

LSE Department of Methodology  
MY 428/528 – LT 2014

# Qualitative Text Analysis

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Office Hours: Thursday 11:30-13:30

# STRUCTURAL & CRITICAL APPROACHES (I)

Week 9

# Lecture Outline

## **1. Introduction**

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## **2. Structural Analysis**

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## **3. Semiology and Semiotics**

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## **5. Narrative Analysis**

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## **5. Rhetorical Analysis**

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# Introduction

## Structural and Critical Approaches - Introduction

- Focus on underlying forms, structures, construction and transmission of meaning rather than on *Content*.
- Structural Approaches focus on micro and macro levels of argumentation.
- Critical Approaches take an explicit ontological/political stance.

# Structural and Critical Approaches - Introduction

- Critical Approaches particularly emphasize the importance of **context/ (dominant) values/ message production/ audience reception.**
- Structural Approaches particularly emphasize the importance of **argumentative/rhetorical** strategies.
- Blurred boundaries between the two approaches.

# Structural and Critical Approaches - Introduction

- **Types of research Question:**

- What are the deeper meanings/structures of a text/message?
- What are the commonly accepted meanings of signs within culture/group X ?

- **Strengths:**

- Capacity to go beyond superficial meaning.
- Add a critical perspective.

- **Weaknesses:**

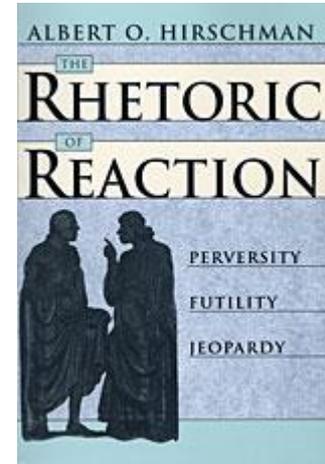
- Highly interpretative
- Work best on a relatively small amount of data
- Rely on complex analytical strategies

# Structural Analysis

# Application of Structural Analysis

## *The Rhetoric of Reaction* by A.O. Hirschman (1991)

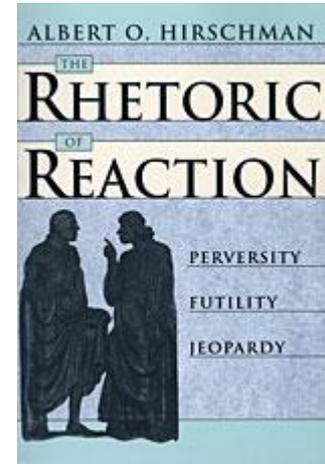
- Despite its title this is not a Rhetorical Analysis but a Structural Analysis.
- Universal patterns of argumentation are invariably exhibited in political debates.
- Specific political views, political interests and the *content* of arguments themselves are not of primary importance.



# Application of Structural Analysis

## *The Rhetoric of Reaction* by A.O. Hirschman (1991)

Every major stage in the development of citizenship in Western Civilization – from the emancipation of slaves to the extension of the franchise to women - has displayed similar argumentative patterns by advocates of a reform and their ‘reactionary’ adversaries.



# Application of Structural Analysis

## *The Rhetoric of Reaction* by A.O. Hirschman (1991)

Hirschman reduces the ‘reactionary ideology’ to three major argumentative strands.

- **The perversity thesis** -- any purposive action to improve some feature of the political, social, or economic order only serves to exacerbate the condition one wishes to remedy.
- **The futility thesis** -- attempts at social transformation will be unavailing. They will simply fail to make a dent.
- **The jeopardy thesis** -- the cost of the proposed change or reform is too high as it endangers some previous, precious accomplishment.

# SEMIOLOGY & SEMIOTICS

# Semiology and Semiotics

- Derive from the work of Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1917) who viewed language as a system of signs and codes.
- Seek out the deep structures, rules and conventions that enable a language to operate at a particular point in time (or over time)
- Individual words are seen as arbitrary signs with meaning only in relation to other signs in the cultural system.

# Semiology and Semiotics

- Saussure called the structural analysis of the meaning of signs and codes *semiology*. Charles Peirce (1839 -1914) called it *semiotics*.
- Key figures in structural analysis include:

## **Psychologist Jacques Lacan (1901-1981)**

Looked at the development of the structure of the unconscious through the binary oppositions of the ‘subject’ and the ‘other’.

## **Literary Critic Roland Barthes (1915-1980)**

Explored the myths of mass culture  
(i.e.; wrestling, films, cars...)

## **Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009)**

Identified structural mental and social processes across cultures  
(i.e.; meaning of ‘raw’ and ‘cooked’ food).

## Semiology and Semiotics

- Messages are viewed as system produced and representative of an era type.
- Messages are representative of a particular culture, at a particular point in time. They reflect identifiable values.

**Portrait of Napoleon  
by J.B Boreli (1813)**



**Sceptre of Charlemagne:**

Portrays Napoleon as the successor of Charlemagne who, like Napoleon conquered France, Germany, Italy, Belgium & the Netherlands

**Laurel Crown:** Celebrates Napoleon's illustrious victories & links with Roman emperors for whom the laurel wreath was a symbol of military triumph



**Globe and Hand of Justice:**

Symbols of Kingship and authority. They suggest that Napoleon is a benevolent ruler

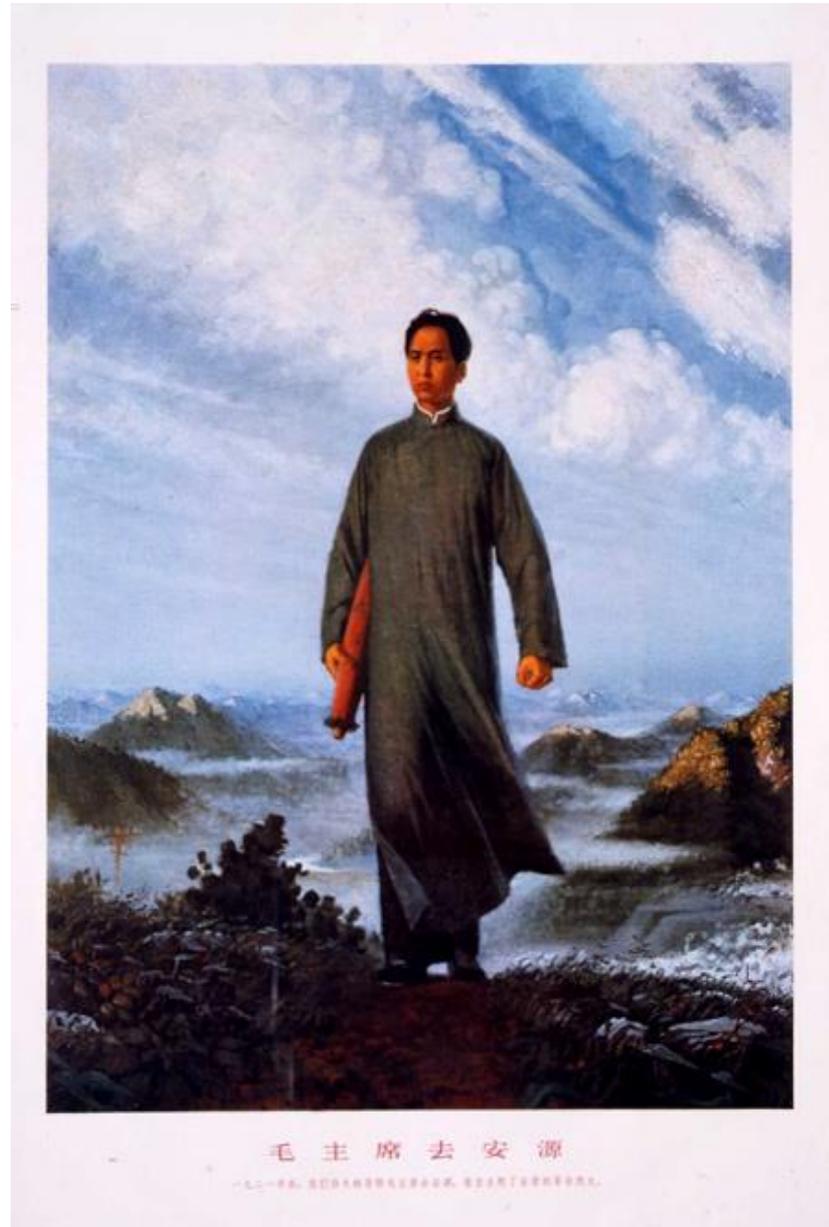
**Coronation Robe:** Inspire awe & show Napoleon as the rightful leader of France

**Golden bees:** Symbols of immortality and emblems of the ancient kings of France. They give Napoleon's reign symbolic legitimacy

**Throne:**

Leaves the viewer in no doubt that Napoleon is the ruler of France

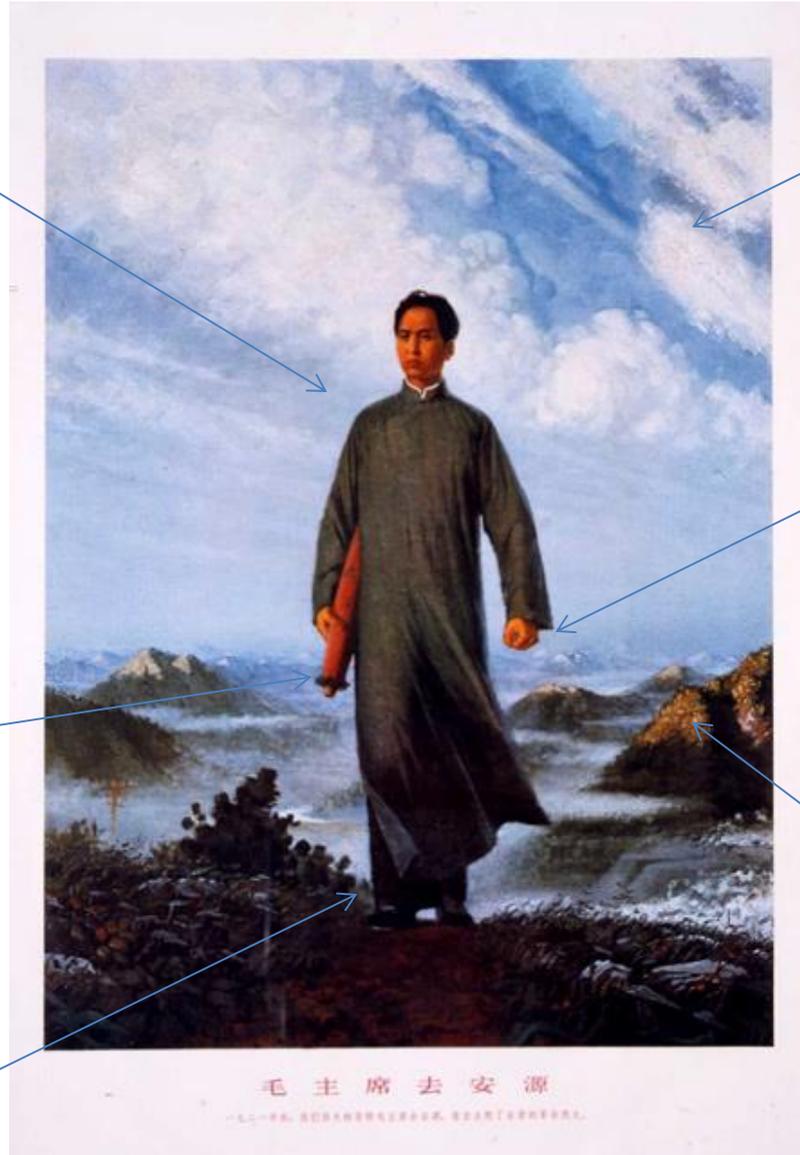
**Portrait of Mao**  
**by Liu Chunhua (1969)**  
*Chairman Mao Goes to*  
*Anyuan*



**Lone Figure:**

Mao is the sole deliver of the Revolution and the saviour of the proletariat

**Clouds:** The clouds part with the arrival of Mao suggesting a better & brighter future for China



**Umbrella:** Refers to Mao's extensive travels in all weathers, demonstrating his commitment to the revolutionary cause

**Clenched Fists:** Show Mao's determination to succeed

**Clothes:** Mao wears plain clothes showing that he is a man of the people

**Mountains:** Standing above the surrounding mountain peaks, Mao is the zenith of the revolutionary spirit

# Narrative Analysis

# Narrative Analysis

- Focuses on stories told by participants.
- Stories reveal our experiences, interpretations and priorities.
- Assumption: Breaking down narratives into units of meaning will reveal their common properties.

# Narrative Analysis

## **Sociolinguistic/ Sociocultural**

- Focus on the structure of narratives.
- Look for regularities, within and across cultures, in how people tell stories.
- The narrative itself is the object of interest.

## **Phenomenology**

- Analysts in this tradition use personal narratives as windows into the lived experience of the narrator.
- They try to achieve empathic understanding of that experience.
- The object of study is the experience of the person telling a story, not just the story itself.

## Application of Narrative Analysis

### *After-rape among three populations in the Southwest*

**Bletzer and Koss (2006)**

- Analysed 62 narratives by women in the South-western United-States who had survived rape (25 Cheyenne women; 24 Anglo women; 13 Mexican American women).
- During the interviews, each woman was asked to tell her story in her own words.
- In addition to themes, Bletzer and Koss looked for narrative structuring devices.

# Application of Narrative Analysis

## *After-rape among three populations in the Southwest* **Bletzer and Koss (2006)**

- Similar patterns across stories:
  - (1) Initial reaction
  - (2) long-term consequences
  - (3) mourning
  - (4) attempts at recovery.
  
- Anglo women used *nested stories*. Mexican American and Cheyenne women made less use of this device.
  
- All women used similar metaphors (i.e.;feeling soiled and dirty)
  
- Anglo women often used *triplets* (i.e.; I felt angry, scared, degraded)
  
- Cheyenne women almost never named men in their accounts.

## Application of Narrative Analysis

*The lived experiences of alcohol addiction*

**Zakrzewski and Hector (2004)**

- Phenomenological approach to Narrative Analysis
- Derives from the works of E. Husserl (1859-1938)  
Experience is the source of all knowledge (v. positivism)
- Requires bracketing our biases so that we don't filter other people's experiences through our own cultural/social lens.
- The aim is to understand experiences as others experience them.

# Application of Narrative Analysis

## *The lived experiences of alcohol addiction* **Zakrzewski and Hector (2004)**

- Studied the lived experience of seven men recovering from addiction to alcohol.
- A recovering addict himself, Zakrzewski knew that this would give him empathy for the men he was interviewing. But, he would also carry a lot of his own biases into the project.
- Zakrzewski went through a bracketing interview in which he was asked the same questions than participants.
- Analysing this interview, he identified themes in his own understanding of addiction.
- He brought that self-conscious understanding to the process of interviewing and analysing the transcripts those interviews.

# Rhetorical Analysis

# Rhetorical Analysis

## **Analysis of acts of persuasion**

- Can be used on texts, pictures, films ... any communicative medium that attempts to make a statement to an intended audience.
  
- **3 key steps**
  - 1) Identify the Rhetorical Situation
  - 2) Examine the appeals
  - 3) Examine style details

# Rhetorical Analysis

## ➤ Identify the Rhetorical Situation

1. Who is the speaker?
2. What is the occasion? (Context under which the text was written)
3. Who is the intended audience?
4. What is the purpose? (what does the writer want to accomplish?)

## ➤ Examine the appeals

1. **Ethos** (or ethical appeal) rely on the writer's credibility and character in the garnering of approval.
2. **Logos** (or logical appeal) use reason to make an argument.
3. **Pathos** (or pathetic appeal) seek to evoke emotion in order to gain approval.

# Rhetorical Analysis

## ➤ **Examine style details**

1. Analogies and figurative language (i.e. metaphors)
2. Repetitions
3. Imagery
4. Diction
5. Tone
6. Attitude/mood (i.e. sarcasm...)
7. Colour (i.e. contrasts...)

*Four Freedoms*  
**Save Freedom of Speech**  
**Buy War Bonds**  
by **Norman Rockwell (1943)**





**Title:** Appeal to a core American belief enshrined in the Constitution and implies that it is threatened (**Ethos**)

**Speaker's Face:** Ecstatic expression maximizes the emotional impact of the poster (**Pathos**)

**Audience:** From a variety of professions and background. They all listen raptly to the humble speaker (**Pathos**)

**Speaker's Clothes:** Working class clothes emphasize that Freedom of Speech is a basic right, enjoyed by all, regardless of occupation, education or class (**Logos**)

**Buy War Bonds:** Specific call to action linked to the fundamental principle of the title. Phrased as an imperative: the poster gives the audience no choice (**Logos**)

## Mixing Rhetorical and Narrative Analysis

Elena Gonzalez-Polledo, Jen Tarr, Aude Bicquelet. *'The thing about pain: The remaking of illness narratives in chronic pain expressions on Social Media'*

*The Distress of Chronic Pain*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-Ndp8mSsIg>

*Real stories of Living with Chronic Pain*

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98L0hEW7\\_gc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98L0hEW7_gc)

*Blog about my disability - chronic pain syndrome & chronic fatigue syndrome*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HtKePW8XPyc>

*Chronic Pain - CTA*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8ZH6myRfeg>

## Mixing Rhetorical and Narrative Analysis

- **Medical Preamble**  
Patients use metaphors (i.e.; ‘touching electric fences’, ‘having bad sunburn...’) to describe their condition.
- **Narrative of Decline**  
Use of Metaphors too (i.e. living ‘in a shrinking room’)
- **Narrative of Aloneness**  
Isolation and loneliness. *Nested stories* are frequently used throughout the narratives. These are often framed as *before/after* sequences.
- *Medical Preambles* and *Narratives of Decline* are frequently based upon an appeal to *Logos*.
- *Narrative of Aloneness* are most often expressed through an appeal to *Pathos* (patient typically represented alone, experiencing pain, limping, crying and images often accompanied by music)

## Useful Resources

- Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of Semiology*, New York: Hill and Want. (last section on data collection)
- Bletzer, K and Koss, M. (2006). After-rape among three populations in the Southwest. *Violence against women* 12:5 – 29.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1991) *The Rhetoric of Reaction* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press).
- Manzo, J. (1996) Taking turns and taking sides: Opening scenes from two jury deliberations. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 59:107-125.
- Negron, R (2007) Switching of ethnic identification among New York City Latinos. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida.
- Saussure, F. de (1960 [1916]). ‘The nature of the linguistic sign’, in: *Course in General Linguistic*, Transl.: W. Baskin, London, Peter Owen Ltd, pp. 65-71.
- Zakrzewski, R. and Hector, M. (2004). The lived experiences of alcohol addiction: Men of Alcoholic Anonymous: *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 25:61- 77.