

Notes to Guide Reading

Week 3, Section 2: Writing with Authority, and Problems of Distributive Justice

Bartholomae, “Inventing the University” (1985)

- Complementing the readings of Meyer/Smith and Sommers, who argue that it is necessary for inexperienced writers to develop the ability to engage in critically-reflective and substantive revision, Bartholomae claims that inexperienced writers also need to learn how to write for an academic audience.
 - Consequently, this article should also motivate you to critically reflect on how to improve your writing skills—and in this vein, keep the following considerations in mind:
 - Be able to explain in your own words Bartholomae means by a “discourse community,” and what some of the general conventions and expectations are of an academic discourse community.
 - Accordingly, be prepared to explain why it is important to know the conventions and expectations of any given discourse community. Also, be thinking about some of the conventions of good writing in your own field: what constitutes good writing in your major and why?
 - Moreover, what does Bartholomae mean by “sounding academic”—and how can inexperienced writers learn how to achieve this goal?
 - Lastly, be prepared to explain whether or not you agree with Bartholomae’s characterization of less experienced writers and his analysis about the importance of writing like an academic.
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Caney, *Justice Beyond Borders*, Chapter 4: Distributive Justice

- This chapter engages important questions about the distribution of “the benefits and burdens of social cooperation” (Rawls 1971) and prevailing global inequalities in wealth, resources, and opportunities, and it revisits the question about whether justice—in this case, *distributive* justice—extends beyond borders or if it only applies domestically (that is, among citizens and between citizens and the state).
- My aim in assigning this chapter is to have you think about what global inequalities—if any—are justified, and why.
- As is usual with Caney’s writing, there are numerous ideas at work in this chapter, as Caney explores several different arguments for and against cosmopolitan global distributive justice—and I would like you to focus on the following.
- First, be able to explain what distributive justice is, and what the “goods” being distributed are.
- Second, be able to reconstruct Beitz’s argument in support of cosmopolitan distributive justice. This will require you carefully read Caney’s discussion about why Beitz’s account fails, since Caney does not explain some important details about Beitz’s theory until pp.111-16.) More specifically:
 - What is Beitz’s central claim?
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Beitz uses to support the truth of this central claim?
 - What might the warrant for his argument be? This is to say that you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Beitz could rest his argument on.
- Third, considering that the central claim of Caney’s hybrid defense of cosmopolitan distributive justice is that people—regardless of their nationality—are entitled to equitable shares of global resources and opportunities, be able to answer the following:
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Caney uses to demonstrate the truth of this claim?

- What might the warrant for his argument be? This is to say that you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Caney could rest his argument on.
 - And be prepared to explain how a realist would respond to either Beitz’s or Caney’s cosmopolitan account of distributive justice (see section XII).
 - Lastly, in thinking specifically about the rhetorical situation and our working list of principles of good writing, be able to explain two characteristics of good or bad writing that you see in Caney’s chapter.
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Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Chapter 1 (1991)

- Young is sympathetic to the need to ensure fair global distributions of resources and wealth, but she is concerned with some of the fundamental assumptions of conventional theories of distributive justice.
- Considering that her central claim is that conventional distributive theories are incomplete—that there is more to justice than the distribution of material social goods—be prepared to answer the following:
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence Young uses to support the truth of her central claim?
 - This will require you to understand the assumptions of conventional distributive theories that Young says are problematic, and why she explains they are problematic.
 - What might the warrant for her argument be? This is to say that you should be able to articulate what you think the bedrock justification is for his argument in this section—and this will require you to identify some fundamental value or idea that Young could rest his argument on.
- Also, be able to explain what work the Massachusetts town or the Ohio city example does for Young’s argument—and what the example does for her writing?
- Moreover, consider how Caney—who argues that people have rights to subsistence, to equal opportunity, and to equal pay (for equal work)—might object to Young.
- Lastly, in thinking specifically about the rhetorical situation and our working list of principles of good writing, be able to explain two characteristics of good or bad writing that you see in Young’s article.