

# Effects of the researcher on analysis results



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

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DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT Respond on the following quote “ Analysis reveals the person making the analysis not really the piece itself.”, David Lodge 1935 Novelist and Playwright

According to Lester (2010), “ Analysis is a way of the mind that not only engages with the outside world, but also internalizes its lesson and learns from them” (pg. 115). It is the separation of an intellectual or material whole into its constituent parts for individual study. It is the dissection and careful study of a “ piece” something to learn about its parts, what they do and how they are connected to each other. This study is a detailed examination of the elements or structure of some kind of text or act whether it is a poem, film, advertisement or book.

Personal perspectives are important because they reveal much about the person making the comment (Lester 2010 p. 122). Some people may say that such views have limited use simply because they are so personal and subjective, and that these interpretations cannot be comprehensive beyond the individual. This, therefore, does not disclose much with regard to how others might make meaning of an image, advertisement, play or other text or acts. A noteworthy event, image or painting, that is considered a work of art not times generate personal reaction, indicative about the culture from which it came from. I agree with the notion that an analysis is a reflection of the person making the analysis and not of the piece itself because of one’s cultural background, personal experiences, and educational status, all of which inform an individual’s opinion of a text.

Fiske, (1982) states that when “ the cultural groups we belong to comprise a large majority in our community or nation, we are less likely to be aware of the content of the messages they send us. Cultures shared by dominant groups often seem to be “ natural,” “ normal,” “ the way things are done.” We only notice the effect of cultures that are different from our own, attending to behaviours that we label exotic or strange, misunderstandings in semiotics are considered to be the result of cultural differences and not at communication failure” (pg. 2). The decoder brings aspects of his or her cultural experience to bear upon the codes and signs which make up the text. Therefore, when members of a dominant culture decode or make meaning of something, it is more than likely that that interpretation would be similar in nature among those members. Thus text rooted in dominant ideologies can be interpreted through such ideological frames and appear natural. In this case the analysis reflects the ideology of the text, which in this example is the dominant ideology. Such an example can be seen in the sometimes cultural rationale we ascribe to the wearing particular clothing (leather jackets or winter boots) or to food choices (KFC), as everyday rationale ascribes meaning and significance to that choice. The same meaning and significance is used by the encoders to spread that dominant ideology through the powerful media. Some may argue that this acceptance of false consciousness is the result of a lack of analysis to a particular event, text or experience but it can be considered the result of little or no analysis; it can be the result of analysis through ideological lens.

Logically, if a culture shares the same codes and conventions, members will interpret and ascribe meaning that are similar. However, even people

belonging the same culture may not always have the same interpretation because of personal experiences. Theorist, Stuart Hall (1980), states that meaning is not simply fixed or determined by the sender. He argues that the message is never transparent and the audience is not a passive receiver of meaning as one would like to believe. For example, a news item that features refugees from war torn Egypt that aims to provide a compassionate account of their plight does not promise that people will decode it to feel sympathetic towards the refugees. People from another war-torn country who share the same culture and religion will be sympathetic and feel strongly that other countries should help based on a humanitarian basis. On the other hand, people of another culture, say American culture (individualistic culture), may think the opposite. Another example, is Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago. People who subscribe to the 'carnival culture' may accept a man gyrating ("wining") on a semi-nude women in the streets of the city during the celebration. A viewer from another culture, however, say from an Islamic-Middle-Eastern country may find this act to be outrageous and shameful. Even persons who share the same Trinidadian culture may not approve of this kind of behaviour. Negative, personal experiences may also cause persons to have an undesirable attitude towards the festival of carnival. People are not entirely free agents and immune to the effects of the culture they inhabit. Thus, when people generate , meaning from say, for example, a movie , they are inevitably affected by the culture they live in in ways of which they are unaware. The culture, in other words, speaks through them. Hall (1980) states that messages are decoded and interpreted in different ways depending on the individual's cultural background.

An analysis is a reflection of the person making the analysis because of his personal experiences as reflected in the type of readings he makes of the subject being analysed. For example, because Caribbean people had a negative historical experience of racial bias practiced by a 'white colonial' people, they would certainly have a kind of bias towards that race in general. Drawing on a personal example, as a teenager working at a popular bank in Port of Spain, where at that time only persons of "high colour" were employed, a brown-complexioned East Indian person like myself, had many experiences of racism displayed toward me. This would certainly carry a certain amount of bias in my analysis of any piece' done by a 'white' person. So instead of taking the dominant reading for something, I might go for the negotiated or oppositional reading. According to Hall (1980), a person might decide to take a dominant-hegemonic position, where he accepts the encoded meaning. He takes the connotated meaning from, say, a television newscast and decodes the message in terms of the referenced code in which it has been encoded. If one subscribes to an oppositional reading, he totally ignores the encoded message even though he understands it. He decodes it in a contrary way. He may also go along with the negotiated reading where he compromises between the hegemonic and oppositional views. Because an audience simply does not passively accept a text, they do not always take the dominant reading. Depending on the reading a person adopts, the analysis would be quite different in all three cases.

An analysis done by someone holding an elite status, is likely to be different from that of a middle class or low-income group. Several factors may contribute to this difference. For example, if someone from this upper elite

class were to analyse a painting by Cazabon, he would most likely be educated, widely-read and would have more knowledge and appreciation of the fine arts. He would most likely know the name of the artist, his other works, and the artistic style being used. The elite analyst would also probably make references to other artistic traditions and make comparisons with other artists using that style. He would perhaps compare the work being analysed with other works done locally, regionally and internationally. The analysis by the elite will be informed by his experience of being more exposed through education, communication and travel. Foreign travel will assist the elite to acquire first-hand knowledge and would be more likely to identify the genre, medium, metaphors and symbolism of the work. The low-income analyst may not have an appreciation for fine arts because he is caught up more with the daily struggles of life in order to survive such as acquiring the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. Because of the upper class upbringing and training (education), and because one might be more widely read, one can give a more in-depth analysis of an artistic piece. The elite analyst is also likely to be more articulate.

Personal perspectives are significant because they reflect much about an individual making an analysis. Whilst consideration of other views would make the analysis more comprehensive and well-rounded, it still rests with the individual analyst 'take' on the piece being analysed. Factors that contribute to the type of analysis that will emerge depend on the cultural background, personal experiences and educational status of the individual making the analysis. This decision however, most times is supported by the ideological influence of dominant power structures in society. Thus it can

therefore, be said that analysis is a reflection of the person making the analysis and not the text or act itself.

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