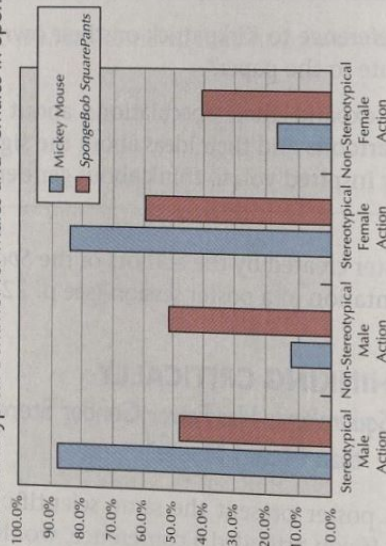


SpongeBob SquarePants Has Fewer Gender Stereotypes than Mickey Mouse

Lauren Campbell, Charlie Bourain, and Tyler Nishida

Results

More Non-Stereotypical Behavior for Males and Females in SpongeBob



Introduction

Television cartoons may influence children's learning of gender stereotypes. Knowing how a contemporary cartoon portrays gender stereotypes would help us understand messages children receive.

Objective

We wanted to see if there is a difference in gender stereotypes between *SpongeBob SquarePants* and a 1930s Mickey Mouse cartoon.

Method

We analyzed cartoons in one-minute increments.

- We coded behavior in four categories:
 - *Stereotypical female* [timid, passive, tearful; caring, motherly; wearing frilly clothes, accessories]
 - *Stereotypical male* [aggressive, fearless, competitive; cocky; showing physical strength; wearing typical male clothing]
 - *Non-stereotypical female* [female exhibiting stereotypical male action]
 - *Non-stereotypical male* [male exhibiting stereotypical female action]

Discussion

SpongeBob SquarePants showed males and females engaged in wider range of behavior with fewer gender stereotypes than Mickey Mouse.

- *SpongeBob SquarePants* intermixed gender stereotypical action (*SpongeBob* acting tough, Sandy being nurturing) and non-stereotypical behavior (*SpongeBob* crying, Sandy rescuing *SpongeBob*)
- Mickey Mouse had mostly gender stereotypical actions (*Mickey* rescuing Minnie, who is in tears).

These differences may match changes in culture since 1930s (women's movement, working women, stay-at-home dads) and may explain why *SpongeBob SquarePants* has been attacked by cultural conservatives.

- *SpongeBob SquarePants* has almost equal ratio of stereotypical and non-stereotypical behaviors for both males and females (49%/51% for males; 59%/41% for females)
- Mickey Mouse has mostly stereotypical behaviors (88%/12% for males; 84%/16% for females)

ANALYZING IMAGES

10

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- 10.1** To analyze the persuasive effects of images and how these effects are created.
- 10.2** To respond to visual images as a more informed citizen and perceptive cultural critic.
- 10.3** To write a comparative analysis of two visual texts.

This chapter asks you to think about three major kinds of communication through images—documentary or news photos, paintings, and advertisements—to increase your visual literacy skills. By **visual literacy**, we mean your awareness of the importance of visual communication and your ability to interpret or make meaning out of images by examining their context and visual features. We focus on the ways that images influence our conceptual and emotional understanding of a phenomenon and the ways that they validate, reveal, and construct the world.

This chapter invites you to analyze images in order to understand their rhetorical and experiential effects. To **analyze** means to divide or dissolve the whole into its parts, examine these parts carefully, look at the relationships among them, and then use this understanding of the parts to better understand the whole—how it functions, what it means. As Chapter 1 explains (Concept 1.2), when you analyze, your goal is to raise interesting questions about the image or object being analyzed—questions that perhaps your reader hasn't thought to ask—and then to provide tentative answers, supported by points and details derived from your own close examination.

The ability to analyze visual texts rhetorically is important because we are surrounded by glamorous and disturbing images from photojournalism, the Internet, billboards, newspapers, television, and magazines—images that, as one critic has stated, “have designs on us,” yet we may not fully understand how they affect us.

Engaging Image Analysis

To introduce you to image analysis, we provide an exercise that asks you to interact with several news photographs on the issue of immigration reform.

Immigration reform is one of the most complex issues facing the United States today; the problem is particularly acute with respect to immigrants from Mexico and Central America, who are drawn to the United States by employment opportunities. U.S. citizens benefit from immigrants' inexpensive labor, which helps keep the prices of services and goods low. In addition to a sizable Mexican-American citizenry, more than ten million illegal immigrants currently live in the United States. All these factors give rise to a number of controversial questions: Should the United States increase border security and focus on building impassable barriers? Should it deport illegal immigrants or explore routes to making them citizens? Should it crack down on employers of illegal immigrants or should it implement a guest worker program to legitimize immigrant labor?

Public debate about immigration issues is particularly susceptible to manipulation by the rhetorical appeal of images. Examine these news photos and consider their rhetorical effects.

FIGURE 10.1 Wall between Tijuana, Mexico, and the United States



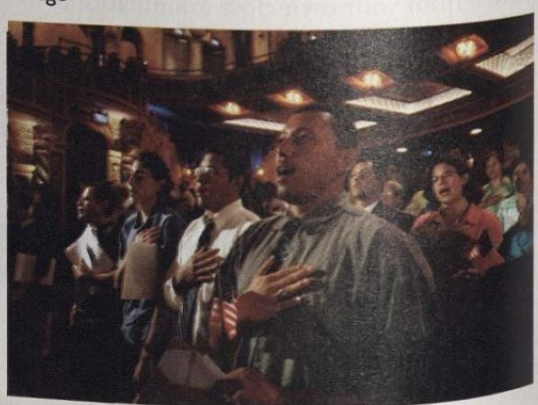
FIGURE 10.2 Immigrants Crossing the Border Illegally



FIGURE 10.3 Protestors Marching for Compassionate Treatment of Immigrants



FIGURE 10.4 Immigrants Saying Their Citizenship Pledge



ON YOUR OWN

1. What objects, people, or places stand out in each photo? Does the photo look candid or staged, taken close-up or from a distance? How do the angle of the photo (taken from below or above the subject) and the use of color contribute to the effect?
2. What is the dominant impression conveyed by each photo?
3. Examine how the similarities and differences among the four photos convey different rhetorical impressions of immigrants, Latino culture, or the role of immigrants and ethnic diversity in U.S. culture.

IN CONVERSATION

Share your responses to the photos and then speculate about how you might use these photos to enhance the persuasiveness of particular claims. Choose one or two photos to support or attack each claim below and explain what the photo could contribute to the argument.

1. The United States should install stricter border security using physical barriers, increased border patrols, and more visa checks.
2. The United States should offer amnesty and citizenship to immigrants who are currently in the United States illegally.

Understanding Image Analysis: Documentary and News Photographs

Documentary and news photos are aimed at shaping the way we think and feel about an event or cultural/historical phenomenon. For example, consider the newspaper photos, TV news footage, or Internet videos of the billowing clouds of smoke and ash from the collapsing World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001. Figures 10.5, 10.6, and 10.7 present three well-known documentary images of this event, taken from three different positions and at three slightly different moments as the event unfolded.

Although all three photos convey the severity of the terrorist attack, each has a different impact. Figure 10.5 records the event shortly before the north tower collapsed and just after the south tower was struck by the second plane, marked in the photo by the red flames. The sheer magnitude and horror of the moment-by-moment action unfolding before our eyes evoked shock, anger, and feelings of helplessness in Americans.

In contrast to the first image, which was taken from a distance below the towers, Figure 10.6 was taken by a police detective in a helicopter searching for survivors on the roof of the north tower before it collapsed. This photo suggests the apocalyptic explosion and implosion of a contemporary city. The destruction pictured here is too massive to be an ordinary event such as a fire in a major building, and yet the streams of ash and smoke don't reveal exactly what is happening.

Another well-publicized view of this event is that of the firefighters on the ground, seen in Figure 10.7. Here the firefighters, risking their lives while trying to rescue the people in the towers, have come to symbolize the self-sacrifice, courage, and also vulnerability of the human effort in the face of such colossal

10.1

Analyze the persuasive effects of images and how these effects are created.



FIGURE 10.5 Terrorist Attack on the World Trade Center



FIGURE 10.6 World Trade Center Attack Seen from the Air

FIGURE 10.7 Firefighters in the World Trade Center Wreckage



destruction. This image also suggests the terror and suspense of a science-fiction-like conflict. All three photos, while memorializing the same event, have different specific subjects, angles of vision, and emotional and mental effects.

The rest of this section introduces you to the ways that photographers think about their use of the camera and the effects they are trying to achieve.

Angle of Vision and Credibility of Photographs

Although the word “documentary” is associated with an objective, transparent, unmediated glimpse of reality, the relationship of documentary photography to its subject matter has always been complex. Historians are now reassessing early documentary photographs, exploring the class and race agendas of the photographers in the kinds of scenes chosen, the photographers’ stance toward them, and the wording of the narratives accompanying the photographs. In other words, despite a photograph’s appearance of capturing a moment of reality (whose reality?), its effect is always influenced by the photographer’s rhetorical angle of vision conveyed through the framing and focusing power of the camera. Perhaps now more than ever, we are aware that the photographer’s purpose and techniques actually shape the reality that viewers see. (Think of the multiple cameras tracking a football game and replaying a touchdown from different angles, often creating very different impressions of a particular play.)

The photographer’s power to shape reality is enhanced by various strategies for making “unnatural” photographs seem “natural” or “real.” For example, photographs can be manipulated or falsified in the following ways:

- staging images (scenes that appear spontaneous but are really posed)
- altering images (airbrushing, reshaping body parts)
- selecting images or parts of images (cropping photographs so that only certain parts are shown)
- mislabeling images (putting a caption on a photograph that misrepresents the image)
- constructing images (putting the head of one person on the body of another)

Research has revealed that many famous photographs were tampered with. As early as the Civil War, composite photos of generals were created by combining heads, bodies, and scenery and inserting figures into scenes. Today this manipulation is also conducted by amateur photographers using photo-editing software. The potential for altering images gives us additional reasons for considering the active role of the photographer and for investigating the credibility and purpose behind images.

How to Analyze a Documentary Photograph

Photographs are always created and interpreted within a social, political, and historical context—the original context in which the photograph was made and viewed and your own context as a current viewer and interpreter. At play are the assumptions, values, and cultural knowledge of the photographer, the original viewers, and the later viewers. Also at play are the sites in which the

photograph is viewed—whether in an original news story, a museum, an upscale art exhibit, an expensive coffee-table book, a documentary film, an Internet site, or a textbook. These sites invite us to respond in different ways. For example, one site may call us to social action or deepen our understanding of an event, while another aims to elicit artistic appreciation or to underscore cultural differences.

Examining the Rhetorical Contexts of a Photo A first step in analyzing a documentary photograph is to consider its various rhetorical contexts. The following chart will help you ask illuminating questions.

Strategies for Analyzing the Rhetorical Contexts of Documentary Photographs	
Context	Questions to Ask
Photographer's purpose and context in making the photograph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the photographer's original intention/purpose in making the image (to report an event, convey information, persuade viewers to think about the event or people a certain way)? • What was the original historical, cultural, social, and political context in which the photograph was taken?
Original context for displaying the photograph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where was the photograph originally viewed (news story, photo essay, scientific report, public exhibit, advocacy Web site)? • How does the original title or caption, if any, reflect the context and shape impressions of the image?
Cultural contexts for interpreting the photograph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the photograph's appearance in a particular place influence your impression of it? • How does your own cultural context differ from that of original viewers? • What assumptions and values do you bring to the context?

Examining the Effects of a Photo on a Viewer In addition to considering the contexts of photographs, we can explore how photographs achieve their effects—that is, how they move us emotionally or intellectually, how they imply arguments and cause us to see the subject in a certain way. An image might soothe us or repel us; it might evoke our sympathies, trigger our fears, or call forth a web of interconnected ideas, memories, and associations.

Before you begin a detailed analysis of a photograph, you will find it helpful to explore the photograph's immediate impact.

- What words come to mind when you view this photograph?
- What is the mood or overall feeling conveyed by the photo?
- Assuming that photographs "have designs on us," what is this photograph trying to get you to feel, think, do, or "see"?

The following chart will help you examine a photograph in detail in order to analyze how it achieves its persuasive effects.*

Strategies for Analyzing the Persuasive Effects of Photographs and Other Images

What to Examine	Some Questions to Ask about Rhetorical Effect
<p>Subject matter: People in portraits: Portraits can be formal or informal and can emphasize character or social role.</p> <p>The gaze of the human subjects can imply power through direct eye contact and deference or shyness through lack of eye contact.</p>	<p>Is the emphasis on identity, character, and personality, or representative status (wife of wealthy merchant, king, soldier, etc.), or symbolic (an image of wisdom, daring, etc.)?</p> <p>What do details of clothing and setting (a room's furnishings, for example) reveal about historical period, economic status, national or ethnic identity?</p>
<p>Subject matter: People in scenes: Scenes can make a statement about everyday life or capture some aspect of a news event or crisis.</p>	<p>What is the relationship of the people to each other and the scene? Can you re-create the story behind the scene?</p> <p>Does the scene look natural/realistic or staged/aesthetically attractive?</p>
<p>Subject matter: Landscape or nature: Scenes can focus on nature or the environment as the dominant subject.</p>	<p>If the setting is outdoors, what are the features of the landscape: urban or rural, mountain or desert?</p> <p>What aspects of nature are shown?</p> <p>If people are in the image, what is the relationship between nature and the human figures?</p> <p>What vision of nature is the artist constructing—majestic, threatening, hospitable, tamed, orderly, wild?</p>

(continued)

*We are indebted to Terry Barrett, Professor Emeritus of Art Education at Ohio State University, for his formulation of questions, "Looking at Photographs, Description and Interpretation," and to Claire Garoutte, Associate Professor of Photography at Seattle University, for informing our discussion of context in analyzing documentary photographs.

What to Examine	Some Questions to Ask about Rhetorical Effect
<p>Distance from subject: Close-ups tend to increase the intensity of the image and suggest the importance of the subject. Long shots tend to blend the subject into the environment.</p>	<p>Are viewers brought close to the subject or distanced from it?</p> <p>How does the distance from the subject contribute to the effect of the photo or painting?</p>
<p>Angle and orientation: The vantage point from which the photograph was taken and the positioning of the photographer to the subject determine the effect of images.</p> <p>Low angle makes the subject look larger. High angle makes the subject look smaller. A level angle implies equality.</p> <p>Front views tend to emphasize the persons in the image. Rear views often emphasize the scene or setting.</p>	<p>How does the angle influence what you see?</p> <p>Why do you think this angle was chosen?</p> <p>How would the photograph have changed if it had been taken from another angle?</p>
<p>Framing: Framing determines what is inside the image and what is closed off to viewers; it's a device to draw the attention of viewers.</p>	<p>How does the framing of the image direct your attention?</p> <p>What is included and what is excluded from the image?</p> <p>How does what the photo or painting allows you to see and know contribute to its effect?</p> <p>Why do you think this particular frame was chosen?</p>
<p>Light: The direction of the light determines the shadows and affects the contrasts, which can be subtle or strong.</p> <p>Lighting has different effects if it is natural or artificial, bright, soft, or harsh.</p>	<p>How does the light reveal details?</p> <p>What does the direction of the light contribute to the presence of shadows?</p> <p>How do these shadows affect the mood or feeling of the photo?</p>
<p>Focus: Focus refers to what is clearly in focus or in the foreground of the photo versus what is blurry.</p> <p>The range between the nearest and farthest thing in focus in the photo is referred to as the depth of field.</p>	<p>What parts of the image are clearly in focus?</p> <p>Are any parts out of focus?</p> <p>What effect do these choices have on viewers' impression of the image?</p> <p>How great is the depth of field and what effect does that have?</p>

What to Examine	Some Questions to Ask about Rhetorical Effect
<p>Scale, space, and shape: Size/scale and shape affect prominence and emphasis. Size and scale can be natural, minimized, or exaggerated.</p> <p>Use of space can be shallow, deep, or both.</p> <p>Both positive shapes and voids can draw viewers' attention.</p>	<p>How do the scale, space, and shape of objects direct viewers' attention and affect a feeling or mood?</p> <p>Are shapes geometric and angular or flowing and organic?</p> <p>Are shapes positive such as objects, or negative such as voids?</p>
<p>Use of repetition, variety, and balance: Repetition of elements can create order, wholeness, and unity.</p> <p>Variety can create interest.</p> <p>Balance can create unity and harmony.</p>	<p>What elements are repeated in this image?</p> <p>What variety is present, say, in shapes?</p> <p>Does the visual weight of the photo seem to be distributed evenly on the sides, top, and bottom?</p> <p>What roles do repetition, variety, and balance play in the impression created by the photo?</p>
<p>Line: Lines can be curved and flowing, straight, or disjointed and angular.</p> <p>Lines can be balanced/symmetrical, stable, and harmonious, or disjointed and agitated.</p>	<p>Does the use of line create structure and convey movement/action or calm/stasis?</p> <p>How does the use of line control how viewers look at the photo or painting?</p>
<p>Color: Choice of black and white can reflect the site of publication, the date of the photo, or an artistic choice.</p> <p>Colors can contribute to the realism and appeal; harmonious colors can be pleasing; clashing or harsh colors can be disturbing.</p>	<p>How many colors are used? What is the relationship of the colors? Which colors dominate? Are the colors warm and vibrant or cool, bright, or dull?</p> <p>How are light and dark used? How does the use of color direct viewers' attention and affect the impression of the image?</p> <p>What emotional response do these colors evoke?</p>

Sample Analysis of a Documentary Photograph

To illustrate how a documentary photograph can work on the viewer's mind and heart, we show you our own analysis of a photo titled *The Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Figure 10.8), taken by photojournalist Peter Turnley in 1989. At the time, the Berlin Wall, which separated communist East Berlin from democratic West Berlin, symbolized the oppression of communism. In 1987 President Ronald Reagan appealed to Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, saying in a famous speech, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall." When the border opened in November 1989, marking the end of communist rule in Eastern Europe, East Berliners flooded into West Berlin, sparking weeks of celebration. Peter Turnley is a world-famous American photojournalist whose photos of major world events have appeared on the covers of *Newsweek* as well as international magazines. This photograph appeared in a 1996 exhibit (and

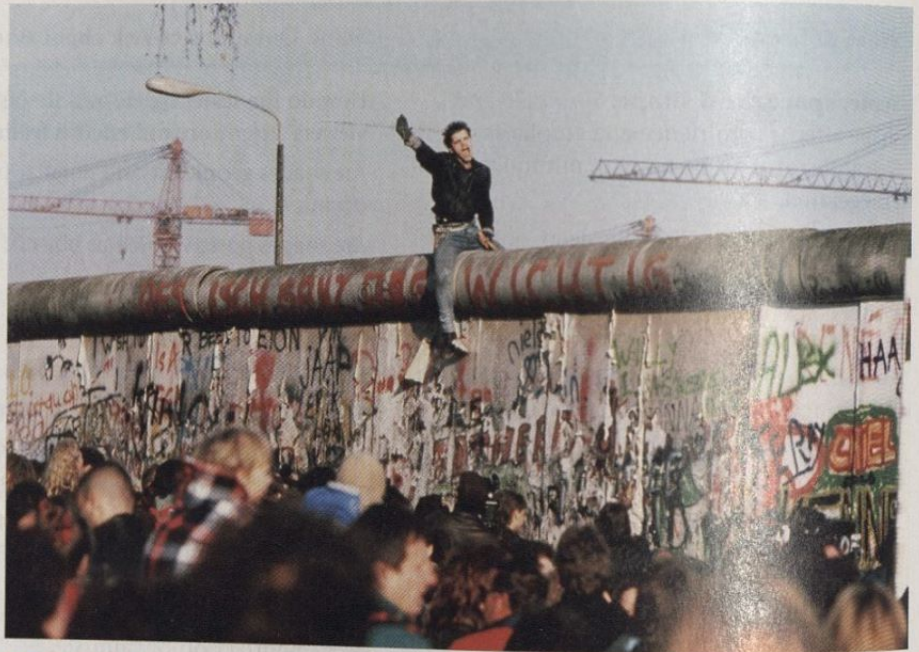


FIGURE 10.8 Fall of the Berlin Wall, 1989, by Peter Turnley

later a book) entitled *In Time of War and Peace* at the International Center of Photography in New York.

This documentary photograph of a celebratory scene following the opening of the Berlin Wall in 1989 uses elements of framing, orientation, focus, balance, and color to convey the dominant impression of a life-changing explosion of energy and emotion triggered by this significant event. This distance photo is divided into three horizontal bands—the sky, the wall, and the celebratory crowd—but the focal point is the yelling, triumphant German youth sitting astride the wall, wearing jeans, a studded belt, and a black jacket. The graffiti indicate that the photo was taken from the West Berlin side (East Berliners were not permitted to get close to the wall), and the light post between the two cranes was probably used to illuminate the no-man zone on the communist side.

Every aspect of the photograph suggests energy. In contrast with the mostly homogeneous sky, the wall and the crowd contain many diverse elements. The wall is heavily graffitied in many colors, and the crowd is composed of many people. The wall looks crowded, tattered, and dirty, something to be torn down rather than cleaned up. Most of the graffiti consist of tags, people's response to the ugly obstruction of the wall; West Berliners had no power to destroy the wall, but they could mark it up. The slightly blurred crowd of heads suggests that the people are in motion. At first it is hard to tell if they are angry protesters storming the wall or celebrators cheering on the German youth. The photograph captures this dual emotion—anger and joy—all at once.

At the center of the photograph is the German youth, whose dark jacket makes him stand out against the light blue sky. A few days earlier the wall had

fenced him in (at that time, it would have been unthinkable even to approach the wall lest he be shot by border guards). Now he rides the wall like an American cowboy at a rodeo. He has conquered the wall. He has become transformed from prisoner to liberator. His cowboy gesture, reflecting European fascination with American cowboy movies, becomes the symbol of the ideological West, the land of freedom, now the wave of the future for these reunited countries. He holds in his hand a tool (a hammer or chisel?) used to chip away the wall symbolically, but the position of his arm and hand suggests a cowboy with a pistol.

What makes this photograph so powerful is the distance. Had Turnley used a telescopic lens to focus on the German youth up close, the photograph would have been about the youth himself, a personal story. But by placing the youth into a larger frame that includes the crowd, the long expanse of ugly wall, and the cranes and lamppost behind the wall, Turnley suggests both the enormous public and political nature of this event and the implications for individual lives. The youth appears to be the first of the energized crowd to demonstrate the conquering of the powerful barrier that had shaped so many German lives for almost three decades. Thus the composition of this photo packs many layers of meaning and symbolism into its depiction of this historic event.

Exploring a Photograph's Compositional Elements and Rhetorical Effect

In the last eight years, documentary photographs have played a key role in persuading audiences that climate change is a serious threat that must be addressed through stricter carbon dioxide emission limits and investments in clean energy. One recurring image shows mountains with receding or disappearing glaciers. An example is the photograph on page 417 at the beginning of Part 3.

1. Working in groups or individually, describe and interpret this photo using questions from the strategies chart for analyzing the context, composition, and rhetorical effects of photos (pp. 233–235). What is the dominant impression conveyed by this photograph?
2. Then using the Internet, search for another photograph that is currently being used in the public discussion of climate change (for example, a photograph employed by environmentalists to fight climate change on an advocacy Web site). Analyze its context, composition, and rhetorical effect.
3. If you were writing to underscore to young voters the seriousness of climate change, which photograph—the one on page 417, the one you found on the Internet, or another—would you choose and why?

FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Image Analysis: Paintings

When you analyze a painting, many of the strategies used for analyzing documentary photographs still apply. You still look carefully at the subject matter of the painting (the setting, the people or objects in the setting, the arrangement in space, the clothing, the gaze of persons, the implied narrative story, and so forth). Likewise,

10.2

Respond to visual images as a more informed citizen and perceptive cultural critic.

you consider the painter's distance from the subject, the angle of orientation, the framing, and other features that paintings share with photographs. Additionally, your analysis of paintings will be enriched if you consider, as you did with documentary photographs, the context in which the painting was originally created and originally viewed as well as your own cultural context and place of viewing.

But painters—by means of their choice of paints, their brushstrokes, their artistic vision, and their methods of representation—often do something quite different from photographers. For example, they can paint mythological or imaginary subjects and can achieve nonrepresentational effects not associated with a camera such as a medieval allegorical style or the striking distortions of Cubism. Also, the long history of painting and the ways that historical periods influence painters' choices of subject matter, medium, and style affect what viewers see and feel about paintings. Background on the artist, historical period, and style of paintings (for example, Baroque, Impressionism, Expressionism, and Cubism) can be found in sources such as the Oxford Art Online database. In analyzing paintings, art critics and historians often contrast paintings that have similar subject matter (for example, two portraits of a hero, two paintings of a biblical scene, two landscapes) but that create very different dominant impressions and effects on viewers.

How to Analyze a Painting

Just as with photographs, you should ground your interpretation of a painting in close observation. Many of the elements introduced in the strategies chart on pages 233–235 for analyzing photographs can apply or be adapted to the analysis of paintings. In addition, you will want to examine the following elements of the paintings you are analyzing.

Strategies for Analyzing the Particular Elements of Paintings

Elements to Analyze	Questions to Ask about Rhetorical Effect
<p>Design and shape of the painting: The width to height, division into parts, and proportional relationship of parts influence the impression of the painting.</p>	<p>What is the viewer's impression of the shape of the painting and the relationship of its parts?</p> <p>How does line organize the painting? Is the painting organized along diagonal, horizontal, or vertical lines?</p>
<p>Medium, technique, and brushstrokes: The material with which the painting is made (for example, pen and ink, tempera/water colors, charcoal, oil paints on paper or canvas) and the thickness and style of brushstrokes determine the artistic effect.</p>	<p>In what medium is the artist working?</p> <p>How does the medium contribute to the impression of the painting?</p> <p>Are brushstrokes sharp and distinct or thick, layered, or fused? Are they delicate and precise or vigorous?</p> <p>What effect does the awareness or lack of awareness of brushstrokes have on the appearance of the painting?</p>

Sample Analysis of a Painting

As an example of a visual analysis of a painting, we offer an interpretation of a famous painting by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), a French Impressionist painter of the late nineteenth century. The French Impressionists were recognized for their refusal to paint old themes; their embrace of scenes of modern society, especially the city and suburbs; and their experimentation with light and brushstrokes as a way to capture fleeting impressions. Figure 10.9 shows Renoir's oil painting *La Loge* (The Theater Box), which he painted as his main contribution to the first exhibit of Impressionist paintings in 1874. Impressionist paintings were considered too *avant garde* to be displayed at the conservative state-controlled Salon, which was the official arbiter and channel of the work of established French artists.

Renoir's *La Loge* depicts social life in nineteenth-century urban society as an occasion to act out social roles. This painting of a man and a woman elegantly dressed in a theater box at the opera, a popular social spot of the period, suggests that attending the theater/opera entailed displaying one's wealth, being seen, and inspecting others as much as it did watching a performance. This painting focuses intensely on two members of the audience and specifically on the woman, who catches and holds our gaze. While the man in the background is looking at someone in the audience through his opera glasses, the woman looks directly at viewers and invites their attention.

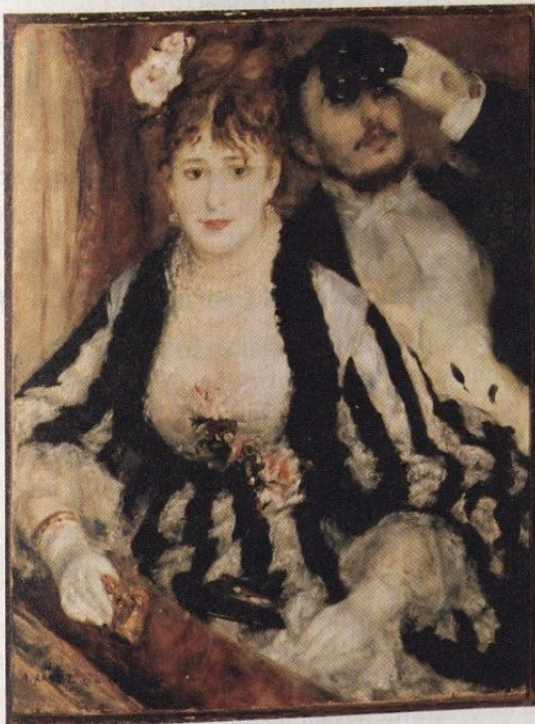


FIGURE 10.9 Renoir's *La Loge* (1874)

Renoir has compelled viewers to dwell on this woman by a number of his choices in this painting. He has chosen to paint her in a tightly framed close-up image, which the slightly off-center woman dominates. Her face and eyes convey the impression that she and the viewer are staring at each other, while in the shadows the man's eyes are blocked by his opera glasses. Thus this painting combines the woman's portrait with a scene at the opera, even though most of the setting, the theater box, is excluded from the painting. (We know we are at the opera because of the painting's title and the man's and woman's accessories.) There seems to be a story behind the scene: What is the man looking at and why is he not noticing the woman as we, the viewers, are compelled to do? This depiction of a moment seems to be less a shared experience of relationship and more a site for performance: men engaged in looking, women inviting the gaze of others.

Another choice Renoir has made to focus viewers' attention on the woman is his striking use of color. In this painting, the color palette is not large—white, black, brown/gold/sepia, with her red lips and red flowers on her bodice. The white of her face and her upper body is the brightest, suggesting light shining on her. Renoir also highlights the woman with short, thick brushstrokes, which give her shimmering, elegant dress texture and the impression of silk, velvet, and lace. As additional signs of wealth, she wears earrings, a gold bracelet, a flower in her hair, and a flower at her bosom. The stark contrast of the black and white in her dress, the white of her face, and the red of her lips—and the agitated diagonal but converging lines of the stripes of her dress that, along with her arms angled out from her body, shape her into a diamond—all work to direct viewers' eyes to her bosom and most of all to her face. Although the expression of the woman is calm, smiling in mild amusement or subtle emotion, the painting captures intensity, perhaps excitement or anticipation, through the sharp contrast of the red, white, and black. The piece is fairly still, and yet we are transfixed by this woman's eyes and lips. With the complex interaction of artistic elements in this painting, Renoir has invited viewers to experience an exciting scene of privileged nineteenth-century urban life.

FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

Contrasting the Compositional Features of Two Paintings

This exercise asks you to apply the analysis strategies presented on pages 238 and 233–235 to examine the pastel painting *Carousel* by Camille Pissarro shown in Figure 10.10 and to contrast it with Renoir's painting in Figure 10.9. Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) was also a French Impressionist who regularly exhibited his works in Impressionist exhibitions. He painted *Carousel* in 1885; the medium is pastel on paper mounted on board.

Your task: Working individually or in groups, analyze Pissarro's painting and then find some striking points of commonality or difference with the Renoir painting that you think merit discussion.

- Begin by applying the strategies for analyzing photographic images and paintings on pages 233–235 and 238.
- After you have analyzed the visual features of the paintings, consider why Pissarro titled his painting *Carousel*.

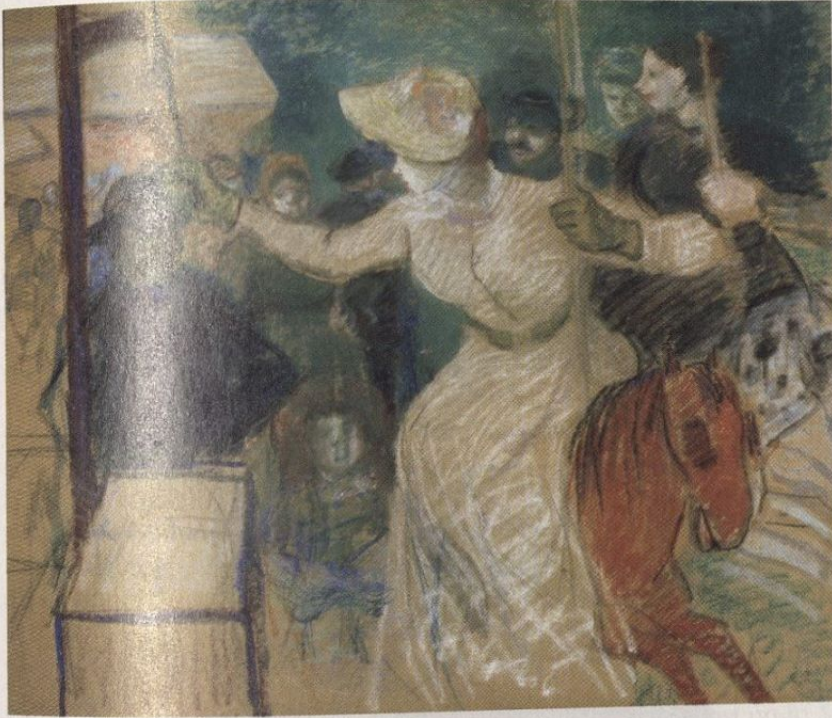


FIGURE 10.10 *Carousel* by Camille Pissarro (1885)

- Finally, what are the thematic differences between these two paintings? How do these paintings, both Impressionistic images of well-dressed women at leisure, create similar or different effects on viewers? What view or feeling about life or about the artists' worlds is conveyed in each painting? What way of seeing or thinking are these paintings persuading you to adopt?

Understanding Image Analysis: Advertisements

The images in advertisements are fascinating to analyze. Like other images, they employ the rhetorical strategies we described in the section on documentary photographs. Often, the ad's words (called the "copy") also contribute to its rhetorical effect. Moreover, ads make a more direct and constant demand on us than do documentary photographs and paintings. Advertising, a multibillion-dollar global industry whose business is communicating across a wide range of media to stimulate the purchase of products or services, comes to us in multiple forms: not just as slick, glamorous magazine ads, but also as direct mail, billboards, radio and television commercials, e-advertisements, banners, pop-ups, and spam. Figures 10.11 and 10.12, a billboard and a bus ad, illustrate the ordinary ubiquity of ads. Because of advertising's powerful role in shaping our culture and influencing our self-images, we have good reason to analyze the rhetorical strategies of advertisers.

FIGURE 10.11 A Billboard Ad



FIGURE 10.12 Ad on a City Bus



FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

Examining the Appeal of Ads

Think about the images and words in the two car insurance ads in Figures 10.11 and 10.12.

1. What do you notice most about the images and copy in these ads?
2. What is the appeal of these ads?
3. How are these ads designed to suit their contexts, a billboard and a bus panel? Why would they be less suitable for a magazine?

How Advertisers Think about Advertising

Although cultural critics frequently focus on ads as manipulative messages that need to be decoded to protect unwary consumers, we confess that we actually enjoy ads, appreciate how they hold down the consumer cost of media, and admire their often-ingenious creativity. (We suspect that others secretly enjoy ads also: Think of how the Super Bowl is popular both for its football and for its ads.) In this section, we take a look at advertising from a marketer's point

of view in order to deepen your awareness of an ad's context and the many behind-the-scenes decisions and negotiations that produced it. Whether marketing professionals design an individual ad or a huge marketing campaign, they typically begin by asking questions.

Who Is Our Target Audience? At the outset, marketers identify one or more target audiences for their product or service. They often use sophisticated psychological research to identify segments of the population who share similar values, beliefs, and aspirations and then subdivide these categories according to age, gender, region, income level, ethnicity, and so forth. Think of the different way you'd pitch a product or service to, say, Wal-Mart shoppers versus Neiman Marcus shoppers, steak eaters versus vegans, or skateboarders versus geeks.

How Much Media Landscape Can We Afford? While identifying their target audience, marketers also consider how much terrain they can afford to occupy on the enormous media landscape of billboards, newspapers, magazines, mailing lists, Internet pop-ups, mobile ads, TV and radio commercials, posters, naming rights for sports stadiums, T-shirts, coffee mugs, product placements in films, sandwich boards, or banners carried across the sky by propeller airplanes. Each of these sites has to be rented or purchased, with the price depending on the perceived quality of the location and the timing. For example, a thirty-second TV commercial during the 2013 Super Bowl cost \$3.8 million, and a one-time, full-page ad in a nationally circulated popular magazine can cost up to \$500,000 or more. Overall, advertisers hope to attain the best possible positioning and timing within the media landscape at a price they can afford.

What Are the Best Media for Reaching Our Target Audience? A marketer's goal is to reach the target audience efficiently and with a minimum of overflow—that is, messages sent to people who are not likely buyers. Marketers are keenly aware of both media and timing: Note, for example, how daytime TV is dominated by ads for payday loans, exercise equipment, or technical colleges, while billboards around airports advertise rental cars. Women's fashion magazines advertise lingerie and perfume but not computers or life insurance, while dating services advertise primarily through Internet ads.

Is Our Goal to Stimulate Direct Sales or to Develop Long-Term Branding and Image? Some ads are intended to stimulate retail sales directly: "Buy two, get one free." In some cases, advertisements use information and argument to show how their product or service is superior to that of their competitors. Most advertisements, however, involve parity products such as soft drinks, deodorants, breakfast cereals, or toothpaste. (*Parity products* are roughly equal in quality among competitors and so can't be promoted through any rational or scientific proof of superiority.) In such cases, advertisers' goal is to build brand loyalty based on a long-lasting relationship with consumers. Advertisers, best thought of as creative teams of writers and artists, try to convert a brand name appearing on a cereal box or a pair of jeans to a field of qualities, values, and imagery that lives inside the heads of its targeted

consumers. Advertisers don't just want you to buy Nikes rather than Reeboks but also to see yourself as a Nike kind of person, who identifies with the life-style or values conveyed in Nike ads.

Mirrors and Windows: The Strategy of an Effective Advertisement

A final behind-the-scenes concept that will help you analyze ads is the marketers' principle of "*mirrors and windows*," a psychological and motivational strategy to associate a product with a target audience's dreams, hopes, fears, desires, and wishes (often subconscious).

- **The mirror effect** refers to the way in which the ad mirrors the target audience's self-image, promoting identification with the ad's message. The target audience has to say, "I am part of the world that this ad speaks to. I have this problem (pimples, boring hair, dandelions, cell phone service without enough bars)."
- **The window effect** provides visions of the future, promises of who we will become or what will happen if we align ourselves with this brand. The ad implies a brief narrative, taking you from your ordinary self (mirror) to your new, aspirational self (window).

For example, the acne product Proactiv Solutions uses a very common mirrors/windows strategy. Proactiv infomercials create the mirror effect by featuring regular-looking teenagers with pimples and the window effect by using a gorgeous actress as endorsing spokesperson: If I use Proactiv Solutions, ordinary "me" will look beautiful like Jessica Simpson.

But the mirrors and windows principle can be used in much more subtle and creative ways. Consider the brilliance of the Geico insurance gecko ads promoting what advertisers call "a resentful purchase"—that is, something you need to have but that doesn't give you material pleasure like a new pair of shoes or money in a savings account. Insurance, a hassle to buy, is also associated with fear—fear of needing it, fear of not having it, fear of not being able to get it again if you ever use it. In this light, think of the Geico campaign featuring the humorous, big-eyed gecko (friendly, cute) with the distinctive cockney voice (working-class swagger). When this chapter was being written, Geico billboards were sprouting up all over the country (see Figure 10.13), while large-print ads were appearing in popular magazines along with numerous TV and radio commercials. Here are some of the particular advantages of the gecko for Geico's layered advertising campaign across many media:

- **"Gecko" sounds like "Geico."** In fact, this sound-alike feature was the inspiration for the campaign.
- **The gecko is identifiable by both sight and sound.** If you see a print ad or a billboard, you remember what the voice sounds like; if you hear a radio ad, you remember what the gecko looks like; on TV or YouTube, you get both sight and sound.
- **The gecko is cheap.** The cost of the computer simulations that produce the gecko is minimal in comparison to the royalties paid to celebrities for an advertising endorsement.



FIGURE 10.13 Geico Gecko Billboard Ad

- **The gecko is ethnically/racially neutral.** Marketers didn't have to decide whether to choose a white versus black versus Asian spokesperson, yet a person of any race or nationality can identify with the little lizard. (Think Kermit the Frog on *Sesame Street*.) Feminist critics, however, might rightly ask why the gecko has to be male.
- **The gecko is scandal-proof.** When in 2010 the Tiger Woods imbroglio ruined the golfer's public image, the huge insurance company Accenture, along with TagHauer watches and other companies, had to drop his endorsement ads, forcing them at great expense to create new advertising campaigns and to lose media visibility in the interim.

Yet we must still ask why the gecko is a good advertising device for an insurance company. How does the gecko campaign incorporate mirrors and windows? Let's start with the mirror effect. It is easy to identify with the Geico ads because everyone has to buy insurance and because everyone wants to save money. (The gecko's main sales pitch is that Geico will save you 15 percent.) Moreover, our long cultural history of identifying with animated characters (*Sesame Street*, *ET*) makes it easy to project our own identities onto the gecko. Additionally, the cockney voice makes the gecko a bit of an outsider, someone breaking into corporate culture through sheer bravado. (Many people think of the gecko's accent as Australian more than cockney, giving the lizard a bit of sexy, macho Crocodile Dundee appeal.)

The ads also create a window effect, which comes from the way the gecko humanizes the insurance company, removing some of the fear and anxiety of buying insurance. You don't think of the gecko as *selling* you the insurance so much as *buying* it for you as your agent, hopping right up on the corporate desk and demanding your rights. Geico becomes a fun company, and you as consumer picture yourself going away with a pile of saved money. Recent ads have added another symbolic feature to the gecko—a pair of glasses—which makes him seem intellectual and responsible, more serious and grown-up. Meanwhile, another Geico campaign, the talking-money ad (see the billboard ad in Figure 10.11), extends the concept of a humorous, friendly creature, like the gecko, that turns Geico insurance into a savings, not an expense.

FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

Designing Ads

This exercise asks you to apply these marketing concepts to designing your own ad. Imagine you are an advertising professional assigned to the Gloopers account. Gloopers is a seaweed (kelp)-based snack treat (a fiction, but pretend it is real) that is very popular under another name in Japan. It was introduced earlier in the American market and failed miserably—what sort of a treat is seaweed? But now, you have laboratory evidence that Gloopers provides crucial nutritional benefits for growing bodies and that it is a healthy alternative to junk food. Many food companies would kill for the endorsement of nutritious content that you now have to work with, but the product is still made out of gunky seaweed. Working in groups or individually, develop a campaign for this product by working out your answers to the following questions:

- Who is your target audience? (Will you seek to appeal to parents as well as children?)
- What is your core message or campaign concept? (Think of a visual approach, including a mirror and window appeal, and perhaps a tagline slogan.)
- What is the best positioning in the media landscape for this campaign?
- How will you build a brand image and brand loyalty?

How to Analyze an Advertisement

In addition to thinking about the decision making behind an ad, when you analyze a print ad you need to ask three overarching questions:

1. How does the ad draw in the target audience by helping them identify with the ad's problematic situation or story (mirror effect)?
2. How does the ad create a field of values, beliefs, and aspirations that serve as windows into a more fulfilled life?
3. How do the ad's images and words work together to create the desired persuasive effects?

For the images in an ad, all the strategies we have already described for documentary photographs and for paintings continue to apply—for example, angle of

vision, framing, and so forth. (Review the strategies chart on pp. 233–235.) With many ads you also have to factor in the creative use of words—puns, connotations, and intertextual references to other ads or cultural artifacts. Note that in professionally created ads, every word, every punctuation mark, and every visual detail down to the props in the photograph or the placement of a model's hands are consciously chosen.

The following strategies chart focuses on questions particularly relevant to print ads.

Strategies for Analyzing the Compositional Features of Print Ads

What to Do	Some Questions to Ask
Examine the settings, furnishings, and all other details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the room formal or informal; neat, lived-in, or messy? • How is the room furnished and decorated? • If the setting is outdoors, what are the features of the landscape: urban or rural, mountain or meadow? • Why are particular animals or birds included? (Think of the differences between using a crow, a hummingbird, or a parrot.)
Consider the social meaning of objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the emotional effect of the objects in a den: for example, duck decoys and fishing rods versus computers and high-tech printers? • What is the social significance (class, economic status, lifestyle, values) of the objects in the ad? (Think of the meaning of a groomed poodle versus a mutt or a single rose versus a fuchsia in a pot.)
Consider the characters, roles, and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are these people and what are they doing? What story line could you construct behind the image? • Are the models regular-looking people, “beautiful people,” or celebrities? • In product advertisements, are female models used instrumentally (depicted as mechanics working on cars or as consumers buying cars) or are they used decoratively (bikini-clad and lounging on the hood of the latest truck)?

(continued)

What to Do	Some Questions to Ask
Observe how models are dressed, posed, and accessorized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the models' facial expressions? • What are their hairstyles and what cultural and social significance do they have? • How well are they dressed and posed?
Observe the relationships among actors and among actors and objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the position of the models signal importance and dominance? • Who is looking at whom? • Who is above or below, in the foreground or background?
Consider what social roles are being played out and what values appealed to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the gender roles traditional or nontraditional? • Are the relationships romantic, erotic, friendly, formal, uncertain? • What are the power relationships among characters?
Consider how document design functions and how the words and images work together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What features of document design (variations of font style and size, placement on the page, formal or playful lettering) stand out? • How much of the copy is devoted to product information or argument about superiority of the product or service? • How much of the copy helps create a field of values, beliefs, aspirations? • How do the words contribute to the "story" implied in the visual images? • What is the style of the language (for example, connotations, double entendres, puns)?

Sample Analysis of an Advertisement

With an understanding of possible photographic effects and the compositional features of ads, you now have the background knowledge needed to begin doing your own analysis of ads. Many of the most dramatic and effective ads now come to us in the form of billboards and television commercials. To show you how such ads can be analyzed, let's examine the acclaimed General Electric Cloud commercial that first aired in 2008. Most people think of General Electric as a company that produces consumer electronics and appliances (refrigerators, dishwashers, etc.); however, GE, one of the largest multinational corporations in

the world, actually has divisions focused on energy, technology infrastructure, and consumer industrial products as well. In 2005, in a push to be recognized as a green company, GE initiated its Ecoimagination campaign and has since increased its presence in wind power, solar panels, desalination, and water purification technology. GE's positioning of itself as a green company invested in water reuse solutions is the back story as well as the subtext of the GE Cloud commercial. You can see the forty-eight second commercial on YouTube.

From its first frame, this ad plays on imagination and pulls viewers into a highly romanticized industrial fantasy of the water cycle in which workers in the clouds perform the purification processes of nature. In the first several frames, white buckets sail through the air above green fields to the clouds, where they are received by male and female workers dressed in perfectly white uniforms, wearing white gloves, white hair coverings, and white hardhats. The sequence of frames that follows depicts the synchronized process of these workers feeding the water from earth through enormous bellows, which vaporize it and then condense it through a giant wringer, like those once used for laundry. Then a scientist-technician examines a test tube of this water and pronounces it pure so that the brigade of workers in an assembly line in the clouds can pass buckets of the water to other technicians, who pour it into a vast watering can structure. As thunder crashes, the watering can tips and the purified water falls to earth as rain. In the final few seconds of the commercial, a voice-over interprets the action of the narrative: "Just as nature reuses water, GE water technologies turn billions of gallons into clean water every year. Rain or shine." The final frame shows a glimpse of these actual industrial processes, and the ad ends with the "Ecoimagination" logo.

Our students in film studies noticed how this ad exemplifies the intense dynamism of commercials with the camera constantly moving, zooming in and out, and panning left or right. These movements reflect the time constraints and attention spans commercials must accommodate. The rapidly moving images are tied together by the color palette—mostly whites and grays—and the consistent pace of rapidly changing frames.

Our students also noted that this ad affects viewers first through its multiple, fantastical, and powerful appeals to *pathos*, which arouse viewers' curiosity with a narrative that does not directly declare its product or its purpose. Why is the setting for this ad the clouds? Why are the characters in the ad dressed in technicians' uniforms that are scrupulously white? What exactly are these workers producing? One curiosity-arousing appeal to *pathos* derives from the "heavenly" associations conveyed through the gorgeous images of billowing clouds and radiant sun beams outlining and shining through them and the predominance of white, the color of purity. These images conjure up paintings of heaven in which the figures in the sky are angels or good souls entering the afterlife. These associations suggest that there is something supernatural and divine about this scene, a message underscored by the Creedence Clearwater Revival song "Have You Ever Seen the Rain?" sung by the winsome voice of Julu Stulbach. In this case, a familiar classic song, charged with personal associations and emotional power, is rendered in a new arrangement, making it particularly evocative. The song with its lyrics about "the calm before the storm" adds a seriousness and builds on the audience's fascination with weather—what causes it and how could we control

it? A second, more playful appeal to *pathos* is generated by the white-uniformed workers who tap viewers' familiarity with science fiction and children's fantasy stories in their resemblance to the uniformed Umpa-Lumpa factory workers in the film *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. These workers signal, as do their counterparts in fiction and film, that readers are in an imagined world but one that comments on the real world. A third appeal to *pathos* carries the mirror effect of the commercial. In depicting these workers as purposeful, industrious, coordinated, and effective, the ad prompts viewers to admire the hard work and indirectly see themselves as dedicated team players engaged in a project to accomplish some important task.

This analysis of the ad's appeals to *pathos* reveals why GE chose to romanticize and fantasize rather than be realistic and direct. If we ask, "Why not take viewers on a tour of a wastewater treatment plant?", the answer dawns on us. A wastewater treatment plant with its giant steel rakes and grates, with scraps of toilet paper and even condoms caught in the prongs, and its various holding tanks for different stages of processing sewage, would interest only a small portion of the audience—and perhaps disgust others—while limiting water technologies to one process. Similarly, the actual technology and plants for industrial cleanup might bore many viewers, who are more interested in product than in process. Instead, the fantastical and associational appeals of the ad can deliver a larger hopeful message while shaping a positive and memorable image of the company.

All these appeals to *pathos* build the company's *ethos* and brand recognition and prepare viewers to absorb the subtly conveyed core message of the ad: Not only is GE good for the environment in the care it takes with resources like water, but GE also possesses the power of nature, and equipped with human ingenuity, knowledge, and ecoimagination, GE's water technologies can solve the world's water problems. The ad, through its window effect, comforts viewers with a sense of the world in which tough problems such as available clean water are faced and solved by the wonders of technology. The dirty process of recycling is now connected with cleanliness, purity, and ample supply of water. The ad inspires appreciation and confidence in GE's know-how and technological capabilities that are as good as, if not better than, nature itself. After all, GE can process billions of gallons of water a year and can do it whether it is raining or sunny.

FOR WRITING AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing an Ad from Different Perspectives

The Axe Apollo men's cologne ad that aired during the 2013 Super Bowl is part of a recent campaign that features traditional culture heroes—lifeguards and firefighters—in competition with another culture hero, the astronaut. Go to YouTube to see the ad with its story line of a shark-endangered, bikini-clad woman rescued by a handsome, buff lifeguard. The audience's expected narrative—rescued girl falls in love with lifeguard—is thwarted, strangely and humorously, by the out-of-nowhere appearance of the geeky, uniformed astronaut. What makes this strange ad effective? You may want to watch the entire ad several times to aid you in your analysis.

1. **Campaign and analysis.** After watching this ad, analyze its rhetorical effect and appeal by using the strategies suggested in the charts on pages 233–235 and 247–248 as well as ideas presented throughout this section (target audience, choice of medium, brand building, mirror-and-window strategy, and compositional features).
2. **Focus on camera techniques.** Think especially in terms of camera shifts and framing, angle and orientation, distance from the subject, and focus. How do these visual techniques contribute to the narrative and the overall impact of the ad?
3. **Cultural criticism.** Reexamine the ad from the perspective of gender, class, ethnicity, and historical moment. Think about the relationships among the characters and focus on the gender roles. To what extent does this ad break or reinforce traditional notions of gender, race, and class? Consider also our particular historical moment. India and China are strengthening their educational systems in math, science, and technology as they look to the development of their space programs; meanwhile funding for the U.S. space program has not kept pace with its robust start in the 1960s and 1970s. Speculate on the cultural relevance of this campaign at this historical moment.
4. **Cultural criticism continued.** Compare the view of heroism and gender in the Axe Apollo ad with that of the Air Force recruitment poster on page 81. To what extent does the woman as expert, solo pilot in the Air Force poster reverse the stereotype of the bikini-clad woman in the Axe Apollo ad? What strategies do advertisers use to appeal simultaneously to both power and femininity in their portrayals of female leaders?

Analysis of Two Visual Texts

Choose two documentary/news photographs, two paintings, or two advertisements to analyze in a closed-form essay. Your two visual texts should have enough in common to facilitate meaningful comparisons. Show these images in your essay (if you are analyzing videos, you'll need to show screen captures), but also describe your two visual texts in detail to highlight what you want viewers to see and to provide a foundation for your analysis. For this closed-form analysis, choose several key points of contrast as the focus. Your thesis statement should make a claim about key differences in the way that your chosen visual texts establish their purposes and achieve their persuasive effects.

WRITING PROJECT

10.3

Write a comparative analysis of two visual texts.

Exploring and Generating Ideas for Your Analysis

For the subject of your analysis, your instructor may allow you to choose your own images or may provide them for you. If you choose your own, be sure to follow your instructor's guidelines. In choosing your visual texts, look for some important commonality that will enable you to concentrate on similarities and differences in your analysis:

- **Documentary or news photographs.** Analyze two photographs of an event from magazines with different political biases; two news photographs from articles addressing the same story from different angles of vision; or two images on Web sites presenting different perspectives on a recent controversial issue such as industrial farming or the war against terrorists.
- **Paintings.** Find two paintings with similar subject matter but different dominant impressions or emotional impacts.
- **Print ads or television (YouTube) ads.** Look for two ads for the same product (for example, cars, perfume, watches, shampoo) that are aimed at different target audiences or that make appeals to noticeably different value systems.

No matter what type of visual texts you are using, we suggest that you generate ideas and material for your analysis by using the question-asking strategies presented earlier in this chapter (see the strategies charts on pp. 233-235 and 247-248).

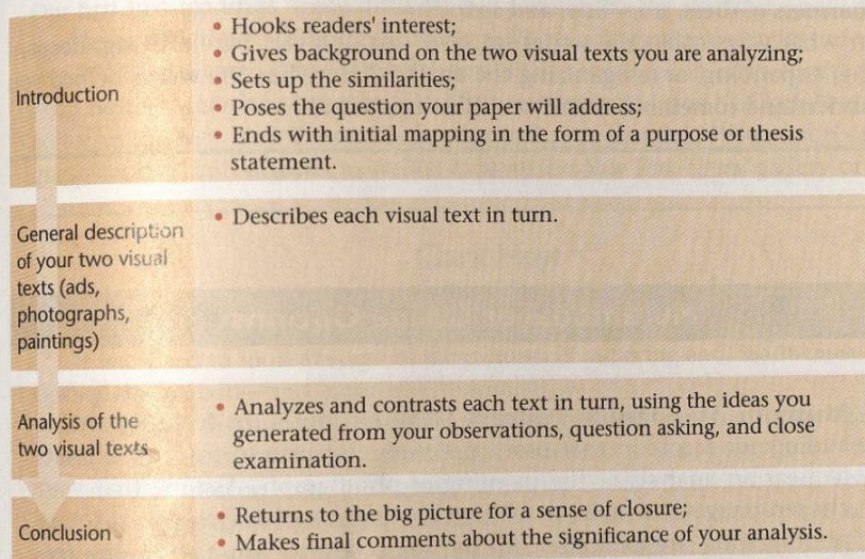
To help you generate more ideas, go detail by detail through your images, asking how the rhetorical effect would be different if some detail were changed:

- How would this documentary photo have a different effect if the homeless man were lying on the sidewalk instead of leaning against the doorway?
- Why did the artist blur images in the background rather than make them more distinct?
- What if the advertisers had decided the model should wear jogging shorts and a tank top instead of a bikini? What if the model were a person of color rather than white?

Shaping and Drafting Your Analysis

Your closed-form essay should be fairly easy to organize at the big-picture level, but each part will require its own organic organization depending on the main points of your analysis. At the big-picture level, you can generally follow a structure like the one shown in Figure 10.14.

If you get stuck, we recommend that you write your rough draft rapidly, without worrying about gracefulness or correctness, merely trying to capture your initial ideas. Many people like to begin with the description of the two visual texts and then write the analysis before writing the introduction and conclusion. After you have written your draft, put it aside for a while before you begin revising.

FIGURE 10.14 Framework for an Analysis of Two Visuals

Revising

Most experienced writers make global changes in their drafts when they revise, especially when they are doing analytical writing. The act of writing a rough draft generally leads to the discovery of more ideas. You may also realize that some of your original ideas aren't clearly developed or that the draft feels scattered or disorganized.

We recommend that you ask your classmates for a peer review of your draft early in the revising process to help you enhance the clarity and depth of your analysis.

Questions for Peer Review

In addition to the generic peer review questions explained in Skill 16.4, ask your peer reviewers to address these questions:

1. How well do the title, introduction, and thesis set up an academic analysis?
2. Where does the writer capture your interest and provide necessary background information? How might the writer more clearly pose the question to be addressed and map out the analysis?
3. Where could the writer describe the visual texts more clearly so that readers can "see" them?
4. How has the writer established the complexity of the texts and their commonalities and differences?
5. How well has the writer used the questions about angle of vision, artistic techniques, and compositional features presented in this chapter to achieve a detailed and insightful analysis of the texts? Where could the writer add more

specific details about settings, props, posing of characters, facial expressions, manners of dress, story line, and so forth?

6. In what ways could the writer improve this analysis by clarifying, deepening, expanding, or reorganizing the analysis? How has the writer helped you understand something new about these two texts?

WRITING PROJECT

Multimodal or Online Options

1. **Museum Audioguide Podcast** Many art museums feature portable audioguide recorders that prompt viewers to pause in front of exhibits to hear an analysis of the painting or photograph. Assume that your chosen images (if you have selected two paintings or two documentary photographs) are exhibited side by side at a museum as part of a featured display. Create a podcast describing and analyzing the exhibits. You can assume that your audience will be looking at the exhibit as you talk. For advice on preparing a podcast, see Skill 19.3.
2. **Lecture with Visual Aids** Assume that for a global outreach program you have been invited to present an analysis of two ad campaigns for the same product or company as this product or company is marketed in different cultures. For example, how are Coca Cola products advertised in China? How is MacDonal's advertised in Central America? Prepare a lecture with PowerPoint or Prezi slides that you can record on video and upload to YouTube. Your slides can hone in on certain features of the ads as you talk. For advice on preparing oral presentations with visual aids, see Skill 19.3.

Readings

Our first two readings argue different perspectives on the ethics of photographing injuries and victims' suffering in disasters. The readings refer to victims of the massive 2010 Haiti earthquake, and the same issue resurfaced in news coverage of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. The first reading is an op-ed by Clark Hoyt, public editor of the *New York Times*. For background, you can do a Web search of photographs of the Haiti disaster as well as explore the *New York Times*' gallery of photos.

Clark Hoyt*

Face to Face with Tragedy

1 It was hard to look at some of the pictures of suffering and death caused by the
2 earthquake in Haiti—and impossible to turn away.

3 The top of one front page in the *Times* was dominated by a woman, her hand to her
4 cheek, as if in shock, walking past partially covered corpses lined up along a dirty curb.
5 The next day, an even larger photograph at the top of page 1 showed a man covered in
6 gray dust, lying alone, dead, statue-like, on a stretcher made from a piece of tattered
cardboard spread over a crude ladder. Inside that same paper, the Friday after the disaster,
was a gruesome scene from the central morgue in Port-au-Prince: a man mourning
the death of his 10-month-old daughter, lying in her diaper atop a pile of bodies.

Some readers were offended at these scenes and even more graphic pictures on
the paper's Web site, calling them exploitive and sensationalistic. "The numerous
photographs printed in the *Times* showing the dead strewn about the streets of Port-
au-Prince are unnecessary, unethical, unkind and inhumane," wrote Randy Stebbins
of Hammond, La. Christa Robbins of Chicago said, "I feel that the people who have
suffered the most are being spectacularized by your blood-and-gore photographs,
which do not at all inform me of the relief efforts, the political stability of the region
or the extent of damage to families and infrastructure." She spoke for several readers
when she added, "If this had happened in California, I cannot imagine a similar depic-
tion of half-clothed bodies splayed out for the camera. What are you thinking?"

But other readers were grateful for the shocking pictures, even as they were deeply
troubled by them. Mary Louise Thomas of Palatka, Fla., said a different photo of the
baby, lying on her dead mother, caused her to cry out, "Oh, my God!" and to sob for
an hour. "But run from it? Never," she said. People repelled by such images "should
really try staring truth in the face occasionally and try to understand it," she wrote.

Mary Claire Carroll of Richmond, Vt., asked, "How else can you motivate or
inspire someone like me to donate money" to help out in Haiti? Her son, she added,
thinks Americans "are too sheltered and protected from the real world."

Every disaster that produces horrific scenes of carnage presents photographers
and their editors with the challenge of telling the unsanitized truth without crossing
into the offensive and truly exploitive. In 2004, when a giant undersea earthquake

*Clark Hoyt. "Face to Face with Tragedy" from *The New York Times*, January 23, 2010. © 2010 The
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written permission is prohibited.

unleashed a tsunami that killed tens of thousands along Indian Ocean coastlines, the *Times* ran a dramatic front-page photo of a woman overcome with grief amid rows of dead children, including her own. Some readers protested, but the newspaper's first public editor, Daniel Okrent, concluded that the paper was right to publish the picture. It told the story of the tsunami, he said.

7 I asked Kenneth Irby, leader of the visual journalism group at the Poynter Institute in Florida, for his assessment of the pictures from Haiti. Irby brings unusual perspectives to the task. He is a veteran photojournalist and an ordained minister, the pastor of an African Methodist Episcopal church in Palmetto, Fla. His wife's best friend is Haitian, and her family was still unaccounted for when we talked last week. "I think the *Times* coverage has been raw, truthful and tasteful," he told me, defending even the most graphic images.

8 Irby, who has been in touch with photographers in Haiti, said survivors want the world to see what has happened. "The actual loved ones, the bereaved, implore the journalists to tell their stories," he said.

9 That is exactly what Damon Winter told me. He is the *Times* photographer who took the pictures that elicited most of the protests to me and much praise on the paper's Web site. Winter, who won a Pulitzer Prize last year for his coverage of the Obama presidential campaign, was the first *Times* staff photographer on the scene, flying from New York to the Dominican Republic and then into Haiti aboard a chartered helicopter. He had never been to Haiti or covered a natural disaster.

10 "I have had so many people beg me to come to their home and photograph the bodies of their children, brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers," he said. "There are so many times that I have to apologize and say that I cannot, that I have photographed so many bodies already, and I think it breaks their hearts because they so desperately want people to know what has happened to them, what tremendous pain they are in, and that they desperately need help." Winter said it was important "that I do whatever I can to try and make our readers understand just how dire the situation is here."

11 Jessie De Witt, an international photo editor, said Winter sent the paper 26 pictures on his first day in Haiti, including the picture of the bodies along the curb that wound up on the front page. He sent 65 the next day, including the mourning father and the dead man on the stretcher. De Witt and her colleagues think carefully about photo selections. A picture of a dog eyeing a corpse is out, as are stacks of bodies without context. And they think about juxtaposition: an Armageddon-like scene of people scrambling for supplies from a ruined store was played against a quieter picture of people waiting patiently for medical treatment.

12 Michele McNally, the assistant managing editor in charge of photography, said she was going through all the photos from all sources, and Winter's photos of the single dead man and the grieving father "stopped me in my tracks." Bill Keller, the executive editor, said editors considered both for the front page, but chose the lone body, played big, because it was dramatic and there was "an intimacy that causes people to pause and dwell on the depth of the tragedy." Looking at one person, instead of many, "humanizes it," he said.

13 I asked McNally about Robbins's contention that such pictures would not appear in the paper if the victims were somewhere in the United States. If such pictures

existed, she said, she would run them. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, the *Times* did publish a front-page picture of a body floating near a bridge where a woman was feeding her dog. But despite Katrina's toll, there were relatively few such images in the paper. Irby said that authorities in the United States are generally quick to cordon off disaster scenes.

Just as a picture of a grieving mother told the story of the tsunami in 2004, the disturbing images of the last two weeks have been telling the story of Haiti, and the *Times* is right to publish them. As Patricia Lay-Dorsey, a reader from Detroit, put it, Winter's "camera was my eye as much as it was his. And every one of his photos told the truth."

THINKING CRITICALLY about "Face to Face with Tragedy"

1. According to Clark Hoyt, what are the ethical and rhetorical problems that photojournalists face in photographing disasters like the Haiti earthquake? Who are the different stakeholders in this controversy?
2. On page 232 in this chapter, we discussed the importance of the photographer's purpose and of the cultural, social, historical, and political context of the photograph. What claims does Hoyt make for the purpose and context of the published images of human suffering in Haiti?
3. Research the coverage of the Haiti earthquake in one of the prominent general news commentary sources such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, *USA Today*, or a leading newspaper's or online news site's archives. What images appear the most often? How did the captions for these images shape your impression of them?
4. What intellectual and emotional impact did these images have on you?

Our second reading, an op-ed piece by Manoucheka Celeste, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Washington, was published in the *Seattle Times* on January 26, 2010.

Manoucheka Celeste

Disturbing Media Images of Haiti Earthquake Aftermath Tell Only Part of the Story

As a Haitian, former journalist and media scholar, [I found] the earthquake in Haiti... both personally devastating and intellectually challenging.

The first earthquake to hit Haiti in more than 200 years was unbelievable, unexpected and unprecedented. The devastation is clear with more than 200,000 lives lost. The damage is real. As we saw, people around the world responded quickly and generously.

3 This catastrophe presented an opportunity for media to respond in an unprecedented way. Some news outlets arrived before relief workers and doctors. We watched the horrors as they happened. I hoped that this was the moment when those of us trained in journalism would do something remarkable: Bring news of an unimaginable event in a way that disrupted the sensational and stereotypical ways that people in the "Third World" are represented.

4 What we got instead was much less humane. Videos of dead bodies, including children and the elderly, filled our television screens. For those of us who tuned in for information about friends and families, it was and is unbearable and despicable. Coverage went from sensational to ridiculous as CNN compared the literacy rates of Haiti and the United States. This was irrelevant as it continued to represent Haiti as a failed state.

5 The focus on poverty, with the repeated tagline "the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere" and references to crime and unrest, make it hard for viewers to imagine any other aspect of life in Haiti. People were called looters for taking food from collapsed buildings after not having eaten for days, framing their survival as a crime. The humanity needed in this moment is clearly missing.

6 Media scholars have long connected media coverage with public opinion, cultivating our attitudes and creating and reinforcing stereotypes. It is predominantly people of color who are shown negatively in news and entertainment. While the images mobilized some to help, they are damaging in the long term as they become ingrained in how we imagine Haitians. For many this is the first and last contact they will have with this population. The images matter as Haitians are shown as less than human. In mass media when images of Haiti and various countries in the African continent are shown, blackness becomes associated with helplessness, danger, poverty and hopelessness.

7 In the most disgusting moment in broadcast history, Pat Robertson proclaimed that Haiti had it coming because of its "deal with the devil," linking Haiti to "godlessness." What Robertson didn't consider was that "godlessness" was used as an excuse to kill and colonize peoples throughout history in the name of God, including Haiti, which, incidentally, is a heavily Christian country.

8 The question that plagues me and hopefully all audiences is: Who is able to die with dignity? In recent media history, there are few, but increasing instances where dead Americans are shown. From Columbine to Sept. 11, we rightfully protect the dead and rarely dare show them on television or in newspapers. Yet, the increasing presence of graphic and emotionally charged images, especially in broadcast media makes it seem normal or desirable.

9 This earthquake, despite the amazing pain that it has caused to so many, presents an unprecedented opportunity. Viewers and readers can demand that in people's darkest hour or once they lose their lives that they are treated with dignity.

10 We want the story without sensationalism and reinforcement of stereotypes. We want the media to value the lives of people who are "not us." As I waited for eight days to hear that my own mother and grandmother in Port-au-Prince are safe, I wanted to hold on to good memories of the person who brought me into the world and the one who taught me to be generous and tenacious. Let's seize the opportunity of this horrific tragedy to demand better from our news sources: dignity for everyone.

THINKING CRITICALLY

about “Disturbing Media Images of Haiti Earthquake Aftermath Tell Only Part of the Story”

1. In her criticism of the media’s use of “graphic and emotionally charged images,” how does Manoucheka Celeste argue against the main perspective that Hoyt endorses?
2. Celeste’s op-ed piece examines the role of viewers’ knowledge, values, and assumptions in interpreting photos in news stories. What historical, political, and racial elements does Celeste underscore?
3. For the photographs of the Haiti disaster that you located and viewed, argue that they either simplified and distorted the issues or pushed them toward complexity and depth. In your mind, what does it mean to treat the human subjects of photographs with “dignity”?
4. How do the views of photography argued in these two readings relate to the gory images of victims of the Boston Marathon bombings in April 2013? What should the public see? What is responsible, ethical visual coverage of events like this? What images from this event had powerful emotional impact?

Our final reading is student Lydia Wheeler’s analytical essay written for the writing project in this chapter. It analyzes two documentary photos focused on economic hardship and displacement. One photo, taken by photographer Stephen Crowley, accompanied a *New York Times* story about a mother and her daughters in the 2008 recession caused by the collapse of the housing bubble in the United States. The subject, Isabel Bermudez, was subsisting on food stamps unable to find a job; previously she had supported her daughters with a six-figure salary. Then the market collapsed, she lost her job, and shortly afterward she lost her house. The second photo is a famous image taken in 1936 in Nipoma, California, during the Great Depression. The photo is part of the *Migrant Mother* series by photographer Dorothea Lange. Lydia decided to examine the original newspaper contexts for these photographs and to approach them as depictions of women’s experiences of economic crisis.

Lydia Wheeler (student)

Two Photographs Capture Women’s Economic Misery

During economic crises, the hardship of individuals is often presented to us as statistics and facts: number of bankruptcies, percentage of the population living below the poverty line, and foreclosures or unemployment rates. Although this numerical data can be shocking, it usually remains abstract and impersonal. In contrast, photographers such as Stephen Crowley and Dorothea Lange help us visualize the human suffering involved in the economic conditions, skillfully evoking the emotional, as

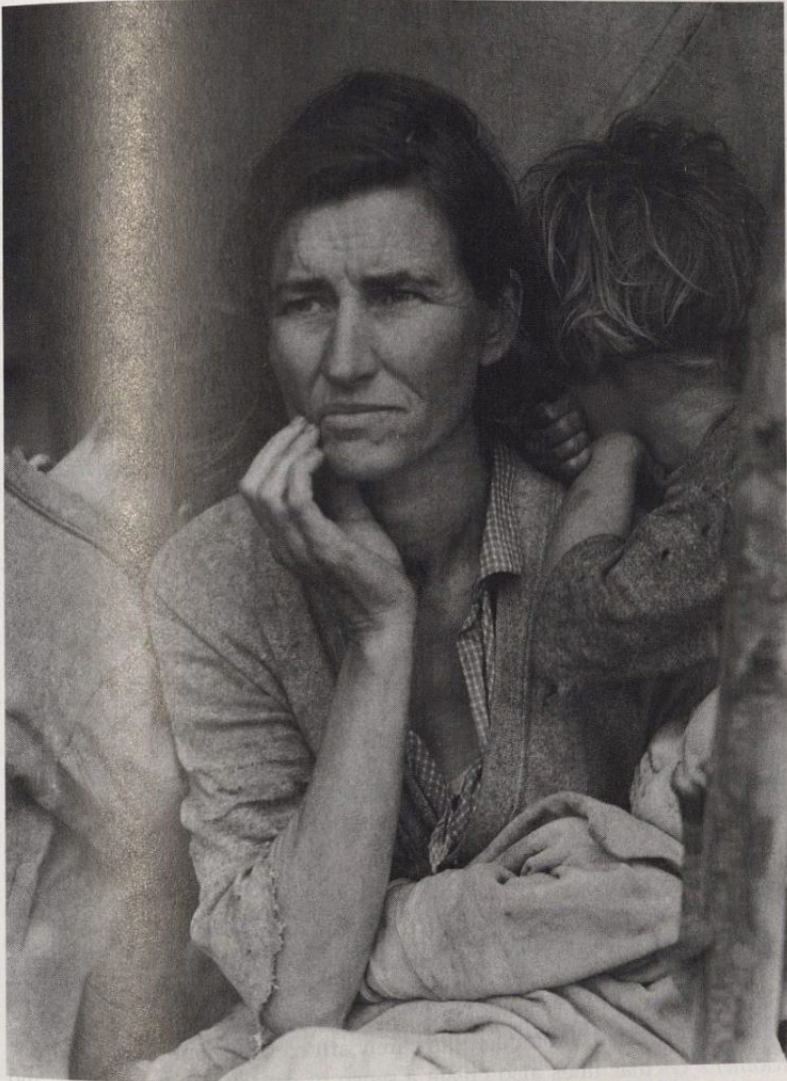
well as the physical, reality of their subjects. Crowley's color photograph, first published January 2, 2010, in a *New York Times* article titled "Living on Nothing but Food Stamps," is captioned "Isabel Bermudez, who has two daughters and no cash income." Lange's black and white photograph was commissioned by the Resettlement Agency to document Americans living in the Great Depression; she originally captioned it *Destitute pea pickers in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children. February 1936*. However, in March of the same year, the *San Francisco Times* published Lange's photograph in an article demanding aid for workers like Florence Owens Thompson, the central subject of the picture. Once published, the photograph became famous and was nicknamed *Migrant Mother*. A close look at these two photos shows that through their skillful use of photographic elements such as focus, framing, orientation, and shape, Stephen Crowley and Dorothea Lange capture the unique emotional and physical realities of their subjects, eliciting compassion and admiration, respectively.

2 Stephen Crowley's photograph of a mother sitting in a room, perhaps the dining room of her house, and her young daughter standing and reaching out to comfort her sets up contrasts and tensions that underscore loss and convey grief. The accompanying article explains that Isabel Bermudez, whose income from real estate once amply supported her family, now has no income or prospect for employment and relies entirely on food stamps. A careful examination of Crowley's photograph implies this loss by hinting that Bermudez's wealth is insecure.

3 The framing, distance, and focus of Crowley's photograph emphasize this vanished wealth and the emotional pain. The image is a medium close up with its human



Isabel Bermudez, who has two daughters and no cash income, by Stephen Crowley



Destitute pea pickers in California; a 32 year old mother of seven children
[*Migrant Mother*] by Dorothea Lange

subjects to the side, surrounding them with empty space and hints of expensive furnishings. While part of the foreground is sharply focused, the background is blurry and unfocused. There is a suggestion that the room is spacious. Further, the high decorative backs of the room's chairs, the repetitive design decorating the bookshelf on the frame's left, and the houseplant next to the bookshelf show that the room is well furnished, even luxurious. Bermudez and her daughter match their surroundings in being elegantly dressed. Bermudez looks across the room as if absorbed in her troubles; her daughter looks intently at her. Viewers' eyes are drawn to Bermudez's

dark dress and her pearl necklace and earrings. However, the ostensible comfort of Bermudez and her surroundings starkly contrasts with her grief.

4 Crowley heightens this contrast and tension through the subjects' orientation and the space between them. The space between Bermudez and her daughter is one of the photograph's dominant features, but it contains only out-of-focus objects in the background. Neither figure is centered in the photo; neither looks at the camera. Consequently, the viewers' attention moves back and forth between them, creating a sense of uneasiness. The meaning of this photo is focused not on what Bermudez has but on what she has lost.

5 Crowley also evokes sympathy and compassion for his subjects with his choice of angle, scale, and detail. The photograph's slightly high angle makes viewers look down—literally—on Bermudez, making her appear vulnerable and powerless and reinforcing the pathos. The most striking bid for compassion is the tears streaming down Bermudez's well made-up face. The contrast between her tidy appearance and the tear tracks on her face suggest overwhelming sadness. The poignancy of her apparent breakdown is heightened by her somber daughter's attempt to wipe away the tears on her mother's face. Crowley's decisions regarding *Isabel's* composition create an image that is highly disturbing.

6 In contrast to Crowley's photograph, Lange's *Migrant Mother*—through its content, focus, frame, rhythm, and angle—conveys long-standing poverty. Yet through this image of inescapable poverty pressing upon its subjects, it evokes admiration for this mother.

7 Lange's frame and focus generate much of the intensity of *Migrant Mother*. This photo is also a medium close up, but Lange's frame is tight with no open space. The lack of this openness cramps Lange's subjects and creates a claustrophobic feel intensified by the number of subjects shown—four to *Isabel's* two. There is almost no background. The subjects filling the foreground are crowded and sharply focused. The contrast between crowded foreground and empty background exaggerates the former and adds a touch of loneliness to *Migrant Mother*; this mother has no resources besides herself. Additionally, the subjects of *Migrant Mother* almost epitomize poverty: Their hair is messy and uncombed, their skin dirt-stained. Even their clothes are worn—from the hem of Thompson's frayed sleeve to the smudges on her baby's blanket, Lange's photograph shows that Thompson can barely afford functional items.

8 *Migrant Mother's* circular lines also create a sense of sameness, stagnation, and hopelessness. Thompson's face draws viewers' eyes as the dominant feature, and Lange has ringed it with several arcs. The parentheses of her standing children's bodies, the angle of her baby in its blanket, and the arc of her dark hair form a ring that hems Thompson in and creates a circular path for the eyes of viewers. Seen with the obvious destitution of Lange's subjects, this repetition is threatening and grimly promises that it will be difficult, if not impossible, for this family to escape its poverty.

9 Like Crowley's *Isabel*, the impact of Lange's *Migrant Mother* derives from both the tragedy of her subjects' situation and their reactions. Lange uses angle and scale to generate sympathy and admiration for Thompson's strength. Once again we see a slightly high angle highlighting the subjects' vulnerability, which Lange reinforces with the slender necks of Thompson's children and a glimpse of her brassiere.

However, Lange then contrasts this vulnerability with Thompson's strength, fostering viewers' admiration rather than compassion. *Migrant Mother's* scale, for example, exaggerates rather than diminishes Thompson's size: the photograph's frame focuses viewers' attention on the mother, who looks large, compared to her children. Additionally, Lange's subject literally supports the bodies of the children surrounding her. Unlike Bermudez, Thompson sits tall as a pillar of strength for her vulnerable children. Even her expression—worried but dry eyed—fosters admiration and respect in viewers. By juxtaposing Thompson's vulnerability with her strength, Lange creates a photograph that conveys both its subjects' poverty and their stoicism in facing the Great Depression.

Lange and Crowley guide viewer's reactions to their photographs through careful control of the elements that influence our emotional responses to their work. Though they both show women in economic crises, these artists are able to convey the distinct realities of their subjects' situations and consequently send viewers away in different emotional states: one of compassion, one of admiration. The fame and veneration of Lange's *Migrant Mother* is a testament to her ability to evoke desired emotions. The photograph was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1941 and again in 1955, and was co-opted by countless movements since it was first published. Whether Crowley's *Isabel* will achieve similar fame for epitomizing this generation's economic crisis remains to be seen, but both photographs certainly succeed in delivering strong, lasting emotional statements.

THINKING CRITICALLY

about "Two Photographs Capture Women's Economic Misery"

1. What photographic elements has Lydia chosen to emphasize in her analysis of each of these photos?
2. What parts of Lydia's analysis help you see and understand these photos with greater insight? Do you agree with her choice of important elements and her analysis of their effects?
3. If you were analyzing these photos, what features would you choose to compare and stress?