

Notes to Guide Reading

Week 3, Section 1: Refining the Revision Process, and Human Rights

Meyer and Smith, *The Practical Tutor*, Chapter 2 only (1987)

- This is an important reading for our writing class because it speaks to what the revision process entails, and should press you to think about the sort of critical questions you should be asking of yourself as you revise your own work and the constructive questions you should be asking of your peers when you engage in peer-review.
- As you critically reflect on your writing skills and as you strive to improve your writing throughout the semester, keep the following considerations in mind:
 - Know what the primary differences are, according to Meyer and Smith, between experienced and inexperienced writers.
 - In this vein, be able to explain in your own words the awkward but important concept of a “dialogic habit of mind.” What is the significance of this skill?
 - Also, be prepared to explain what Meyer and Smith argue is the solution to this problem: how can this difficulty that inexperienced writers face be overcome? Your understanding here needs to be specific.
- This article should have you thinking about your weaknesses and strengths as a writer.
 - Accordingly, you should be able to articulate what you think your major weaknesses are, and how you aim to improve upon these weaknesses in your writing for this class.
 - Similarly, in this vein, be prepared to explain whether or not you agree with Meyer and Smith’s characterization of less experienced writers.

Sommers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” (1980)

- This article should also help you to understand the importance of the revision process to producing good writing. Like the Meyer/Smith chapter, 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:
 - What does Sommers mean by the “linear” model or theory of writing, and why is this conception of the revision problematic according to Sommers?
 - How does this conception of the linear model relate to the central claim that Sommers defends? What is her central claim?
 - What is the chief difference between experienced and inexperienced writers?

Caney, *Justice Beyond Borders*, Chapter 3: Civil and Political Justice

- This chapter builds on chapter 2, in which Caney defends the idea that if we take issues of global justice seriously, then we are committed to the idea that some moral principles are universal in scope: that they are true for everyone in all contexts (they extend beyond borders).
- More specifically, this chapter develops one possible justification for a cosmopolitan account of justice: namely, that promoting justice is a matter of protecting individual human rights.
- There are a lot of different arguments for/against rights-based accounts of justice that are presented in this chapter—and I would like you to focus on the following.

- First, what does it mean to have a right, what are “human” rights, and how are civil and political rights “human rights?”
 - Second, Caney defends the fourth rights-based account of justice that he examines; and considering that his central claim in this particular section is that a “well-being-based” argument can successfully defend a rights-based account of justice, be prepared to answer the following:
 - What does it mean for a person to “have an interest in well-being?”
 - What are three reasons or pieces of evidence he uses to demonstrate the truth of his 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 Caney could rest his argument on.
 - Third, what are two ways in which Rawls’ *non*-cosmopolitan defense of human rights differs from Caney’s cosmopolitan defense of human rights?
 - This will require you to develop a general understanding of Rawls’ argument that acceptable principles of justice are those that “liberal” and “decent” peoples would be willing to accept.
 - This will also require you to understand possible objections to Rawls’ account (see pp.81-5).
 - Lastly, be prepared to explain *in detail* one of the four challenges to rights-based accounts of justice that Caney discusses.
-