

Concepts in communication



Application Assignment

Section One: The Artifact

My artifact of choice, which I'm going to be utilizing to connect course terminology with external content herein, is the book "*Doctor Sleep*," by Stephen King. The novel serves as a sequel to the classic horror story "*The Shining*," and is set some thirty years in the future. At the outset of the plot, our primary protagonist, Dan Torrance, has hit rock bottom with his alcoholism (a hereditary reenactment of his own father's sins) and moves to a quaint New England village following a conflict of morality he has inside of a woman's apartment one morning. Here, he obtains seasonal work, joins a chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous, and later, establishes a permanent position at a local hospice. With the aid of his telepathic ability known as "the shining," and a community cat with an ESP-like awareness, Dan becomes notoriously known as Doctor Sleep amongst the residents for his uncanny ability to comfort the dying, and provide them with some foresight into the journey beyond life. During this time, a young girl named Abra with a similar talent to Dan's (though far more powerful) begins to reach out to him via telepathically encoding messages on a chalkboard inside of his private quarters at the hospice. Simultaneously, revelations are beginning to occur; correlating Abra's unusual ability to a series of unexplainable events happening around her parent's home. Suddenly, the oddities cease, and for many years, tranquil bliss ensues. Then, one day, Abra abruptly uses her talent in an attempt to enlist Dan's assistance after witnessing a vision of a young boy being murdered by an organization known as the True Knot. The True Knot is essentially a semi-immortal band of RV travelers who have

endured throughout the centuries by feeding on the essence of “ steam,” which they siphon from the bodies of murdered children possessing “ the shining.” Led by the diabolical “ Rose the Hat,” the True Knot become aware of Abra’s existence and power by administering a reverse procedure. After becoming sick from a disease transmitted through the dead boy, the True Knot become adamant on capturing and killing Abra, and channeling her power as a means to sustain their continued survival. Following an in person discussion with the girl, Dan agrees to help, and confronts Abra’s father and family practitioner; who are then forced to come to terms with the nature of her talent. The men form a plot to ambush Rose’s henchmen, who are currently en-route to kidnap Abra. Upon successfully thwarting the agenda of the True Knot, it becomes apparent to the protagonists that Rose will relentlessly exhaust all available resources to avenge her fallen comrades and murder Abra. With a heightened sense of urgency, Dan formulates another plan, and makes a final pilgrimage to Colorado (ironically the exact location of the decimated Overlook Hotel from his childhood) with a scheme to put an end to the remains of the True Knot once and for all. At the conclusion of the story, Dan advantageously uses the mental connection between himself and Abra to defeat Rose and her remaining cohorts in a psychic battle; drawing upon the combined power of deceased ghosts and the girl, in conjunction with his own. Furthermore, Dan is ultimately able to silence the demons of his past, and establish an ongoing relationship with Abra’s family, whom he discovers is related by blood during the third act of the story.

Section Two: Concepts in Communication

Culture & Gender

In the second chapter of Kory Floyd's textbook "*Interpersonal Communication: Third Edition*," we're presented with the ideal of in-groups and out-groups – the ability to personally identify with others in contrast to those who we find dissimilar (35). Dissecting the concept further, it becomes evident that a portion of each individual culture (group) relies on the use of communication codes, which deepen their level of diversification from other groups by utilizing unique phrases and gestures to establish meaning. Jargon, which is a language used by members of a particular group that may appear nonsensical to those outside of it, (48) is one such format of said phrases.

Communication and the Self

Meandering onward through Floyd, we come across discussions regarding self-concept - the set of stable ideas about who you are that compose your identity, (71) and specifically, the Johari Window; a model of scaling which aspects of your personality you're aware of versus which aspects remain a mystery to either yourself or others (72). Additionally, there are many factors that affect self-concept over time, and how we believe we're being perceived by those around us dictates our sense of reflected appraisal. The notion is that we basically mirror the messages cast onto us when analyzing our value and self-worth as humans. Intrinsic processing aside, we also have tendencies to project our desired image onto others to create a sort of managed impression. This is commonly done to instill competence, flattery, and many other elements in an interaction.

Interpersonal Perception

In the midst of the fourth chapter in our class textbook, an illustration is given to the term egocentricity, by comparing the inability to take another person's perspective to the ignorance of toddler behavior patterns (120). Arguably of more prominence, however, is acknowledging the fact that some people consciously partake in this mindset in attempts to avoid uncertainty and, perhaps, even justify questionable actions. As an intelligent species, we humans constantly strive to make sense of what's going on around us. Unfortunately, making these inferences often results in logical fallacies in our interpretations. One potential way these errors are exposed is through overly attributing, or targeting a specific characteristic of a person in order to explain an array of observed mannerisms (129).

Concerning Language

A vast topic in itself, language is used every day for many purposes. From the persuasive aspect, the strategy of activating the listener's emotions by inducing pathos is a popular appeal to alter the manner in which they would typically respond to a given argument (152). On the other hand, words can also be used as weapons, and demoralize the recipient by means of contextual vulgar and obscenities (163): collectively referred to as profanity.

The Nonverbal Category

Floyd highlights ten separate channels in which our senses contribute to our ability to communicate without speaking. Chief among these is kinesics and proxemics – the study of movement and personal boundaries, respectively

(192, 199). In society, it's fairly commonplace to witness displays of affection (such as hugging) between individuals to convey emotion. Likewise, a "personal bubble" is a method of describing proximity preferences, derived from the politically correct latter term, and used frequently throughout Western countries to gauge the space and comfort relationship of an interaction. On the topic of sensory language; customary, or ritualistic touches, also come into play when conducting an activity tied to a traditional or repetitious nature (197).

Section Three: Connecting My Chosen Concepts to My Artifact

In "*Doctor Sleep*," the True Knot exemplifies an in-group cultural bias consistently. They do this by coining the term "rubes" when referring to the majority of mankind who don't share their exotic traits and collectivistic religion. These references are generally accompanied by disdainful remarks, making my claim even more apparent. The cult also places a heavy emphasis on the use of jargon while performing their ritualistic ceremonies of sacrifice and conversion throughout the novel. We witness this in passages where ancient snippets of dialogue are recited, such as "*sabbatha hanti*," "*lodsam hanti*," and "*cahanna risone hanti*." Great examples of self-concept are recurrently depicted in the character of Dan Torrance. Early on, he confides in a mentor of the AA program, voicing his thoughts of self-loathing and helplessness, while enveloping the Johari Window by refraining from disclosing information about "the shining," for fear of instigating a bizarre reaction. He makes a solid effort to vindicate his past transgression by selling himself in a job interview, and project an image. Meanwhile, Abra carries the weight of reflected appraisal by attempting to suppress her

powers for the benefit of her parent's peace of mind. In the skirmish with the True Knot, Dan's followers demonstrate egocentricity while speaking with a wounded woman named Andi; incredulous to how anyone could kill children, despite the necessity it imposes for the continued survival of the cult members. As Abra communicates with Dan secretly, here parents continuously over attribute her obscurity to being a female teenager. As the book begins to spiral toward the finale, Rose convinces one of her assistants to assume the role of an assassin, and hide in a storage shed overlooking the battlefield as a fail-safe method to assure victory. She accomplishes this by appealing to the woman's pathos, and taking advantage of her grief stricken state following the death of a loved one. Profanity increases as the story reaches its climax, predominantly when the True Knot adopts the name "bitch-girl" when referencing to Abra, and all the frustration she's caused them. Finally, it should come as no surprise that a novel inspired by telepathy is rich with nonverbal communication. Numerous examples are found during the chalkboard writing scenes, where Abra signs off her messages with smiley faced emoticons, as well as turn-taking styles of shooting telepathic pictures back and forth between herself and Dan. There's a chapter that influences the importance of proxemics when Abra and Dan meet outside of a public library for the first time. Not wanting to come off predatorily to bystanders, a certain level of caution is executed by Dan due to the age and gender differences of the characters. "*Doctor Sleep*" has a plethora of ritualistic touches. The True Knot grew stronger when they were united, so carrying out many of their duties while holding hands was customary. Abra also personified this term on several occasions when she

was required to hold objects in order to obtain clues to transpired events using her abilities.

Works Cited

Floyd, Kory. *Interpersonal Communication* 3rd ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2016. Print.

King, Stephen. *Doctor Sleep* . New York: Pocket, 2013. Print.