

Sample Student

10 November 2012

English 100 – Comparative Analysis

Sample Essay

Advertising and Violence v. Hip-Hop and Gender Roles

Two essays in the book *Rereading America* use similar writing strategies to display and bolster their arguments to the reader. The first essay is titled “Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt’: Advertising and Violence,” by Jean Kilbourne. This essay elaborates on the impact advertising has on male and female gender roles in America. Kilbourne argues that companies’ advertisements objectify women, turning them into things that men can use without guilt. In the second essay, “From Fly-Girls to Bitches and Hos” by Joan Morgan, the idea that hip-hop negatively alters the role of women in black communities is presented. Morgan stresses that rappers define the “masculinity” that black men strive towards. Manhood, as displayed by rappers, is full of violence, crime, hidden guilt, and secret escapes through drugs and alcohol.

Comment [1]: Good focus on comparable strategies right up front in your summary introduction

Comment [2]: This is the perfect amount of introduction material for the reading – anything more would be more than we need or want in an introductory paragraph

Comment [3]: Note that essay titles like this one are always placed in quotation marks, not italicized like a book title would be.

While each piece has quite a distinctive voice, tone and style – one is quite academic, the other colloquial and infused with street references, for example; one uses pope imagery for example material, the other uses hip hop music lyrics and culture – both of these essays employ similar rhetorical strategies to convey their messages to us, to very good effect. They both also use a direct, first person stance in their speech and they both rely on tangible data, source quotes and statistics, and anecdotal evidence to bolster their arguments. These are all strategies meant to capture readers' attentions and impress their arguments upon us. They do so quite convincingly, in the process revealing to devastating effect the diminished and subservient role of women in American culture that still persists today.

Comment [4]: A clear and convincing thesis that effectively lists the connections between the two pieces but also takes a clear position on the successes of the writing in both. Although the argument here is one that gives a positive evaluation of both pieces – which a comparative discussion is by no means *required* to do – there is still a clear focus on effective writing strategies used in the writing and why those strategies are particularly effective and successful in this case. This is exactly what comparative analysis thesis work should do.

In the essay by Jean Kilbourne, first person point of view is used to involve the reader in the argument. Throughout the essay the pronoun “we” refers to humankind, but more directly addresses women including the author herself. Using personal pronouns as a writing strategy ropes the reader into the essay’s argument, by presenting the problem as the reader’s dilemma in addition to the writer’s. Personal pronouns ask the reader to interact with the writing. An example of the personal pronoun drawing the reader in is in the quote “we all know what wolves do to sheep” (Kilbourne 579). This statement forces the reader to think about what Kilbourne is referring to; it provokes the reader to think about his or her knowledge of a wolf’s relationship with a sheep. If the reader refuses to actively read the essay, he or she will miss the point the author is trying to make. Kilbourne’s assumptions on the knowledge of the reader, and the blatant statement about such knowledge, makes the reader take a second look at the sentence to validate or invalidate her supposition. Through personal pronouns, Kilbourne compels the reader to interact and actively read the text by making him or her question his or herself and the argument.

Comment [5]: A focused, well-articulated topic paragraph opening and transition work that echoes and extends your summary (and/or thesis) formulation and gives us a very clear idea of where you’re taking the discussion. Good.

Comment [6]: Very nice close reading and textual analysis work here. This is exactly the kind of close examination that yields conclusions about how exactly the writing achieves the successes it does (or doesn’t) in conveying meaning. Good.

Comment [7]: Integration of textual support – Good deployment of textual support here to illustrate and extend the descriptions you’re offering of the selection. Nicely done.

Comment [8]: Good citation work – Adept handling of the technical details of citation work here. The parenthetical reference(s) is formatted just as it’s supposed to be. Nicely done.

Comment [9]: Good focus here on strategy and the readerly experience of the rhetorical choices the author(s) makes in the writing at this point in the text.

Like Kilbourne's essay, Joan Morgan's essay uses personal pronouns; but, in addition to involving the reader in the text, she uses the pronouns to direct the essay to a specific audience: the black community. By using the pronouns "brothers" and "sistas," Morgan, a young black woman, narrows the audience to the young African-American men and women in the United States. The pronouns Morgan uses welcome the readers who recognize these pronouns as common lingo, and aid in clearly conveying her message to those readers.

Comment [10]: Succinct and articulate conclusion and transition work here that very effectively recalls the topic focus of the paragraph while also extending and deepening the support for your thesis formulation running throughout your discussion, just as it should. Very good.

Comment [11]: Underdeveloped discussion(s). Additional discussion material needed here. The paragraph(s) is insufficiently developed and needs attenuation (lengthening & deepening) of the ideas it introduces (or the discussion needs to be folded into larger paragraphs nearby, one or the other). There is not enough analysis and/or textual support to justify and support the paragraph and topic statements you're offering here. Draw out your discussion more as you attempt to develop your points and textual work further. 6-8 sentences per paragraph with 75% dedicated to your own speech and a maximum of 25% reserved for quoted or paraphrased support material is a good minimum benchmark to follow for this kind of analytical discussion work.

In addition to 'brother' and 'sista,' Morgan uses the pronouns "we" and "our" to unite her "sista friend" (Morgan 604) readers under her argument. Morgan connects her argument (that the lyrics that young men write degrade the gender role of women) to the women who experience the degradation firsthand, by including herself as a victim. Morgan shares her experiences so that women in the same situation can relate to her and compare their own stories with Morgan's. We desperately need a space to lovingly address the uncomfortable issues that have come up in reaction to hip-hop's renovation of the role of women (Morgan 606). In this paraphrase, Morgan places the burden of action on her shoulders as well as the other women in the black community. In making her fight her sista's fight, Morgan empowers her reader's to take action alongside her. Whether or not the reader is in the black community where this reform is taking place, Morgan firmly establishes her argument; however, for the audience it appeals to directly, the young black community, the essay becomes a relatable and motivating battle for young women in the black society.

Comment [12]: Bookending – Your own ideas are more important than the author's. "Bookend" textual references with your own full topic and summary statements, analysis and transition work *before* and then again *after* lead-ins to quotes or paraphrases. Sandwich textual citations *in the middle* for support and illustration, and place your own extended analysis work on both sides of the textual material. Never let another author speak for you - Always begin and end with your own ideas and writing, instead making those other sources speak after you or in support of you.

Comment [13]: Author double reference. Do not repeat your source name in a parenthetical citation when the quoted or paraphrased source has already been introduced elsewhere in the sentence / paragraph / essay discussion and it's clear who the source is in this new citation. One place or the other, but not both. For references whose source is already clear to the reader, include only the page number of the source in your parenthetical citation.

Comment [14]: Very articulate **explication and synthesis of textual concepts**. Focused, thorough and succinct, it offers perceptive summary coverage of the selection. This is exactly the kind of close and **detailed textual evaluation** I'm looking for – it succeeds in its attempt to make conclusions about *how (well)* the work is composed (rather than *what* the ideas might be or whether they're good ones or bad ones). Good work.

Both essays use personal pronouns to reel in the reader's attention.

"We," is found many times throughout each essay; the authors use this pronoun to place ownership in the reader's lap as well as the author's. Every time "we" appears in the text, the reader must analyze whether or not he or she actually belongs in the argument, capturing the reader's focus, and making him or her concentrate on what the essay is saying about him or herself. **One differing aspect of the two essays is that Morgan's essay uses personal pronouns to direct the essay towards the audience of the young black community in which Morgan lives, in addition to involving the reader in the text, while Kilbourne's more loosely applies to women- and mankind.** First person point of view in each essay portrays the argument to the reader and encourages the reader to consider the meaning of the argument as it applies to him or herself. Both authors use this writing strategy in slightly different ways to convey two very different arguments.

Comment [15]: There are two principal kinds of comparative analysis construction:

Subject block, in which a given set of points are all discussed together for only one subject source at a time before moving on to the other subject source and discussing those same points again.

Point-by-point, in which only a single point is discussed at a time, first with one subject source and then the other subject source before moving on to the next discussion point where the pattern is repeated.

This is a successful example of a **point-by-point discussion** where only one point – differing uses of personal pronouns in each piece – is dealt with for *both pieces* in one discussion.

What's good about this paragraph: I have highlighted the description at the head of the paragraph of the specific point to be discussed and the point midway through the essay where the discussion transitions from source reading to the other. This is what a well-balanced point by point discussion should look like. One paragraph, one point, equal time spent examining that point in both source readings.

Another strategy used in Kilbourne's essay is her use of images and quotes from advertisements to provide tangible evidence for the reader to corroborate her argument: advertisements objectify women and encourage violence in relationships between men and women. Kilbourne inserts many pictures and quotes from advertisements published around the world. One of many examples is of an "Old Spice" advertisement; the ad displays a woman saying "NO'... [while] showing a man leaning over a [her] against a wall" (Kilbourne 579), but on the bottom of the ad, "in very small print, is 'sweat.'" Kilbourne argues that this company is not only encouraging the purchase of their deodorant, but also encouraging men to disregard what women say, because "they really do not mean it." With the picture of the ad near the argument, Kilbourne gives the reader the opportunity to interpret the image in his or her own way; however, Kilbourne has placed her own comments and opinions on the ad directly below the picture, so while the reader studies the image, he or she has Kilbourne's strong argument near to refer to and verify. The use of images and real life examples in the essay support Kilbourne's point of view on the affect of advertisements on America, and provide concrete evidence for the reader to digest.

Also using concrete evidence to reinforce her argument, Morgan enhances her essay with published quotes from hip-hop artists. Developing her point that hip-hop is altering the gender roles in the black community, Morgan presents existing lyrics from rap songs to display its role. To illustrate the change in women's roles, Morgan places two lines from Jeru the Damaja's rap: "Now a queen's a queen but a stunt's a stunt / You can tell who's who by the things they want" (lines 12-13)

According to urbandictionary.com, a “stunt means a loose women who is often referred to as a hoe or bitch” (Urban). This quote displays to the reader how rappers have transformed the black community into a place where demeaning terms for women are used frequently, and women do not refuse the humiliating names, but welcome them, and form themselves to fit the definition of the word. With words from the mouths of those transforming the gender role of women, Morgan offers evidence supporting her argument

Comment [16]: Again, as explained above, there are two principal kinds of comparative analysis construction:

Subject block, in which a given set of points are all discussed together for only one subject source at a time before moving on to the other subject source and discussing those same points again.

Point-by-point, in which only a single point is discussed at a time, first with one subject source and then the other subject source before moving on to the next discussion point where the pattern is repeated.

The two paragraphs that are highlighted in blue and green are, taken together, successful examples of a **subject block discussion** where each source reading gets its own full discussion but both paragraphs, while discussing different readings, are still addressing *only one point* – what kinds of evidence are used successfully in each reading to support and illustrate the writer’s arguments.

What’s good about these paragraphs: Each paragraph gives a full, well-supported analysis of the effectiveness of the types of evidence or specific support used in the argumentation. Both paragraphs, while saying different things because the readings themselves look and feel different from one another in certain ways, are very focused, well-controlled discussions of the same central point. This is what a well-balanced subject block discussion should look like. Two paragraphs (or more), one point, equal time spent examining that point for both source readings.

Kilbourne and Morgan supply images and quotations directly from the source they are accusing in their arguments: the advertisers and the rappers. The use of real and tangible examples solidifies the credibility of the author's arguments to the reader. In Kilbourne's essay, she allows the reader to interpret the images, but then presents her argument by explaining pieces of the advertisement as she sees it.

Conversely, in Morgan's essay, she simply uses quotes to support her argument, stating them directly as unquestionable evidence that the reader can interpret in his or her own way. In both Kilbourne and Morgan's essays, this writing strategy successfully persuades the reader of their arguments with evidence that allows the reader to corroborate their main points.

When comparing the essay "Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt: Advertising and Violence" with the essay "From Fly-Girls to Bitches and Hos," many similarities and differences appear. Both essays use first person point of view and quotes from the sources being accused in their arguments to earn the reader's attention and agreement on the issues presented. Using two similar writing strategies, the authors convey their arguments to the readers successfully. Another similarity between these two essays is their core meaning: America is shaping a society that objectifies and degrades women, and citizens must unite to fight this shocking change.

Comment [17]: A effective transition word for moving between subjects and points in a comparative discussion. Other useful comparative discussion transition words and phrases are:

conversely
 in contrast
 on the contrary
 on the one hand, on the other hand
 as opposed to
 likewise
 similarly
 rather, yet, but, however
 still, nevertheless
 although
 whereas
 furthermore, likewise, moreover

Comment [18]: Effective conclusion work that very successfully recalls the principal arguments of the essay above without simply repeating them verbatim. You've made some smart statements here seeking to synthesize and distill the points explored throughout your work while at the same time pointing to further lines of inquiry that are suggested by your analysis work. This is just what good conclusion work should do. Very good.

Works Cited

Kilbourne, Jean. "'Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt': Advertising and Violence." *Rereading America*. Ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. 194-206. Print.

Morgan, Joan. "From Fly-Girls to Bitches and Hos." *Rereading America*. Ed. Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, Bonnie Lisle. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. 194-206. Print.

"Urban Dictionary: Stunt." *Urban Dictionary*. Urban Dictionary, 11 Aug. 2006. Web. 02 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=stunt>>.

Comment [19]: Perfect list entry work. No problems here. Well done.