

# Cool Scripts

## Creating Participation & Popularity

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“I’m making explorations. I don't know where they're going to take me. My work is designed for the pragmatic purpose of trying to understand our technological environment and its psychic and social consequences. But my books constitute the process rather than the completed product of discovery; my purpose is to employ facts as tentative probes, as means of insight, of pattern recognition, rather than to use them in the traditional and sterile sense of classified data, categories, containers. I want to map new terrain rather than chart old landmarks. But I've never presented such explorations as revealed truth. As an investigator, I have no fixed point of view, no commitment to any theory--my own or anyone else's. As a matter of fact, I’m completely ready to junk any statement I've ever made about any subject if events don't bear me out, or if I discover it isn't contributing to an understanding of the problem. The better part of my work on media is actually somewhat like a safe-cracker's. I don't know what's inside; maybe it's nothing. I just sit down and start to work. I grope, I listen, I test, I accept and discard; I try out different sequences--until the tumblers fall and the doors spring open.”

Marshall McLuhan  
*Playboy* Interview (1969)

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## Introduction

Marshall McLuhan observed in *Understanding Media* that there are “cool” and “hot” types of media allowing for greater or lesser participation by the receiver and blurring lines between producer and consumers, authors and readers.

The same might be said of “texts” and “scripts” that circulate within media. While some theories like Reader-Response Theory argues that all texts are cool needing participation for completion, one might also argue that some texts are “cooler” than other texts allowing for greater participation in their completion. In effect, there are “cool” and “hot” texts or scripts.

Not only do cool texts create greater participation by readers, they also allow for greater circulation in culture as completion of the texts become shared projects. In culture these cool texts are key components of what Henry Jenkins terms “spreadable media” in his book of the same name *Spreadable Media*. As Jenkins notes, “Context spreads when it acts as fodder for conversations that audiences are already having.” In effect, cool texts provide the real fuel within spreadable media.

Greater circulation of texts in culture has a strong relationship to greater popularity of the text in culture. In fact, it might be the greatest factor. Not just in current texts but rather the popularity of texts throughout history. In effect, one might be able to say that cool texts lead to popularity while hot texts do not find popularity. As cultural critic John Fiske notes in *Reading Popular Culture*:

“If the cultural commodities or texts do not contain resources out of which the people can make their own meaning of their social relations and identities, they will be rejected and will fail in the marketplace. They will not be made popular.”

Through studying popular and classical texts in history as well as popular current texts, a type of cool grammar might be discovered and refined. The grammar will consist of a particular structure as well as elements (or cool devices) within this structure.

The following is an attempt at identifying the structure and elements of a grammar for creating these “cool scripts.”

\* \* \*

In all of this, the project might go far beyond the bounds of literary theory and popular writing in that cool and hot texts might have a substantial relationship to other areas of culture.

For example, one area is political control. One thesis, that needs (but allows) testing, is that political systems that desire more control over citizens create texts (like propaganda) that are more “hot” than “cool” for it is not in the interest of controlling political systems to create participative cultures.

One of the great paradoxes today in America is that technology and media have created a “cool” culture of participation (electronic technology and cool interactive media of iPhones and social media) within an increasingly controlling political system. Since the political system has little control over the technology and types of media within this technology, their remaining option for control is texts and scripts within this technology and media.

Therefore, one of the great “elephant in the room” questions for the political system today is how is to maintain control through texts and scripts. The political system has a need to create “hot” non-participative texts and scripts but doing so ensures little circulation and popularity in culture since they are complete needing little participation. The political system seems to attempt to manage this paradox right now by its attempt to participate in popularity created by others. It is ultimately a no-win game for them and suggests a great change is ahead.

\* \* \*

Beyond possible political implications above, the change is invading all parts of culture and society with profound effects.

- In media the change is marked by the change from the one-way broadcast model of transmission and reception to the two-way interactive model of the Internet where digital technology allows individuals to be both transmit and receive.

- In marketing and advertising, brand image and control is no longer something undertaken by the brand owner but becomes a collaborative effort by participation of brand buyers along with brand producers.

- In entertainment, the distinction between authors and readers, actors and audiences, is in the midst of radical change with the emergence of new forms of literary production such “fan fiction” and the growing phenomenon on Broadway called “immersive” or “event” theater where the audience participates in the performance.

- In politics, the distinction between leaders and followers has been challenged by the emergence of organization structures based on flat, connected networks rather than pyramid-like hierarchies. A recent example of this new structure was illustrated in the Occupy Movement of 2012.

The change is fueled by today's interactive digital technology of the Internet. The result is that creation of culture is open to a larger number of "participants." While the role merger is radical, it is certainly not the first time this has happened.

For example, one of the greatest achievements of Greek culture was creation of the democratic idea of participation of citizens (original consumers) in the affairs of state. The idea and reality of participation of citizen, consumers in cultural production has been an important (yet largely hidden) dynamic defining periods and eras of history. In fact, an argument can be made that "enlightened" Renaissance-like periods of history have resulted from high participative cultures while "dark" periods of history have been related to low participatory cultures.

Even today, the nations of the world might be placed on spectrum based around the amount of one-way media or interactive media in each nation with evidence that one-way media allows for less participation than two-way media. We made this argument a number of years ago in our manuscript *Media Nations* observing that nations with higher percentages of one-way broadcast media (radios, televisions and newspapers) offer less participatory cultures than nations with higher numbers of interactive two-way digital media (cell phones, computers). The nations with higher percentages of broadcast media trend towards totalitarianism regimes while those with higher percentages of interactive media trend towards democratic systems.

\* \* \*

The dichotomy between participation and non-participation was perhaps best translated into the modern world with the distinction between "hot" and "cool" media made by Marshall McLuhan in his famous *Understanding Media*.

There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in 'high definition.' High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, 'high definition.' A cartoon is 'low definition,' simply because very little visual information is provided. The ear is given a meager amount of information. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the

other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience.

Concepts like degrees of definition and information are perhaps better understood by their relationship to user participation. As McLuhan noted, “Hot media are, therefore, low in participation, and cool media are high in participation or completion by the audience.”<sup>1</sup> To McLuhan, “hot” media was filled with so much information it was non-participatory for the user. On the other hand, “cool” media offered less information and therefore allowed more participation by the user.

While McLuhan’s dichotomy of “hot” and “cool” media gave modern clothing to the ancient dynamics of participation, its main focus was on types of media and underlined McLuhan’s main thesis in *Understanding Media* that the “Medium was the message.” In effect, the context of communication or particular media of communication, controlled the content within it.

But McLuhan was a literary historian and scholar as well as a media theorist and he provided a very interesting quote from Sir Francis Bacon in *Understanding Media* that participation might be a function of literary devices (media content) as well as media context noting:

Francis Bacon never tired of contrasting hot and cool prose. Writing in ‘methods’ or complete packages, he contrasted with writing in aphorisms, or single observations such as ‘Revenge is a kind of wild justice.’ The passive consumer wants packages, but those, he suggested, who are concerned in pursuing knowledge and in seeking causes will resort to aphorisms, just because they are incomplete and require participation in depth.

So, not only is there “hot” and “cool” media allowing for less or more participation, there is also “hot” and “cool” devices within media (such as Bacons aphorisms) allowing for less-or-more participation. In this way, aphorisms can be labeled “cool” literary devices because they are incomplete, demanding participation for their completion. In contrast to them, there are “hot” literary devices that deliver “complete packages” with no demand for participatory completion. In effect, “cool” and “hot” literary devices find a correspondence with “cool” and “hot” media. But at the same time, they are not dependent on the media for their definition. In other words, “hot” media might contain “cool” technique and “cool” media might contain “hot” content.”

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

Although McLuhan used Bacon's observation to discuss participatory devices in the scripts and texts, the use of these devices go back much further than Bacon and can be found throughout history. As greater participation in political systems has diminished the distinction between government and citizens, in economic systems between producers and consumers, in literature (and other text and script based forms) it has diminished the distinction between authors and readers, performers and audience.

The breakdown in scripts and texts of the dichotomy between authors and readers certainly has a relationship to the politics and economics of their particular periods. One might even argue that this breakdown of the dichotomy in texts and scripts provides the key factor in the coming and going of participatory cultures throughout history.

But beyond creating participatory cultures, the breakdown of the dichotomy between authors and readers might be a key factor creating popularity for certain texts and scripts throughout history. For example, one observes a number of "cool" literary devices in the Bible such as the use of Proverbs and Parables as well as a structure based on short sections. Or what about the novels of Charles Dickens? Rather than publish them in *complete* form, they were published as *incomplete* stories on a monthly basis and later published as books.

There is of course an on-going cottage industry of "how to" write popular, bestselling, blockbuster texts with many pundits and "experts" propounding ideas and theories as to what makes certain scripts rise to stardom in culture. Many devices such as the use of suspense are put forward to explain popularity of the text. Yet in all the discussion, there is little (if any) discussion of the relationship between "cool" devices and "cool scripts" and popularity. Might there be a powerful relationship so far hidden and unexplored? A literary detective might indeed find these methods present in the classics of literature throughout the ages.

The following proposes a type of grammar for creating "cool scripts." The creation of this grammar is both possible as well as long overdue. In the following pages we offer the beginning outline for a grammar of "cool scripts." Hopefully, our following text will create participation and blur the distinction between author and reader. As the reader will observe, we attempt to practice what we preach here by trying to avoid writing in "complete packages" but rather incomplete packages with cool devices and words (as well as the images symbolized by the words). So, offered here (hopefully) is an incomplete script of text inviting, encouraging, welcoming (with open arms) a type of participation mystique in the assemblage of a particular creation.

## Cool Culture

"Words are a mirror of their times. By looking at the areas in which the vocabulary of a language is expanding fastest in a given period, we can form a fairly accurate impression of the chief preoccupations of society at that time and the points at which the boundaries of human endeavour are being advanced."

John Ayto,  
*Twentieth Century Words.*

Culture (Medium) = Equality, Cool. Communication as communion or coming together.

Individual (Message) = Freedom, Hot. Communication as transmission of moving from one place to another.

Paradox: America was founded at intersection of Freedom + Equality.

The words Freedom and Equality being re-interpreted today in light of Cool Theory. Freedom and equality are within all of us as duality symbols. There is the equality of the unconsciousness and birth and youth that represents the equality of the first and beginning symbol of cycles. The one of birth from the great equality of the ocean within a mother.

There is the movement towards freedom throughout life, away from the mother ocean of childhood and pre-birth and towards (in many ways) an isolating aloneness of freedom in the later years of life. The freedom of old age triumphs over the equality of youth. Temporarily perhaps. But enough to set the background and setting for a particular story. Not only is this a freedom to purchase items but also to see them for purchase in the first place.

Search words represent hot and cool trends that can be measured. "The famous Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis posits a linguistic determinism arguing language plays a central role in creation of a worldview. In the sense that language is a product of words, one can say that a culture's worldview is affected and influenced by the words of its particular language. Words both create and communicate worldviews. The greatest potential in history for the observation and analysis of words exists on the Internet. Indeed, the Internet can be considered history's greatest observatory and laboratory of words."

"Electric Symbols"

## Cool Theory

### Theories of Communication

This misunderstanding of communication derives from two competing ideas of communication. James Carey, one of the leading communications scholars, talks about these two ideas in his important book *Communication and Culture*. In the article "A Cultural Approach to Communications," Carey points out that there have been two major alternative conceptions of communications in American culture since the term first entered discourse in the nineteenth century. He terms these views as the *transmission* view and the *ritual* view.

The transmission view is defined by terms such as "imparting," "transmitting," "sending," or "giving information to others." The ritual view is defined by terms such as "sharing," "participation," "association," "fellowship" and the possession of a common faith. The transmission view centers around the metaphors of geography and transportation with an ancient heritage derived from the dream of increasing the speed and effect of messages through space. As Carey notes, the center of this idea is "the transmission of signals or messages over distances for the purpose of control." He remarks, "From the time upper and lower Egypt were unified under the First Dynasty down through the invention of the telegraph, transportation and communication were inseparably linked."

### Dominance Of Transmission

The ancient transmission metaphor was brought into the modern world during the nineteenth century with the western expansion of the American railroads when "movement of people and information were seen as the same thing." While the arrival of the telegraph ended the identity Carey argues that it did not destroy the metaphor. He concludes that today our basic orientation to communication remains grounded in the idea of transmission.

It is an orientation with strong religious and moral connotations. This was so because movement in space became a highly redemptive act for Americans. More than merely the transmittal of information, movement in space became an attempt to establish and extend the kingdom of God. It is a belief, notes Carey, that has never quite escaped from

Americans. "The moral meaning of transportation," he writes, "was the establishment and extension of God's kingdom on earth. The moral meaning of communication was the same."

Carey suggests that as the forces of science and secularization gained ground, the religious metaphors fell away. The technology of communication moved to the center of thought. But the religious and moral understanding of communication has never left the "zeitgeist" or context against which communications in America is understood. As Carey says, from the telegraph to the computer the same sense of profound possibility for moral improvement is present whenever the machines are invoked." In effect, the transmission view has become a type of paradigm which defines the "playing field" before the "game" even starts.

### Ancient Heritage Of Ritual

As a result, the ritual view has played only a minor part in America's conception of communication. Even so, Carey argues that the ritual view is by far the older view and is based identity and common roots of the terms "commonness," "communion," "community," and "communication." Carey makes an important and critical point when he concludes that "A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs." If the archetype of the transmission view is the extension of messages across geography to control, the archetype of the ritual view is the sacred ceremony that draws together in fellowship and commonality.

While the transmission view has moral and religious underpinnings, the "indebtedness of the ritual view of communication to religion is apparent in the name chosen to label it." Moreover, Carey points out that it derives from a view of religion that downplays the role of the sermon, the instruction and admonition, in order to highlight the role of prayer, chant and ceremony. In this sense, "It sees the original or highest manifestation of communication not in the transmission of intelligent information but in the construction and maintenance of an ordered, meaningful cultural world that can serve as a control container for human action."

The ritual view of communication therefore sees popular culture as providing *confirmation* of belief rather *transmission* of information. Its purpose is not to alter attitudes or change minds "but to represent an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest an ongoing and fragile social process."

But the ritual view has been far from the dominant motif of American communications scholarship that has been entranced with the transmission view. Carey suggests that this is in large part a result of Americans obsessive individualism, "from our Puritanism which

disdains activity not practical and work oriented and from the separation of culture and science."

Similar to communication, the ancient idea of symbolism and symbols was based on ritual and communion rather than transmission. This symbolic communion involved a ritual coming together centered around a broken slate of clay. The word "symbol" is derived from the Greek word symbolon. In ancient Greece it was a custom to break a slate of burned clay into several pieces and distribute them within the group. When the group reunited the pieces were fitted together (Greek symbollein). This confirmed the members belonging to the group.

## Symbolism

Hot = Duality (Non participation) = Linear, Narrative Time  
Cool = Correspondence (Participation) = Non-Linear Time

Great correspondence of above with literary theories and literary devices. For example, symbol correspondence is really a form of metaphor.

## Media Theory.

“There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in ‘high definition.’ High definition is the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, ‘high definition.’ A cartoon is ‘low definition,’ simply because very little visual information is provided. The ear is given a meager amount of information. Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience.” McLuhan UM.

Relationship to other philosophies and linguistics.

## Text Theory

“Francis Bacon never tired of contrasting hot and cool prose. Writing in ‘methods’ or complete packages, he contrasted with writing in aphorisms, or single observations such as ‘Revenge is a kind of wild justice.’ The passive consumer wants packages, but those, he suggested, who are concerned in pursuing

knowledge and in seeking causes will resort to aphorisms, just because they are incomplete and require participation in depth.”

Marshall McLuhan  
*Understanding Media*

### Mixing Hot & Cool

McLuhan’s theory of “hot” and “cool” media was a provocative section *in Understanding Media*. Yet, as interesting as it was, it’s ultimate place in the McLuhan canon was a rather solitary one never finding a real correspondence with the rest of his work and theories.

For example, one question worth asking is the relationship of “hot” and “cool” media theory to other key theories relating to visual and auditory media and senses. In general, McLuhan felt that visual media (such as writing and the alphabet) was usually “hot” media providing more information. Conversely, auditory media (like speech) was usually “cool” media providing less information.

Yet, as the quote above from *Understanding Media* demonstrates, this was not always the case. Certain visual media like TV was considered “cool” while other visual media, like film, was considered “hot.” And too, certain oral media, like radio, was considered “hot” while other oral media like the telephone was considered “cool” media.

The “hot” and “cool” distinction within similar media (like TV and film, radio and telephones) suggests there might be other distinctions within similar media. Therefore, if McLuhan’s “hot” and “cool” categories do not come symbiotically attached to major types of media, they might co-exist within the same media.

The most obvious example of this co-existence of “hot” and “cool” elements within a particular media is television. While McLuhan considered television a cool media for the amount of information it provided the viewer, this view certainly goes against the grain of numerous media critics who view television more as a “hot” involving little audience participation. In fact, the lack of participation in the television viewing experience is one of the major critiques of television.

Or, consider the telephone, one of the leading “cool” media. Certainly there is little question that telephones involve much “cool” participation. For example, consider a telephone conversation between two friends. This probably involves the greatest amount of “cool” participatory media with each person using the media as a “peer” of the other. In fact, it might be said to represent the speech component of what is termed peer-to-peer communication on the Internet.

But there are also elements within the media of telephones that involve less participation than other elements. Consider variations of telephone conversations other than “peer-to-peer” conversations between friends. For

example, consider a telephone conversation between an employee and his or her boss. Usually, there is far less participation by the employee than in a conversation with a friend. Or, consider an even lower amount of participation in a telephone conversation between a telemarketer and a consumer. And finally, consider perhaps the lowest form of telephone participation in recorded telephone calls placed by automatic call centers. Here, there is hardly any chance for participation. The telephone in effect becomes the epitome of McLuhan's "hot" media and an interactive "cool" media becomes the speech version of print's junk mail.

Perhaps the contemporary "poster child" for interactive participatory "cool" media is the Internet. Similar to telephones, it contains large elements of participatory "cool" media. For example, emails between friends are much like phone calls between friends.

At the same time, like telephones, the Internet increasingly contains many "hot" areas allowing little participation. As an example, consider the increasing number of spam email messages on the Internet. Like automatic telephone calls or junk mail, they allow little participation.

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Since McLuhan's time, the world has experienced an increasing segmentation of media types which has made his early "hot" and "cool" media dichotomies more difficult to discern. A telephone is no longer just a telephone and a television is often much more than the television of McLuhan's time.

Telephones, for example, have become wireless Dick Tracy type of devices able to show pictures, stock quotes, email messages and web sites. Wireless communication has made telephones more "cool" while, at the same time, the growing onslaught of telemarketers and call centers with their low participation, have made telephones more "hot."

Or, consider television that has gained a new aspect of interactive coolness with devices like the remote control and TiVo technology. In many respects, the growing TV programming genre called reality television provides a new audience access to television, making the subtle suggestion that television content, rather than just television technology, has a "cool" participation factor.

In all of this evolution, the designation of "hot" and "cool" media still has great importance as a basic navigational beacon for many students of media in the stormy sea of media flooding the modern world. However, the media it once defined under the labels of "hot" or "cool" has grown from media with relatively distinct boundaries to vast media "cities" with constantly expanding boundaries. For example, consider the growth of Internet sites from the early days of a few pages and links to grand Internet cities like AOL full of different virtual "suburbs" and communities.

While the theories of McLuhan and his ideas about “hot” and “cool” media might take us to the “outer-belts” of these new grand media cities, they offer less help in exploring the suburbs and various populations inside them and their techniques of communication.

\* \* \*

Like his “hot” and “cool” theories of media types, his ideas about “hot” and “cool” technique never received the elaboration they deserved. Yet, as we have observed, technique was constantly on display in the writing technique and style of McLuhan’s prose, or perhaps more accurately, McLuhan’s anti-prose.

In effect, when one takes a broad overview of McLuhan’s work it becomes apparent that much of his writing is in the form of aphorisms. This leads to an interesting speculation: the real magic of McLuhan’s popularity and fame might not have been so much in the revolutionary *content* of his ideas but rather in the “cool” *contextual* technique that presented these ideas.

In effect, the Boomer generation of the 60s might have been drawn by all the publicity to McLuhan’s works but it was the style that allowed them a new type of participation in these ideas. It was a new type of participation not allowed by an environment increasingly filled with the “hot” messages of advertising and politics. They might have come to the McLuhan edifice for phrases like “The medium is the message” and divisions like “hot” and “cool” media.

Yet it was the technique of expression that really pulled the Boomer generation into the McLuhan edifice and made them linger within it longer than they linger in other works of literature. In their bold aphoristic phrasings and attempt to avoid the simplicity of “Idiot’s Guide” packaging, a packaging that Bacon identified as “hot” media a few hundred years before McLuhan, his words invited the cool participation they talked about. They really represented the “cool” media of the 60s.

## Language of Presence/Language of Absence

Speech is the language of presence and writing the language of absence. Derrida argues that throughout the Western philosophical tradition, writing has been considered as merely a derivative form of speech, and thus as a “fall” from the “full presence” of speech.

Derrida’s book *Of Grammatology* starts with a review of Saussure’s linguistic structuralism, as presented in the *Course in General Semantics*. In particular, Derrida analyzes the concept of “sign” which for Saussure has the two separate components of sound and meaning. These components are also called signifier (*signifiant*) and signified (*signifié*).

Derrida quotes Saussure: "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first."

Critiquing this relationship between speech and writing, Derrida suggests that written symbols are legitimate signifiers on their own—that they should not be considered as secondary or derivative relative to oral speech.

#### Metalinguage

A language used to talk about language.

#### Narratology

The study of structure in narratives.

#### Phenomenonolgy

A method of philosophical inquiry that lays stress on the perceiver's vital and central role in determining meaning. Edmund Husserl noted that the proper object of philosophical inquiry is not the objects in the world but rather the consciousness of perceiving them.

A philosophical movement that describes the formal structure of the objects of awareness and of awareness itself in abstraction from any claims concerning existence (2) : the typological classification of a class of phenomena like the *phenomenology* of religion.

#### Readerly/Writerly

Devised by Roland Barthes and expounded in his book *S/Z* to distinguish between two basic types of text: 1) the readerly text which the reader's reponse is more or less passive such as a realistic novel or classic text presenting recognizable world with easily recognizable characters and events where the reader accepts the meaning without needing to make much effort and 2) writerly text which makes demands on the reader in that they have things to work out and look for to provide meaning. Examples are Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Makes the reader into a producer. Barthes felt the writerly text was of great value because he felt the goal of literature was to make the reader a producer rather than a consumer.

#### Readerly Text = Hot Texts

A text that makes no requirement of the reader to "write" or "produce" their own meanings. The reader may passively locate "ready-made" meaning. Barthes writes that these sorts of texts are "controlled by the principle of non-contradiction" that is, they do not disturb the "common sense," or "Doxa," of the surrounding culture. The "readerly texts," moreover, "are products [that] make up the enormous mass of our literature." Within this category, there is a spectrum of "replete literature,"

which comprises "any classic (readerly) texts" that work "like a cupboard where meanings are shelved, stacked, [and] safeguarded"

Writerly Text = Cool Text

A text that aspires to the proper goal of literature and criticism: "... to make the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text." Writerly texts and ways of reading constitute, in short, an active rather than passive way of interacting with a culture and its texts. A culture and its texts, Barthes writes, should never be accepted in their given forms and traditions. As opposed to the "readerly texts" as "product," the "writerly text is ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system (Ideology, Genus, Criticism) which reduces the plurality of entrances, the opening of networks, the infinity of languages." Thus reading becomes for Barthes "not a parasitical act, the reactive complement of a writing," but rather a "form of work."

Hermeneutic Code: The Voice of the Truth

Barthes observes that the hermeneutic code is associated with enigmas of the text. It is entities or elements that articulate a question and its answer, as well as events that prepare the question or delay its answer. When Barthes identifies an enigma in the text he marks it HER. The process of revealing truth by solving enigmas is further broken down in the following sequence:

- Thematisation. What in the narrative is an enigma?
- Positioning. Additional confirmations of the enigma.
- Formulation of the enigma.
- Promise of an answer of the enigma.
- Fraud. Circumvention of the true answer.
- Equivocation. Mixture of fraud and truth.
- Blocking. The enigma cannot be solved.
- Suspended answer. Stopping the answering after having begun.
- Partial answer. Some facets of the truth are revealed.
- Disclosure of the truth.

(Note: Above closeness to screenplay plot structure)

Because the hermeneutic code involves a move from a question to an answer it is one of the two codes (the other being the proairetic or action code) which Barthes calls "irreversible" (XV): Once a secret is revealed, it cannot be unrevealed—the moment of cognition is permanent for the reader. Compared to the detailed sequential actions of the proairetic code, the hermeneutic code encompasses the entire narrative, or at least large parts of it.

(Note: This is confirmation of our “cool” and “hot” script argument!)

Cultural critic John Fiske used the word “producerly” rather than “writerly” to make the same argument that Barthes makes noting:

“Producerly text offers itself up to popular production ... It has loose ends that escape its control. Its meanings exceed its own power to discipline them – it is, in a very real sense, beyond its own control.”

John Fiske  
*Understanding Popular Culture*

### Reader-Response Theory

Concerned with the relationship between text and theory with an emphasis on the different ways a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives that arise from the relationship. Concerned with the reader’s contribution to the text and challenges the text-oriented theories of Formalism and the New Criticism that have ignored or underestimated the reader’s role.

Fundamentally, a text has no real existence until it is read. Its meaning is *in potentia* so to speak. A reader completes its meaning by reading it. The reading is complimentary and actualizes potential meaning. Thus, the reader does not have, as traditionally thought, a passive role but on the contrary is an active agent in the creation of meaning.

In 1979, Umberto Eco published *The Role of the Reader*. In this he proposed a distinction between what he calls “open” and “closed” texts. An open text (*Finnegan’s Wake*, *The Wasteland*) requires the reader’s close collaboration in the creation of meaning. But a closed text (a whodunit by Christie, a thriller by Forsyth or a scientific treatise) determines or predetermines a reader’s response.

### Semantics

A branch of linguistics which deals with the meanings of words and particularly with changes in these meanings.

### Semiotics

a general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages and comprises syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics.

Study of signs and sign-using behaviour, especially in language. In the late 19th and early 20th century the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce led to the emergence of semiotics as a method for examining phenomena in different fields, including aesthetics, anthropology, communications, psychology,

and semantics. Interest in the structure behind the use of particular signs links semiotics with the methods of structuralism. Saussure's theories are also fundamental to poststructuralism.

#### Syntagmatic/Paradigmatic

Structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure's theory that there are two dimensions in the relationship of words: 1) the syntagmatic or horizontal relations and 2) the paradigmatic or vertical, associative relations.

## Cool History

### Holy Books

The Analects (Confucius)

Bhagavad Gita

Koran (Qur'an)

Bible

    New Testament

    Old Testament

Talmud

Torah

I Ching

Tao Te Ching

Upanishads

Mencius

Chuang Tzu

Analytics of Confucious

Hadith

Avesta

Book of Mormon

Vedas

### Spiritual Books

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Quran (Koran)

The Tao Te Ching

Bhagavad-Gita

Book of Mormon

Talmud

The Urantia Book

### Philosophy

### Political

    Manifesto

        A public declaration of political, religious, philosophical, artistic or literary principles.

“The time of the manifesto is the present (and immediate future); the ‘now’ time (Benjamin’s *Jetztzeit*) of decision. The manifesto has no interest in the past except as part of the problem to be solved. The manifesto, as Derrida reminds us in *Specters of Marx*, typically tells us that ‘the time is out of joint,’ that it is ‘high time’ we set things right, then proposes a course of action or a change of heart in order to move on to better times in the future. Derrida also notes that the paradigm of the modern manifesto is to be found in the ancient (biblical) forms of prophecy, on the one hand, and the gospel (*evangelion*), on the other. The former, of course, promises punishment for those who, bound by the Covenant, violate its terms; it tends towards the revolutionary. The modern political manifesto may combine the two modes, mixing fire and brimstone and love and light in equal measure. The artistic manifesto – think of those of the Futurists and Surrealists – combines threat and promise in a simulacrum of revelation. The scientific manifesto – think of Bacon, Galileo, Darwin – is a different breed; cool, calm and collected, because the scientific manifestor, having a certain knowledge in hand, knows that time is on his or her side; like Galileo censored, s/he can afford to wait: ‘*Eppure, si muove.*’ “

Hayden White  
*Manifestos for History*

*Fama Fraternitatis* (1614)  
Founding Document of the Rosicrucian’s

*Common Sense* (1776)  
Most Incendiary & Popular Pamphlet of Revolutionary Era

*Declaration of Independence* (1776)  
Founding Document of America

“What do we mean by the Revolution? The war? That was no part of the Revolution; it was only an effect and consequence of it. The Revolution was in the minds of the people, and this was effected, from 1760 to 1775, in the course of fifteen years before a drop of blood was shed at Lexington. The records of thirteen legislatures, the pamphlets, newspapers in all colonies, ought to be consulted during that period to ascertain the steps by which the public opinion was enlightened and informed concerning the authority of Parliament over the colonies.”

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson

*Communist Manifesto* (1848)  
 Key Document of Communism  
 Symbolism  
 Ghost in “specter” haunting Europe

*Futurist Manifesto* (1909)  
 Launched Art Movement of Futurism

Surrealist Manifesto (1924)  
 Key Document of Surrealism

*Port Huron Statement* (1962)  
 Founding Document of the SDS

*Milestones* (1964)  
 Founding Document of Modern Islamic Radicalism  
 Symbolism  
 Space – Below, buried  
 Movement – Signposts along the way

*Society of Spectacle* (1967)  
 Key Document of French Situationists

*Rules for Radicals* (1971)  
 Handbook for Community Organizing

*Declaration of Independence of Cyberspace* (1996)  
 Applicability of government on the Internet

*Cluetrain Manifesto* (1999)  
 Impact of Internet on Markets & Consumers

*The Coming Insurrection* (2009)  
 Call to Arms in France and Europe

In a general way, one can say that totalitarian political systems are “hot” allowing for little participation while democratic systems are “cool” allowing greater participation.

Declaration

## Talking Points

Providing a script for circulation in media.

## Literature

Folklore

Fairytales

A part of folk literature and the oral tradition. No one recorded them until the brothers Grimm produced their *Household Tales* (1812, 1814 and 1822).

Prophetic

Mythology

Children's Literature

Testament

A document that bears witness. An affirmation such as *The New Testament* and *The Old Testament* of the *Bible*.

## Speeches

Gettysburg Address

Ask Not What Your Country Can Do For You

## Cool Script Uses

“The power of storytelling is also central to my work as a business executive and entrepreneur. Over the years, I've learned that the ability to articulate your story or that of your company is crucial in almost every phase of enterprise management. It works all along the business food chain: A great salesperson knows how to tell a story in which the product is the hero. A successful line manager can rally the team to extraordinary efforts through a story that shows how short-term sacrifice leads to long-term success. An effective CEO uses an emotional narrative about the company's mission to attract investors and partners, to set lofty goals, and to inspire employees.”

Peter Guber  
Entertainment Executive  
*Harvard Business Review* (12/1/07)

Scripts and the stories they structure have application far beyond films and novels. While film entertainment is the obvious use for scripts, there are applications for scripts outside the entertainment industry and ultimately perhaps more important.

For example, scripts have great use in the persuasion professions of advertising, public relations, sales and politics the field of education as a powerful teaching tool. They also have an important place in corporate communications in communications to employees, managers and outside investors.

Perhaps one of the most obvious (but little used) applications for scripts is in the creation of novels. While novels are often adapted into films and sometimes films appear as novels, there has been little merger of the two forms of writing into a new form of script or novel for that matter.

Art forms such as film and literature evolve over time by creating and combining genres within the art forms. This *evolutionary* growth is shown above by the horizontal arrows. However, art forms can create revolutionary changes by merging with other art forms. This *revolutionary* change is shown by the vertical arrow. For example, evolutionary growth in screenwriting (films) and novel writing (literature) involves writing for genres within the art form. On the other hand, revolutionary growth involves combining the art form of screenwriting with that of novel writing.

## Marketing

“Traditional branding theory has valued controlling meaning rather than inspiring circulation.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

“Companies hold onto the idea that a brand may carry a highly restricted range of meanings, defined and articulated by brand stewards. They avoid creating producerly texts because making material that is open to interpretation leaves the control of meaning out of their hands. But, in doing so, companies limit the spreadability of their messages and constraint the value of the brand as a vehicle for social and personal expression.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

“Perhaps the only way to retain complete control over the meaning of a text is never to share it with anyone.”

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

See *Contagious* articles. Relationship of “cool” text to social currency.

## Politics

Talking Points

## Education

“(In the future) illiteracy will not be defined by those who cannot read and write, but by those who cannot learn and relearn.”

Alvin Toffler

## Entertainment

Screenplays

See “Once & Future Kingdom” article

Plays

See notes on new immersive, event trend of Broadway plays

Novels

## Cool Literary Devices

### Archetype

“All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes...For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us.”

*The Structure And Dynamics of the Psyche*  
Carl Jung

### Allegory

The term derives from the Greek *allegoria* “speaking otherwise” and is a story in verse or prose with a double meaning: a primary or surface meaning and a secondary or under-the-surface meaning. It is a story that can be read, understood and interpreted at two levels. It is thus closely related to the Fable and Parable.

The best-known allegory in English language is Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678) an allegory of Christian salvation or the average man’s journey through the trials and tribulations of life.

Origins of allegory are ancient and religious and it appears to be a universal mode of expression. Much myth for example is a form of allegory in an attempt to explain universal facts and forces. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is an example of allegory of redemption and salvation. In fact, most Classical myths are allegories.

Early uses in Plato’s *Timeaeus*, *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*. Particularly, the myth of the cave in Plato’s *Republic* is a well-known example.

Some literary examples.

Divine Comedy

Inferno  
Gulliver's Travels  
Animal Farm  
Watership Down  
Lord of the Rings  
The Hobbit

Synonyms  
Apologue  
Fable  
Parable

Related Words  
Beast Fable  
Bestiary  
Morality Play  
Legend  
Myth  
Narrative  
Tale

#### Allusion

Usually an implicit reference. Often a kind of appeal to a reader to share some experience with the writer. An implied or indirect reference especially in literature; *also* : the use of such references

#### Ambiguity

Relates to a word or expression that can be understood in two or more possible ways.

Example: the *ambiguity* of the clairvoyant's messages from the deceased allowed the grieving relatives to interpret them however they wished.

William Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity* was first published in 1930 by. In brief, Empson's theory was that things are often not what they seem, that words connote at least as much as they denote and very often more. Empson observes, "We call it ambiguous ... when we recognize that there could be a puzzle as to what the author meant, in that alternate views might be taken without sheer misreading ... An ambiguity, in ordinary speech, means something very pronounced, and as a rule witty or deceitful." He finds relevance in any "verbal nuance" however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same

piece of language. “The machinations of ambiguity, are among the very roots of poetry.”

It was one of the most influential critical works of the 20th century and was a key foundation work in the formation of the New Criticism. The book is organized around seven types of that Empson finds in the poetry he criticizes. The first printing in America was by New Directions in 1947. An ambiguity is represented as a puzzle to Empson. We have ambiguity when “alternative views might be taken without sheer misreading.” Empson reads poetry as an exploration of conflicts within the author.

Seven types of ambiguity:

The first type of ambiguity is the metaphor, that is, when two things are said to be alike which have different properties. This concept is similar to that of metaphysical conceit.

Two or more meanings are resolved into one. Empson characterizes this as using two different metaphors at once.

Two ideas that are connected through context can be given in one word simultaneously.

Two or more meanings that do not agree but combine to make clear a complicated state of mind in the author.

When the author discovers his idea in the act of writing. Empson describes a simile that lies halfway between two statements made by the author.

When a statement says nothing and the readers are forced to invent a statement of their own, most likely in conflict with that of the author.

Two words that within context are opposites that expose a fundamental division in the author's mind.

Antonym

A word of opposite meaning.

EX: Hot and cold.

(Note: Opposition symbols?)

## Aphorism

A concise statement of a principle, truth or dogma. Proverbs are often aphoristic as are maxims.

A terse statement of a truth or opinion; an adage; a brief statement of a principle. Wisdom condensed in a few words. Examples: "Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth." (Wilde) "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." (Blake) Aphorisms often take the form of a definition: "Hypocrisy is a homage paid by vice to virtue." (La Rochefoucauld).'

Examples:

"Mirrors would do well to reflect a little more before sending back images." Jean Cocteau

"Sex without love is an empty gesture. But as empty gestures go, it is one of the best."

## Cognitive Dissonance

Mental conflict that occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information. The concept was introduced by the psychologist Leon Festinger (1919–89) in the late 1950s. He and later researchers showed that, when confronted with challenging new information, most people seek to preserve their current understanding of the world by rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding the new information or by convincing themselves that no conflict really exists. Cognitive dissonance is nonetheless considered an explanation for attitude change.

## Collage

A creative work that resembles such a composition in incorporating various materials or elements. Example: The album is a *collage* of several musical styles. A term adopted from the vocabulary of painters to denote a work which contains a mixture of allusions, references, quotations and foreign expressions. Common in the works of James Joyce, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot.

## Connotation

Denotation is the opposite. The most literal and limited meaning of a word regardless of what one feels about it or ideas it connotes. Ex: Apartheid denotes a certain form of political, social and racial regime. It connotes much more though.

Connotation is the suggestion of a meaning of a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes. For example, an old chair has the connotation of comfort.

General categories relate to positive and negative associations. For example, the word “fat” for many people has negative connotations. The word “childlike” has positive connotations relating to innocence.

“Miuccia Prada, a connoisseur of vintage jewelry, has a collection of tiaras and subverts their formal *connotations* by wearing them for the day.”

Hamish Bowles  
*Vogue* (March 1997)

The opposite of connotation is denotation or specific definition rather than implied definition.

#### Didactic

Sets out to instruct. More “hot” than “cool” device.

#### Dissonance

Lack of agreement and especially an inconsistency between the beliefs one holds or between one's actions and one's beliefs. A mingling of discordant sounds and *especially* a clashing or unresolved musical interval or chord.

#### Double Entendre

Ambiguity of meaning arising from language that lends itself to more than one interpretation. A word or expression capable of two interpretations with one usually risqué.

#### Fable

A short narrative in prose that points to a moral. Non-human creatures or inanimate objects are normally the characters.

#### Figurative Language

Language which uses figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, alliteration. Distinguished from literal language.

#### Free Association

A word or idea acts as a stimulus or trigger to a series or sequence of other words which may or may not have logical relationship. Ex. Joyce in *Ulysses* was a principal pioneer of this.

### Free Verse

### Gossip

A person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others. Report of an intimate nature. Chatty talk.

(Note: Participation aspect of rumor based around voyeurism? Just as people “participate” in looking at accidents.)

“In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo.”  
TS Eliot,  
*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

### Irony

For the Roman rhetoricians, irony denoted a rhetorical figure and manner of discourse in which the meaning was contrary to the words. Two major types are verbal irony and situation irony.

“It can be no accident that the beginning of the great age of satire in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century coincides with the increasing use of irony as means of expression throughout the world.” *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Theories*.

A pretense of ignorance and of willingness to learn from another assumed in order to make the other's false conceptions conspicuous by adroit questioning called also *Socratic irony*. The use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning

A usually humorous or sardonic literary style or form characterized by irony. Incongruity between the actual result of a sequence of events and the normal or expected result or an event or result marked by such incongruity

Incongruity between a situation developed in a drama and the accompanying words or actions that is understood by the audience but not by the characters in the play —called also *dramatic irony*, *tragic irony*

EX: “What a beautiful view,” he said, his voice dripping with *irony*, as he looked out the window at the alley. She described her vacation with heavy *irony* as “an educational experience.”

Language device in which the real intent is concealed or contradicted by the literal meaning of words or a situation. Verbal irony, either spoken or written, arises from an awareness of contrast between what is and what ought to be. Dramatic irony, an incongruity in a theatrical work between what is expected and what occurs, depends on the structure of a play rather than its use of words, and it is often created by the audience's awareness of a fate in store for the characters that they themselves do not suspect.

### Maxim

A general truth, fundamental principle, or rule of conduct. A proposition, often barely distinguishable from an aphorism, which consists of a pithy, succinct statement which contains a precept or general truth about human nature and human conduct. EX: "Old people are fond of giving good advice: it consoles them for no longer being capable of setting a bad example." Synonyms are: adage, aphorism, apothegm, byword, epigram, saying, proverb. Related words: bromide, cliché, platitude, axiom, motto, precept, truism.

### Metaphor

"It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!"

*Romeo & Juliet*  
Shakespeare

"A poet makes himself a visionary through a long, boundless, and systemized disorganization of all the senses."

Arthur Rimbaud

"Metaphor systematically disorganizes the common sense of things – jumbling together the abstract with the concrete, the physical with the psychological, the like with the unlike – and reorganizes it in uncommon combinations."

*I Is An Other*  
James Geary

A figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another. The basic figure in poetry. Comparison is implicit whereas in simile it is explicit. EX: "He was drowning in paperwork" is a *metaphor* in which having to deal with a lot of paperwork is being compared to drowning in an ocean of water.

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn noted that metaphor "plays an essential role in establishing a link between scientific language and the

world.” He noted also that those links are not set in stone. “Theory change, in particular, is accomplished by a change in some of the relevant metaphors and in the corresponding parts of the network of similarities through which terms attach to nature.”

In 1978, linguists Michael Reddy and George Lakoff, working independently, demonstrated that metaphor is fundamentally a matter of thought and that metaphorical language is secondary. Conceptual metaphors shape our understanding and determine how we reason. Consequently, metaphors can be central to law as *Citizens United* showed by expanding the common legal metaphor Corporations Are Persons with vast political consequences.

*Metaphors We Live By* (1984) by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson put the early ideas of Lakoff into book form. The book argued that people use metaphors every time they speak. Some of those metaphors are literary – devices for making thoughts more vivid or entertaining. But most are much more basic than that – they’re “metaphors we live by,” metaphors we use without even realizing we’re using them.

For example, you might not think that the statement “He strayed from the line of argument” is metaphorical in any significant way, but it is grounded in the metaphor that AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, and the assumption that A JOURNEY DEFINES A PATH. Put them together, and you get AN ARGUMENT DEFINES A PATH, a path which can be strayed from. Lakoff and Johnson explore these interactions in great detail, and suggest some fascinating philosophical and political implications. (Amazon reviewer of *Metaphors We Live By*).

An important recent book on metaphors is *I Is An Other: The Secret Life of Metaphor and How it Shapes the Way We See the World* (2011) by James Geary.

### Conceptual Metaphor

In cognitive linguistics, **conceptual metaphor**, or **cognitive metaphor**, refers to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain in terms of another. An example of this is the understanding of quantity in terms of directionality such as “the prices are rising.” The idea was first extensively explored by Lakoff in *Metaphors We Live By*.

In his book, Lakoff offers an example of one commonly used conceptual metaphors in “argument is war.” This metaphor shapes our language in the way we view argument as war or as a battle to be won. It is not uncommon to hear someone say “He won that argument” or “I attacked every weak point in his argument”. The very way argument is thought of is shaped by

this metaphor of arguments being war and battles that must be won. Argument can be seen in many other ways other than a battle, but we use this concept to shape the way we think of argument and the way we go about arguing.

#### Dead Metaphor

Used so often, has become lifeless and lost its figurative strength. Has become a cliché. Ex: Green with envy. Top dog. To beat about the bush.

#### Diminishing metaphor

A discrepancy or discord between enor and vehicle. Thought and image brought together in such a way that they are not wholly congruous. T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*:

Let us go then, you and I  
When the evening is etherized against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table.

#### Mixed Metaphor

A figure of speech combining inconsistent or incongruous metaphors. EX: "If we want to get ahead we'll have to iron out the remaining bottlenecks" is an example of a *mixed metaphor*.

(Note: A relationship of metaphor to the *correspondence theory* of symbolism. For example, expressions like "I'm feeling up today" and "I'm high" derive from the metaphorical equation of happiness and height while expressions like "I'm feeling down today" or "I'm low" derive from the metaphorical equation of dejection with depth. Why? Because we are literally up in a vertical sense when we are alert, active and awake and literally down in a horizontal sense when we are sluggish, sleepy or sick. In effect, one can also say that not only is there a metaphorical equation between descriptions of feeling and height but also a symbolic correspondence in that feelings have a correspondence to height in a manner similar to the correspondence between unconsciousness and the feminine, consciousness and the masculine)

#### Metonymy

Drawing a contiguity between things (rather than similarity like metaphor). A figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or thing is substituted for the thing itself. EX: The stage for the theatrical profession. The Crown for the monarchy. The Bench for the judiciary.

#### Metaphor/Metonymy

A theory of binary opposition propounded by Roman Jakobson in *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances* (1956). Jakobson uses the

distinction developed elsewhere between the two axes of language, syntagmatic and paradigmatic. The first may be thought of as a horizontal line where one word is associated with another word through contiguity and the second as a vertical line where meanings can be substituted one for another.

(Note the similarity between the two great dynamics of symbolism in opposition based on linear and correspondence on similarity, the horizontal and vertical lines)

### Mimesis

Almost the same meaning as mime but the concept of imitation here has wider connotations. Aristotle in *Poetics* states that tragedy is an imitation of action. See Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis*.

### Montage

### Neologism

Newly coined words are 1) completely new words like hippy, hepcat 2) a word formed from an existing root or prefix like stereo and para and 3) an established word like beat, dig, high which are given completely new meanings. Today, filled with many like power breakfast, camcorder, Grammy, pooper scooter.

### Objective Correlative

Something (as a situation or chain of events) that symbolizes or objectifies a particular emotion and that may be used in creative writing to evoke a desired emotional response in the reader. Made famous by TS Eliot in an essay on *Hamlet* (1919). "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative' or a set of objects a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion such that when eternal facts which much terminate in sensory experiences are given the emotion is immediately evoked."

### Onomatopoeia

The naming of a thing or action by a vocal imitation of the sound associated with it (as *buzz*, *hiss*). The use of words whose sound suggests the sense.

### Open Couplet

A couplet in which the sense is not completed in the second line but is carried forward into the third or fourth line. Pope's *Epistle to Augustus*:

Our rural Ancestors, with little blest  
Patient of labour when end was rest  
Indulg'd the day that hous'd their annual gain  
With feasts, and off'rings, and a thankful strain.

## Open Stage

Any form of staging in which the performers are not separated from the audience. Forms are theater in the round, thrust stage (audience on three sides), end stage (audience facing from one end) and transverse stage (audience on two opposing sides).

## Oxymoron

A combination of contradictory or incongruous words (as *cruel kindness*); *broadly* : something (as a concept) that is made up of contradictory or incongruous elements. EX: The phrase “cruel kindness” is an *oxymoron*.

“I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief.” Lamb.

“No light, but rather darkness visible.” Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

“The phrase ‘Broadway rock musical’ is an *oxymoron*. Broadway doesn't have the nerve to let the really hard stuff in the house.” Mark Coleman, *Rolling Stone*, 26 Dec. 1996/ 9 Jan. 1997.

“He calls himself a ‘bleeding-heart conservative,’ and that *oxymoron* sums up the unique Jack Kemp role in the Bush Administration: the apostle of free enterprise who is the ambassador to the poor.” —William Safire, *New York Times Magazine*, 25 Mar. 1990

## Parable

A usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle.

Examples: He told the children a *parable* about the importance of forgiveness. The *parable* of the Good Samaritan

### Synonyms

Apologue  
Fable  
Allegory

### Related Words

Beast Fable  
Bestiary  
Morality Play

Legend  
Myth  
Narrative  
Tale

## Paradox

"On their evidence a classic tells, and supremely well, a tale with a sharp point to it that it meanwhile also implicitly rejects. Its sharp point and matching, muted counterpoint shape it overall: thence its felt unity. The polarity is never resolved between the two rival morals of the classic tale, the one express and the other tacit, the one outspoken and the other whispered, the one affirmed and other insinuated: thence its ambiguity, its felt depth, its enduring vitality. Overtheme and undertheme are cross-fertile contraries, like a male and female principle that play off each other until they climax together."

Rudolph Binion  
*Sounding the Classics*  
(Praeger, 1997, Westport, CT.)

A statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is perhaps true. A self-contradictory statement that at first seems true.

Apparently self-contradictory statement whose underlying meaning is revealed only by careful scrutiny. Its purpose is to arrest attention and provoke fresh thought, as in the statement "Less is more." In poetry, paradox functions as a device encompassing the tensions of error and truth simultaneously, not necessarily by startling juxtapositions but by subtle and continuous qualifications of the ordinary meanings of words. When a paradox is compressed into two words, as in "living death," it is called an oxymoron.

Basically, two kinds might be distinguished: 1) particular or local and 2) structural. An example of the first is "I must be cruel only to be kind," a line from hamlet. An example of the second type is more complex. For example, there is a paradox at the heart of the Christian faith that the world will be saved by failure.

Origin: Latin *paradoxum*, from Greek *paradoxon*, from neuter of *paradoxos* contrary to expectation, from *para-* + *dokein* to think, seem. First Known Use: 1540

Examples:

It is a *paradox* that computers need maintenance so often, since they are meant to save people time.

As an actor, he's a *paradox*—he loves being in the public eye but also deeply values and protects his privacy.

A novel full of *paradox*

For the actors, the goal was a *paradox*: real emotion, produced on cue. — Claudia Roth Pierpont, *New Yorker*, 27 Oct. 2008

Again and again, he returns in his writing to the *paradox* of a woman who is superior to the men around her by virtue of social class though considered inferior to them on account of her gender. —Terry Eagleton, *Harper's*, November 2007

She was certainly far from understanding him completely; his meaning was not at all times obvious. It was hard to see what he meant for instance by speaking of his provincial side—which was exactly the side she would have taken him most to lack. Was it a harmless *paradox*, intended to puzzle her? or was it the last refinement of high culture? —Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, 1881

Mr. Guppy propounds for Mr. Smallweed's consideration the *paradox* that the more you drink the thirstier you are and reclines his head upon the window-sill in a state of hopeless languor. —Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, 1852-53

## Paradox of America

Based on two ideas that are in conflict – freedom and equality.

## Propaganda

The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.

Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause; *also* : a public action having such an effect.

New Latin, from *Congregatio de propaganda fide* Congregation for propagating the faith, organization established by Pope Gregory XV †1623. First Known Use: 1718

Manipulation of information to influence public opinion. The term comes from Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith), a missionary organization established by the pope in 1622. Propagandists emphasize the elements of information that support their position and deemphasize or exclude those that do not. Misleading statements and even lies may be used to create the desired effect in the public audience. Lobbying, advertising, and missionary activity are all forms of propaganda, but the term is most commonly used in the political arena. Prior to the 20th century, pictures and the written media were the principal instruments of propaganda; radio, television, motion pictures, and the Internet later joined their ranks. Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes use propaganda to win and keep the support of the populace. In wartime, propaganda directed by a country at its own civilian population and military forces can boost morale; propaganda aimed at the enemy is an element of psychological warfare.

George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language."

See Edward Bernays and the beginning of propaganda in the 1930s. Steward Ewel *Captains of Consciousness* and his book on Bernays.

"Material which fills in every blank limits audience interpretations. Propaganda, for instance, is less producerly because it sets rigid limits on potential meanings."

Henry Jenkins  
*Spreadable Media*

### Proverb

A brief popular maxim expressing a general truth. Succinct and pithy saying that is in general use and expresses commonly held ideas and beliefs. Proverbs are part of every spoken language and folk literature, originating in oral tradition. Often a proverb is found with variations in many different parts of the world. Literate societies dating to the ancient Egyptians have collected proverbs. One of the earliest English proverb collections, *The Proverbs of Alfred*, dates from c. 1150–80. In North America the best-known collection is probably *Poor Richard's*, an almanac published 1732–57 by Benjamin Franklin.

The best-known collection is *The Book of Proverbs* following *The Psalms* in *The Old Testament*.

"Send a fool to close the shutters and he'll close them all over town." (Yiddish)

"We cannot step twice into the same river." (Classical Greek)

## Pun

A figure of speech involving wordplay. The usually humorous use of a word in such a way as to suggest two or more of its meanings or the meaning of another word similar in sound.

EX: The delicatessen is sandwiched, if you'll *pardon the pun*, between two stores.

She's a skillful pilot whose career has—*no pun intended*—really taken off.

Firefighting sparks my interest.

## Rhetoric

Art of using language for persuasion in speaking or writing. A “hot” type of text allowing little reader participation.

## Rumor

Talk or opinion widely disseminated with no discernible source. A statement or report current without known authority for its truth.

(Note: Does the search for a source by the reader or hearer of rumor lead to greater participation? Popularity of tabloids based on rumors?)

## Satire

Artistic form in which human or individual vices, folly, abuses, or shortcomings are held up to censure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony, or other methods, sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement. Literature and drama are its chief vehicles, but it is also found in such mediums as film, the visual arts (e.g., caricatures), and political cartoons. Though present in Greek literature, notably in the works of [Aristophanes](#), satire generally follows the example of either of two Romans, [Horace](#) or [Juvenal](#). To Horace the satirist is an urbane man of the world who sees folly everywhere but is moved to gentle laughter rather than to rage. Juvenal's satirist is an upright man who is horrified and angered by corruption. Their different perspectives produced the subgenres of satire identified by [John Dryden](#) as comic satire and tragic satire.

“The satirist is thus a kind of self-appointed guardian of standards, ideals and truth; of moral as well as aesthetic values. He is a man (woman satirists are rare) who takes it upon himself to correct, censure and ridicule the follies and vices of society and thus to bring contempt and derision upon aberrations from a desirable and civilized norm. Thus satire is a kind of protest, a sublimation and refinement of anger and indignation.” *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* – Cuddon.

## Sermon

“The sermon became one of the principal sources of instruction and ‘entertainment’ in a period when the Church had much control over the diversions available to the public.” *Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory* – Cuddon. The great age of sermon literature runs from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout Europe, the literature of the pulpit had considerable influence on the establishment of ethnic languages and the development of allegory, fable, verse and drama.

## Simile

A figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another in such a way to clarify and enhance an image. An explicit comparison as opposed to a metaphors implicit comparison and recognizable by the use of the words “like” or “as.”

A figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by *like* or *as* (as in *cheeks like roses*)

Ex: “She's as fierce as a tiger” is a *simile*, but “She's a tiger when she's angry” is a metaphor.

“The great blast furnaces of Liege rose along the line like ancient castles burning in a border raid.” Graham Greene *Stamboul Train*.

But Dickens finds the unexpected detail, the vivid *simile*. Think of Joe Gargery in *Great Expectations*, “with eyes of such a very undecided blue that they seemed to have somehow got mixed with their own whites.” Or, in *David Copperfield*, Dora's cousin “in the Life-Guards, with such long legs that he looked like the afternoon shadow of somebody else.” —James Wood, *New Republic*, 14 Dec. 1998

A figure of speech involving a comparison between two unlike entities. In a simile, unlike a metaphor, the resemblance is indicated by the words “like” or “as.” Similes in everyday speech reflect simple comparisons, as in “He eats like a bird” or “She is slow as molasses.” Similes in literature may be specific and direct or more lengthy and complex. The Homeric, or epic, simile, which is typically used in epic poetry, often extends to several lines.

## Slang

Language peculiar to a particular group. The poetry of the common man. Nonstandard vocabulary of extreme informality, usually not limited to any region. It includes newly coined words, shortened forms, and standard words used playfully out of their usual context. Slang is drawn from the vocabularies of

limited groups: cant, the words or expressions coined or adopted by an age, ethnic, occupational, or other group (e.g., college students, jazz musicians); jargon, the shoptalk or technical terminology specific to an occupation; and argot, the cant and jargon used as a secret language by thieves or other criminals. Occupying a middle ground between standard and informal words accepted by the general public and the special words or expressions of these subgroups, slang often serves as a testing ground for words in the latter category. Many prove either useful enough to become accepted as standard or informal words or too faddish for standard use. *Blizzard* and *okay* have become standard, while *conbobberation* (“disturbance”) and *tomato* (“girl”) have been discarded. Some words and expressions have a lasting place in slang; for instance, *beat it* (“go away”), first used in the 16th century, has neither become standard English nor vanished.

### Stream of Consciousness

The continuous unedited chronological flow of conscious experience through the mind. Another term for it is interior monologue. Narrative technique in nondramatic fiction intended to render the flow of myriad impressions—visual, auditory, tactile, associative, and subliminal—that impinge on an individual consciousness. To represent the mind at work, a writer may incorporate snatches of thought and grammatical constructions that do not seem coherent because they are based on the free association of ideas and images. The term was first used by William James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890). In the 20th century, writers attempting to capture the total flow of their characters' consciousness commonly used the techniques of interior monologue, which represents a sequence of thought and feeling. Novels in which stream of consciousness plays an important role include James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) and *To The Lighthouse* (1927).

### Subjectivity

The author is primarily concerned with conveying personal experiences and feelings (autobiography) as opposed to objectivity suggesting the writer is outside of and detached from what he is writing about.

(Note: for purposes of classification into cool or hot, how does one approach these two modes?)

### Sublime

To cause to pass directly from the solid to the vapor state and condense back to solid form. To elevate or exalt especially in dignity or honor to render finer (as in purity or excellence). To convert (something inferior) into something of higher worth

### Sub-Text

The text of the unsaid a reader tends to construct for himself or herself by imagining what is not said or not done, what might be implied or hinted, what is ambiguous, marginal, ambivalent, evasive and so on. In doing so, the reader exercises insight into the unconscious elements in the work and elicits additional meanings. Fredrick Jameson is concerned with the “political unconscious” of a text that constitutes the unspoken, the concealed and repressed.

### Suggestion

The process by which one thought leads to another especially through association of ideas. Ideas, feelings and impulses a word or arrangement of words evoke over and above their actual sense and sound. Really, the use of “cool” devices create this suggestion.

### Symbol and Symbolism

The two key dynamics of symbolism can be listed as “hot” and “cool”

Duality = Hot, less participation

Opposition to the times

Person against Culture

Correspondence = Cool, more participation

In tune with times

Person aligned with Culture

### Synesthesia

The mixing of sensations. The concurrent appeal to more than one sense. The response through several senses to the stimulation of one.

EX: Hearing a color or seeing a smell.

First used by Rimbaud and Baudelaire in their poetry and especially in Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du mal*.

Used in everyday speech such as “a cold eye” or a “soft wind” or “heavy silence” or “hard voice” or “black look.”

### Synonym

A word similar in meaning to another.

Ex: For the word insane – mad, demented, daft, loopy, psychotic, crazy, nutty.

### Vague

Not clearly expressed stated in indefinite terms. Not having a precise meaning.  
Not clearly defined, grasped, or understood. Indistinct. Not clearly felt or sensed.  
Somewhat subconscious.

## Cool Words

There are various dictionaries focusing on specific devices of language such as aphorisms, metaphors and synonyms. One day there might exist a *Dictionary of Cool Words* or words. Below are a few examples of “cool” words expanded to related cool words through synonyms and related words from *Webster’s Dictionary* (online).

### Ambiguity

#### Synonyms

Obscurity  
Darkness  
Equivocalness  
Equivocation  
Inscrutability  
Murkiness  
Mysteriousness  
Nebulosity  
Obliqueness  
Opacity

#### Related Words

Mystery  
Cloudiness  
Dimness  
Faintness  
Fogginess  
Fuzziness  
Haziness  
Indefiniteness  
Indistinctness  
Shade  
Shadow  
Uncertainty  
Vagueness  
Impenetrability  
Incomprehensibility  
Circuitous

Indirectness  
Depth  
Abtruseness  
Complexity  
Difficulty  
Obtruseness  
Complication

## Collage

### Synonyms

Agglomeration  
Alphabet Soup  
Assortment  
Clutter  
Miscellany  
Grab bag  
Hodgepodge  
Jumble  
Jungle  
Litter  
Melange  
Menagerie  
Miscellanea  
Mishmash  
Mixed Bag  
Montage  
Pastiche  
Patchwork  
Potpourri  
Rummage  
Salmagundi  
Scramble  
Shuffle  
Smorgasbord  
Stew  
Tumble  
Variety  
Welter

## Related Words

Notions  
Oddments  
Odds and ends  
Sundries  
Accumulation  
Aggregate  
Conglomerate  
Catchall  
Alloy  
Amalgam  
Blend  
Combination  
Composite  
Compound  
Fusion  
Intermixture  
Mix-Up  
Chaos  
Confusion  
Disarray  
Mess  
Morass  
Muddle  
Shambles  
Imbroglia  
Snarl  
Tangle

## Paradox

### Synonyms

Dichotomy  
Incongruity  
Contradiction

### Related Words

Antinomy  
Conundrum  
Enigma  
Mystery  
Puzzle

## Riddle

## Vague

### Synonyms

Fuzzy  
Indefinite  
Inexplicit  
Unclear

### Related Words

Ambiguous  
Cryptic  
Dark  
Enigmatic  
Equivocal  
Murky  
Nebulous  
Obscure  
Unintelligible  
Bleary  
Blurry  
Dim  
Faint  
Foggy  
Gauzy  
Misty  
Woozy  
Indeterminate  
Indistinct  
Indistinguishable  
Uncertain  
Undefinable  
Undetermined  
Inexplicable  
Inscrutable  
Mysterious  
Baffling  
Bewildering  
Confounding  
Confusing

Mystifying  
Obfuscatory  
Perplexing  
Puzzling  
Unfathomable

## Cool Structure

Beginning

Juxtaposition

Non-Linear

Numbers Not Names

For Sequence or Chapters in Narrative

Outline

Coolness might not come from devices within a piece but rather from a particular *stage in the author's creative process*. Outlines represent the beginning stages in the construction of a text. Like all “beginnings” they offer the potential for much participation before an “ending” is placed on the text.

Piece

Short

Sketch

As outlines represent beginning stages in the construction of texts, sketches represent beginning stages in the construction of an image. For example, painters who make sketches of future paintings and share these for comments are similar to writers who make outlines of future texts and share these outlines for comments.

Table of Contents

With One = Hot

Without One = Cool

(Note: No Table of Contents here)

Voice (Narrator)

Point of view

First Person

Alternating

Faulkner's *Sound And Fury*

Second Person

Third Person

Mixed

Virginia Woolf *To The Lighthouse*

Fitzgerald *Great Gatsby*

## Reference

Hypertext

Reference to other texts within text

## Cool Elements

### Activity (Of characters within text)

Exploration/Search (As opposed to “hot” Discovery/Find)

“I’m making explorations. I don't know where they're going to take me. My work is designed for the pragmatic purpose of trying to understand our technological environment and its psychic and social consequences. But my books constitute the process rather than the completed product of discovery; my purpose is to employ facts as tentative probes, as means of insight, of pattern recognition, rather than to use them in the traditional and sterile sense of classified data, categories, containers. I want to map new terrain rather than chart old landmarks. But I've never presented such explorations as revealed truth. As an investigator, I have no fixed point of view, no commitment to any theory--my own or anyone else's. As a matter of fact, I'm completely ready to junk any statement I've ever made about any subject if events don't bear me out, or if I discover it isn't contributing to an understanding of the problem. The better part of my work on media is actually somewhat like a safe-cracker's. I don't know what's inside; maybe it's nothing. I just sit down and start to work. I grope, I listen, I test, I accept and discard; I try out different sequences--until the tumblers fall and the doors spring open.”

Marshall McLuhan  
*Playboy* Interview (1969)

### Color

### Short

As opposed to long text

Or long text chopped into short pieces

“I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.”

Mark Twain

Sound

Noise = Hot  
Silence = Cool

Senses

Eye/See = Hot  
    Writing  
Ear/Hear = Cool  
    Speech

In *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida argues that throughout the Western philosophical tradition, writing has been considered as merely a derivative form of speech, and thus as a “fall” from the “full presence” of speech.

Nose/Smell = Cool

Light

Darkness = Cool  
Light = Hot  
Reflection = Cool  
Radiation = Hot  
Dim = Cool  
Bright = Hot

Time

Youth = Cool  
    Beginning  
Old age = Hot  
    Ending

Place

City = Hot  
Nature = Cool  
    Wilderness the coolest part of nature  
    Desert = Cool

Architecture

Open = cool  
Closed = hot

Space

Shape

Culture

Mass Culture  
    Broadcast aspect = Hot  
    Communion equality aspect = Cool  
    Commodity Culture

Capitalism – No shared fantasies, stress, alienation, freedom; desire is transformation

#### Segmented Culture

Interactive aspect = Cool

Freedom aspect = Hot

Gift Culture

Non-Commercial – Allows for shared fantasies; desire is sharing and reciprocity and not transformation

#### Number

##### Texture

Soft = Cool

Smooth = Hot

Rough = Cool

Hard = Hot

##### Primary Elements

Water

Earth

Fire

Air

#### Images

Texts and scripts create images and one might make the claim – as we do with scripts – that some images are more participatory and cool than other images that are hot and non-participatory. Cool images would embody the cool literary devices as well as the cool elements above.

For example, are there paradoxical images? Puzzling images that call for involvement? What of optical illusions?

#### Illusions

**Physiological illusions**, such as the [afterimages](#) following bright lights, or adapting stimuli of excessively longer alternating patterns (contingent perceptual aftereffect), are presumed to be the effects on the eyes or brain of excessive stimulation or interaction with contextual or competing stimuli of a specific type—brightness, colour, position, size, movement, etc.

Cognitive illusions are assumed to arise by interaction with assumptions about the world, leading to "unconscious inferences", an idea first suggested in the 19th century by [Hermann Helmholtz](#). Cognitive illusions are commonly divided into [ambiguous illusions](#), distorting illusions, paradox illusions, or fiction illusions.

- **Ambiguous illusions** are pictures or objects that elicit a perceptual "switch" between the alternative interpretations. The [Necker cube](#) is a well-known example; another instance is the [Rubin vase](#).
- **Distorting or geometrical-optical illusions** are characterized by distortions of size, length, position or curvature. A striking example is the [Café wall illusion](#). Other examples are the famous [Müller-Lyer illusion](#) and [Ponzo illusion](#).
- **Paradox illusions** are generated by objects that are paradoxical or impossible, such as the [Penrose triangle](#) or [impossible staircases](#) seen, for example, in [M.C. Escher's \*Ascending and Descending\*](#) and [Waterfall](#). The triangle is an illusion dependent on a cognitive misunderstanding that adjacent edges must join.

**Fictions** are when a figure is perceived even though it is not in the stimulus.

(Note: Might be entire book on images called *Cool Images*)

## Cool Languages

Hot languages = Less participation

Cool languages = More participation

The language of the Third Reich helped to create the culture. “It isn’t only Nazi actions that have to vanish, but also the Nazi cast of mind, the typical Nazi way of thinking, and its breeding ground: the language of Nazism.”

*The Language of the Third Reich*  
Victor Klemperer

“New demands led the language of the Third Reich to stimulate an increase in the use of the dissociating prefix *ent* (*de*) though in each case it remains open to question whether we are dealing with completely new creations or the adoption by the common language of terms already familiar in specialist circles. Windows had to be blacked out (*verdunkelt*) because of enemy planes, which in turn led to the daily task of lifting the blackout (*des Entdunkelns*). In the event of roof fires, the lofts had to be free of clutter that might get in the way of the firefighters – they were therefore de-cattered (*entrumpelt*). New sources of nourishment had to be tapped: the bitter horse-chestnut was de-bittered (*entbittert*).”

Klemperer, the main critic of Hitlerdeutsch, demonstrates, resisting patterns of thought means engaging in conceptual metaphors and refusing the logic that ideologies impose upon them. (See Metaphors under Cool Device section and particularly the ideas of George Lakoff and his book *Metaphors We Live By*.)

## Cool Genres

Adventure  
Exploration  
Fiction  
Mystery

### Cool texts in Hot Media

McLuhan observed that movies were a “hot” media in that they enhanced the single sense of vision in such a manner that the viewer (audience) did not need to exert much effort in filling in the details of a movie image. However, there can exist “cool” text within hot media such as text based on the mystery genre.

For example, in 1999, a film was made with an inexpensive handheld camera for \$35,000. It told the story of three student filmmakers who hiked into the mountains of Maryland to film a documentary about a local legend called the Blair Witch. The filmmakers supposedly disappeared and viewers were told the film was pieced together from “rediscovered” amateur footage shot on their hike. No one was sure if this was true.

Wharton marketing professor Jonah Berger mentions this film *The Blair Witch Project* in his book *Contagious* and asks readers “What do we do when confronted with a controversial mystery like this? Naturally, we ask others to help us sort out the answer.” This is exactly what happened. The film garnered a huge buzz simply from people wondering whether it depicted real events or not. The buzz drove the movie to become a blockbuster and grossed more than \$248 million worldwide.

One of the lessons learned here is that a hot media containing cool text can generate huge participation.

## Cool Forms

Blogs  
Fairytale  
Fan Fiction

“The more I dive into this matter of whaling, and push my researches up to the very spring-like head of it, so much the more am I impressed with its honorableness and antiquity; and especially when I find so many great demi-gods and heroes, prophets of all sorts, who one way or other have shed distinction upon it, I am transported with the reflection that I myself below, though but subordinately, to so emblazoned a fraternity.”

Herman Melville  
On writing fan fiction

Mythology  
Open Source Code  
Parable  
Probe

Marshall McLuhan urged readers to think of his work as "probes" or "mosaics" offering a toolkit approach to thinking about the media. Probes are riddled with aphorisms like “The electric light is pure information” and “People don't actually read newspapers, they get into them every morning like a hot bath.”

Tweets  
Script

As opposed to text, scripts are outlines for future performances whether film, plays, radio.

Example: In a screenplay, the screenwriter is the “author” while the reader is similar to the first “director”

Talking Points – Forms of scripts used mainly in the political arena or for business communications.

Video Games

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## Notes

“But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, representation to reality, the appearance to the essence... illusion only is sacred, truth profane. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness.”

Feuerbach  
Preface to the second edition of *The Essence of Christianity*

“A lively new polemic about the concepts ‘one divides into two’ and ‘two fuse into one’ is unfolding on the philosophical front in this country. This debate is a struggle between those who are for and those who are against the materialist dialectic, a struggle between two conceptions of the world: the proletarian conception and the bourgeois conception. Those who maintain that ‘one divides into two’ is the fundamental law of things are on the side of the materialist dialectic; those who maintain that the fundamental law of things is that ‘two fuse into one’ are against the materialist dialectic. The two sides have drawn a clear line of demarcation between them, and their arguments are diametrically opposed. This polemic is a reflection, on the ideological level, of the acute and complex class struggle taking place in China and in the world.”

Red Flag  
(Peking)  
21 September 1964

\* \* \*

One of the greatest tragedies of our time is the “hot” non-participatory aspects of the modern world. This non-participatory aspect is probably most notable in media. One can “view” or “listen to” but cannot participate or interact with.

The French philosopher Guy Debord notes this modern condition in his book *The Society of the Spectacle* observing that modern man is increasingly a “spectator” rather than an “actor” in the world. And, the French anthropologist Marcel Mauss in his landmark book *The Gift* observes the historic need for this “cool” participatory type of interaction noting, “The unreciprocated gift still makes the person who has accepted it inferior, particularly when it has been accepted with no thought of returning it ... We must give back more than we have received.”

For the most part, modern communication is far too occupied with bringing new technologies of communication online to compete for the attention of mass culture than investigating the techniques behind these technologies. The focus of communication, whether those in the universities, Hollywood, Madison Avenue or Washington DC, is on new *types* of communication rather than new *techniques* of communication.

In the middle of modern communication, we have the Internet, that island of the masculine alphabet of words in the feminine sea of electric cyberspace. If only McLuhan was around to provide some of his satire and aphorisms to the whole thing. Would he see the Internet as the real showdown between “medium” and “message?” Would he consider it the battleground for the senses of orality against those of visualness?

And what would he make of all those elementary kids playing Sims or Animal Crossing? Or all those young boys playing Madden Football? Or what about the increasing numbers of young men that spend their leisure time playing Lineage or Grand Theft Auto? Or what would he think of all the beeping and ringing of our modern culture, of cell phones going off in movies and drivers zooming around the outer-belts of cities with cell phones glued to their ears?

More than likely, McLuhan would be participating with this media and perhaps lecturing and writing about it. But, like before, it is unlikely that popular culture would really understand the importance of his words. Like the Boomer generation that went before them, the new Millennium and Xer generations are aware of this Oracle called McLuhan but things don't go much further than a basic awareness.

If only the new generation could understand McLuhan ... in a new way. It's probably too much to ask. But now more than ever is the time for a focus on communication technique, that hidden core of the McLuhan heritage to modern communication. For attention to McLuhan brings with it so much more than attention to the avant-garde media theorist from Toronto. It also summons back into the present the past world of the great artists and art works of communication technique.

\* \* \*

## Cool As Theater

Immersive theater mixes food, drink and environmental staging  
to lure audiences that eschew Broadway

Gordon Cox

Variety

4/23/13

Call it experiential; call it immersive; call it event theater. It's usually a snarl of logistical challenges. There's no set financial model for making it viable. The work itself is often impossible to describe.

And a growing number of legions think it's the next big thing.

Often staged in unorthodox locations and already commonplace overseas, the shows typically feature long runs, lower margins, purpose-built venues and added revenue streams — such as food and drink.

“It's really on the cutting edge of what people want theater to become,” says producer Howard Kagan of his upcoming commercial transfer of “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812,” a rock opera that improbably mixes Tolstoy, contempo musical idioms and an environmental staging in a Russian supper-club setting that serves pierogis and vodka. “It becomes relevant and desirable and fun for a huge array of demographics that don't necessarily think they'll turn out for a Broadway show.”

Adds La Jolla Playhouse a.d. Christopher Ashley, “I think this kind of work is the next huge wave of growth in the American theater.”

\* \* \*

### Other event theater

“Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812”

One part environmental staging in a Russian supper club, one part modern-day music and one part the story (taken from a small seg of “War and Peace”) of a young Moscow woman who's seduced by a devious Casanova while waiting for her husband to return from the front lines.

WHERE: Kazino, a specially constructed and designed space on a lot in Manhattan's Meatpacking District.

“Sleep No More”

Punchdrunk's genre-bending, noirish dance-theater retelling of “Macbeth,” staged over five

floors in a meticulously set-dressed venue in which masked auds roam at will while the performers enact the tale all around them. In addition to the bar where theatergoers start the show, there's also a rooftop watering hole and restaurant. WHERE: The McKittrick Hotel, not actually a hotel but the show's custom-renovated space in a former nightclub in west Chelsea, Manhattan.

\* \* \*

*Then She Fell*  
Immersive Theater  
Opens March 9, closes July 28, 2013  
The Kingsland Ward at St. John's  
195 Maujer St., Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Then She Fell* is a fully immersive, multi-sensory experience in which only 15 audience members per performance explore a dreamscape where every alcove, corner, and corridor has been transformed into lushly designed world. Inspired by the life and writings of Lewis Carroll, it offers an Alice-like experience for audience members as they explore the rooms, often by themselves, in order to discover hidden scenes; encounter performers one-on-one; unearth clues that illuminate a shrouded history; use skeleton keys to gain access to guarded secrets; and imbibe elixirs custom designed by one of NYC's foremost mixologists.

Performances begin promptly, and there is absolutely no late admittance. There are no refunds. Admittance is strictly limited to audience members 21 years of age and over; all audience members must bring valid government-issued photo IDs. The performance lasts roughly 2 hours without intermission. Because of the immersive nature of this piece, audiences may be standing for several minutes at a time over the course of the performance. Audiences are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes. This performance is not recommended for audience members who are not comfortable standing, walking, or being alone.

\* \* \*

The New Yorker  
Goings On About Town

Third Rail Projects recently moved its wildly imaginative multimedia theatre-dance piece from a single-level hospital to a creaky three-story school building, now dressed to be a mental ward in Wonderland. There are even more nooks and crannies to snoop around in, skeleton key in hand, looking for clues about the nature of the relationship between Lewis Carroll and his young muse

Alice Liddell. Fifteen audience members per show are led through a maze of cockeyed spaces and left in small rooms with actors playing the White Rabbit or the Mad Hatter or the Red Queen, who might wordlessly offer a tiny, yummy alcoholic drink poured from a vial and then orchestrate an anxiety-provoking but exciting theatrical encounter: silently eat a tangerine with Alice; lie down in a little bed while the White Queen nestles beside you, telling a haunting bedtime story. Lucky theatregoers get to join the tea party, where chocolate is served and spoons fly. Wonderfully written, directed, and choreographed by Zach Morris, Tom Pearson, and Jennine Willett, in collaboration with the company.

\* \* \*

### The New Politics of Participation

#### **Sociology Quarterly**

#### **Permanent Revolution: Occupying Democracy**

Douglas Rushkoff\*

Article first published online: 27 MAR 2013

“Unlike the innovations of the industrial age, which fostered production, accumulation, central authority, and empire, those of the digital era are biased toward replication and self-modification. Robotics, genomics, nanomachines, and digital programming do not render completed technologies but self-replicating, iterative systems. We program them now, but they continue themselves, learning from experience, iterating new versions, and carrying on the intentions of their original creators in novel ways.”

To parse the impact of the digital environment is a bit more difficult because we are currently living within its effects. I have identified four of the most pronounced conceptual shifts accompanying digitality in order to demonstrate the ways that the Occupy movement has utilized them as central operating principles for its new approach to activism and democratic participation.

**The first is the notion of feedback.** Traditionally, what we think of as feedback is simply the latent results of particular causes. Farmers plant in one season and get feedback months later in the yield of crop. Plant seeds too close together, and the crop competes for resources. These data are then incorporated into the next year's planting. Likewise, businesses send a product to market and then wait for sales reports to determine if the design and marketing were appropriate or could be improved upon. Each new iteration of planting or product design was based on the feedback from the one before.

In the dawn of the digital era, Cyberneticist Norbert Wiener (1965) saw in feedback a way of developing robots that could instantaneously “feel” and respond to changing conditions in the real world. Just as a thermostat senses the temperature in order to turn a heater on or off and an elevator “feels” for indicators at each floor instead of attempting to measure the distance between one floor and another, robots could be taught to rely no more on their programming than to the things around them. Each piece of feedback could be iterated into the next action.

With the help of systems theorists aided by computers (Miller and Page 2007), much more complex systems could be analyzed in terms of feedback and iteration. The screech one hears when placing a microphone too close to an amplified speaker—what we call feedback—is really just the cyclical loop of uncontrolled feedback, iterating back to the microphone and again to the speaker. It is analogous to any of the many chaotic systems from the weather to the stock market that evade the analysis of our normal faculties.

Computers give us a way to see such systems in terms of their feedback and iteration. Fractals—the paisley graphics churned out by computers—are really just visualizations of the feedback and iteration of nonlinear equations. Their power is in their ability to render previously incomprehensible systems in graphics that make sense to the human viewer. As a result, we become more ready to understand feedback as an ongoing phenomenon rather than some occasional event.

In politics, for example, feedback used to occur primarily in four-year cycles. The populace would vote for a president, that president would go about his job, and then four years later he would get feedback in the form of being granted another term or kicked out of office. Pollsters arose to obtain feedback at tighter intervals so that a politician could adjust policy (or even just his communication about policy) during his term. Digital technology—from live Twitter feeds to real-time peplemeter results—now allows for instantaneous feedback. In a digital environment, feedback and iteration fold into one another.

**Second and similarly, in a digital environment, narratives no longer work quite like they used to.** Thanks to the remote control, the digital video recorder, the joystick, and the mouse, traditional stories are deconstructed, channel surfed, and fast forwarded (Rushkoff 1995). Aristotle was likely the first to identify the way that audiences are carried through a story through their identification with a character. This identification allows the audience to go up into tension as the tragic hero makes a series of decisions that put him into jeopardy. If the audience could make any decisions on its own, they might have a way out other than to continue along with the character into peril, where they will ultimately have to accept the playwright's choice of how things end up.

Likewise, anthropologist Joseph Campbell spent a career analyzing what he called “the hero's journey,” a shape he believed was common to most mythology. This journey into peril for later redemption again required a captive audience, incapable of making its own decisions. These

narrative techniques, as well as audience captivity, were eventually exploited by broadcast advertisers who learned to enact them in just 30 seconds, all for the benefit of a product. As audiences attained interactivity, however, the captivity required for this sort of propaganda—as well as the rest of traditional storytelling—became threatened. With escape as close as the push of a button, audiences of all kinds become intolerant of the anxiety associated with the rising tension of a story.

In the deconstructed, cut-and-paste mashup of digital media, the messianic, ends-justify-the-means values of traditional journeys no longer find an environment consonant with their value systems. This is the realm of ongoing fantasy role-playing, not tragically terminal heroes. The digital environment is not a place for extended struggles, charismatic leaders followed by masses, or winner-takes-all campaigns. The structure of digital entertainment and problem solving is less like agonistic play with victors and vanquished than it is like James Carse's (1997) “infinite game”—one played for the sake of play. The object of the game is to keep the game going as long as possible.

**This sensibility extends to the third characteristic of the digital media environment, its emphasis on prototyping over product.** The shareware culture of the Internet led to what are known as “public betas”—the release of unfinished software to the public for testing and improvement. As Media Lab director Joichi Ito has explained (Ito 2011), there is no point testing a product in-house when there is a willing population of users out there ready to bang on one's programs. Besides, there is no time (see feedback and iteration above) to finish a product before seeing how people are going to react to it. Better to incorporate feedback into one's software in an ongoing fashion.

**Fourth and finally, the digital environment blurs the boundary between users and programmers.** In a computing environment (unless a program is intentionally and artificially encrypted and protected) one's level of participation is only limited by his willingness to learn more and dig deeper. One can play music through iTunes, or become a disc jockey whose selections are listened to by others. He can go deeper and use Garage Band to make new music, or another program to create new instruments for Garage Band. Or he can learn to program a new kind of music sequencer altogether.

Or, as Julian Kücklich (2004) and I (Rushkoff 2012) have explored separately, one's level of participation in any system can now be understood through the lens of a programmer or player. One can play a computer game out of the box; one can learn the “cheat” codes to play the game on a new level; one can learn to “mod” his own level of the game; or one can become a programmer and develop his own game. In a digital society people participate on all these levels, and their limitations are either voluntary or visibly imposed.

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Commodity culture (commercial culture of capitalism) does not allow for shared fantasies and stress alienation, freedom and alones. Upscale mobility, new possibilities, escapist. Deep history in advertising history and theory. Desire is transformation.

Gift cultures (non-commercial cultures) does allow for shared fantasies. The fantasy here is not transformation of the individual but sharing with others, strengthening social ties, acceptance of mutual obligations. Reciprocity.

Fan created works often center on themes of romance, friendship and community and contribute to the fan community. Jenkins.

Nostalgia as shared fantasy.