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## Explaining Through Process Analysis

Process analysis focuses on how something happens. As an expository pattern, it appears most frequently in instructions that tell us how to do something or in explanations that explain how something is or was done. Instructions can range from the simple and everyday to the complex and challenging: from the directions for using a new appliance or piece of electronic equipment to a detailed plan showing how to make the United Nations more effective. Effective instructions do more than simply list the steps to be taken. They generally provide detailed justification for individual steps or for the plan as a whole, and they take into account readers' background knowledge and abilities.

Explanations, on the other hand, might explain the stages of a wide variety of operations or actions, of mental or evolutionary process—how stress affects judgment and health, how volcanoes cause earthquakes and mudslides, or how digital telephones work. Effective explanations take into account the things readers want or need to know about, but they can also appeal to curiosity and imagination. You can speculate how space exploration might work or how societies might be better organized.

The following process analysis by L. Rust Hills shows how process analysis can be used in imaginative ways to talk about everyday matters. It takes the form of a set of directions, and though it is short, it is a whole essay in miniature. The second example is an explanation that helps readers understand some of the reasons hurricanes can be so dangerous.

### What to Do About Soap Ends

This is admittedly not a problem qualitative on the order of what to do about the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, but quantitatively it disturbs a great deal of Mankind—all those millions, in fact, who've ever used a bar of soap—except, of course, me. I've solved the problem of what to do about those troublesome, wasteful, messy little soap ends, and I'm ready now to deliver my solution to a grateful world.

The solution depends on a fact not commonly known, which I discovered in the shower. Archimedes made his great discovery about displacement ("Eureka!" and all that) in the bathtub, but I made mine in the shower. It is not commonly known that if, when you soap yourself, you hold the same side of the bar of soap cupped in the palm of your hand, that side will, after a few days, become curved and rounded, while the side of the bar you're soaping yourself with will become flat. (In between showers or baths, leave the bar curved side down so it won't stick to whatever it's resting on.) When the bar diminishes sufficiently, the flat side can be pressed onto a new bar of soap and will adhere sufficiently overnight to become, with the next day's use, a just slightly oversized new bar, ready to be treated in the same way as the one that came before it, in perpetuity, one bar after another, down through the length of your days on earth, with never a nasty soap end to trouble you ever again. Eureka, and now on to those nuclear weapons. Man is at his best, I feel, when in his problem-solving mode.

—L. Rust Hills

It's not the wind, though, that's the most dangerous part of a hurricane. It's the water, especially when something called the "storm surge" occurs. As the low-pressure eye of the hurricane sits over the ocean, the sea level literally rises into a dome of water. For every inch drop in barometric pressure, the ocean rises a foot higher. Now, out at sea, that means nothing. The rise is not even noticeable. But when that mound of water starts moving toward land, the situation becomes crucial. As the water approaches a shallow beach, the dome of water rises. It may rise ten to fifteen feet in an hour and span fifty miles. Like a marine bulldozer, the surge may rise up twenty feet high, crash onto land, and wash everything away. Then with six- to eight-foot waves riding atop this mound of water, the storm surge destroys buildings, trees, cars, and anything else in its path. It's this storm surge that accounts for 90 percent of the deaths during a hurricane.

—Ira Flatow, "Storm Surge"

## WHY USE PROCESS ANALYSIS?

In almost every part of our lives, we rely on instructions. They help us cook a meal, repair a car, get to a vacation spot, perform an experiment, and calculate income tax. Essays offering instruction appear in newspapers, magazines, and books on topics from fashion, fitness, and sports to technology, pets, and personal relationships.

We turn to explanations not when we want to do things but when we want to understand how things work. Explanations can focus on mechanical or technical subjects (how computer operating systems work), on social matters (how societies create groups of insiders and outsiders), on psychological topics (how stress builds up), or on natural subjects (how cancer cells take over from normal cells).

Process analysis can have imaginative uses as well, helping us speculate about building floating cities, changing our diets for better health, or considering steps that might close the ozone hole over the South Pole. Writers sometimes explain a process in order to amuse or criticize—analyzing with a critical eye some aspects of behavior (as do Kilbourne and Mitford in this chapter) or looking at some surprising natural phenomenon. And process analysis often appears in combination with other expository patterns. You might use it to help readers understand the steps by which a cause (such as meditating) leads to an effect (reduced physical and mental stress), for example. Or you might explain differences in the processes of forming social relationships as part of an essay contrasting the behaviors of men and women.

Expository writing built around process analysis generally responds to a need for information and understanding. The need may be immediate (how to prepare for an upcoming sales meeting or an exam). It may be practical or helpful (understanding the ways our bodies respond to stress; strategies for incorporating a healthy diet and exercise into a busy schedule). Or it may be a matter of curiosity or a desire for understanding (discovering how puppeteers in Indonesia create hours-long shows that appeal to both children and adults; investigating the ways our brains process information).

## CHOOSING A STRATEGY

Having encountered instructions and explanations many times before, your readers will probably expect you to employ some basic strategies. For example, they will expect the opening of a set of instructions to announce its purpose, establish the need for a step-by-step explanation of the process, and indicate any materials needed to accomplish it. The way you choose to accomplish these things should vary from situation to situation and topic to topic, however. If you are addressing a need your readers can readily recognize, such as finding effective ways to take a test, make a speech, or apply for a student loan, you might begin with a brief example of how important such knowledge is. Or you might even state the need directly: "Would you like to know how to give a speech without getting so flustered that you forget half of what you planned to say?" or "Wouldn't you like to know how to get a student loan without all the hassle and paperwork most people encounter?"

In many instances, however, you will have to convince readers that they ought to be interested in the instructions you are offering. This is the situation Heather Kaye faced when she decided to tell readers how to play the game "Bones." In response, she created an opening paragraph reminding her readers how often they get bored and telling them of the simple equipment they will need to pass the time with an amusing game.

When boredom strikes, what can you do if you are tired of computer games, don't like chess, and don't have the money or time to go to a movie? Just collect a pad of paper, a pen, six dice, and a friend, and you are ready to play a game called "Bones." Bones provides fun and excitement, and you don't have to be Einstein to learn how to play. It is a game of chance and luck, laughter and friendship.

For an explanation, however, you may need to appeal to readers' curiosity or their desire for understanding (practical or otherwise). Emphasizing the mystery, adventure, or even oddity of a process will engage most readers' curiosity: What bodily processes allow pearl divers to stay underwater for several minutes when most of us can hold our breath for only ten or twenty seconds? How do bats produce a kind of "radar" that enables them to fly in the dark and catch minute insects? When you appeal to readers' desire for understanding, you will be most likely to succeed when you suggest a practical dimension for the knowledge. For instance, some readers interested in the natural world may be interested in the complex stages of the honey-making process. Yet to attract the majority of readers you may need to suggest that such knowledge can help them understand honey's virtues as a sweetener or choose among different kinds of honey as they shop.

Most process analyses are organized into simple, chronological units, either the steps involved in accomplishing the task or the stages of operation. In planning a set of instructions, begin by breaking it down into steps, approaching the activity as if you were doing it for the first time so that you do not leave out any necessary elements that have become so routine you might easily overlook them. Then create an organization that will help readers keep track of the many steps, perhaps dividing the task into several units, each containing smaller steps. Consider building your plan around a framework like the following.

Introduction: Need for the information, materials, statement of purpose

Step 1: Explanations, details

Substeps 1, 2, 3.... (if any)

Step 2: Explanations, details

Substeps 1, 2, 3....

Step 3: Explanations, details

Substeps 1, 2, 3....

### Summary (if necessary)

In planning an explanation, identify the various stages or components, including any that overlap, and create an organization that presents them in an easy-to-follow, logical order. If the process is complex, divide it into major components and subdivide each in turn, just as the following rough plan does.

**Introduction (tentative thesis identifying need for the information):** Because most people do not understand the amount of energy, natural resources, and human effort needed to create paper, they use it wastefully; understanding the process and the resources it requires is an important first step for all of us concerned with preserving our environment.

**Stage 1: Bringing together natural resources**

- a. Wood—logging
- b. Water—drawing from rivers or lakes
- c. Fuel for heat and power (oil, gas, or electric)

**Stage 2: Turning logs into pulp**

- a. Grinding up logs (uses water and power) or
- b. Breaking wood into pulp using chemicals

**Stage 3: Turning pulp into paper**

- a. Paper machine
  1. Feeding pulp into machine
  2. Using heated screen to congeal pulp into a mushy sheet of paper
- b. Dryer
  1. Using heat to further congeal pulp
  2. Using rollers to stretch and thin the sheet (consumes energy)

**Stage 4: Turning paper into paper products (energy and labor intensive)**

- a. Creating giant rolls of paper
- b. Cutting and folding rolls of paper into tissues, newsprint, pads, paper towels, and other everyday products

Maintaining the exact order of a process is sometimes of greatest importance, as in a recipe. But occasionally the organization of an analysis may present problems. You may need to interrupt the step-by-step format to give descriptions, definitions, and other explanatory asides. Some processes may even defy a strict chronological treatment because several things occur simultaneously. In explaining the operating process of a gasoline engine, for example, you would be unable to convey at once everything that happens at the same time. Instead, you would need to present the material in general stages, each with subdivisions, so your readers could see each stage by itself yet also become aware of interacting relationships.

## DEVELOPING A PROCESS ANALYSIS

In developing the paragraphs and sentences that make up an explanation of a process, you also need to pay attention to your readers' expectations. When you are presenting instructions, your readers will expect you to tell them of any necessary materials and will look for frequent summaries to allow them to check if they have followed the steps correctly. They will benefit from warnings of special difficulties they may encounter or any dangers the procedure entails. In addition, they will appreciate words of encouragement ("The procedure may seem strange, but it will work") or reminders of the goal of the process ("No pain, no gain: the only way to a flat tummy is through the hard work of repeating these exercises").

Effective explanations and instructions alike often have a visual element. Drawings can show how the parts of a mechanism fit together or help readers recognize the differences among the elements of a natural process, such as the growth of an insect or the eruption of a volcano. Pictures can help readers identify ingredients or components and show them what a finished product will look like.

To guide readers through the steps or stages of a process, to remind them of changes that will occur, or to highlight the sequence of events, consider using words that point out relationships among the various elements.

Words identifying different stages—step, event, element, component, phase, state, feature, occurrence

Words emphasizing relationships in time—after, next, while, first, second, third, fourth, concurrently, the next week, later, preceding, following

Words indicating changes—becomes, varies, transforms, causes, completes, alters, revises, uncovers, synthesizes, cures, builds

Make sure you include enough details to allow readers to visualize the steps or stages of the process, but not so many that the details become confusing. Present major steps (or stages) in considerable detail, minor ones in less. If you choose to write in the second person (you), as in a set of directions (“You should then blend the ingredients”), make sure you use this point of view consistently and do not shift to the first person (I or we) or the third person (he, she, it, or they) without good reason. If you choose the first person or third person for your perspective, make sure likewise that your presentation is consistent.

## Student Essay

Losing weight is not easy for most people, nor is the process a simple one, as Karin Gaffney explains in the essay that follows. As a result, she provided detailed explanations along with her dieting instructions so that readers can understand not only how to diet but also why they should follow certain steps and avoid others.

### Losing Weight by Karin Gaffney

Across the board, regardless of age, gender, race, or background, most people spend time trying to lose weight (Williamson et al.). Some people want to lose only five or ten pounds while others worry about getting rid of seventy-five pounds or more. As a result, weight loss is both a universal concern and a highly individualized matter.

Losing weight must mean a lot to Americans. After all, they spend over three billion dollars on weight-loss programs each year (“Rating” 353). If you think you need to diet, think again. Many people think they are overweight because they compare themselves to impossibly thin models or imagine themselves in the slimmest of new fashions. So if you think you need to diet, consult a doctor and other reliable sources of health information. Then go to a good weight-loss program—if you really need one.

Why should you be careful about going on a diet? A study in 1988 by the Centers for Disease Control concluded that any change of weight either up or down led to a higher rate of heart disease in the people studied (“Losing” 350). This does not necessarily mean that you should forget about dieting, however, because weight loss can also help you avoid other health problems (“Losing” 348, 350).

To lose weight, some people turn to commercial diets and hospital programs, yet the majority rely on self-help. For those people who are trying to lose weight on their own, I can offer some general advice along with a simple weight-loss program. The simple advice is no different from what most of us have already heard, but it probably still needs to be repeated: 1) cut down on high-fat foods, 2) eat moderate portions of healthy foods, and 3) get regular exercise. Above all, consult your doctor not only to determine whether you should diet but to make sure your dietary and exercise programs are appropriate for you (and not for the models and athletes who appear on exercise tapes or talk about their health and muscle-power diets in magazines).

A person who is overweight probably has a diet heavy in fat (Beitz 281). A calorie of fat in food becomes part of body fat much more easily than does a calorie of carbohydrate, which is easily burned as energy (Delaney 46). In other words, the body often keeps the fat it takes in, but the carbohydrates it uses up. Moreover, a gram of fat has about 2.25 times as many calories as one gram of carbohydrate or protein does (Beitz 281).

The first step in a healthy weight-loss plan is to reduce the fat in your diet. If you eliminate high-fat foods such as ice creams, cheese, hamburgers, and butter from your diet, your body will respond immediately to the change. Low-fat substitutes, such as low-fat milk, can also have a positive effect, as can steps like cutting the fat off meat or taking the skin off poultry (“Losing”352).

The second step is to eat more foods that are low in fat but high in fiber and carbohydrates. Here are several choices:

1. Potatoes (baked, not fried, and without butter or sour cream)
2. Beans (pinto, kidney, lentil, and so on)
3. Whole grains (cereals, pastas, breads)
4. Fresh fruits
5. Skim milk (and skim milk products)

When you eat foods like these, your blood sugar levels stabilize and you get “filled up,” yet you take in only about one-half the number of calories that fatty alternatives provide (Delaney 44–45).

The third step is to snack wisely. Limit your snacks, of course, and choose from foods like the following: string cheese, corn-on-the-cob (without butter), vegetables, angel food cake, pita bread, soft pretzels, fruits, bagels, nonfat yogurt, juice, animal crackers, or fig bars (“30 Low Fat” 3). Food companies have also been adding fat-free items to grocery shelves in recent years, so when you shop, look for low-fat frozen desserts, low-fat cookies, and the like.

The fourth step is to exercise regularly. Exercise can burn up to 200–300 calories per day (Delaney 46). You may also be surprised to learn that exercise can decrease your weight even if you do not radically change your eating habits. Regular exercise increases basal metabolism, the energy needed just to stay alive. One-half of the calories in a person’s diet, for example, can go to basal metabolism. Exercise can increase the basal metabolism rate so that a person can lose more calories by just living and breathing. The amount of muscle a person has also affects basal metabolism. A person with more muscle has a higher basal metabolism and burns up more of the calories in food through this means (“Losing” 357).

Your exercise routine does not have to be strenuous or exhausting like that of an Olympic trainee. Moderate exercise, such as one half-hour to an hour of good-paced walking, is beneficial. If you need an incentive to start your exercise program, remember that a person who goes from a nonexerciser to a moderate exerciser will notice the results more than someone going from moderate to advanced. There are other side benefits to exercise as well. For example, people who exercise regularly develop adult diabetes 40 percent less frequently than nonexercisers do (“Losing” 351).

The fifth step is to set reasonable goals for weight loss. Concentrate on losing a pound or two at a time, and try to maintain this small weight loss before continuing (“Losing” 350). This approach will help make you confident of your ability to lose weight and help you avoid the yo-yo effect of losing a lot of weight, then gaining it right back.

The final step is to keep several key points in mind.

1. Make eating right and exercising (not dieting) the focus of your attention and effort.
2. Concentrate on maintaining your healthy lifestyle so that you can make your weight loss permanent and benefit over the long term from good eating and exercise habits.
3. Remember that you are an individual and that the advice offered here may or may not apply to you. Always consult a doctor who knows you and your medical history.

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## Give Juggling a Hand!

This instructional essay, a particularly compact explanation of an intriguing activity, was first published in *The Sciences*. It reflects the authors' enjoyment of juggling as well as their expertise. By providing some historical background, clear directions, and interesting explanations, the writers make the activity seem as enjoyable to readers as it is to them.

Nothing could be simpler than a game of catch. But just add another ball or two and the game turns magical—the juggled balls take on a life of their own. Suddenly, simple motions and common objects blur into one stunning display after another.

In recent years, juggling has experienced a renaissance. Street performers and skilled amateurs are practicing the ancient art in parks, back yards, and on campuses around the globe. Membership in the largely amateur International Jugglers' Association (IJA) has more than doubled since 1979.

Juggling is actually 4000 years young. In Egypt, Asia, and the Americas, it was once associated with religious ritual. In medieval Europe, wandering minstrels often juggled; the term derives from these jongleurs.

Amazing jugglers imported from the Orient—in particular the “East Indian” Ramo Samee, who was said to string beads in his mouth while turning rings with his fingers and toes, and the Japanese artist Takashima, who manipulated a cotton ball with a stick held in his teeth—convinced 19th-century Europeans that juggling could be extraordinary show business.

Perhaps the greatest juggler of all time was variety-show virtuoso Enrico Rastelli. By his death in 1931, he had taught himself to juggle eight clubs, eight plates or ten balls; he could even bounce three balls continuously on his head.

Most people assume that a skilled juggler can manage up to 20 objects. In fact, even five-ball juggling is very difficult and requires about a year to master. Only a few jugglers worldwide have perfected seven-ball routines. At the 1986 IJA competition, one entrant separately juggled nine rings, eight balls, and seven clubs.

Jugglers use a bewildering variety of objects, including bowling balls, whips, plastic swimming pools, cube puzzles, fruit, flaming torches, and playing cards. Performers trying for the largest number of objects usually choose rings, which allow a tighter traffic pattern and are stable when thrown to great heights. Several jugglers can manage ten or 11 rings, and some are trying for 12 or 13.

Clubs are the most visually pleasing objects to juggle. They're especially suited for passing back and forth between performers. Because they take up a lot of space when they rotate and must be caught at one end, juggling even five is tricky. Almost nobody can manage seven, even for a few seconds.

Throughout history, all jugglers—from South Sea Islanders to Aztec Indians—have used the same fundamental patterns:

**The Cascade.** Here, each ball travels from one hand to the other and back again, following a looping path that looks like a figure eight lying on its side. The juggler starts with two balls in his right hand, using a scooping motion and releasing a ball when his throwing hand is level with his navel. As the first ball reaches its highest point, the other hand scoops and releases a second ball, and as that one reaches its apogee, he throws the third. Skilled jugglers can keep three, five, or even seven balls going in a cascade, but never four or six. With an even number, balls collide at the intersection of the figure eight.

**The Shower.** In this more difficult pattern, the balls follow a circular path as they are thrown upward by the right hand, caught by the left and quickly passed back to the right. Since the right does all the long-distance throwing, the shower is inherently asymmetrical and, therefore, inefficient; it is difficult with more than three objects.



The Fountain. This figure allows for a large number of balls. In a four-ball fountain, each hand juggles two balls independently in a circular motion. For symmetry, the number of balls is usually even. If the hands throw alternately and the two patterns interlock, it is surprisingly hard to discern that the fountain is made of two separate components and not one.

Because gravity causes objects to accelerate as they fall, a juggler has only a short time to catch and throw one ball before another drops into his hand—even if he throws high. A juggler who throws a ball eight feet in the air, for example, must catch it 1.4 seconds later, but throwing it four times that high only doubles the flight time.

The best way to understand juggling is to learn to do it yourself. Some people get the hang of the three-ball cascade in minutes, although most need at least a few days. Limit your sessions to ten minutes rather than frustrate yourself with a two-hour binge.

Step 1: One Ball. Practice throwing a ball from your right hand to your left and back, letting the ball rise to just above your head. Make the ball follow the path of a figure eight lying on its side, by “scooping” the ball and releasing it near the navel. Catch the ball at the side of your body, then repeat the sequence.

Step 2: Two Balls. Put one in each hand. Throw the ball in the left hand as in Step 1, and then, just as the ball passes its high point, throw the right-hand ball. Avoid releasing the second throw too early or tossing the balls to unequal heights.

At first it may be difficult to catch the balls. Don’t worry. Focus instead on the accuracy and height of the throws. Catching will come naturally as soon as the throws are on target. If things seem hectic, try higher throws.

Step 3: Two Balls Reversed. Reverse the order of throws so that the sequence is right, then left.

Step 4: Three Balls. Now put two balls in your right hand and one in your left. Try to complete Step 2 while simply holding the extra ball. Pause, then do Step 3.

The third ball can make it difficult to catch the second throw. To solve this, throw the third ball just after the second reaches its high point. The sequence is thus right, left, right. At first it may be tough to persuade your right hand to make its second throw. Remember: catches are irrelevant in the beginning. Throw high, accurately and slowly. Don’t rush the tempo, and don’t forget the figure-eight pattern.

Once you’ve mastered the three-ball cascade you’ll want to try other patterns. A juggler is never finished: there is always one more ball.

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## MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Are readers in general likely to find the topic of this essay interesting? Why or why not? How do the authors encourage readers to consider juggling an amusing or worthwhile activity? Are these reasons presented directly or indirectly?
2. People often think juggling is difficult because it looks difficult. What do the writers say about the process to convince readers that they can master it?
3. What purposes are served by the historical background in Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5? (See “Guide to Terms”: Purpose.)

## EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What technique do Buhler and Graham use to begin the essay? To conclude it? What makes these techniques successful (or unsuccessful) in this particular essay? (Guide: Introductions; Closings.)
2. Why do the authors describe different juggling patterns before they provide specific advice on beginning to juggle? Would the selection be more effective or less effective if the order were reversed? (Guide: Evaluation.)
3. Which expository patterns, other than PROCESS ANALYSIS, do the authors use to make juggling readily understandable and to help readers believe that they can master it?

## DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Tell how the diction and vocabulary choices in Paragraphs 10–12 help make juggling seem simple. (Guide: Diction.)
2. How does the diction in Paragraphs 14–20 contribute to the message that getting started with juggling is not as difficult as most readers might think?
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following terms, look them up in a dictionary: renaissance (Par 2); virtuoso (5); cascade (10).

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Physical activities can be difficult or challenging, but so can mental, social, or artistic activities. Working in a group, discuss activities you undertake with some success that others might find difficult, and list as many as you can. From the list, choose several that you and other group members are interested in writing or reading about. Note which ones you might be able to explain in ways that will intrigue readers and teach them something useful. Choose one as the topic for an essay and, as a group, prepare a plan for the essay.
2. Considering Audience: In the first seven paragraphs of their essay, Buhler and Graham offer a variety of information about juggling. Looking at each paragraph, describe the kinds of readers who might find the information it presents particularly interesting. Explain why you think these paragraphs are successful or unsuccessful in appealing to a wide range of readers.
3. Developing an Essay: Many sports and hobbies can seem difficult or mystifying. Drawing on Buhler and Graham's essay as a model, create a set of instructions to simplify a seemingly challenging, dangerous, or mysterious sport or activity. Make the activity interesting and encourage readers to try it.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring developing by use of PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313–314 at the end of this chapter.)

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## Working with Dreams

This chapter from *The Secret Language of Dreams* provides concrete advice for remembering, analyzing, and interpreting dreams, supported with explanations of the dreaming process. Though the primary expository pattern David Fontana employs is analysis of a process, he also makes frequent use of examples, some in narrative form and some in visual form.

The first stage of working with dreams is the art of remembering them. Many people claim never to recall their dreams, and some deny having dreams at all. However, with practice, and the right technique, it is not unusual to remember five or more dreams each morning.

Start with a positive attitude. Remembering dreams is a habit, and can be cultivated. The best way is to tell yourself during the day that you will remember your dreams, and upon awakening lie still for a while, focusing your conscious mind on whatever ideas or emotions have emerged from your sleep, and allowing them through association to prompt dream recall.

Keeping a dream diary makes it possible to build up a detailed, sustained picture of your dream life. Write down (or sketch) everything you can remember—small details as well as main themes—and make a note of any emotions or associations that emerge from the dream's contents. During the day, think back to the dream of the night before, even if its details have faded, and try to re-live the emotions associated with it. Re-read your notes and be patient: it may take weeks or months before you regularly remember your dreams, but success will come if you persevere. To speed things up, occasionally set an alarm clock for about two hours after you usually fall asleep: you will stand a good chance of awakening immediately after the first, dream-laden period of REM sleep.

Some dream researchers advise subjects to collect at least a hundred dreams before starting analysis, as it may take this length of time before the common themes emerge coherently. It is always worth searching for connections with the events of the day, but remember—the dream has a reason for choosing these events, and may be using them to symbolize deeper material. Note anything significant about these events and any memories that they spark off. Such memories may lead back to long-forgotten experiences to which the dream is trying to draw your attention.

### Keeping a Dream Record

A dream sketchbook can often capture the mood of a dream better than a written record. Moreover, making notes immediately after waking requires a mental adjustment that will often interpose itself between the dreamer and the dream, whereas a sketch can often be made without losing touch with the remembered experience. The example on these pages is a dream by a 15-year-old girl; her spoken account is given on this page, with a note on the symbolism; the sketch is in her visual notebook.

First I saw a hairy caterpillar eating a leaf, which then gradually changed into the keyboard of one of those old upright typewriters. The keys were moving by themselves and the paper coming out of the machine was all crumpled and had glistening raindrops on it—but there was no rain. The paper then appeared on a table and someone had spilt a cup of coffee over it. The caterpillar turned into a butterfly and flew off. Suddenly, I was in a rain storm trying to bring in the laundry, and the caterpillar was there also crawling along the washing line.

## Dream Analysis

The best way to analyze dreams is through the recurring themes that emerge from a dream diary. Whether analysis concentrates on these themes or on powerful individual dreams, a good way to start is to separate the dream material into discrete categories: for example, scenery, objects, characters, events, colours, emotions. One should not strive for detailed accuracy: these categories may well overlap, and the memories themselves may be vague or confused. But try not to ignore apparently unimportant details, because these may be the very aspects that carry the most meaning.

Start by selecting something from whichever of the categories appears most relevant, and subject it to the process of Jungian direct association.... Write down the object (or whatever) in the centre of a piece of paper, hold it in the mind, and note down all associated images and ideas that come to you. Keep returning to the original stimulus. Try to ensure that each association is specific: if the dream contained a red car, it may be its colour, rather than the fact that it is a car, that is of most symbolic significance. When no more associations come to mind, put the paper aside and go on to the next dream symbol with which you want to deal, and so on, until all the desired categories have been covered.

[Carl] Jung, [a psychologist] suggested that direct association becomes easier if the dreamer imagines that he or she is describing each element to someone who has never encountered such a thing before. He also advocated elaborating upon direct associations, linking them to any personal reactions or responses that arise for the dreamer in response to the original dream image.

If few associations arise from a dream's main elements, the dream may be operating at Level 1, carrying little representational or symbolic meaning, and simply serving as a reminder of the significance owed to certain events in the dreamer's life. It may be hinting, for example, that particular emotions may need more acknowledgment, or may be providing clues about the solution to problems that have been worrying the dreamer at a conscious level.

If the dream appears to carry a further level of meaning that remains undetectable by direct association, Freudian<sup>1</sup> free association may be helpful, allowing the mind freely to follow a whole chain of thoughts and images set off by the individual dream element, with one idea emerging spontaneously from another. Jung complained that such free and unspecific associations lead the dreamer too far away from the original dream, but Freud's method can reveal significant repressed memories, urges or emotions that direct association may fail to reach.

If the memories and ideas that emerge from dreams are purely personal associations, the chances are that they emerge from a Level 2 dream, but if they seem to be working as archetypal symbols<sup>2</sup>... they are probably operating at Level 3.

Jung stressed that no dream interpretation should be imposed upon the dreamer: the meaning is uncovered only if it provides the dreamer with a self-insight, whether welcome or unwelcome, that rings true. Interpretations should "act" for the dreamer, setting his or her "life in motion again". To be truly effective, a dream interpretation should be confirmed not only by subsequent dreams, but also by subsequent life-events.

## Dream Control

Once interpretation has led us into the scenery of our dreams, and once we have recognized their landscapes as the symbols and archetypes of our unconscious mind, we can often begin directly to influence our dream life by trying by various techniques to carry aspects of our waking consciousness into sleep.

The ability regularly to become more conscious in our dreams is known as lucid dreaming ... and is often found in people who have a high degree of concentration and awareness in waking life. It is also associated with spiritual and occult powers. Tibetan Buddhism teaches that to gain control in the land of our dreams gives us control in the realms after death, where conscious awareness can free the initiate from the illusory cycle of birth and death.

There are several techniques for establishing awareness in dreams, and thus for experiencing them with the conscious mind. Hindu, Buddhist and Western esoteric orders link these methods with more general exercises, such as meditation and self-observation, designed to develop enhanced psychological and spiritual awareness. For example, some Western occultists advocate building up during prolonged and intensive meditation a clear visualization of oneself sitting opposite the physical body, and then transferring consciousness to this. Later, during sleep, this body can be used as the conscious dream body. It is also suggested that by co-hypnosis (which involves two practitioners simultaneously hypnotizing each other) it is even possible consciously to share and control experiences in the dream world.

Shamans attempt to fix a power object of some kind so firmly in the waking mind that it can even be visualized in sleep, reminding them that they are dreaming. The anthropologist Carlos Castaneda was advised by Don Juan, his Yaqui shaman guide to other worlds, to control his dreams and other altered states of consciousness by visualizing his own hands before sleeping, so that if they appeared in his dreams he would become aware that he was dreaming. Shamans also teach that if we vividly re-create the dream worlds in the imagination while we are consciously remembering our dreams, it becomes progressively easier to re-enter them in a conscious state while dreaming. Falling asleep determined to find a particular object, or hear a particular song, may also help to develop conscious control over dreaming.

The reflection technique involves asking oneself as often as possible during the day, "How do I know that I am not dreaming now?", and being as specific as possible with the answers. It then becomes easier to recognize an actual dream for what it is, and so assert control over it. A variation on this is the intention technique, in which the dreamer is encouraged constantly to tell himself or herself during the day that particular events in the dream world will be recognized as such by the aware, dreaming mind. If, for example, we frequently dream of horses, or trains, or schools, we should impress upon our waking mind that the appearance of such objects in dreams will alert us to the fact of dreaming.

A similar technique is to imagine ourselves dreaming of certain common objects or actions, like climbing stairs or running across a field, and attempt to visualize them as frequently as possible in waking life. Again, when the chosen image occurs in a dream, we become conscious of dreaming.

Autosuggestion, repeating to oneself again and again on the verge of our sleep that conscious awareness will emerge in our dreams, can also help.

Recent research on dream control has experimented with laboratory techniques. By recording eye movements or changes in pulse or in breathing, experimenters can detect the moment when REM dreaming commences. Alerting the dreamer with a mild electric shock from a device strapped to the wrist may induce a conscious understanding that a dream is in progress, thus bringing the dream within the dreamer's control.

A somewhat different approach, used by various Eastern traditions and by Jung in his technique of active imagination, is to imagine that one is dreaming while awake. Thus we enter a "virtual" waking dream world: everything is seen as an illusion which has been created by the mind, and can be changed at will. By reminding ourselves constantly that we are exercising this will when carrying out every waking action, we can potentially build a bridge between waking and dream consciousness, thus creating a single level of awareness that extends throughout waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep.

A similar technique of mind control is to develop the habit of asking ourselves when remembering dreams why it is that a particularly unusual dream event did not prompt us into realizing that we were dreaming. This technique trains the mind by reminding it of its past failures to alert us to the fact of dreaming, and encouraging it not to repeat such failures.

Many of the above techniques can be used in conjunction with each other as aids to lucid dreaming, as can more conventional methods such as keeping a dream diary or meditation. However, a key requirement for all techniques is patience: do not be too discouraged if the desired results are some time in coming.

It is also vital not to try too hard. Lucid dreaming is achieved by an act of will, but not by an act of teeth-gritting determination. Like any creative activity, it is most readily achieved by a mind that is concentrated, motivated and persistent, but at the same time light and playful.

## Solving Problems

The prescription that we should sleep upon problems is well known. Although the conscious ego is inactive while we sleep, some part of the mind continues working on the problems that beset it during the day, so that when we awake the solutions may be already in place.

Sometimes answers are actually given in dreams. A famous example is that of the German chemist Friedrich Kekulé who claimed that his ground-breaking discovery of the molecular structure of benzene, in 1865, came to him in a dream. Working hard on the problem, he fell asleep and dreamed of molecules dancing before his eyes, forming into patterns, then joining like a snake catching its tail in a dream representation of the so-called "benzene ring."

We can sometimes obtain a demonstration of the problem-solving power of the dreaming mind if we visualize an unsolved anagram or mathematical puzzle while drifting to sleep. Instructing the mind to work on the puzzle, just before sleep descends, can often stimulate a dream solution.

The answer may come literally, unfiltered by symbol. The Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev, after many fruitless attempts to tabulate the elements according to their atomic weight, dreamed their respective values and subsequently found all but one to be correct, a discovery that led to the publication of his periodic law in 1869.

When dreams offer symbolic rather than literal solutions, interpretation can be more difficult. The scientist Neils Bohr identified the model of a hydrogen atom in 1913 after a dream in which he stood on the sun and saw the planets attached to its surface by thin filaments as they circled overhead. Numerical solutions, in particular, may be conveyed in symbolic form, perhaps using associations lodged deep in the personal unconscious. For example, the number 3 might be indicated by an old three-legged stool from the dreamer's childhood.

One of the most astonishing of all dream discoveries, involving visitation by a dream ghost, is that of H.V. Hilprecht, Professor of Assyrian at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1893, Hilprecht was trying to decipher inscriptions on drawings of two agate fragments believed to come from finger rings, dating from c. 1300 BC and excavated from the ruins of a temple at Nippur in modern Iraq. Discouraged by lack of success, Hilprecht retired to bed and dreamed that an ancient Babylonian priest appeared before him to inform him with a wealth of background detail that the fragments were not separate rings at all but part of a cylinder that the priests had cut up to make earrings for a statue. If they were put together, the priest told him, the original inscription could be read with ease. Hilprecht awoke and confirmed the truth of his dream, receiving final proof when he examined the fragments in the museum at Istanbul.

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## MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. In Paragraphs 1, 7, 14, and 26 the writer introduces elements of the larger process of "working with dreams." What are each of these elements? Identify the smaller steps or techniques the writer presents within each one.
2. What overall logical pattern does the writer follow in organizing the essay? How does it help unify the essay, if at all? (See "Guide to Terms": Unity.)
3. To what extent do the examples that Fontana presents in Paragraphs 27 and 29-31 help make the explanation in Paragraphs 26-31 convincing? What qualities do these examples have in common?

## EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. The writer uses a number of subheadings to introduce the sections of the essay. How accurately do they describe and introduce the contents of each section? If you think they are not as accurate as they need to be, suggest alternatives.
2. Why do you think the writer provides alternative techniques for controlling and analyzing dreams or for solving problems through dreams? Does he offer readers any explanation of why there are multiple techniques or advice for choosing among them? If not, suggest some ways the author might give readers more guidance, and rewrite two paragraphs from the essay providing such advice for readers.
3. What is the tone of this essay? (Guide: Tone.) How does the author feel about the subject that he is discussing? What evidence is there of his feelings in the essay? What does he appear to assume about his reader's attitudes toward the subject?

## DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Paragraphs 2-4, 7-11, and 18-25 offer specific directions to readers. Analyze the words (especially verbs) that the writer uses to present these directions. What pattern does he follow in his word choice? Does he make different kinds of choices in each of the sections? If so, what are the differences? Do his specific word choices help him avoid seeming "bossy"? Why, or why not? (Guide: Diction.)
2. What does the diction in the sections listed above (in Question 1) contribute to the overall tone of the essay? (Guide: Tone.)
3. Use a dictionary to define the following words and use each appropriately in a sentence you create: REM (Par. 3); illusory (15); esoteric (16); shamans (17); tabulate (29).

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: In a group, share some dreams and compose an analysis of one of them following Fontana's advice.
2. Considering Audience: Some people dismiss dream interpretation on the grounds that it is unscientific or that it is uncertain and flawed. Create a list of the varied objections readers might have to dream interpretation. For each objection, search Fontana's essay for information, ideas, or statements that might provide an answer. For those he does not address, compose for the essay a paragraph or two that might convince readers of the seriousness and importance of what Fontana has to say.
3. Developing an Essay: Do some research of your own on dream interpretation and develop an essay offering advice on the subject that differs in significant ways from Fontana's advice. If possible, make direct reference to his work and indicate why your advice provides a worthwhile alternative.

(NOTE: Suggestions for essays requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313-314 at the end of this chapter.)

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## Deranged Marriage

This essay was published in *Life as We Know It: A Collection of Personal Essays* from Salon.com. In it, Sridhar Pappu describes a process of "courtship" and marriage likely to be unfamiliar to many readers. What makes this analysis of a process even more interesting is that in the particular events Pappu presents, the process doesn't work – though it is clear that it has worked for other people for many years.

In the days before last Christmas, a girl I had never met or spoken to called me to see if I wanted to marry her. It wasn't the girl, really, but her family. And they didn't call me, exactly. They called my mother.

Thus began a series of events that concluded on a Saturday night in January with me sitting in the dark, sobbing into a pillowcase, drinking a bottle of He'brew beer that I'd saved from a friend's Hanukkah party, and listening to Merle Haggard. I had taken on the antiquated custom of arranged marriage, in its modern incarnation, and it had beaten me into a state of previously unfathomable self-pity that happened to include very bad beer.

This was new terrain for me. I am Indian by birth, but I grew up as a white kid in southwest Ohio. I drank beer in open fields in high school and still consider my greatest adolescent achievement the night I walked into the homecoming dance with the prettiest girl in my senior class. I worship Johnny Bench. And until last December, the prospect of an arranged marriage was an abstract idea to me, the appropriate narrative vein for someone else's story; my grandparents', my parents', even my sister's, but never my own.

Of course, I had distaste for all of it: a feeling, which informed every John Hughes movie I ever saw, that any kind of outside involvement in finding that "someone" was, well, wrong. I can say truthfully now that I felt the right girl would just come to me on, say, the Wilson Avenue Bridge in Chicago, or within the basement-level environs of the old Knitting Factory in New York. *Tabula rasa*. I'm here.

I believed my future would be spent in apartments on the Upper East Side or in Greenwich Village, where, my hands shoved into the pockets of a tweed sports coat, I would find myself asking a waiflike brunet why she was leaving me or coming back to me, or if she had ever loved me at all. I saw my brows furrowed and my eyes drawn close. "Jenny," I'd say, "what's this all about?"

The fact of the matter is that I have passed through nearly half of my twenties without experiencing anything close to that exchange, and I realize that, on some level, the idea of an arranged marriage has always been with me. It has served as both an emboldening force against loneliness, and the precise cause of that loneliness, since it has hovered in the background as Plan B while I have searched for nothing less than the perfect girl.

Which brings us to the events of the past few months.

It all began with my hesitant approval of my mother's decision to start "the process." I did this without knowing precisely where or to whom that process might lead. Arranged marriage has changed a great deal since it was shipped to this country in the late 1960s, having been forced to embrace the exterior trappings of a world that it is designed to circumvent. There are (or can be) phone calls, dates, and months of courtship, supposedly meant to give the participants access to traits, qualities, and annoying habits not obvious at first glance. More important, these new aspects of the ritual seek to first simulate, then stimulate the intermittent passion, the plain pining, experienced in unmatched love.

My own faux dating started with a match to a girl from Louisiana that never got past the picture-viewing stage, then moved to a match with a soon-to-be-graduating medical school student from Florida. Nearly giddy in the days before Christmas, my mother and father called to say that, yes, "this one" was pretty, and soon, in a hotel room in Boston, they showed me her picture – with résumé.



The photograph showed her standing in profile, her face turned just slightly. She was wearing a sari with her hands placed over one another in an attempt to display a kind of grace. Her vita said her career goals include a “fellowship in gastroenterology” and listed her interests as “Languages, Literature” as well as travel and running. It went on to say that she enjoyed “people, social and fun loving.” My father said she’d be coming to Chicago on the residency-interview trail in January, and that was when I could meet her.

“For now,” said my father as I sat on the edge of the bed, pretending to only half-listen while watching *The Sopranos*, “we’re going to just concentrate on doctors.”

I met her two weeks later on a cold, sunless day. She had on a long, dark coat and a blue shawl, and a smile—bright and assured and unironic—that made her seem irreducibly pretty. We were, I felt, what a young couple should look like: well dressed and unwrinkled, what Eudora Welty once described as a “matched team—like professional, Spanish dancers wearing masks.”

We spent seven hours together—beginning with a tense ride and a tenses, chitchatty lunch at the Berghoff meant to create casualness where there was none. Of course, the easiest way for characters in any story to address the large, overarching dilemmas and issues (Why am I with you? What is going on between the two of us? How can I make things better?) is to talk about them, which, initiated by her, is what we did.

“Are your parents traditional?” she asked as we walked around the Art Institute.

“I guess they have traditional ideas,” I said. “My dad likes to play the liberal, but my mom’s the real heavy. They’re pretty great, though. I dunno. I mean, what do you mean by ‘traditional’?”

“I guess,” she said, “I mean, what do they expect out of this?”

“I’m not sure,” I said, and I wasn’t.

“What do you expect out of this?”

“I don’t know,” I said, taken by her matter-of-factness. “How about you?”

She went on to tell me that her parents first brought up the idea a year ago, saying that as long as she was going to visit these cities, she “might as well” begin to meet “these” boys.

Listening to this, I felt my limbs entirely weaken and my head grow light. I thought about the Cincinnati Bengals’ inability to keep their lead against the San Francisco 49ers in the 1989 Super Bowl, about the need for the Cincinnati Reds to pick up another quality starting pitcher. I saw my picture pasted on a bulletin board along with those of other earnest, nearsighted young Indian men. How did my looks rate next to theirs? My clothes? My hair? How did she feel when I told her that I felt unnerved around large groups of Indian people, that most of my close friends were Jewish?

I wanted to go home, but of course I didn’t. Instead, I finished the museum tour with her and walked north up Michigan Avenue, talking to her about city politics in Chicago and Miami. She told me that she loved Cuban coffee, and I said that my father had raised my sister and me to drink Maxwell House black. She said there was nothing so pretty as a Florida sunset, but that she wanted to live in a place with hip, young professionals. I didn’t ask but was pretty certain that she really, really liked *Friends*.

“So, Sridhar,” she said before we entered a Starbucks, “what else?”

“About me,” I replied, “or about this?”

“About this,” she said. “What are your concerns?”

That night in my notebook, I would write that I was “gripped by an acute sensation to hold her and only let go 30 or 40 years later.” I know, yeech. But I suppose that a good deal of me had thought this was a moment of real definition, where she could see something that set me apart from the rest of the Sanjays and Ajays, the would-be radiologists and software engineers. The future had in fact unfolded. Now it just needed ironing out.

Inside, over a tall mocha and a tall house coffee, we spoke about our problems with the process and what we expected from a potential spouse. She said she didn’t want to get married for two more years, and that she wanted to move to Houston. Proximity, she said, was a definite issue. I expressed the sentiment that part of me didn’t feel Indian enough, that I wanted someone not entirely freaked out by my intention to eventually write a novel.

Smitten is the word for what I felt. In the course of the day I had premonitions of attending her medical school graduation in May, of buying a fixer-upper in Houston’s Rice Village with a large sunporch and a home office in the attic. Premature feelings perhaps, but not entirely out of line with the heightened sense that comes with these things, where every word choice, every pause, every action takes on 400 to 500 additional pounds in emotional weight.

I told her that I'd like to see her before she left town, and she said that she felt the same. When I called her two days later, however, she said seeing me again wasn't possible, that she had gone ahead and made plans with other people. "I guess," she said, "it's just not going to happen."

A pretty good piece of dialogue for someone who is not a writer, good enough to plunge me into a rueful weekend of darkness and "Mama Tried."

Since then, however, in talks with my parents and my sister, I have come to see this experience for what it was: the first match, the initial act in a process that seeks to remove the randomness from life, that deals with affection directly and is meant to eliminate the ambiguities and missed signals that plague us once we enter the love life of adults.

I'm not sure if it will ever "happen" for me, not in this way. But for now I'm willing to try.

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## MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What is the process Sridhar Pappu describes in this essay?
2. What do the imagined events described in Paragraph 5 reveal about the writer's cultural and social values?
3. How does the process Pappu presents differ from more traditional versions of the process? Can these differences account for the reactions he describes in Paragraph 2? Why, or why not?

## EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. Describe the strategy Pappu uses to open the essay. (See "Guide to Terms": Introductions.)
2. Is the opening to the essay likely to be effective in getting the attention of most readers? Why, or why not? (Guide: Evaluation.)
3. Why does the writer describe the failure of the process in Paragraph 2?
4. Where in the essay does the presentation of the process begin? Why do you think the writer waits so long to begin the presentation?

## DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Why does the writer use the phrase "faux dating"? Is the meaning of this phrase likely to be apparent to most readers? Why, or why not?
2. At several points in the essay, the writer includes quotations from himself and from other people. For what purposes does he include these quotations?

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working with a group of writers, make a list of activities that your parents and other people from earlier generations accomplish in ways different from those that are common or fashionable today. Make a list of the differences among present and past (or "traditional") processes. Then choose one process, and summarize the differences between present and past versions in a paragraph or two.
2. Considering Audience: Choose one of the processes from activity 1, above, and explore in writing what people from different age groups need to know about the values and ideas that shape each different version of the process.
3. Developing an Essay: Write an essay about the topic you explored in activity 2, presenting different versions of the process, and explain it to both contemporary and "traditional" audiences.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by analysis of PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313-314 at the end of this chapter.)

JIM HARRISON has written poems, novels, and screenplays. His books include *Legends of the Fall* (1980), *Wolf: A False Memoir* (1989), *Just Before Dark: Collected Nonfiction* (1991), *The Woman Lit by Fireflies* (1991), *The Theory and Practice of Rivers and New Poems* (1989), *After Ikkyu and Other Poems* (1996), *The Shape of the Journey: Collected Poems* (1998), and *Sundog: The Story of an American Foreman, Robert Corvus Strang* (1999).

## Going Places

**“Going Places” first appeared in *Outside* magazine. In this essay, Harrison presents an unusual set of directions, for drivers “obsessed with going places, pure and simple, for the sake of movement, anywhere and practically anytime.” Since the people he claims to be addressing are not the kind likely to follow instructions step-by-step, he adopts a slightly different approach, offering instead a set of suggestions and precepts. At the same time, however, he speaks to those readers who are less adventurous or independent in their ways, providing a blueprint for adventure and (self-)discovery that he encourages them to follow if only in parts, on short journeys as well as long ones. By the end of the essay, most writers are likely to agree that Harrison’s larger purpose is to suggest ways for readers to live richer, freer, and more imaginative lives.**

Everyone remembers those kindergarten or first-grade jigsaw puzzles of the forty-eight states, not including Hawaii and Alaska, which weren’t states when I was a child and perhaps for that reason are permanently beyond my sphere of interest. I’m not at all sure at what age a child begins to comprehend the abstraction of maps—Arthur Rimbaud’s line about the “child crazed with maps” strikes home. Contiguous states in the puzzle were of different colors, establishing the notion that states are more different from one another than they really are. The world grows larger with the child’s mind, but each new step doesn’t abolish the previous steps, so it’s not much more than a big child who finally gets a driver’s license, certainly equivalent to losing your virginity in the list of life’s prime events.

It is at this point that pathology enters: Out of a hundred drivers the great majority find cars pleasant enough, and some will be obsessed with them in mechanical terms, but two or three out of the hundred will be obsessed with going places, pure and simple, for the sake of movement, anywhere and practically anytime.

“You haven’t been anywhere until you’ve taken Route 2 through the Sand Hills of Nebraska,” they’re liable to say, late at night.

“Or Route 191 in Montana, 35 in Wisconsin, 90 in West Texas, 28 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, 120 in Wyoming, 62 in Arkansas, 83 in Kansas, 14 in Louisiana,” I reply, after agreeing that 2 in Nebraska is one of my favorites. To handle Route 2 properly, you should first give a few hours to the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island to check on the human and natural history of the Great Plains. If you don’t care all that much about what you’re seeing, you should stay home, or, if you’re just trying to get someplace, take a plane.

There is, of course, a hesitation to make any rules for the road; the main reason you’re out there is to escape any confinement other than that of change and motion. But certain precepts and theories should be kept in mind:

- Don't compute time and distance. Computing time and distance vitiates the benefits to be gotten from aimlessness. Leave that sort of thing to civilians with their specious categories of birthdays, average wage, height and weight, the number of steps to second floors. If you get into this acquisitive mood, make two ninety-degree turns and backtrack for a while. Or stop the car and run around in a big circle in a field. Climbing a tree or going swimming also helps. Remember that habit is a form of gravity that strangulates.
- Leave your reason, your logic, at home. A few years ago I flew all the way from northern Michigan to Palm Beach, Florida, in order to drive to Livingston, Montana, with a friend. Earlier in life I hitchhiked 4,000 miles round-trip to see the Pacific Ocean. Last year I needed to do some research in Nebraska. Good sense and the fact that it was January told me to drive south, then west by way of Chicago, spend a few days, and drive home. Instead I headed due north into a blizzard and made a three-day backroad circle to La Crosse, Wisconsin, one of my favorite hideouts. When I finished in Nebraska, I went to Wyoming, pulled a left for Colorado and New Mexico, a right for Arizona, headed east across Texas and Louisiana to Alabama, then north toward home. My spirit was lightened by the thirty-five days and 8,000 or so miles. The car was a loaner, and on deserted back roads I could drive on cruise control, standing on the seat with shoulders and head through the sunroof.
- Spend as little time as possible thinking about the equipment. Assuming you are not a mechanic, and even if you are, it's better not to think too much about the car over and above minimum service details. I've had a succession of three four-wheel-drive Subaru station wagons, each equipped with a power winch, although recently I've had doubts about this auto. I like to take the car as far as I can go up a two-track, then get out and walk until the road disappears. This is the only solution to the neurotic pang that you might be missing something. High-performance cars don't have the clearance for back roads, and orthodox four-wheel drives are too jouncy for long trips. An ideal car might be a Saab turbo four-wheel-drive station wagon, but it has not as yet been built by that dour land without sunshine and garlic. A Range Rover is a pleasant, albeit expensive, idea, but you could very well find yourself a thousand miles from a spare part.
- A little research during downtime helps. This is the place for the lost art of reading. The sort of driving I'm talking about is a religious impulse, a craving for the unknown. You can, however, add to any trip immeasurably by knowing something about the history of the area or location. For instance, if you're driving through Chadron, Nebraska, on Route 20, it doesn't hurt to know that Crazy Horse, He Dog, American Horse, Little Big Man, and Sitting Bull took the same route when it was still a buffalo path.
- Be careful about who you are with. Whiners aren't appropriate. There can be tremendous inconveniences and long stretches of boredom. It takes a specific amount of optimism to be on the road, and anything less means misery. A nominal Buddhist who knows that "the goal is the path" is at an advantage. The essential silence of the highway can allow couples to turn the road into a domestic mud bath by letting their petty grievances preoccupy them. Marriages survive by garden-variety etiquette, and when my wife and I travel together we forget the often suffocating flotsam and jetsam of marriage.

If you're driving solo, another enemy can be the radio or tape deck. This is an eccentric observation, but anyone under fifty in America has likely dissipated a goodly share of his life listening to music. Music frequently draws you out of where you belong. It is hard work to be attentive, but it's the only game in town. D. H. Lawrence said that "the only true aristocracy is consciousness," which doesn't mean you can't listen to music; just don't do it all the time. Make your own road tapes: Start with cuts of Del Shannon, Merle Haggard, Stravinsky, Aretha Franklin, Bob Seger, Mozart, Buffett, Monteverdi, Woody Guthrie, Jim Reeves, B. B. King, George Jones, Esther Lammandier, Ray Charles, Bob Wills, and Nicholas Thorne. That sort of thing.

If you're lucky, you can find a perfect companion. During a time of mutual stress I drove around Arizona with the grizzly bear expert Douglas Peacock, who knows every piece of flora, fauna, and Native American history in that state. In such company, the most unassertive mesa becomes verdant with possibility.

- Pretend you don't care about good food. This is intensely difficult if you are a professional pig, gourmand, and trencherman like I am. If you're going to drive around America you have to adopt the bliss-ninny notion that less is more. Pack a cooler full of disgusting health snacks. I am assuming you know enough to stay off the interstates with their sneeze shields and rainbow Jell-Os, the dinner specials that include the legendary "fried, fried," a substantial meal spun out of hot fat by the deep-fry cook. It could be anything from a shoe box full of oxygen to a cow plot to a dime-store wig. In honor of my own precepts I have given up routing designed to hit my favorite restaurants in Escanaba, Duluth, St. Cloud (Ivan's in the Park), Mandan, Miles City, and so on. The quasi-food revolution hasn't hit the countryside; I've had good luck calling disc jockeys for advice. You generally do much better in the South, particularly at barbecue places with hand-painted road signs. Along with food you might also consider amusements: If you stop at local bars or American Legion country dances don't offer underage girls hard drugs and that sort of thing. But unless you're a total asshole, Easy Rider paranoia is unwarranted. You are technically safer on the road than you are in your own bathroom or eating a dinner of unrecognizable leftovers with your mother.
- Avoid irony, cynicism, and self-judgment. If you were really smart, you probably wouldn't be doing this. You would be in an office or club acting nifty, but you're in a car and no one knows you, and no one calls you because they don't know where you are. Moving targets are hard to hit. You are doing what you want, rather than what someone else wants. This is not the time to examine your shortcomings, which will certainly surface when you get home. Your spiritual fathers range from Marco Polo to Arthur Rimbaud, from Richard Halliburton to Jack Kerouac. Kerouac was the first actual novelist I ever met, back in 1957 or 1958 at the Five Spot, a jazz club in New York City. I saw him several times, and this great soul did not dwell on self-criticism, though, of course, there is an obvious downside to this behavior.
- Do not scorn day trips. You can use them to avoid nervous collapse. They are akin to the ardent sailor and his small sailboat. You needn't travel very far unless you live in one of our major urban centers, strewn across the land like immense canker sores. Outside this sort of urban concentration, county maps are available at any courthouse. One summer in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, after a tour in Hollywood had driven me ditzzy, I logged more than 5,000 miles in four counties on gravel roads and two-tracks, lifting my sodden spirits and looking for good grouse and woodcock cover (game birds literally prefer to live in their restaurants, their prime feeding areas). This also served to keep me out of bars and away from drinking, because I don't drink while driving.
- Plan a real big one—perhaps hemispheric, or least national. Atrophy is the problem. If you're not expanding, you're growing smaller. As a poet and novelist I have to get out of the study and collect some brand-new memories, and many of our more memorable events are that of the childish, the daffy and irrational. "How do you know but that every bird that cuts the airy wavy is an immense world of delight closed to your senses five?" asked Blake. If you're currently trapped, your best move is to imagine the next road voyage.

I'm planning a trip when I finish my current novel, for which I had to make an intense study of the years 1865 to 1900 in our history, also the history of Native Americans. I intend to check out locations where I sensed a particular magic in the past: certain culverts in western Minnesota, nondescript gullies in Kansas, invisible graveyards in New Mexico, moonbeam targets in Nebraska, buffalo jumps in Montana, melted ice palaces in the Dakotas, deserted but well-stocked wine warehouses in California. Maybe I'll discover a new bird or animal. Maybe I'll drive up a gravel road that winnows into a two-track that stops at an immense swale, in the center of which is a dense woodlot. I'll wade through the bog into the woods, where I'll find an old, gray farmhouse. In this farmhouse I'll find all my beloved dead dogs and cats in perfect health, tended by the heroines in my novels. I'll make a map of this trip on thin buckskin that I'll gradually cut up and add to stews. Everyone must find his own places.

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## MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. Why does Harrison begin this essay with a reflection on experiences of learning geography as a child? Is this an appropriate introduction for the remainder of the essay? Explain your response. (See "Guide to Terms": Introductions; Evaluation.)
2. Why does Harrison provide readers with statistics (though somewhat unscientific ones) in Paragraph 2? Describe the types of people to whom Harrison refers.
3. Why (in Paragraph 11) does Harrison refer to the tape deck and radio as potential enemies? What point might he be trying to make? How successful do you think his alternative is in avoiding the negative aspects of such equipment?

## EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. Harrison's "list" (Paragraphs 6–10) is not the same kind of step-by-step list that Buhler and Graham present in "Give Juggling a Hand!" (pp. 262–264). What type of organization does he use to present the process? How effective is this approach? (Guide: Evaluation.)
2. What predominant tone does Harrison use throughout this essay? (Guide: Tone.) Where does the essay vary in tone, and why?
3. What type of reality is Harrison attempting to shape or present in his essay? Why does he use quotations in Paragraphs 3 and 4? What is the effect of these quotations in shaping reality?

## DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. For what level of reader is Harrison's work written? Make a list of the characteristics you think Harrison assumes his readers will have. What parts of the essay support your conclusions?
2. Highlight any words in the essay that are unfamiliar to you. Look up each of the words in a dictionary and use each one appropriately in a sentence.

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: From your own perspective, write a list of key elements for a good automobile "travel" experience. Then, working in a group, compare lists. Look for common threads and write out a plan for an essay similar to Harrison's that expresses your collective thoughts on travel.
2. Considering Audience: People who travel frequently by automobile might respond positively to Harrison's essay. Even if they disagree with some of his points, they will likely understand his emphasis on the importance of the process of traveling by car. In writing, describe briefly how you might compose a similar kind of essay for people who generally travel by train, bus, or plane.
3. Developing an Essay: The term "rugged individualism" is often applied in a positive way to the character of Americans, particularly those who explored the Western frontier. The trait still shapes the behavior of some Americans today, including people who set out on cross-country drives with no particular destination. Write an essay comparing the concept of "going places" during the exploration and settlement of the Western frontier to travel and exploration today. You may need to do some research on the exploration and settlement in nineteenth-century America for your essay.

(NOTE: Suggestions for essays requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313–314 at the end of this chapter.)

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## Issues and Ideas

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### Advertising and Appearances

- James B. Twitchell, *We Build Excitement*
- Jean E. Kilbourne, *Beauty...And the Beast of Advertising*
- Jessica Mitford, *To Dispel Fears of Live Burial*

Do appearances count? When they come to us on television, in movies, or through advertisements, they do—at least, that is what the authors of the essays that follow suggest.

James Twitchell explains how the images and strategies of advertising create and maintain a culture of which we are a part: a culture based on ever-present images and texts encouraging us to buy brand-name products, which he refers to as “adcult.” Adcult makes one product appear better or more desirable than others and helps shape our tastes, choices, environment, and values, a process Twitchell analyzes in detail.

Jean E. Kilbourne offers a sharply critical analysis of the images of physical appearance and of behavior that dominate various media and have influenced our attitudes toward our bodies, our values, and our behaviors in harmful ways. She focuses especially on the ways women participate in and are affected by this process, but her conclusions also apply to society at large.

Jessica Mitford’s treatment of our fascination with appearances has an even harder edge. She offers a biting satiric and humorous view of our concern with the appearance of the dead, a form of manipulation that amounts almost to a denial of the reality of death. Though she puts primary blame on the funeral industry for creating and maintaining this obsession with false appearances, she includes in her indictment all of us who willingly tolerate the sham process.

Taken together, these essays demonstrate the importance of media images in contemporary life and suggest ways of interpreting and analyzing these images that can lead to further writing.

## James B. Twitchell

JAMES B. TWITCHELL was born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1943. He received his B.A. (1962), M.A. (1966), and Ph.D. (1969) from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has taught at Duke University, California State University Bakersfield, and the University of Florida, where he is currently Alumni Professor of English. Though much of Twitchell’s writing has appeared in scholarly journals and in books issued by university presses, his work is nonetheless interesting and accessible to a wide audience of readers. Among his books are *Forbidden Partners: The Incest Taboo in Modern Culture* (1986); *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror* (1987); *Preposterous Violence: Fables of Aggression in Modern Culture* (1989); *Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America* (1992) (nominated for a National Book Award and a National Book Critics Circle Award); and *Adcult USA: The Triumph of Advertising in American Culture* (1996).

### We Build Excitement

In this selection from *Adcult USA* (1996), James Twitchell talks about the process by which advertising became part of our culture and now serves as a primary force in shaping our culture, our perceptions, and our values. The selection is primarily informational and makes use of numerous examples in its analysis of the process. Twitchell is critical, at times, of the work of advertisers, but his criticism is much less harsh than that of many other writers, for, as he admits in the preface to *Adcult USA*, “I have always loved advertising.”

The Hatter in the Strand of London, instead of making better felt-hats than another, mounts a huge lath-and-plaster Hat, seven feet high, upon wheels; sends a man to drive it through the streets; hoping to be saved thereby. He has not attempted to make better hats, as he was appointed by the Universe to do, and as with this ingenuity of his he could very probably have done, but his whole industry is turned to persuade us that he has made such! He too knows that the Quack has become God.

Thomas Carlyle just didn't get it. The Hatter in the Strand of London was not in the business of making hats to make better hats. He made hats to make money. The Victorians may have commanded the manufacturer to make the best of what he set out to do, but the culture of capitalism does not care so much about what he makes as about what he can sell. Hence the “best” hat becomes the most profitable hat. Ironically, perhaps he cannot make hats profitably unless he can market what he makes efficiently. The selling determines the making. And once he makes those best hats, especially if he has a machine to help him, heaven help him if he makes too many. If he has to spend some of his productive time acting like a nut in order to sell those hats, so be it.

The ingredients necessary to concoct an Adcult [culture of advertising] are not complex. The Hatter in the Strand of London is crucial. Because the Hatter probably has enough hats for his own use, he makes something that has exchange value. Assuming that he can control the retail price, the more he manufactures, the more he takes advantage of the economies of mass production and the greater the profit. To control that retail price however, he needs some method to differentiate his hat or he will produce more than he can sell. After all, because the product is partially machine made, it is essentially interchangeable with a competitor's product made with the same machinery.

The process of differentiation, called branding, is the key ingredient in all advertising. Make all the machine-made felt hats, biscuits, shoes, cigarettes, automobiles, or computer chips you want, but you cannot sell effectively until you can call it a Fedora, a Ritz, a Nike, a Marlboro, a Chevrolet, or an Intel 386. If everybody's biscuits are in the same barrel, and if they look pretty much the same, urging people to buy biscuits probably won't do the trick. Chances are, they won't buy your biscuit. As Thomas J. Barratt said at almost the same time that Carlyle was having at the Hatter, “Any fool can make soap. It takes a clever man to sell it.”<sup>3</sup> Barratt was a clever man. He made a fortune by the end of the century by calling his soap Pears' Soap and making sure everyone knew about it by defacing miles of Anglo-American wall and newsprint space with “Have you had your Pears' today?” In many ways modern culture has been a battle between Carlyle and Barratt. If you aren't sure who won, look around you.

Adcult also requires purchasers with sufficient disposable income to buy your product. And it doesn't hurt if your audience members have enough curiosity to listen to you tell them your biscuits are different when they know all biscuits are the same. But watch out: this process is not without risk. When money is tight, brands take flight. For reasons no one can understand, from time to time markets fall apart, advertising loses its grip, and the charade has to be reenacted. Procter & Gamble spent billions building its soap brands, Philip Morris did the same with premium cigarettes, as did IBM with the personal computer, only to have the demand for their brands suddenly plummet. Generics appear to eat up what advertising created. Brands can suddenly become just commodities again. The Hatter in the Strand soon responds by dropping his prices and by making a still larger lath-and-plaster hat.

With those ingredients in the pot all an Adcult still needs is a plasma, or conduit, between producer and consumer within which producers can, in the jargon of modern criticism, inscribe their message. The ever bigger lath-and-plaster hat is soon subject to diminishing returns. The brand may appear on his hat, but its name recognition is created in a medium. So along with his sign the Hatter may even decide to hire someone to advertise his product by voice. In the nineteenth century consumers still heard the cries of the costermonger (the coster is a kind of English apple) or other traders announcing their wares:

One-a-penny, two-a-penny, hot cross buns!  
One-a-penny, two for tup'ence, hot cross buns!

Dust, O! Dust O! Bring it out today.  
Bring it out today! I shan't be here tomorrow!

I sweep your Chimnies clean, O!  
I sweep your Chimney clean, O!

Buy my Diddle Dumplings, hot! hot!  
Diddle, Diddle, Diddle, Dumplings, hot!

Maids, I mend old Pans or Kettles,  
Mend old Pans or Kettles, O!



Muffins, O! Crumpets! Muffins to-day!  
Crumpets, O! Muffins, O! Fresh to-day!

Street cries and moving hats “set upon wheels” are no longer major conduits in modern Adcult. True, the urban bus has become a billboard. And the billboard plastered on a truck is making a comeback in cluttered cities (the sides of such rolling billboards are lit fluorescently and can change panels every ten minutes), and the human voice can still be heard on street corners.<sup>4</sup> But they are no match for ink and electrons.

With the advent of print and paste, signs moved to walls. From the late seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth the great cities of western Europe were nightly plastered over—sometimes twice a night—with what became known as posters. Seventeenth-century London streets were so thick with signs that Charles II proclaimed that “no sign shall be hung across the streets shutting out the air and light of the heavens.” Although it was against the law, even Fleet Street Prison was posted. As the “post no bills” regulations took hold, posters became free-standing billboards. The “boards” grew so thick in America that people could barely see Niagara Falls through the forest of Coca-Cola and Mennen’s Toilet powder signs. N. W. Ayer Company executives bragged that if all the boards they had erected for Nabisco were painted on a fence, the fence would enclose the Panama Canal on either side, from sea to shining sea.

What distinguishes modern advertising is that it has jumped from the human voice and printed posters to anything that can carry it. Almost every physical object now carries advertising, almost every human environment is suffused with advertising, almost every moment of time is calibrated by advertising.

Start the day with breakfast. What’s on the cereal box but the Ninja Turtles, Batman, or the Addams Family? Characters real or imagined once sold cereal; now they are the cereal. Once Wild Bill Hickock, Bob Mathias, Huckleberry Hound, and Yogi Bear touted Sugar Pops or Wheaties. Now the sugar gobs reappear every six months, renamed to cross-promote some event. When the most recent Robin Hood movie was released, a Prince of Thieves Cereal appeared on grocery shelves. Alas, the movie did not show Mr. Hood starting the day with his own brand. But Kellogg has tried for this brass ring of promotion anyway. It has marketed cereals with Jerry Seinfeld and Jay Leno on the boxes and then gone on to buy commercial time on their network, NBC. It is of some comfort that while cereals sporting Barbie and Donkey Kong have gone stale on the shelves, the redoubtable Fred Flintstone and his Flintstones cereal survive.

Go to school. The classroom is the Valhalla of place-based media. Better than the doctor’s office, the shopping mall, the health club, the hospital, and the airport, here you have the ideal—a captive audience with more disposable income than discretion. Advertising material is all over the place. For home economics classes Chef Boyardee supplies worksheets on how to use pasta; Prego counters with the Prego Science Challenge complete with an “instructional kit” to test the thickness of various spaghetti sauces. General Mills sends out samples of its candy along with a pamphlet, “Gushers: Wonders of the Earth,” which encourages the kids to learn about geysers by biting the “fruit snack.” Monsanto donates a video suggesting that the world cannot be fed without using pesticides; Union Carbide does the same, saying chemicals “add comfort to your lives.” Exxon has an energy awareness game in which nonrenewable natural resources are not losers. K-Swiss sneakers provides shoes for participants in a video creation of an ad for...you guessed it. And Kodak, McDonald’s, and Coca-Cola plaster a national essay contest about why kids should stay in school with corporate logos and concern. Clearly, one reason to stay in school is to consume more advertising.

Go shopping. The war, as they say, is in the store. Food shoppers make almost two-thirds of their buying decisions when they set foot in the aisle. Capitalizing on these last-minute decisions is why grocers don’t alphabetize soup sections, why all the raisin bran cereals are not bunched together, and why high-profit toothbrushes are both nestled with toothpastes and stacked almost at random throughout the store. With more than fifteen hundred new items introduced to supermarkets each month, the need to inform and convince the querulous shopper of the new product is intense. The experience of food buying has become an advertising adventure.

A company called Ad-Tiles puts its ads on the floors in Pathmark stores, charging what amounts to 50 cents per thousand impressions. Flashing coupon dispensers are omnipresent, except near the upright freezers and open dairy case, because shoppers do not like to open doors to compare prices—too cold. They won't even open the door for coupons. The latest hot places for advertising are the checkout line and the shopping cart. The shopping cart, which revolutionized food shopping as much as self-service, because it determined the amount of food a shopper could buy, has come alive. VideOcart is here, almost. This shopping cart has a six-by-nine-inch screen affixed to what used to be the kiddie rumble seat, and infrared sensors on the ceiling cause it to flash ads, messages, and recipes as you pass various products. The same technology that scans the Universal Product Code on your can of beans now scans the shopper. You are the can.

Go to a sporting event. It's football season. Let's go to a bowl game. Which one? Or which product? The Orange Bowl has become the Federal Express Orange Bowl, the Cotton Bowl has become the Mobil Cotton Bowl, the Sugar Bowl has become the USF&G Sugar Bowl, and the Sun Bowl has become the John Hancock Bowl. Not to mention the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl (now the IBM OS/2 Fiesta Bowl), the Mazda Gator Bowl (now the Outback Steakhouse Gator Bowl), the Sea World Holiday Bowl, the Domino's Pizza Copper Bowl, the California Raisin Bowl, and everyone's favorite, the Poulan/Weed Eater Independence Bowl. For a while even the Heisman Memorial Trophy was up for grabs. Merrill Lynch paid \$1.5 million for promotional rights but not for a name change. Not yet. No matter: Merrill Lynch already has a golf tournament.

Take a trip. Get away from Adcult. Weren't we told in the famous Cunard advertisement that getting there is half the fun? Hop in a taxi. Some urban cabs have alphanumeric signs that scroll ten ads per minute across a panel on the back of the front seat. Gannett, the billboard-and-newspaper conglomerate, has been experimenting with installing these "electronic gutters" in subway cars and has contracted with the Transit Authority of New York to put them in six thousand cars. Nothing revolutionary here, just the electrifying of the advertising card, which has been a staple of public transportation since the first trolley. The company has also introduced what it calls the brand train and the brand bus in which a sponsor can buy all the ad space on a particular vehicle that runs a specific route. So Donna Karan's DKNY line has taken over an entire ten-car train that runs under Lexington Avenue on Manhattan's East Side, endlessly running beneath DKNY's superstore at Bloomingdale's. Gannett also installed radio equipment in bus shelters around midtown Manhattan for a news and business station. The New York City Department of Transportation ordered Gannett to pull the plug—too much noise.

No destination is safe. The Russian government has even sold space inside Red Square. For something less than \$1 million your message can be part of the May Day celebration. Coca-Cola and Pepsi are already in Pushkin Square. For \$100,000 the side of GUM, the largest department store in the world, is yours. Lenin's tomb is off-limits, but above Lenin's tomb is OK. For about \$30,000 you can float a blimp. Who's itching to get onto Russian space? The usual suspects: AT&T, Reebok, Sara Lee, and of course the ever-present tobacco companies.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, no matter where you go in this world or beyond, when you get home, your credit card bill for the trip will eventually appear. When it does, it may have that tear-off tag on the envelope upon which is printed yet another ad.

Almost as interesting as where advertising is, is where it might be. Here are some of the more interesting venues contributed by advertising men and women who make hundreds of thousands of dollars thinking up and trying out some of these locations:

- Subway tokens.
- The backs of chairs in commuter trains.
- The Gateway Arch in St. Louis.
- Postage stamps and paper currency.
- In place of the telephone dial tone.
- Polo ponies.
- The bottom of golf holes, to be observed while putting and then while removing the ball.
- Self-serve gasoline pumps. Messages scroll along with the amount of gas pumped.
- Rural mailboxes. Although the Postal Service prohibits advertising on boxes, John Deere has produced a green and yellow version that retails for about \$50.
- Astronauts' uniforms.
- Postcards. Laden with advertising, they are given to patrons by restaurants.
- School buses.
- Slot machines. Why should they come up cherries and oranges? Why not boxes of Tide?

- Catalogs. This has been done, most notably by The Sharper Image, but the reverse is almost as interesting – a recent Lands’ End catalog included a story by David Mamet.
- Video games. “Cool Spot” is a game like “Pac Man,” except it stars “Spot,” the 7-Up mascot. “Yo! Noid” is a game centered around the Domino’s Pizza character. “Mick and Mack: Global Gladiators” has a black hero who battles pollution. To get from level to level the player has to collect golden arches passed out by a gate-tending Ronald McDonald.

**It may be of some comfort to critics of this use of the human imagination that a new advertising medium has begun appearing inside advertising agencies. Called Media News, it appears on a never ending fifty-four-by-eight-inch alphanumeric display similar to the Dow Jones market ticker. Running across the board is information interspersed with thirty seconds of commercials. Advertisers pay \$5,000 for thirteen weeks of ads in a medium described by its creators as “invasive without being aggravating.” Poetic justice?**

The rise of place-based (as it is known in the trade), in your face (as it is experienced), or new media (as it is presented to the public) follows the principle that where blank space exists, there shall advertising be. The triumph of Adcult is attributable not so much to new products as to new media reaching new audiences. Each new invasion by commercialism is greeted with an outcry, followed by tentative acceptance, assumption, and expectation. And finally, of course, neglect.

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#### MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What, according to the writer, did Thomas Carlyle fail to understand (see Par. 1)? What key point about business and advertising does the writer make in rejecting Carlyle’s point of view?
2. What are the ingredients of an Adcult, and where does the writer discuss them? Is this definition satisfactory? In what ways, if any, might it be improved?
3. How does modern advertising differ from that of previous centuries? Be specific.

#### EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. In what way are the italicized sentences beginning Paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15 linked to the second sentence in Paragraph 9? Discuss how this linking provides coherence within the second half of the selection. (See “Guide to Terms”: Coherence.) In what ways does Paragraph 9, as a whole, help unify the selection? (Guide: Unity.)
2. In which paragraphs does the writer employ extended examples? In which does he use clusters of brief examples? Which paragraphs containing brief examples are especially effective? Why? Are any markedly less effective? Explain why.
3. How would you describe the overall tone of this selection? In what ways, if at all, does the tone add to or detract from the informational goals of the piece? Can the tone in Paragraphs 10, 11, and 16 be considered either ironic or sarcastic? (Guide: Irony.) If so, does this tone undermine the writer’s claim that “I have always loved advertising”? Explain. If not, what do you believe is the tone of these paragraphs?

## DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Would you characterize the diction in Paragraphs 11–13 as specific or general? As abstract or concrete? (Guide: Specific/General; Concrete/Abstract.) Cite examples to support your conclusions. How does the diction contribute to the purpose and effect of these paragraphs? (Guide: Purpose.)
2. Compare the diction in Paragraphs 5–6 and 15–16. Which makes greater use of formal diction, and why? Which makes greater use of colloquial language, and why? (Guide: Colloquial Expressions.) To what extent does the writer use the connotations of terms as well as their denotations to criticize advertisers? (Guide: Connotation/Denotation.) Is this criticism harsh or mild, direct or indirect? Explain.
3. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following terms, look them up in a dictionary: lath, quack (Par 1); differentiate (3); charade, plummet (5); conduit, inscribe, costermonger (6); suffused, calibrated (9); redoubtable (10); Valhalla (11); omnipresent (13); invasive (18); attributable, tentative, assumption (19).

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Advertising is a good subject for expository writing. Working with a group, make up a set of questions about advertising and then list details, ideas, and possible topics under each. When you are finished, look through the list to see if you can discover possible focuses for essays. Choose the two you find most promising, and develop an essay plan for each. Here are several questions to get you started: Other than manufacturers, who sponsors advertising? What different kinds of advertising do we encounter in a typical day? Do different kinds of advertising achieve their effects through different processes?
2. Considering Audience: Twitchell uses many examples in his essay, and in so doing he represents the tastes, values, and interests of many groups of readers. But he does not include all possible readers. What significant groups (ethnic, occupational religious, or otherwise) are not represented in the examples? Do any of these omissions seriously weaken the essay? If so, which ones? Suggest several examples that might be added to the essay to broaden its appeal or make it more effective in some other way.
3. Developing an Essay: Drawing on “We Build Excitement” as a model, create an essay of your own showing how the contemporary form of some activity or process (fishing, basketball, or clothing design and manufacture, for example) differs from earlier forms. Also explain the special features of the contemporary process in detail.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313–314 at the end of this chapter.)

JEAN E. KILBOURNE is a media critic whose award-winning films *Still Killing Us Softly* and *Calling the Shots* explore the relationships between media and advertising images and our values and behaviors. She lectures regularly on alcohol and cigarette advertising, images of women in advertising, and related issues.

## Beauty...And the Beast of Advertising

In this essay, first published in *Media & Values* in 1989, Kilbourne analyzes the ways media images shape perceptions and values, particularly those of women. This essay blends a number of patterns, including definition, process analysis, and cause-and-effect analysis.

"You're a Halston woman from the very beginning," the advertisement proclaims. The model stares provocatively at the viewer, her long blonde hair waving around her face, her bare chest partially covered by two curved bottles that give the illusion of breasts and a cleavage.

The average American is accustomed to blue-eyed blondes seductively touting a variety of products. In this case, however, the blonde is about five years old.

Advertising is an over \$100 billion a year industry and affects all of us throughout our lives. We are each exposed to over 2,000 ads a day, constituting perhaps the most powerful educational force in society. The average adult will spend one and one-half years of his/her life watching television commercials. But the ads sell a great deal more than products. They sell values, images and concepts of success and worth, love and sexuality, popularity and normalcy. They tell us who we are and who we should be. Sometimes they sell addictions.

Advertising's foundation and economic lifeblood is the mass media, and the primary purpose of the mass media is to deliver an audience to advertisers, just as the primary purpose of television programs is to deliver an audience for commercials.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable, however, because they are new and inexperienced consumers and are the prime targets of many advertisements. They are in the process of learning their values and roles and developing their self-concepts. Most teenagers are sensitive to peer pressure and find it difficult to resist or even question the dominant cultural messages perpetuated and reinforced by the media. Mass communication has made possible a kind of nationally distributed peer pressure that erodes private and individual values and standards.

But what does society, and especially teenagers, learn from the advertising messages that proliferate in the mass media? On the most obvious level they learn the stereotypes. Advertising creates a mythical, WASP-oriented world in which no one is ever ugly, overweight, poor, struggling or disabled either physically or mentally (unless you count the housewives who talk to little men in toilet bowls, animated germs in drains or muscle-bound giants clad in white clothing). And it is a world in which people talk only about products.

### Housewives or Sex Objects

The aspect of advertising most in need of analysis and change is the portrayal of women. Scientific studies and the most casual viewing yield the same conclusion: Women are shown almost exclusively as housewives or sex objects.

The housewife, pathologically obsessed by cleanliness and lemon-fresh scents, debates cleaning products with herself and worries about her husband's "ring around the collar."

The sex object is a mannequin, a shell. Conventional beauty is her only attribute. She has no lines or wrinkles (which would indicate she had the bad taste and poor judgment to grow older), no scars or blemishes—indeed, she has no pores. She is thin, generally tall and long-legged, and, above all, she is young. All "beautiful" women in advertisements (including minority women), regardless of product or audience, conform to this norm. Women are constantly exhorted to emulate this ideal, to feel ashamed and guilty if they fail, and to feel that their desirability and lovability are contingent upon physical perfection.

## Creating Artificiality

The image is artificial and can only be achieved artificially (even the “natural look” requires much preparation and expense). Beauty is something that comes from without; more than one million dollars is spent every hour on cosmetics. Desperate to conform to an ideal and impossible standard, many women go to great lengths to manipulate and change their faces and bodies. A woman is conditioned to view her face as a mask and her body as an object, as things separate from and more important than her real self, constantly in need of alteration, improvement, and disguise. She is made to feel dissatisfied with and ashamed of herself, whether she tries to achieve “the look” or not. Objectified constantly by others, she learns to objectify herself. (It is interesting to note that one in five college-age women have an eating disorder.)

“When *Glamour* magazine surveyed its readers in 1984, 75 percent felt too heavy and only 15 percent felt just right. Nearly half of those who were actually underweight reported feeling too fat and wanting to diet. Among a sample of college women, 40 percent felt overweight when only 12 percent actually were too heavy,” according to Rita Freedman in her book *Beauty Bound*.

There is evidence that this preoccupation with weight begins at ever-earlier ages for women. According to a recent article in *New Age Journal*, “Even grade-school girls are succumbing to sticklike standards of beauty enforced by a relentless parade of wasp-waisted fashion models, movie stars, and pop idols.” A study by a University of California professor showed that nearly 80 percent of fourth-grade girls in the Bay Area are watching their weight.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* survey of students in four Chicago-area schools found that more than half the fourth-grade girls were dieting and three-quarters felt they were overweight. One student said, “We don’t expect boys to be that handsome. We take them as they are.” Another added, “But boys expect girls to be perfect and beautiful. And skinny.”

Dr. Steven Levenkron, author of *The Best Little Girl in the World*, the story of an anorexic, says his blood pressure soars every time he opens a magazine and finds an ad for women’s fashions. “If I had my way,” he said, “every one of them would have to carry a line saying, ‘Caution: This model may be hazardous to your health.’”

Women are also dismembered in commercials, their bodies separated into parts in need of change or improvement. If a woman has “acceptable” breasts, then she must also be sure that her legs are worth watching, her hips slim, her feet sexy, and that her buttocks look nude under her clothes (“like I’m not wearin’ nothin’”). This image is difficult and costly to achieve and impossible to maintain (unless you buy the product)—no one is flawless and everyone ages. Growing older is the great taboo. Women are encouraged to remain little girls (“because innocence is sexier than you think”), to be passive and dependent, never too mature. The contradictory message—“sensual, but not too far from innocence”—places women in a double bind; somehow we are supposed to be both sexy and virginal, experienced and naïve, seductive and chaste. The disparagement of maturity is, of course, insulting and frustrating to adult women, and the implication that little girls are seductive is dangerous to real children.

## Influencing Sexual Attitudes

Young people also learn a great deal about sexual attitudes from the media and from advertising in particular. Advertising’s approach to sex is pornographic; it reduces people to objects and de-emphasizes human contact and individuality. This reduction of sexuality to a dirty joke and of people to objects is the real obscenity of the culture. Although the sexual sell, overt and subliminal, is at a fevered pitch in most commercials, there is at the same time a notable absence of sex as an important and profound human activity.

There have been some changes in the images of women. Indeed, a “new woman” has emerged in commercials in recent years. She is generally presented as superwoman, who manages to do all the work at home and on the job (with the help of a product, of course, not of her husband or children or friends), or as the liberated woman, who owes her independence and self-esteem to the products she uses. These new images do not represent any real progress but rather create a myth of progress, an illusion that reduces complex sociopolitical problems to mundane personal ones.

Advertising images do not cause these problems, but they contribute to them by creating a climate in which the marketing of women’s bodies—the sexual sell and dismemberment, distorted body image ideal and children as sex objects—is seen as acceptable.

This is the real tragedy, that many women internalize these stereotypes and learn their “limitations,” thus establishing a self-fulfilling prophecy. If one accepts these mythical and degrading images, to some extent one actualizes them. By remaining unaware of the profound seriousness of the ubiquitous influence, the redundant message and the subliminal impact of advertisements, we ignore one of the most powerful “educational” forces in the culture—one that greatly affects our self-images, our ability to relate to each other, and effectively destroys any awareness and action that might help to change that climate.

#### Meanings and Values

1. According to the writer, what does advertising tell women they should be, and by what process does it convey this message? Does the beginning of Paragraph 18 accurately summarize the process the writer has been analyzing? If not, what is missing from the summary? Would the essay be stronger if the missing information were included? Why or why not? (See “Guide to Terms”: Evaluation.)
2. Who or what is the “new woman” (Par. 7)? Why does the writer believe that this image does “not represent any real progress”? Why would the absence of any discussion of the “new woman” weaken the expository purpose of the selection? (Guide: Purpose.)
3. At several places in the essay, Kilbourne discusses the consequences of advertising on teenagers while in much of the rest of the essay she focuses on women. Does the focus on teenagers undermine the unity of the essay? Why, or why not? (Guide: Unity.)

#### EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What strategy does Kilbourne use to begin her essay (Pars. 1–2)? (Guide: Introductions.) Can the opening of this essay be considered ironic? Why, or why not? (Guide: Irony.) What strategy does she use to conclude the essay? (Guide: Closings.)
2. What kinds of evidence does the author provide to support her conclusions about the process of advertising and its consequences? Which kind of evidence do you consider most effective, and which seems least effective? Why? (Guide: Evaluation.)
3. Discuss how Kilbourne varies sentence length (and structure) to achieve emphasis in Paragraphs 3, 9, and 15. (Guide: Emphasis; Syntax.)

#### DICTION AND VOCABULARY

1. Where in the essay does the writer use numbers to present information? Be specific. Why can these numbers be considered a form of concrete diction? (Guide: Concrete/Abstract; Diction.) What do they contribute to the effects of the various passages in which they appear?
2. If you do not know the meaning of some of the following words, look them up in a dictionary: provocatively, cleavage (Par. 1); touting (2); stereotypes, WASP (6); pathologically (8); mannequin, attribute, exhorted, contingent (9); anorexic (14); sensual, disparagement (15); overt, subliminal (16); mundane (17); ubiquitous, redundant (19).

#### READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working with a group of classmates, spend some time observing advertisements on television or analyzing them in magazines. Take notes on the process by which they achieve their effects as well as the effects themselves. Discuss the notes and arrive at a focus and a thesis for a possible essay.
2. Considering Audience: Read (or reread) Brent Staples’s essay, “Just Walk on By” (pp. 5–9), for another example of an essay that begins with a reversal of readers’ expectations. Create an opening for an essay of your own with a reversal of readers’ expectations similar to the ones created by Kilbourne and Staples.
3. Developing an Essay: Using Kilbourne’s essay as a model, discuss the process of advertising as it affects a group or groups other than women in general. Feel free to take a positive view of advertising in contrast to Kilbourne’s generally negative perspective.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by means of PROCESS ANALYSIS are on pp. 313–314 at the end of this chapter.)

JESSICA MITFORD was born in 1917, the daughter of an English peer. Her brother was sent to Eton, but she and her six sisters were educated at home by their mother. At the age of nineteen Mitford left home, eventually making her way to the United States in 1939. She made her home in San Francisco and became an American citizen in 1944. She did not begin her writing career until she was thirty-eight. Her books are *Lifeitselfmanship* (1956); her autobiography, *Daughters and Rebels* (1960); the bestseller *The American Way of Death* (1963); *The Trial of Dr. Spock* (1969); *Kind and Usual Punishment* (1973), a devastating study of the American penal system; *A Fine Old Conflict* (1977); and *Poison Penmanship* (1979). Mitford's articles have appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, and *McCall's*.

## To Dispel Fears of Live Burial

"To Dispel Fears of Live Burial" (editor's title) is a portion of *The American Way of Death*, a book described in the *New York Times* as a "savagely witty and well-documented exposé." The "savagely witty" style, evident in this selection, does not obscure the fact of its being a tightly organized, step-by-step process analysis.

Embalming is indeed a most extraordinary procedure, and one must wonder at the docility of Americans who each year pay hundreds of millions of dollars for its perpetuation, blissfully ignorant of what it is all about, what is done, how it is done. Not one in ten thousand has any idea of what actually takes place. Books on the subject are extremely hard to come by. They are not to be found in most libraries or bookshops.

In an era when huge television audiences watch surgical operations in the comfort of their living rooms, when, thanks to the animated cartoon, the geography of the digestive system has become familiar territory even to the nursery school set, in a land where the satisfaction of curiosity about almost all matters is a national pastime, the secrecy surrounding embalming can, surely, hardly be attributed to the inherent gruesomeness of the subject. Custom in this regard has within this century suffered a complete reversal. In the early days of American embalming, when it was performed in the home of the deceased, it was almost mandatory for some relative to stay by the embalmer's side and witness the procedure. Today, family members who might wish to be in attendance would certainly be dissuaded by the funeral director. All others, except apprentices, are excluded by law from the preparation room.

A close look at what does actually take place may explain in large measure the undertaker's intractable reticence concerning a procedure that has become his major *raison d'être*. Is it possible he fears that public information about embalming might lead patrons to wonder if they really want this service? If the funeral men are loath to discuss the subject outside the trade, the reader may, understandably, be equally loath to go on reading at this point. For those who have the stomach for it, let us part the formaldehyde curtain....

The body is first laid out in the undertaker's morgue—or rather, Mr. Jones is reposing in the preparation room—to be readied to bid the world farewell.

The preparation room in any of the better funeral establishments has the tiled and sterile look of a surgery, and indeed the embalmer-restorative artist who does his chores there is beginning to adopt the term "dermasurgeon" (appropriately corrupted by some mortician-writers as "demisurgeon") to describe his calling. His equipment, consisting of scalpels, scissors, augers, forceps, clamps, needles, pumps, tubes, bowls and basins, is crudely imitative of the surgeon's as is his technique, acquired in a nine- or twelve-month post-high-school course in an embalming school. He is supplied by an advanced chemical industry with a bewildering array of fluids, sprays, pastes, oils, powders, creams, to fix or soften tissue, shrink or distend it as needed, dry it here, restore the moisture there. There are cosmetics, waxes and paints, to fill and cover features, even plaster of Paris to replace entire limbs. There are ingenious aids to prop and stabilize the cadaver: A Vari-Pose Head Rest, the Edwards Arm and Hand Positioner, the Repose Block (to support the shoulders during the embalming), and the Throop Foot Positioner, which resembles an old-fashioned stocks.

Mr. John H. Eckels, president of the Eckels College of Mortuary Science, thus describes the first part of the embalming procedure: "In the hands of a skilled practitioner, this work may be done in a comparatively short time and without mutilating the body other than by slight incision—so slight that it scarcely would cause serious inconvenience if made upon a living person. It is necessary to remove the blood, and doing this not only helps in the disinfecting, but removes the principal cause of disfigurements due to discoloration."



Another textbook discusses the all-important time element: "The earlier this is done, the better, for every hour that elapses between death and embalming will add to the problems and complications encountered...." Just how soon should one get going on the embalming? The author tells us, "On the basis of such scanty information made available to this profession through its rudimentary and haphazard system of technical research, we must conclude that the best results are to be obtained if the subject is embalmed before life is completely extinct—that is, before cellular death has occurred. In the average case, this would mean within an hour after somatic death." For those who feel that there is something a little rudimentary, not to say haphazard, about this advice, a comforting thought is offered by another writer. Speaking of fears entertained in early days of premature burial, he points out, "One of the effects of embalming by chemical injection, however, has been to dispel fears of live burial." How true; once the blood is removed, chances of live burial are indeed remote.

To return to Mr. Jones, the blood is drained out through the veins and replaced by embalming fluid pumped in through the arteries. As noted in *The Principles and Practices of Embalming*, "Every operator has a favorite injection and drainage point—a fact which becomes a handicap only if he fails or refuses to forsake his favorites when conditions demand it." Typical favorites are the carotid artery, femoral artery, jugular vein, subclavian vein. There are various choices of embalming fluid. If Flexitone is used, it will produce a "mild, flexible rigidity. The skin retains a velvety softness, the tissues are rubbery and pliable. Ideal for women and children." It may be blended with B. and G. Products Company's Lyf-Lyk tint, which is guaranteed to reproduce "nature's own skin texture...the velvety appearance of living tissue." Suntone comes in three separate tints: Suntan; Special Cosmetic Tint, a pink shade "especially indicated for young female subjects"; and Regular Cosmetic Tint, moderately pink.

About three to six gallons of dyed and perfumed solution of formaldehyde, glycerin, borax, phenol, alcohol, and water are soon circulating through Mr. Jones, whose mouth has been sewn together with a "needle directed upward between the upper lip and gum and brought out through the left nostril," with the corners raised slightly "for a more pleasant expression." If he should be bucktoothed, his teeth are cleaned with Bon Ami and coated with colorless nail polish. His eyes, meanwhile, are closed with flesh-tinted eye caps and eye cement.

The next step is to have at Mr. Jones with a thing called a trocar. This is a long, hollow needle attached to a tube. It is jabbed into the abdomen, poked around the entrails and chest cavity, the contents of which are pumped out and replaced with "cavity fluid." This done, and the hole in the abdomen sewn up, Mr. Jones's face is heavily creamed (to protect the skin from burns which may be caused by leakage of the chemicals), and he is covered with a sheet and left unmolested for a while. But not for long—there is more, much more, in store for him. He has been embalmed, but not yet restored, and the best time to start the restorative work is eight to ten hours after embalming, when the tissues have become firm and dry.

The object of all this attention to the corpse, it must be remembered, is to make it presentable for viewing in an attitude of healthy repose. "Our customs require the presentation of our dead in the semblance of normality...unmarred by the ravages of illness, disease or mutilation," says Mr. J. Sheridan Mayer in his *Restorative Art*. This is rather a large order since few people die in the full bloom of health, unravaged by illness and unmarked by some disfigurement. The funeral industry is equal to the challenge: "In some cases the gruesome appearance of a mutilated or disease-ridden subject may be quite discouraging. The task of restoration may seem impossible and shake the confidence of the embalmer. This is the time for intestinal fortitude and determination. Once the formative work is begun and affected tissues are cleaned or removed, all doubts of success vanish. It is surprising and gratifying to discover the results which may be obtained."

The embalmer, having allowed an appropriate interval to elapse, returns to the attack, but now he brings into play the skill and equipment of sculptor and cosmetician. Is a hand missing? Casting one in plaster of Paris is a simple matter. "For replacement purposes, only a cast of the back of the hand is necessary; this is within the ability of the average operator and is quite adequate." If a lip or two, a nose or an ear should be missing, the embalmer has at hand a variety of restorative waxes with which to model replacements. Pores and skin texture are simulated by stippling with a little brush, and over this cosmetics are laid on. Head off? Decapitation cases are rather routinely handled. Ragged edges are trimmed, and head joined to torso with a series of splints, wires and sutures. It is a good idea to have a little something at the neck—a scarf or high collar—when time for viewing comes. Swollen mouth? Cut out tissue as needed from inside the lips. If too much is removed, the surface contour can easily be restored by padding with cotton. Swollen necks and cheeks are reduced by removing tissue through vertical incisions made down each side of the neck. "When the deceased is casketed, the pillow will hide the suture incisions...as an extra precaution against leakage, the suture may be painted with liquid sealer."

The opposite condition is more likely to present itself—that of emaciation. His hypodermic syringe now loaded with massage cream, the embalmer seeks out and fills the hollowed and sunken areas by injection. In this procedure the backs of the hands and fingers and the under-chin area should not be neglected.

Positioning the lips is a problem that recurrently challenges the ingenuity of the embalmer. Closed too tightly, they tend to give a stern, even disapproving expression. Ideally, embalmers feel, the lips should give the impression of being ever so slightly parted, the upper lip protruding slightly for a more youthful appearance. This takes some engineering, however, as the lips tend to drift apart. Lip drift can sometimes be remedied by pushing one or two straight pins through the inner margin of the lower lip and then inserting them between the two front upper teeth. If Mr. Jones happens to have no teeth, the pins can just as easily be anchored in his Armstrong Face Former and Denture Replacer. Another method to maintain lip closure is to dislocate the lower jaw, which is then held in its new position by a wire run through holes which have been drilled through the upper and lower jaws at the midline. As the French are fond of saying, *il faut souffrir pour être belle*.<sup>6</sup>

If Mr. Jones has died of jaundice, the embalming fluid will very likely turn him green. Does this deter the embalmer? Not if he has intestinal fortitude. Masking pastes and cosmetics are heavily laid on, burial garments and casket interiors are color-correlated with particular care, and Jones is displayed beneath rose-colored lights. Friends will say, “How well he looks.” Death by carbon monoxide, on the other hand, can be rather a good thing from the embalmer’s viewpoint: “One advantage is the fact that this type of discoloration is an exaggerated form of a natural pink coloration.” This is nice because the healthy glow is already present and needs but little attention.

The patching and filling completed, Mr. Jones is now shaved, washed and dressed. Cream-based cosmetic, available in pink, flesh, suntan, brunette and blond, is applied to his hands and face, his hair is shampooed and combed (and, in the case of Mrs. Jones, set), his hands manicured. For the horny-handed son of toil special care must be taken; cream should be applied to remove ingrained grime, and the nails cleaned. “If he were not in the habit of having them manicured in life, trimming and shaping is advised for better appearance—never questioned by kin.”

Jones is now ready for casketing (this is the present participle of the verb “to casket”). In this operation, his right shoulder should be depressed slightly “to turn the body a bit to the right and soften the appearance of lying flat on the back.” Positioning the hands is a matter of importance, and special rubber positioning blocks may be used. The hands should be cupped slightly for a more lifelike, relaxed appearance. Proper placement of the body requires a delicate sense of balance. It should lie as high as possible in the casket, yet not so high that the lid, when lowered, will hit the nose. On the other hand, we are cautioned, placing the body too low “creates the impression that the body is in a box.”

Jones is next wheeled into the appointed slumber room where a few last touches may be added—his favorite pipe placed in his hand or, if he was a great reader, a book propped into position. (In the case of little Master Jones a Teddy bear may be clutched.) Here he will hold open house for a few days, visiting hours 10 A.M. to 9 P.M.

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#### MEANINGS AND VALUES

1. What is the author’s tone? (See “Guide to Terms”: Style/Tone.) What does the tone reveal about the writer’s attitude toward the intense concern with the appearance of the dead exhibited by embalmers (and other people)?
2. Why was it formerly “almost mandatory” for some relative to witness the embalming procedure (Par. 2)?
3. Do you believe that public information about this procedure would cost mortuaries much embalming business (Par. 3)? Why, or why not? Why do people subject their dead to such a process?
4. Use the three-part system of evaluation found under Evaluation in the “Guide to Terms” to judge the success of this process analysis.

## EXPOSITORY TECHNIQUES

1. What is the central theme? (Guide: Unity.) Which parts of the writing, if any, do not contribute to the theme, thus damaging unity? Which contribute to unity?
2. Beginning with Paragraph 4, list or mark the transitional devices that help to bridge paragraphs. (Guide: Transition.) Briefly explain how coherence is aided by such interparagraph transitions.
3. In this selection, far more than in most, emphasis can best be studied in connection with style. In fact, the two are almost indistinguishable here, and few, if any, of the other methods of achieving emphasis are used at all. (Guide: Emphasis; Style/Tone.) Consider each of the following stylistic qualities (some may overlap; others are included in diction) and illustrate, by examples, how each creates emphasis.
  - a. Number and selection of details—for example, the equipment and “aids” (Par. 5)
  - b. Understatement—for example, the “chances of live burial” (Par. 7)
  - c. Special use of quotations—for example, “that the body is in a box” (Par. 17)
  - d. Sarcasm and/or other forms of irony—for example, “How well he looks” (Par. 15) (Guide: Irony.)

## Diction and Vocabulary

1. Much of the essay’s unique style (with resulting emphasis) comes from qualities of diction. Use examples to illustrate the following. (Some may be identical to those of the preceding answer, but they need not be.)
  - a. Choice of common, low-key words to achieve sarcasm through understatement—for example, “This is nice...” (Par. 15)
  - b. Terms of violence—for example, “returns to the attack” (Par. 12)
  - c. Terms of the living—for example, “will hold open house” (Par. 18)
  - d. The continuing use of “Mr. Jones”
2. Illustrate the meaning of “connotation” with examples of the quotations from morticians. (Guide: Connotation/Denotation.) Are these also examples of “euphemism”?
3. Use the dictionary as needed to understand the meanings of the following words: docility, perpetuation (Par. 1); inherent, mandatory (2); intractable, reticence, *raison d’être* (3); ingenious (5); rudimentary, cellular, somatic (7); carotid artery, femoral artery, subclavian vein (8); semblance (11); simulated, stippling, sutures (12); emaciation (13); dispel (7, title).

## READ TO WRITE

1. Collaborating: Working in a group, think of any other common practices in which we alter appearances to hide reality or create a new reality. Choose one practice and analyze it in detail as the potential subject for an essay.
2. Considering Audience: Many of the processes Mitford describes would be likely to upset or offend many readers, yet she presents them in a way that does not do so except to help readers regard them critically. Choose one such passage and discuss in writing the techniques Mitford employs to present the subject critically but without making it seem distasteful to most readers.
3. Developing an Essay: Mitford presents an unpleasant subject—dead bodies—in such detail that it becomes intriguing (her humor helps here, too). Use a similar strategy in your own writing about a subject that readers might at first consider distasteful or boring.

(NOTE: Suggestions for topics requiring development by PROCESS ANALYSIS follow.)

## Writing Suggestions for Chapter 7

### ANALOGY

From one of the following topics, develop a central theme into an informational process analysis, showing:

1. How you selected a college
2. How you selected your future career or major field of study
3. How your family selected a home
4. How an unusual sport is played
5. How religious faith is achieved
6. How gasoline is made
7. How the air (or water) in \_\_\_\_\_ becomes polluted
8. How lightning kills
9. How foreign policy is made
10. How political campaigns are financed
11. How \_\_\_\_\_ was rebuilt
12. How fruit blossoms are pollinated
13. How a computer chip is designed or made

### COLLABORATIVE EXERCISES

1. As a group, write an informative paper on the process of completing a collaborative project. Consider how you plan team meetings, team tasks, team evaluations, and so on.
2. For topics 2a-h, have each member of a group write the directional process for a different audience-reader. Predefine each person's audience profile using an audience profile sheet.
  - a. How to do any of the processes suggested by topics 1a-e (This treatment will require a different viewpoint, one that is completely objective, and it may require a different organization.)
  - b. How to overcome shyness
  - c. How to overcome stage fright
  - d. How to make the best use of study time
  - e. How to write a college composition
  - f. How to sell an ugly house
  - g. How to prepare livestock or any other entry for a fair
  - h. How to start a club (or some other kind of recurring activity)

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Choosing a Strategy #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Choosing a Strategy #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Developing a Process Analysis #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Developing a Process Analysis #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Developing a Process Analysis #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Buhler and Graham / Give Juggling a Hand! #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Buhler and Graham / Give Juggling a Hand! #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Fontana / Working with Dreams #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Fontana / Working with Dreams #

<sup>1</sup>From the psychologist Sigmund Freud. [ed.]

<sup>2</sup>"Archetypes are the common themes...that emerge from the collective unconscious and reappear in symbolic form again and again in myths, symbol systems and dreams....archetypes appear as symbols, or take personified form as the particular gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, fabulous beasts and powers of good and evil."

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Fontana / Working with Dreams #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Fontana / Working with Dreams #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Pappu / Deranged Marriage #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Pappu / Deranged Marriage #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Pappu / Deranged Marriage #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Harrison / Going Places #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Harrison / Going Places #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Harrison / Going Places #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Harrison / Going Places #

Issues and Ideas #

Twitchell / We Build Excitement #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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<sup>3</sup>E. S. Tuner, *The Shocking History of Advertising* (New York: Dutton, 1953).

Twitchell / We Build Excitement #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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<sup>4</sup>In a sense, of course, advertising in various media is ancient. Commercial speech starts with the snake’s spiel in the Garden of Eden, is heard in the cries of vendors in ancient Persia, is seen on walls of Pompeii as the marks listing prices of various prostitutes, is carried in our surnames (as with Smith, Weaver, Miller, Taylor, Baker....), and remains in the coats of arms over European hostelries with names like the Red Crown, the Gold Fox, and the Three Stars as well as in the symbolic images of the barber’s pole or the golden balls of a pawn shop.

Twitchell / We Build Excitement #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Twitchell / We Build Excitement #

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<sup>5</sup>Nor would you be ad free in outer space. For \$500,000 NASA agreed that Columbia Pictures could cover a rocket with an ad for Arnold Schwarzenegger’s Last Action Hero (the movie bombed before the missile flew). And Joel Babbit, an Atlanta advertising executive, almost succeeded in launching a billboard high in the heavens. The space billboard was to be an unfolding screen set in geosynchronous orbit 250 miles above the equator; in the evening it would appear to be about the size of the moon—just right for a logo. The usual suspects were interested, but the U.S. Department of Transportation nixed the idea.

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Twitchell / We Build Excitement #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Kilbourne / Beauty...And the Beast of Advertising #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Kilbourne / Beauty...And the Beast of Advertising #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Kilbourne / Beauty...And the Beast of Advertising #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Mitford / To Dispel Fears of Live Burial #

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# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

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Mitford / To Dispel Fears of Live Burial #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Mitford / To Dispel Fears of Live Burial #

<sup>6</sup>“You have to suffer if you want to be beautiful” (editor’s note).

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis



Mitford / To Dispel Fears of Live Burial #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis

Writing Suggestions #

# Chapter 7 / Explaining Through Process Analysis