

Lobster, Lobster, Lobster

Week 6 Agenda

English 201 :: February 10, 2013

Hi All!

I am in deep admiration of your discussions---Robust, thoughtful, thorough. It raises some questions, I think. I'll address those here.

- a) larger social issues
- b) research and audience
- c) research and documentation

a) larger social issues

A few posts hinted at a “larger issue” that was part of the CTL essay. I would venture to say, an integral part. Wallace certainly begins CTL by discussing “everything lobster.” But, then, he “opens up” the essay to discuss issues of pain (his original title for the piece was: “Lobster, Preference, and Various Kinds of Pain”).

Let me call your attention to something even bigger...

Check out Wallace's [footnote #8](#) . Here, Wallace discusses the treatment of many of our food animals. A couple of you touched on this too.

Have you ever been to a commercial pig farm? I have. It's awful. Ghastly even. The 1000s of pigs never leave the buildings. They are housed in tiny, concrete pens. They move pen-to-pen, depending on their age. They never leave those tiny pens. And, while awful, I still eat bacon and pork chops.

Many of our food animals no longer graze fields. Some never even step on the grass. Our practices have changed as our populations have grown. It's quite a mess. As many of you mentioned, *Wallace wanted us to think about these things.*

I call this the “larger social issue.” It's actually a second topic (and the major topic) in CTL, right after “lobster.”

It's also what I'm asking you to write! I want your next essay to be

- 1) about the event you attend, but also about
- 2) about a larger social issue that branches out from the event itself.

I mentioned this briefly last week. If I attend a car show, I could address issues of the Big 3 and job loss or the economy. If I attend a horse show, I could discuss issues of making horses a food animal (recently in the news). If I attend a football game, I could address issues of sportsmanship or issues of sustaining multiple head injuries and the types of dementia that often occur from multiple concussions. The possibilities are endless.

You may not know your “larger social issue” until after you attend you event and take time to reflect on it. That’s ok too.

There’s a discussion board if you want to bounce ideas around with each other (this one is “OPTIONAL.”).

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Writing is a social activity and sometimes it takes talking through ideas to make the best ones surface.

In your P3 essay (DWDFWD), you will need to begin by describing your event—in great detail—before you “move” to discussing your larger social issue.

- Having a “larger social issue” is KEY to doing well on this assignment.

b) research and audience

You all discussed how Wallace did a lot of research for this essay and that the audience of *Gourmet* may or may not have needed the exact source documentation (APA or MLA or Turabian or Chicago).

Some questions to entertain:

- Would you have preferred he had used a style guide (APA or MLA or Turabian or Chicago to name a few) even in *Gourmet*?
- Do popular press magazines often use a style guide? How about newspapers? What about novels or a collection of short stories or essays? Hmm...
- How would a lay audience react to having a peer reviewed journal-style article? Would it create a distance between writer and medium and audience?

I do research in this very area.

- I think it odd that we write “academic essays” when we could make our words more accessible and more meaningful to larger audiences.

- I think what my students write could be / should be out there, reaching a bigger audience than just your teacher or even your classroom.

And yet, the university forces us to follow some age-old conventions. Why can't a research paper be written more like a magazine article? Why can't it be a YouTube Video? Who made this rule, and why can't we change it?

I INSIST you cite your sources. But, an approach like Wallace's, I think, is more interesting than a traditional 5-paragraph (or 5-page) argument in MLA style. He still makes many of the same writerly moves, he just brings along the audience in thought-provoking, witty, often ironic ways.

Yes, you must cite your sources. You can, though, decide HOW you want to do that. You might want to use MLA (Note: in the upcoming P4, you must use MLA). You might want to use hyperlinks. You could give sources in a series of footnotes. On this project, YOU get to decide. **But, you MUST cite sources.**

c) research and documentation

You said that the essay would have meant more if Wallace had better documented his sources. Yet, he names the cab driver and the man in the cab with them. He names the guy from PETA. He says "it's all right there in the encyclopedia." He cites "some" of his sources.

I ask that you document ALL of your sources in your essay. But, as I stated above, you can DECIDE which style guide to follow, or whether to use a footnote system, or link to resources directly in your text.

No matter what project, no matter what class, no matter what job later in life— You need to make sure and document ALL sources.

In this project, you want to be informative and reach an audience above and beyond professors and scholars. That said, you may choose to use footnotes or adapt MLA conventions to fit your needs. These are decisions YOU will make. Just make it make sense to the reader.

**Document everything.
Cite everything.**

LOGOS / ETHOS / PATHOS

Facts do not always tell the whole story. There are 3 ancient rhetorical strategies to help carry a message. I saw some mention of this in the discussion board as well.

LOGOS: relies on Logic. Those dang facts. Relying on facts makes your writing persuasive. It even builds your ethos.

ETHOS: is a type of “ethics” usually associated with the author and his/her credibility. Establishing your “ethos” helps the audience to not only understand you better, they often believe you because of your stated and your implied background (ethos).

PATHOS: uses the power of emotion to pull on the audience and reach them with their heart. Use emotion, but use it wisely. ---Not enough, and you don't reach them. Too much, and you lose them.

All three are important and most often all three are necessary. Remember, not too much of any of the three, though. All things in moderation.

For more on the Rhetorical Strategies:

- From RPI: <http://www.rpi.edu/dept/lc/webclass/web/project1/group4/>
- From Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/588/04/>

ATTENDING AN EVENT AND PROJECT THREE (P3)

You will need a finished draft of **your P3 by MARCH 4 for peer review**. So, you have another week or so to attend your event if you haven't yet.

The time after the event gives you time to reflect and think about "themes" (both the topic of the meeting AND the larger social issue) and to write your draft.

It's not going to go well if you wait till March 1 to write. Seriously.

The events you discussed in this week's discussion board sound excellent. Be thinking about “larger issues” that may springboard from attending them.

- **READ: [Field Note Handout](#) (←linked here)** to help guide you for attending your event.

Also, re-read CTL and/or re-read the assignment sheet. Read the student examples I included in the assignment sheet. Use that optional discussion board, or write to me. Let's get this piece of writing to be the best it can be!

Some Helpful Hints for a Successful P3...

What Did Wallace Do? :: What Can YOU Do?

- Help the reader raise ethical questions. Or find ways to show empathy.
- Raise more questions than can be answered; it's most definitely not a negative thing.
- Present inquiries in a variety of ways, whether they be facts, questions, or personal experiences and observations.
- Do a lot of *asking*.
- Ask people questions. It adds depth. It's not just one person's observations and research; it's a few different people's ideas.
- In typical Wallace fashion, take a seemingly straight forward event, and analyze the snot out of it.
- Do a lot of analyzing.
- Detail and describe every aspect.
- Use your own life experiences.
- Use detailed description as it shows the amount of research.
- Give credit to sources throughout.
- Think of your readers and inform them as deeply as possible on the issue.
- Obtain information.
- Use footnotes when applicable.
- Try not to take a side.
- Let the reader make their own decisions.