, those voices are always answered by the voices of the critics. As she traces the history of the media's coverage of Hillary Clinton

during the campaign, those who defend the press and those who criticize the press are set up in a point-counterpoint structure with the critics always getting the last and strongest word. In this article we hear a debate, but one side clearly comes out the winner.

The first group of voices, those which claim that media coverage of Hillary Clinton was not sexist, is represented by specific women in the press who have been accused of sexism in their coverage of the campaign and by some of their defenders. Corcoran first gives a series of examples of suspect coverage, and then lets those accused defend themselves. For example, in her discussion of the "Tammy Wynette slur," she quotes Newsweek's Ginny Carroll, who criticized Hillary Clinton for being "heedless to the country music vote," and cites Ann McDaniel's defense of Carroll, who claimed that the country music vote is significant because it is a way to appear to be in touch with ordinary people. Corcoran also cites the press coverage of Hillary Clinton's apparent jab at stay-at-home mothers, "I suppose I could have stayed at home and baked cookies and had teas. But what I decided to do was fulfill my profession," which set the tone for press coverage of Hillary Clinton for the rest of the campaign. She follows this example with reporter's defense of her coverage of the sound bite: "The cookies remark was a stupid remark for a political wife to make."

Corcoran also gives a series of examples of the shift in press coverage from serious issues toward concerns over Hillary Clinton's changing public image, followed by voices defending this coverage. For example, Alessandra Stanley of the New York Times wrote, "Though some voters say they like her precisely because she is a modern role model ... so many others have been put off by her assertiveness that she has begun favoring her softer side." Corcoran follows up this quote with Stanley's defense of her story: "Stanley maintains she was not stereotyping but covering a dramatic remake in the candidate's wife. 'There was a very conscious effort to tone her down,' she says. 'I didn't make that up.'" Another reporter, Michele Ingrassia of Newsday, who described Hillary Clinton as "standing by her man, gazing adoringly," defends her account, stating that it was not meant to be serious but that it was nevertheless true: "... she did start to gaze adoringly. Trust me."

These representative examples of the voices defending the press against charges of sexism are countered with commentary by representatives of the second group of voices: objective, expert media observers who believe that press handling of Hillary Clinton was in fact sexist. For example, Corcoran follows the description of media coverage of the "cookies and tea" gaffe with a comment by Margaret Colson, the deputy Washington bureau chief for Time magazine, who acknowledged, with regret, that the quotation was used out of context. Corcoran also provides the context: Hillary Clinton's next sentence was "The work I have done as a professional, a public advocate, has been aimed ... to assure that women can make the choices ... whether it's a full-time career, full-time motherhood or some combination." Hillary Clinton's more complete statement reveals that the press reporting distorted and stereotyped her voice by only a partial quotation.

Likewise, in her account of why the women in the media covered Hillary Clinton the way they did, Corcoran draws on experts who acknowledge that the press coverage was at least questionable. For example, she quotes Ann Grimes, assistant national editor for the Washington Post and author of a book entitled Running Mates: The Making of the First Lady, who notes the long history of antagonism between women of the press and political wives but also states that the reaction to Hillary Clinton was a mixture of fascination and antagonism. Corcoran also cites Susan Rasky, journalism professor at the University of California at Berkeley and former New York Times congressional correspondent, who argues that the media's coverage was "more manufactured than real" and that its sexism came from "a long line of sexist stereotypes of first ladies." Corcoran even manages to pull some of the members of the press to her side. In fact, she concludes her article by quoting Marjorie Williams, a contributing editor to Vanity Fair who covered Barbara Bush during the 1992 campaign and who acknowledges that the press must be held responsible for the manner in which it covered Hillary Clinton: "We're the ones who are supposed to try for an unbiased and intelligent approach. We're the ones who have to answer for how stupid it got." Corcoran does not have to point the finger of blame at the press or cry sexism; a member of the press itself does it for her.

By pulling the voices of authority to her side to refute the media's defense of coverage, Corcoran creates an argument that will convince her readers that the media's coverage of

Hillary Clinton was sexist in spite of insistence to the contrary. The author's criticism of the press is presented indirectly through the structure of the debate between the two groups of opposing voices, in which every defense is countered by a more compelling and authoritative answer. She does this so successfully that she does not even need to state her own position at the end, or even anywhere after the opening paragraphs. The well-orchestrated argument between defenders and critics does all the work for her.

Since stereotypes are themselves a matter of how people perceive things, Corcoran needs to share with us how a number of people perceive the coverage of Hillary Clinton. In that way we can begin to see through the stereotypes that made it hard for the press and the public to gain a calm view of who Hillary Clinton was. Hillary Clinton's own voice starts to come through a bit more clearly here as the stereotypes in the reporting are exposed. Even more important, however, we can begin to see how the stereotypes tempted and confused much of the press, keeping them from more serious coverage. Seeing how these stereotypes distort may help us from being as confused by them in the future. Perhaps because of articles like this, in the future we may have more responsible coverage of not only political wives but all women in public life.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write an essay of about 500 words analyzing the voices in any one of the eight texts listed for discussion on page 97. Your audience will be classmates who are also learning to recognize the role voices play in a text's meaning.

2. Analyze the voices in any short article you have read as part of your research for the term research project. Your audience will be people who share your research interest.

3. Imagine you have a pen pal overseas who wishes to understand more about politics in the United States. Your pen pal lives in a country with a dictatorial government under which all political decisions are based on the unilateral choices of the head of state. In your pen pal's country, newspapers report only official government statements. In order to explain to your pen pal the complex drama of political decisions in your country, clip an appropriate newspaper article about an American political decision and in a letter to your friend discuss the various voices that appear in the article and the role they play in the news story. Explain how the journalist's voice remains distinct from the political voices the journalist uses to report on the decision.

4. As part of a course in philosophy you are asked to read the passage below from *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* by A. J. Ayer. You and your classmates are confused as to exactly what Ayer is saying. In order to clarify your understanding of this and other difficult philosophic passages, you have formed a class study group. It is your turn to lead the discussion of this passage. In preparation write a few paragraphs identifying the various voices Ayer uses and the positions they voice in his text. Be sure to identify where Ayer stands at the conclusion of the selection in respect to the subject he raises.

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