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IDEOLOGY AND ARGUMENT

Perhaps you have had a conversation with someone about another person, and your friend says to you, “Oh, she is very conservative.” “How do you know?” you reply. At that point your friend may be at a loss for words but is still sure that the person you are discussing is conservative. Or liberal. Or feminist. Or fundamentalist. And so on and so forth. We often read whole ways of thinking and entire philosophies from what others say, do, and show us. Yet we are often unclear about how we draw these conclusions or whether they are justified.

An interesting aspect of this kind of “mind reading” is that we seem to draw conclusions about what people think that go beyond the bare evidence presented to us. We could likely make a guess about a person’s politics, religious leanings, and views on such issues as the environment, women’s rights, military intervention, and so forth based on hearing their views on just a couple of items from this list. We might guess wrong, but many of us would venture a guess anyway. For instance, if you know that someone is in favor of banning offshore oil drilling, tighter controls over firearms, and reducing our military involvement overseas, you can probably make a good guess what they think about capital punishment and for whom they voted in the last election.

We take a chance on this “mind reading” because ways of thinking tend to be *systematic*—that is, certain kinds of values and convictions tend to be connected to others. People generally want their thinking to be consistent, and so what we think about the environment may well share some fundamental assumptions and values with what we think about government programs for the poor. Of course, we must remember that many people also harbor some attitudes at variance with their dominant ways of thinking.

When we conclude that someone is liberal, conservative, and so on, it seems clear that we have “read” something in what the person has done or said that leads

us to conclude where he or she stands socially and politically. We know that such readings are not foolproof; sometimes, we are surprised by a person's words or behaviors after we have made such a reading. I believe, though, that we can learn how to read more effectively the ways of thinking that people share. We can do this through the close reading of what I will shortly describe as *ideology*, and we read ideology through looking at *argument*.

For instance, consider this section of the main website for PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals:

WHY ANIMAL RIGHTS?

Almost all of us grew up eating meat, wearing leather, and going to circuses and zoos. We never considered the impact of these actions on the animals involved. For whatever reason, you are now asking the question: Why should animals have rights? [LEARN MORE.](#)

Animals Are Not Ours to Eat

Animals Are Not Ours to Wear

Animals Are Not Ours to Experiment On

Animals Are Not Ours to Use for Entertainment

Animals Are Not Ours to Abuse in Any Way

We see here a list of convictions and principles for this group. If we heard a speaker lay out these principles in a speech, I think most of us would guess that the speaker was also politically to the left, in favor of reproductive rights, in favor of simple living and respect for the environment—the list would go on. We might be wrong in such guesses, but I think more PETA proponents than not would share such stances. They just seem to “go with” a concern for animals' rights. How can we intentionally understand these networks of connected ideas? How can we read more carefully and intentionally—how can we do a close reading of—texts that seem to indicate wider systems of thought?

Let me call your attention to several important aspects of our readings of other people's thought.

- First, the webs of convictions and commitments that we identify can be called *ideology*. *Ideology* is one of those terms that varies considerably according to different theories. It is a term central to most variations on Marxist theory and method, for instance. Since we are focusing on techniques of close reading and not the theories that might guide those techniques, let me offer a generic definition of ideology that will serve our

purposes and yet fit with most theories: *Ideology is a systematic network of beliefs, commitments, values, and assumptions that influence how power is maintained, struggled over, and resisted.* Other scholars offer similar generic understandings of the term. Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg (2001) tells us that “ideology is the mechanism by and through which individuals live their roles as subjects in a social formation” (p. 185). Mark Lawrence McPhail (1996) sees the ideological as having to do with “how conflict, power, and material interests shape and influence social and symbolic interaction” (p. 340). So our example of people from PETA would tell us that a belief in animal rights likely fits into a systematic network of beliefs and that these beliefs and commitments have something to do with how power in our society is created, struggled over, and resisted.

- A second aspect of drawing conclusions about people’s social and political alignments is that in order to do so, we attend to the everyday *arguments* or *argumentation* (both terms are commonly used) that people employ in everyday speech, writing, and action. An argument faces in two directions: It tells us a speaker’s ideology, but it also urges that ideology upon an audience. It is both a symptom and a creator of ideology. *Argument is a process by which speakers and writers, together with audiences, make claims about what people should do and assemble reasons and evidence why people should do those things.* Many scholars have studied argument and have arrived at similar definitions. Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) refer to argument in several ways: as “the domain of action of our faculty of reasoning and proving” (3) and as “techniques allowing us to induce or to increase the mind’s adherence to the theses presented for its assent” (4). They claim that “all argumentation aims at gaining the adherence of minds” (p. 14). Gary C. Woodward and Robert E. Denton Jr. (2004) define argument as “claims linked to evidence or good reasons” (p. 87). Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik (1979) define the closely related process of reasoning as “a collective and continuing human transaction, in which we present ideas or claims to particular sets of people within particular situations or contexts and offer the appropriate kinds of ‘reasons’ in their support” (p. 9). If you visit the PETA website, you will see a fair bit of concern for the everyday messages people get that encourage the exploitation of animals, for such messages create the mindset that PETA would like to work against. In sum, ideology is the web of ideas people have, but argument is the materially observable discourse that both reveals a writer’s ideology and urges that ideology on others.
- A third aspect of how we guess other people’s ways of thinking is that although we are aware of our attributions of politics, religion, and so forth to others, we are not often consciously aware of how we make these attributions. This particular aspect of reading, in other words, is often *out of awareness*. Learning techniques of close reading can help

us to see more clearly how people go about making assumptions about other people's ways of thinking based on their arguments. I believe that most of us, after spending a few minutes on the PETA website, would draw a number of conclusions about the further politics and lifestyle of members of that organization, even if we are not aware of the assumptions we are making.

Let me pull these considerations together at this point to talk about what I do in Chapter 4. This chapter will teach you some *techniques for closely reading* the everyday arguments in people's texts that reflect those people's ideologies. I proceed on the assumption that ideology is largely created, maintained, and resisted in everyday argument, more so than in grand, single moments of indoctrination and persuasion. If you think about your own ideologies, I believe you will realize that they sort of seeped into your head over a lifetime of hearing the everyday arguments of others. Or if, as is sometimes the case, you have recently resisted or rejected some ideology, that decision is usually the result of a long process of weighing everyday arguments, rather than the result of any single dramatic experience.

Let me also note that identification of ideology—and sometimes, the critique, analysis, or contradiction of some ideologies—is very much a part of the critic's calling to social justice, as noted earlier in this book. This is true regardless of your sense of social justice or your own ideologies. Identification of ideology through close reading gives us a window into the larger scheme of beliefs and values held by people—and thus, into what their sense of social justice might be.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A TEXT

When we learn how to read other people's ideologies, then we are learning about the rhetorical environment that is created around us. We therefore learn something about how we might create, sustain, or resist ideologies ourselves. This is because the arguments that call others to think, feel, and act in some ways are likely also calling to us. In an important sense, to learn to understand the role of everyday arguments in creating ideologies is to learn how social and individual consciousness is shaped. The chapter is organized around these four questions, which the close reader should ask about the arguments in a text under examination:

- What should the audience think or do?
- What does the text ask the audience to assume?
- How does the audience know what the text claims?
- Who is empowered or disempowered?

From asking these questions about argument, we may draw some conclusions about ideology. Let's consider these four questions one by one.

What Should the Audience Think or Do?

When we ask what the reader should think or do, we are asking what claims or conclusions the text would lead to. Sometimes these are not spelled out, and a value of close reading is to make the implied claims of the text clear so that audiences may know what they are buying into with that text. What the audience should think or do may sometimes end up going well beyond the particular subject of the argument—the claim may affect wide ranges of thought and action. The interconnectedness of ideology, the fact that it is a network of ideas, means that placing one idea in an audience's head often makes it easier for the audience to go on to another idea.

To ask someone to think or do a thing implies a wider moral or ethical standard that the thought or action supports. If I ask you to contribute to wildlife preservation, that implies acceptance of a wider standard, one of caring for animals and for the natural world. Our first question should encourage readers to think about the wider networks of thought implied by the specific call to thought or action in a text. Such a wider network is, as we saw earlier, an ideology. Even an advertisement urging the reader to buy mouthwash implies, by calling for that action, a wider network of thought. To buy mouthwash leads us to think that good health and hygiene involve smelling good, smelling a particular way. Of course, the ideology also implies that we achieve these standards through spending money and buying a product; this wider network of ideas is ideological.

What Does the Text Ask the Audience to Assume?

Every argument must begin with some assumptions. Even the call, "Run! The house is on fire!" must be based on such assumptions as the danger of fire, the need to flee to avoid fire, the idea that human bodies cannot withstand fire, and so forth. When we ask about assumptions, we are asking what both the writer or speaker and the audience for the text bring to an argument to make it "work." These assumptions tend to be connected in a network, and that network is ideological. If our first question leads us to think about the ideology that comes from an argument, this second question leads us to think about the ideology, the network of ideas, that an audience must already have so as to make sense of an argument.

Most news reports on the state of the economy assume that growth is good, and that is connected to other assumptions, such as the idea that people are supposed to use and exploit the Earth's resources, that more and bigger are always better, that poverty is a source of shame, and so forth. You need to share that assumption, or the argument won't "work" for you. An idea widely held among professors is the belief that plagiarism, or use of another's words as if they were

one's own, is a serious academic offense. But many students do not come to school sharing that assumption in the first place, and so, warnings against plagiarism by professors often make no sense or fall on deaf ears. Professors often work to instill this assumption in students so that future appeals to avoid plagiarism will work.

Another way to think about this second question is to ask what the text takes for granted. What does the text seem to assume that the audience already agrees with? The close reader might think about how the substance of the text would be different were it addressed to a different audience. Study a president's recent State of the Union message, for instance. What does the speech assume that it could likely not assume if addressed to the Mexican people or to the Canadian parliament? Your answer to that question will help to reveal the ideology the text already takes for granted as it approaches an audience, as it calls to an audience, assumed to share that ideology.

Often a text's assumptions make it appear as if everybody in the world shared them. The assumptions of an ideology often seem universal in that way to those who share the ideology. It can be instructive to study a text from a quite different time or place, to identify assumptions taken to be universal in that text but that you, the reader, do not share. Some texts in defense of slavery written by early 19th-century American slaveholders might be a good place to detect assumptions precisely because those assumptions are not shared today. Today, texts having to do with the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, and transgender people may be fruitfully studied for their assumptions precisely because not all audiences in the United States share the same assumptions and ideologies concerning those issues.

Another way to get at the question of assumptions is to think about what the text takes to be "natural" or "commonsense." These are terms for assumptions. Most text, to pursue our example of the last paragraph, assumes that if one is speaking of a "family," one is speaking of a mother, a father, and their biological offspring. There is thus a widespread ideology in American society, although surely not one universally shared, that families are naturally and commonsensically based on heterosexual couples. This assumption may continue to be shared even if the number of families with very different configurations is changing rapidly.

How Does the Audience Know What the Text Claims?

The assumptions of ideology made by a text are different from the evidence the text offers for its claims. In probing this question, we want to know how the reader knows what the text claims. What does a text do to lead the reader to that knowledge?

Our earlier question about assumptions may point us toward this question of evidence because assumptions form the *standards of proof* that evidence must meet. A speaker and an audience may share the assumption that whatever is found in a particular religious text must be true. The speaker and audience thus share a religious ideology. If that is the standard of proof for that ideology, that points toward the kind of evidence the text will present to lead the audience to

knowledge of the text's claims. If being found in the Koran is the standard of proof for one ideology, then actual quotations from the Koran can function as evidence, leading the audience to knowledge.

In addition to using the assumptions of an audience, a text usually offers evidence, or *proof*, for what it asks the audience to do or think. What counts as evidence varies widely and can be quite revealing of the ideological implications of a text. Think of the ideological differences between a text that offers biblical passages as evidence and a text that quotes recent scientific studies as evidence—this is not only a matter of proof but a matter of urging one ideology or another on an audience. The mere citing of either biblical or scientific evidence invokes the whole network of beliefs that is an ideology.

As a close reader, you might look at “true crime” shows on television, especially those that send a camera to follow actual police around for a night. Ask yourself what assumptions are made by the texts of these shows, what ideology and standards of proof they assume are shared by the producers of the show and the audience. And then, ask yourself what kind of evidence the shows produce to suggest certain ideas to the audience. For instance, is the audience generally urged to think that those detained or arrested are guilty of crimes? Does the text assume a shared ideology in which the police are generally correct and justified in their actions? Think about the evidence given in the shows that lead the audience to mutter, “Guilty, guilty, guilty!” Why does that evidence “work” in the shows? How does it meet certain standards of evidence? My point here is not to criticize the shows or the police but rather to ask you to examine the ideology implied and perpetuated by these shows.

Who Is Empowered or Disempowered?

Finally, we should ask who is empowered or disempowered by a text. An ideological close reading assumes that power is always at work to some extent in a text, and understanding how the text connects to structures and struggles over power helps to reveal its ideological import. Even an advertisement for soup empowers the people selling soup; depending on the text, it may empower homemakers by promising more free time, or it may disempower homemakers by constraining their thoughts about how to live life alone within the home. The network of ideas that is an ideology usually creates the same empowerments and disempowerments across the web of connected ideas.

Some kinds of empowerment relate to presence or absence: what ideas, what sorts of people, what ways of life or habits of thought, are shown and are not shown. Only in the last few decades have gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people begun to appear on television shows and in movies. Only in the last few decades have interracial couples appeared in texts of popular culture. In an even more recent time frame, Asians have become more widely visible. Visibility is empowerment, invisibility is disempowerment, and readers should ask of texts, Who is “there,” and who is “absent”? The same question may be asked about ideas and systems of thought, of course.

Another way to get at empowerment is to ask what sort of hierarchies are implied by the text: who it says ought to “be in charge” and who not. Over the last several decades, children and young people appear to be more empowered in texts of popular culture. In the 1950s, children on television or in film would ask their parents for permission to do any little thing. Nowadays, you don’t need to look for long at shows on children’s cable television channels to find almost an absence of parents and parental authority. This certainly bespeaks a shift in empowerment and disempowerment.

PUTTING OUR QUESTIONS TOGETHER: A BRIEF EXAMPLE

Let us look at a brief example of an ordinary text found in everyday experience and how the ideology and arguments in the text might be opened up through a close reading based on those questions. I was watching a television show the other day on hauntings—cable television seems to be full of such programs—and someone on the show whose home was allegedly haunted offered an argument for the reality of ghosts. It went something like this:

Everybody is made of energy, and you can’t destroy energy. So when someone dies, their energy continues on, and that’s what a ghost is. We are seeing, hearing, and feeling someone’s energy after their death.

Our four questions need not be applied to this sort of close reading in the order listed. Often, one question will lead us into the text more fruitfully than others, and sometimes, several questions pop up at once. Let’s begin with the “evidence” question: How does the audience know what the text claims? The speaker offered no more information than what you see above. Energy is a concept in physics, for which there have been centuries of scientific study, yet none of that evidence is given in the statement. The speaker seems to assume that the audience—to bring in another of our questions—believes that the human being or essence is fundamentally energy. How is that assumption bolstered? How do we know what the speaker says? For one thing, it sounds “sort of” true that energy cannot be destroyed. Didn’t we all hear someplace that if you shine a flashlight into the sky, the light keeps going forever (although it dissipates more with every mile it travels)? The speaker has, in other words, alluded to what the audience may vaguely recall as a possibly correct statement about physics, so as to encourage the reader to *assume* that the statement “we are all energy” is *factually* correct. It is close enough to what we may have read in a physics textbook to make the uncritical listener accept it as fact. Later, I refer to this kind of “knowledge” as “folk science.”

Clearly, what the audience is to think or do (another of our questions) is to believe in the reality of ghostly hauntings, in the existence of human life and

consciousness after death, and in the claim that it is just such a ghost that is creating the disturbances in the speaker's home. Note that even if it were true that energy continues, the speaker must ask the audience to assume that the energy that was part of one human being continues in some organized form after death such that one could see a figure floating through a room and exclaim, "Oh my! It's Larry!" People in her house thought they were seeing recognizable human forms, after all, not mere blobs or light. Not only are we asked to think that "energy" that is recognizable as Larry or any other deceased person continues to be organized (rather than, like our flashlight beam, dispersing into entropic chaos), we are also asked to assume that this sort of ghost would retain some level of intentionality: in other words, that the energy retains the intention to float through the room, appearing to the room's occupants.

The argument is therefore asking readers to think that we, after death, may likewise continue in an organized and intentional form. This is not surprising, nor is it different from claims made by many religions. What is interesting ideologically about this claim is that it is *not* made on the basis of spiritual or religious evidence. What for centuries and in many contexts would be a religious argument (e.g., "the soul continues after death") is made here as a scientific argument. This leads us to the question we have not yet considered: that of empowerment. It's clear that statements like this would contribute to empowering institutions of science more than institutions of religion. It does not depend on the priests, rabbis, or enlightened ones for validation. But does it shift validation to scientists? No, because the speaker did not reference specific scientific studies, which might be sponsored by institutions of science, what is really referenced is ordinary people's "everyday" sense of science. We all have what we might call a "folk science" in our heads: No two snowflakes are alike, hot water freezes into ice cubes faster than cold water does, and so forth. The empowerment in the speaker's statement then has nothing to do directly with ghosts but instead has to do with our settled ideas of *folk* scientific "truth" (which may be true but may also be crackpot).

That empowerment of ordinary people's ideas of everyday science may give us pause in the end. People may have all sorts of ideas they think are scientifically grounded because they read them in tabloid newspapers or heard them in comedy-show jokes or got them from family lore. These ideas can feed into ideologies, some of which may be questionable or downright harmful. All sorts of racist or sexist ideologies are based on pseudoscientific notions of mental ability and character flaws grounded in exactly that sort of folk science. Your cranky uncle may solemnly repeat that the brain sizes of certain races are smaller or that the physical capabilities of women are inferior, based on that kind of folk science.

The speaker's statement seems harmless enough. Let her believe in ghosts if she likes, and let her urge that belief on others. But to couch her belief in the terms that she does furthers an ideology that can have unpleasant consequences in other matters beyond the supernatural. It can coach an attitude toward what counts as scientific data that ends up supporting such unsavory ideologies as racism, sexism, and the like. We need to be careful when such ideologies are supported.

THREE EXAMPLES FOR CLOSE READING

Now we turn to “thicker” texts that offer meatier chances to analyze arguments and the ideologies they support. As our chief objects of study in this chapter, I offer three examples for the close reading of argument and ideology, Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. They make an interesting range of texts. The first may seem like an unusual choice for a reader in the 21st century: the British poet Rudyard Kipling’s poem “Tommy” from 1892. The Tommy in the poem is a British soldier, and in the poem, Kipling, speaking through the accent and vernacular language of the soldier, makes an argument about how a society treats its ordinary soldiers. When you read it, you may be surprised by some parallels with our situation today, in which many have complained that the ordinary man or woman in uniform is called upon to make great sacrifice without sufficient support or respect from his or her country. Figure 4.2 is an article, “Only Connect,” from the *New York Times Magazine*. It argues that wealthy tourists are seeking out opportunities to “connect” with ordinary people around the globe during vacation trips. These tourists sign up for “reality tours,” and the author seems to be saying that such adventures allow the tourist to make an “authentic” connection. Finally, Figure 4.3 is an article from a website opposed to same-sex marriages: <http://www.nogaymarriage.com/tenarguments.asp>. The article is a summary of a book by noted evangelist Dr. James Dobson. It gives 10 reasons to oppose same-sex marriage and is an excellent extended example of a complex argument with great ideological impact. Let us now turn to our first in-depth example, the poem “Tommy.”

“Tommy”

FIGURE 4.1

Tommy

Rudyard Kipling

I went into a public-house to get a pint o’ beer,
 The publican ’e up an’ sez, “We serve no red-coats here.”
 The girls be’ind the bar they laughed an’ giggled fit to die,
 I outs into the street again an’ to myself sez I:
 O it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ “Tommy, go away”;
 But it’s “Thank you, Mister Atkins”, when the band begins to play,

The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
 O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins", when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
 They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
 They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
 But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!

For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait outside";
 But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide,
 The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
 O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
 Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
 An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
 Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.

Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"
 But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll,
 The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
 O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
 But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
 An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,
 Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;

While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, fall be'ind",
 But it's "Please to walk in front, sir", when there's trouble in
 the wind,
 There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
 O it's "Please to walk in front, sir", when there's trouble in the wind.

(Continued)

FIGURE 4.1 ■ (Continued)

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
 We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
 Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
 The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
 For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
 But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
 An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
 An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool—you bet that Tommy sees!

In terms of argument, the poem "Tommy" is what is sometimes called an enthymeme. The enthymeme was first theorized in ancient Greece. It is the sort of everyday argument we use to help us make decisions in matters where we cannot be certain. It is sometimes thought of as an "incomplete" argument because the audience is expected to supply key parts of the argument. If I tell you, "Buy tomatoes at the next store; they are cheaper there," that is an enthymeme because, although I offer a claim (buy tomatoes at the next store) and a reason (they are cheaper there), I count on you, my audience, to fill in the parts of the argument that would say that cheaper is better, that the next store is near enough to make it easy to go there, and so forth. Because the audience must fill in parts of the argument, enthymemes rely on widely held social knowledge.

"Tommy" is an enthymeme because it depends on social knowledge. As a poem, we would not expect it to quote the latest statistics or a recent newspaper story to make a case that those in uniform are unfairly treated. "Tommy" does not cite this morning's CNN lead story. Instead, it makes use of what "everybody knows." The episodes of humiliation for soldiers and sailors that it reports will make sense to the audience precisely because it has witnessed those episodes—perhaps, to its shame, the audience has engaged in such behavior. The question of how the audience knows the truth of the stories told in the poem is then answered with the audience's own experience.

The poem consists of little vignettes, moments of drama strung together, each one with a moral attached. The audience had likely seen or heard of episodes such as the one in the first stanza, in which soldiers are denied service and laughed at in uniform. Readers of the poem may have witnessed an event such as the one in the second stanza, where the soldier is turned away from a theater, but drunken civilians are welcomed in. There is special room for him on the troop train going to war but not in a theater. Note that every single stanza and each refrain contain phrases in quotation marks. This drives the point home to the reader by

referencing something once actually said and said again now. So the audience is asked to attest to the truth of these “quotations” and stories, as having heard them or something like them in the audience’s own experience.

One reason enthymemes work powerfully as argument is that they involve the audience, which brings to the argument what it needs for completion. The audience helps the arguer along just by filling in parts. *Assumptions* behind the argument are a major part of what the audience must bring to “Tommy.” The assumptions most likely to be referenced by these arguments concern how class worked in the British social system of the 19th century. But the poem works for today’s audiences to the extent that we share some of those assumptions of class.

The most important assumption based on class is that the soldiers in the poem are of lower socioeconomic class. England in the 19th century was highly stratified by class, and everybody was aware of how class was marked. To read the poem as Kipling intended in the 19th century required the audience to apply assumptions it held about markers of class. It is surprising how much today’s reader of the poem will bring the same assumptions to the reading. And in fact, our military today recruits a disproportionately large percentage of its force from those with less money and fewer economic opportunities.

Beer is historically seen as a drink for the common person, and that was certainly the case when “Tommy” was written. Tommy goes into a bar for beer. He is turned away from the main part of the theater but is sent to the balcony (or gallery) or to music halls, which would have been recognized as sites of entertainment for the lower classes. Tommy’s banishment to the gallery, or balcony, brings to mind the scandalous banishment of African Americans to the balconies of movie theaters during decades of Jim Crow laws and segregation. Thus, the poem may have ideological impact beyond military examples.

Tommy’s language would have been widely read as lower class. Kipling ensured this assumption by introducing errors in spelling that are also meant to signal lower-class or cockney pronunciation. The *b* is dropped in “public-ouse” as well as in “e” in the next line and “be’ind” two lines after that and beyond. It’s “sez” and not *says*. In the third stanza and elsewhere, *g* is dropped in “makin,” “hustlin,” and “goin.”

Other markers of class are the cheapness of the uniforms, the poor quality of food (“cook-room slops”), and the nearly unlivable conditions of the “barricks,” which evidently were in want of heat or “fire.” Tommy and his fellow soldiers are more likely to be from the lower classes if adults like them are in want of “schools,” which the poem says are promised but not delivered. These examples are offered as evidence in support of the argument, but they also invoke the assumptions the reader would need to make to recognize that Tommy is of a lower economic class. This poem still resonates with many today who may complain that wars take advantage of men and women from lower economic classes, some of whom may enlist because of poor job prospects elsewhere. Even for those who enlist out of patriotism and pride of country today, complaints of poor supplies, equipment, and housing sound like many headlines from our country’s military conflicts

around the world. Soldiers are of a lower economic class once they enlist, even if they were not before, and audiences know how to read the class status from the examples given.

An interesting assumption concerning morality and class is invoked. A common assumption in 19th-century England was that the lower classes were less moral and less ethical. Note the couplet,

*An' if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;*

This argument invokes the reader's assumption that the lower classes are not "saints" yet gives a reason for it: the living conditions ("single men in barricks") of the lower classes. The assumption is invoked to give a reason why it may be true but is not a failing of the lower classes.

"Tommy" seems to be an attempt to empower the common soldier, then, at least through calling his or her plight to public attention. The poem is in a position to urge a change in public attitudes about men and women in uniform and to encourage soldiers by giving voice to some of their grievances. It is a cry of shame upon those who would have soldiers "walk in front" in times of danger but step to the rear in times of peace. As a poem, it will be read across time and space. What it asks the reader to think or do is therefore something that the reader must bring to the poem in addition to evidence and assumptions. This is an enthymeme even in what it asks of the reader; the poem's point or bottom line must be filled in by the audience.

A reading of action, attitude, and empowerment would not be complete without considering this reservation: In empowering the lower socio-economic classes, the poem also replicates and reinscribes conditions used by the powerful to keep the lower classes in check. The poem does *not* show us that Tommy violates assumptions about the lower classes as less educated and articulate, as sometimes immoral or unruly, and as sometimes materially wretched. It lays the blame for these conditions at the door of the powerful, and it is a powerful argument for humanity and acceptance of the lower classes, but it reinforces rather than breaks any stereotypes. It may have to do so if it works by invoking some stereotypes that are in the audience's minds as assumptions and evidence. This difficult balance between marking any group that is disadvantaged—because of sex, sexuality, race, age, and so forth—and challenging the markers themselves is often found in arguments that attempt to change conditions of power.

"Only Connect"

The article "Only Connect," by Anna Louie Sussman, appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*. This magazine, like its host newspaper, is in business to make money. It makes money as the national "newspaper of record," as the most

FIGURE 4.2

THE REMIX

Only Connect

WHY TODAY'S TRAVELERS ARE PEOPLE WHO NEED PEOPLE.

Many affluent travelers used to consider a private villa and an after-hours museum tour the ultimate vacation—a way to seal oneself off from the world in a bubble of luxury. But as a cult of authenticity has taken hold among global nomads, the impulse to engage has replaced the desire to escape. And they want more than just superficial encounters with “the natives”; they want their culture unfiltered. What the locavore movement did for food—giving the heirloom tomato from down the road more cachet than an ounce of beluga—this new humanism has done for travel.

“People are looking to enrich themselves and, especially with families, to create memories,” says Joel A. Zack, the president of Heritage Tours, which specializes in Morocco, Turkey and several countries in Africa. “They’re willing to sacrifice, say, the plunge pool and go to a place like Swaziland.” There, Zack encourages local guides to take guests back to their villages. “We want them to say, ‘Hey, meet my great-aunt, she’s 92. Meet my 24 cousins—this one, she’s studying to be a doctor.’ And maybe our guest is a doctor, too, and connects with her.”

Malia Everette, who creates customized tours for Global Exchange, a 20-year-old nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, says she has noticed a marked increase among what she calls her “five-star customers” for the company’s “reality tours,” which focus on educational exchanges with people working in the fields of women’s rights, public health and environmental issues.

Close encounters of the philanthropic kind are increasingly popular among the moneyed set—Ritz-Carlton hotels recently launched Give Back Getaways, a program in which guests spend a half day volunteering with a local organization—and, indeed, nearly every traditional mode of luxury travel is feeling the human touch. High-end operators now tout excursions like dinner with a maharajah, lunch with an artist in his studio or trips through the Argentinean pampa with a band of guitar-strumming gauchos. Home stays have caught on, too, especially



Direct access A sultan’s tent in Egypt, part of a trip arranged by Abercrombie & Kent, one of several travel companies providing local connections.

when that means bunking with the heirs of the stately Clonalis House, in County Roscommon, Ireland, or the well-connected owners of Ballyvolane, a manor in County Cork.

“The most luxurious way to travel is to find someone who knows the land well,” says the high-end travel consultant Lisa Lindblad. “It’s a matter of getting to know them.” For instance, she sets clients up with an old friend she met in Kenya—a “great shopper”—who will guide them through Nairobi’s markets. According to Lindblad, it’s a sense of impending loss that drives this urge to engage with the world. “People are sensing that stuff is going,” she says. “Not just places but people.” ANNA LOUIE SUSSMAN



(1) At Ballyvolane House, a “home stay” estate in Ireland. (2) Harvest time with a fair-trade coffee farmer in Nicaragua. (3) Western travelers meeting with a grand ayatollah in Iran, arranged by Global Exchange.



respected daily newspaper in the nation’s largest city. New York is also one of the wealthiest cities in the country and thus very much into making money itself. The articles, the editorials, the advertisements all bespeak a certain level of moneyed sophistication. Of course, ordinary people read the *Times*, but stylistically, it presents itself as very uptown. It speaks to people who have financial means,

and much of its content, whether on style, sports, entertainment, or travel, advises these folks on how to spend their money.

“Only Connect,” too, indirectly asks its audience to spend money, on the sort of tour described in the article. The subtitle describes those who take the tour as “people who need people.” In fact, the tourists described are also people who need tax shelters and certified public accountants. In many ways, this article is the flip side of “Tommy.” It addresses those who would be in a position to have “dinner with a maharajah” and titillates the rest of us by showing us how that richer group lives. In sum, “Only Connect” purveys an ideology of shopping, and the product, in this case, is the experience of different human beings.

One need not get far beyond the “people who need people” subtitle to see that those who are taking tours like this one “need people” in the sense that one might “need” a new BMW: One goes out and buys one. It is clear in the first place that the article assumes these tourists are well to do. How do we know this? What evidence is offered?

The article is clear: The first sentence references “affluent travelers,” the sort who can afford “a private villa and an after-hours museum tour.” These are people used to “a bubble of luxury.” They are used to beluga caviar. A representative occupation mentioned for these tourists is that of doctor. Notice also the fascinating statement that “people are looking to enrich themselves” through these tours. Of course, one must be rich to begin with to afford such a thing, but the sort of experience with local people that is offered is described as a way to enrich oneself. Getting richer is the gold standard, so to speak, by which these tours are measured—they are a good investment, just like one’s mutual funds.

A significant key to the ideology of the article is a major assumption that is never questioned here: that human connection can be bought. First, let us note the poignancy of the statement that “a cult of authenticity has taken hold among global nomads.” I don’t think they worry so about having authentic experiences on the South Side of Chicago, the South Bronx, or other economically disadvantaged districts. This “moneyed set” has, in the argument of the article, an unmet need for authentic human connection. We might pause and consider ways in which that “bubble of luxury” leads to a yearning for authenticity, or “culture unfiltered,” as the article puts it—how wealth can isolate one and create a sense of artificiality in one’s life. This yearning is such that “they’re willing to sacrifice, say, the plunge pool and go to a place like Swaziland.” Swaziland is evidently authentic, one of several sites of these “reality tours.”

But this authenticity can be purchased specifically through these tours—human connection is for sale. One would think the wealthy could simply go visit their gardeners or stroll down the streets of the rough parts of their own towns, but that kind of real experience would not be commodified. These tours specifically offer authenticity for sale. One purchases the human connection, and an important dimension of this authenticity is precisely this assumption that such connection *can* be bought and sold.

It is clear that it is human connection—or in some sense, the humans themselves—that is for sale. Of the tour company president we learn,

Zack encourages local guides to take guests back to their villages. “We want them to say, ‘Hey, meet my great-aunt, she’s 92. Meet my 24 cousins.’”

This is explicitly described as “luxury travel” that gives one “the human touch.” Among the real human experiences you might have are “trips through the Argentinean pampa with a band of guitar-strumming gauchos.” That it is human connection for sale in hopes of authenticity is clear. This travel trend is called “the new humanism.”

A language of commodification, of buying and selling, is very much apparent in the article. A standard sales pitch, for instance, is that the product on sale is rare or about to run out: “Three days only! Once they are sold, they are gone! Never again at this price!” And that is precisely what we find in this statement: “People are sensing that stuff is going,” she says. “Not just places but people.” Note the merging of places and people alike into “stuff,” or commodities: Go to Swaziland now; you won’t be able to buy the “stuff” of human connection like this much longer.

The purchase of authenticity and human contact goes only so far. One may go to Swaziland, one may meet a “local” grandmother, but to actually spend the night—to share food and drink, to share intimate space—the article promises the bubble of luxury again. Note that the examples of “home stays” are not in Swaziland but with “the heirs of the stately Clonalis House in Country Roscommon, Ireland, or the well-connected owners of Ballyvolane, a manor in County Cork.” The tourist may meet the 24 cousins in Swaziland but then beat it back to the lodge before sunset.

What the article wants the reader to do is, of course, to take the tour. It’s not explicitly an advertisement, but it works like one and was surely written with the support and encouragement of the tour companies. More significantly, the article perpetuates an ideology of privileged wealth that purchases anything it wants, including human connection. Luxury will not be denied and keeps sneaking through. You might make an “educational” connection with poor villagers, but when it comes time to “bunk down” for the night, it’s not the straw in a hut but the 500-thread-count sheets at the manor that are substituted at the last minute for authenticity.

How ironic the title, then: “Only Connect.” That is what we do when we purchase a commodity: We are not looking for a lifelong personal connection with that new rug; we only want to connect with it, to buy it, and to have it around. The local people, many of them likely poor, are not permanently befriended. No real commitment is asked of the wealthy tourist. The tourist tries to “only connect,” and then it’s jetting back off to the penthouse suite to tell friends about it over that beluga caviar. As it perpetuates an ideology of the good life through consumption, the tours lead the wealthy into the same trap of inauthenticity from

which they were trying to escape. At some level, even those living in a “bubble of luxury” must know that stroking human commodities in this way cannot lead to authentic connection. No commodification can, but if that is the basis for one’s ideology, one’s lifestyle, one will have a yearning that can never be filled. Solutions are never bought but really only rented temporarily—by taking the tours.

“Gay Marriage: Why Would It Affect Me? Ten Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage”

FIGURE 4.3

Gay Marriage: Why Would It Affect Me?

Ten Arguments Against Same Sex Marriage

(This is a synopsis of the new book by Dr. James Dobson, *Marriage Under Fire*.)

Argument #1

The implications for children in a world of decaying families are profound. A recent article in the *Weekly Standard* described how the advent of legally sanctioned gay unions in Scandinavian countries has already destroyed the institution of marriage, where half of today’s children are born out of wedlock.

It is predicted now, based on demographic trends in this country, that more than half of the babies born in the 1990s will spend at least part of their childhood in single-parent homes.

Social scientists have been surprisingly consistent in warning against this fractured family. If it continues, almost every child will have several “moms” and “dads,” perhaps six or eight “grandparents,” and dozens of half-siblings. It will be a world where little boys and girls are shuffled from pillar to post in an ever-changing pattern of living arrangements—where huge numbers of them will be raised in foster-care homes or living on the street (as millions do in other countries all over the world today). Imagine an environment where nothing is stable and where people think primarily about themselves and their own self-preservation.

The apostle Paul described a similar society in Romans 1, which addressed the epidemic of homosexuality that was rampant in the ancient world and especially in Rome at that time. He wrote, “They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless” (v. 29–31, NIV).

It appears likely now that the demise of families will accelerate this type of decline dramatically, resulting in a chaotic culture that will be devastating to children.

Argument #2

The introduction of legalized gay marriages will lead inexorably to polygamy and other alternatives to one-man, one-woman unions.

In Utah, polygamist Tom Green, who claims five wives, is citing *Lawrence v. Texas* as the legal authority for his appeal. This past January, a Salt Lake City civil rights attorney filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of another couple wanting to engage in legal polygamy. Their justification? *Lawrence v. Texas*.

The ACLU of Utah has actually suggested that the state will “have to step up to prove that a polygamous relationship is detrimental to society” — as opposed to the polygamists having to prove that plural marriage is not harmful to the culture. Do you see how the game is played? Despite 5,000 years of history, the burden now rests on you and me to prove that polygamy is unhealthy. The ACLU went on to say that the nuclear family “may not be necessarily the best model.” Indeed, Justice Antonin Scalia warned of this likelihood in his statement for the minority in the *Lawrence* case. It took less than six months for his prediction to become reality.

Why will gay marriage set the table for polygamy? Because there is no place to stop once that Rubicon has been crossed. Historically, the definition of marriage has rested on a bedrock of tradition, legal precedent, theology and the overwhelming support of the people.

After the introduction of marriage between homosexuals, however, it will be supported by nothing more substantial than the opinion of a single judge or by a black-robed panel of justices. After they have done their wretched work, the family will consist of little more than someone’s interpretation of “rights.”

Given that unstable legal climate, it is certain that some self-possessed judge, somewhere, will soon rule that three men and one woman can marry. Or five and two, or four and four. Who will be able to deny them that right? The guarantee is implied, we will be told, by the Constitution. Those who disagree will continue to be seen as hate-mongers and bigots. (Indeed, those charges are already being leveled against those of us who espouse biblical values!) How about group marriage, or marriage between relatives, or marriage between adults and children? How about marriage between a man and his donkey? Anything allegedly linked to “civil rights” will be doable. The legal underpinnings for marriage will have been destroyed.

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Argument #3

An even greater objective of the homosexual movement is to end the state's compelling interest in marital relationships altogether. After marriages have been redefined, divorces will be obtained instantly, will not involve a court, and will take on the status of a driver's license or a hunting permit. With the family out of the way, all rights and privileges of marriage will accrue to gay and lesbian partners without the legal entanglements and commitments heretofore associated with it.

Argument #4

With the legalization of homosexual marriage, every public school in the nation will be required to teach that this perversion is the moral equivalent of traditional marriage between a man and a woman. Textbooks, even in conservative states, will have to depict man/man and woman/woman relationships, and stories written for children as young as elementary school, or even kindergarten, will have to give equal space to homosexuals.

Argument #5

From that point forward, courts will not be able to favor a traditional family involving one man and one woman over a homosexual couple in matters of adoption. Children will be placed in homes with parents representing only one sex on an equal basis with those having a mom and a dad. The prospect of fatherless and motherless children will not be considered in the evaluation of eligibility. It will be the law.

Argument #6

Foster-care parents will be required to undergo "sensitivity training" to rid themselves of bias in favor of traditional marriage, and will have to affirm homosexuality in children and teens.

Argument #7

How about the impact on Social Security if there are millions of new dependents that will be entitled to survivor benefits? It will amount to billions of dollars on an already overburdened system. And how about the cost to American businesses? Unproductive costs mean fewer jobs for those who need them. Are state and municipal governments to be required to raise taxes substantially to provide health insurance and other benefits to millions of new "spouses and other dependents"?

Argument #8

Marriage among homosexuals will spread throughout the world, just as pornography did after the Nixon Commission declared obscene material “beneficial” to mankind. Almost instantly, the English-speaking countries liberalized their laws against smut. America continues to be the fountainhead of filth and immorality, and its influence is global.

The point is that numerous leaders in other nations are watching to see how we will handle the issue of homosexuality and marriage. Only two countries in the world have authorized gay marriage to date—the Netherlands and Belgium. Canada is leaning in that direction, as are numerous European countries. Dr. Darrell Reid, president of Focus on the Family Canada, told me two weeks ago that his country is carefully monitoring the United States to see where it is going. If we take this step off a cliff, the family on every continent will splinter at an accelerated rate. Conversely, our U.S. Supreme Court has made it clear that it looks to European and Canadian law in the interpretation of our Constitution. What an outrage! That should have been grounds for impeachment, but the Congress, as usual, remained passive and silent.

Argument #9

Perhaps most important, the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be severely curtailed. The family has been God’s primary vehicle for evangelism since the beginning.

Its most important assignment has been the propagation of the human race and the handing down of the faith to our children. Malachi 2:15 reads, referring to husbands and wives, “Has not the Lord made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth” (NIV).

That responsibility to teach the next generation will never recover from the loss of committed, God-fearing families. The younger generation and those yet to come will be deprived of the Good News, as has already occurred in France, Germany and other European countries. Instead of providing for a father and mother, the advent of homosexual marriage will create millions of motherless children and fatherless kids. This is morally wrong, and is condemned in Scripture. Are we now going to join the Netherlands and Belgium to become the third country in the history of the world to “normalize” and legalize behavior that has been prohibited by God himself? Heaven help us if we do!

(Continued)

(Continued)

Argument #10

The culture war will be over, and I fear, the world may soon become “as it was in the days of Noah” (Matthew 24:37, NIV). This is the climactic moment in the battle to preserve the family, and future generations hang in the balance.

This apocalyptic and pessimistic view of the institution of the family and its future will sound alarmist to many, but I think it will prove accurate unless—unless—God’s people awaken and begin an even greater vigil of prayer for our nation. That’s why Shirley and I are urgently seeking the Lord’s favor and asking Him to hear the petitions of His people and heal our land.

As of this time, however, large segments of the church appear to be unaware of the danger; its leaders are surprisingly silent about our peril (although we are tremendously thankful for the efforts of those who have spoken out on this issue). The lawless abandon occurring recently in California, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Washington and elsewhere should have shocked us out of our lethargy. So far, I’m alarmed to say, the concern and outrage of the American people have not translated into action.

This reticence on behalf of Christians is deeply troubling. Marriage is a sacrament designed by God that serves as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and His Church. Tampering with His plan for the family is immoral and wrong. To violate the Lord’s expressed will for humankind, especially in regard to behavior that He has prohibited, is to court disaster.

Source: <http://www.nogaymarriage.com/tenarguments.asp>

The article “Gay Marriage: Why Would It Affect Me?” explicitly identifies itself as argument, unlike our other examples, so it invites ideological close reading. When we ask what a text wants its reader to think or do, we come most directly to the issue of ideology. But the answer to that question is not yet quite what we mean by ideology, for remember that an ideology is a network of beliefs and attitudes. The easy answer to the question of what “Gay Marriage” wants the audience to do is that it wants to foster opposition to same-sex marriage. But that idea is part of a network of ideas, an ideology, that may be detected from a close reading of this online article.

The ideology defended here is more complicated than simple opposition to same-sex marriage. That ideology is fundamentally a vision of the key idea of *family* and what it means to live in close, intimate, human relationships. The article presents a network of ideas in which that idea of family predominates, and the idea of opposition to same-sex marriage is actually a supporting or component part of the ideology. Argument #1 leads off, after all, with a statement about “the implications for children in a world of decaying families.”

Glimpses of the centrality of family show us that opposition to same-sex marriage is seen as a contributor to the idea of family rather than as a central idea in its own right. In Argument #2, the fifth paragraph closes with this result of a process of legalizing same-sex marriage: “After they [politicians and judges] have done their wretched work, the family will consist of little more than someone’s interpretation of ‘rights.’” This alleged destruction or immaterialization of family is the result of same-sex marriage and is offered as the reason to oppose it. The following paragraph is most revealing of this ideological kingpin, for it surveys all manner of domestic arrangements in horror (“marriage between a man and his donkey”), claiming that each such arrangement would be what a “family” would become were same-sex marriage legalized. This paragraph helps us to understand what is meant by the key ideological term *family*: It is *structure* above all.

The article argues repeatedly for a certain structure or configuration. The second paragraph of Argument #1 bemoans the statistic that “more than half of the babies born in the 1990s will spend at least part of their childhood in single-parent homes.” The next paragraph foresees in horror a situation where “almost every child will have several ‘moms’ and ‘dads,’ perhaps six or eight ‘grandparents,’ and dozens of half-siblings.” It is useful to ask about the *assumptions* the text invites the audience to make at this point. I think one central assumption is that these varying structures are to be seen in contrast to what is assumed to be the preferred arrangement: one male parent and one female parent, married, with their own biological children and only their own biological children, all living together in the same place. Notice that throughout the article, a range of living arrangements is viewed in dismay just because they all differ from that “default” structure. There is never any discussion about whether the default structure—the nuclear family, as it is sometimes called—is loving, economically nurturing, or socially supportive. The reader is to assume either that all nuclear families are nurturing and supportive or—and the article leans in this direction, I believe—that structure truly matters more than love, economics, or support.

Further evidence abounds of the nuclear family as the assumed default. Argument #5 foresees a future in which “a traditional family involving one man and one woman,” a family “having a mom and a dad” will tragically not be valued more than “parents representing only one sex” or even “fatherless and motherless children” in the care of someone. The third paragraph of Argument #9 likewise envisions with horror “motherless children and fatherless kids” as the likely structural alternative to “a father and a mother.” Why motherlessness and fatherlessness follow from lack of *either* a mother and a father is unclear; what is clear is that in the absence of the latter, the traditional family structure, all alternatives are horrible due to their structural flaws.

It is interesting that in terms of the evidence offered or reasons given why the reader should believe the article, religious evidence seems not to dominate. We are told that the Bible opposes nontraditional structures, but much of the evidence for that claim is secular. Only twice is the favored nuclear family structure explicitly linked to religious purposes, the first being found in Argument #9. In the first

paragraph, we are told, “The family has been God’s primary vehicle for evangelism since the beginning.” The argument continues in the next paragraph: “Its most important assignment has been the propagation of the human race and the handing down of the faith to our children.” The nuclear family structure is thus seen as the instrument, perhaps the chief instrument, of the spread of religious faith. On this argument, without that structure, faith would disappear. The creation of new generations and the instilling of faith in those generations are both made to depend on the family. And in Argument #10, the third paragraph argues that “marriage is a sacrament designed by God that serves as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and His Church.” Again, there is no question raised as to whether the marriage is happy, contentious, bitter, long lasting, and so forth. No, the binary structure of man:woman::Christ:church is what matters most.

The ideological centrality of family structure is further enforced by a theme running throughout “Gay Marriage,” and that is that change is bad, and stability is good. That assumption is entirely consistent with an ideology of structure: If your house begins to shift, you are in trouble. Expressions equating change with disaster abound. Argument #1 fears “a world where little boys and girls are shuffled from pillar to post in an ever-changing pattern of living arrangements,” a world “where nothing is stable.” Argument #2 argues that “legalized gay marriages will lead inexorably to polygamy,” and note the irresistible change embodied in that word *inexorably*. The sixth paragraph complains of legal climates that are “unstable.”

Quick change is the worst. Argument #2 argues that “it took less than six months” for Justice Scalia’s dire prediction of change based on same-sex legal precedents to occur. Once such change begins, once same-sex marriage is approved, the third paragraph of Argument #2 tells us that “there is no place to stop” and contrasts that unstoppable change with the nuclear family’s stability on “a bedrock of tradition, legal precedent, theology, and the overwhelming support of the people.” Argument #3 argues that “after marriages have been redefined, divorces will be obtained instantly,” and note the suddenness of such action. An image of change and movement underlies Argument #8’s fear that “marriage among homosexuals will spread throughout the world.” Later, that argument begs the United States to consider “where it is going,” predicting that its destination is precisely to “take this step off a cliff,” and note the metaphor of movement and then sudden change implied.

It is interesting that one of the calls to think or do something made by the article is directed at Christians and is found in Argument #10, second paragraph, a call to “awaken”—but what the faithful are to do when they awaken is not to move or shift but to engage in “an even greater vigil of prayer,” which is a physically stable and settled position for most people. That is the sort of “action” called for in the third paragraph, not one of moving about but one of greater stillness in prayer against same-sex marriage.

An interesting shift occurs across the trajectory of the whole article when we consider the question of evidence, or what reasons the audience is given to believe what the argument asks them to believe. Early in the article, scripture or scientific studies in the past or present are cited. Specific references are sometimes not

given, but what one might call “hard” evidence in support of the argument is provided. This creates a sense that the argument is well documented. As the article proceeds, however, that sort of evidence gives way to speculation about the future. The audience is seduced into a position of trusting the support for the argument; then, that trust is exploited by unsupported predictions.

Argument #1 quotes “a recent article in the *Weekly Standard*” describing the state of “gay unions in Scandinavian countries” and resulting births out of wedlock. The second paragraph reports predictions based on “demographic trends” that seem reasonable enough. Paragraph 4 of Argument #1 quotes the Bible, St. Paul’s letter to the Romans; it seems to be accurate and in context, whether one agrees with it or not. Argument #2 continues, in its second paragraph, the trend of hard evidence, citing Supreme Court cases (*Lawrence v. Texas*) and arguments made in a Utah court. In the third paragraph, legal evidence is presented from the ACLU in the Utah case.

Note the turn, then, in the sixth paragraph of Argument #2, from evidence to prediction: “Given that unstable legal climate, it is certain that some self-possessed judge, somewhere, will soon rule that three men and one woman can marry.” The “evidence” has shifted from what was certainly true in the past to allegations of what must certainly be true in the future. This change in stance on the matter of evidence continues throughout the rest of the article. Argument #3 shifts to the future tense: “After marriages have been redefined, divorces will be obtained.” This, of course, cannot be known as evidence because it is about the future. Argument #4 is oriented toward the future, with no recitation of past or current facts: “With the legalization of homosexual marriage, every public school in the nation will be required . . .” Where earlier there was evidence, now there is prediction of the future. Argument #5 is explicitly pointed toward the future: “From that point forward, courts will not be able to favor a traditional family.” Note carefully that these statements are not described in the article as prediction, and they are presented in the same level-headed, factual style with which earlier factual evidence was given. Argument #6 looks into the future: “Foster-care parents will be required . . .” Again, this is a prediction phrased with the calm certainty of evidence. Argument #7 is composed largely of questions that speculate on the future: “How about the impact on Social Security . . .” and so forth. These questions are not phrased in terms of “what if” but as if the negative consequence were a factual certainty. Argument #8 predicts that “marriage among homosexuals will spread” in the future—a prediction but not the sort of evidence with which the article began.

It is easy, on one level, to address the question of who is empowered and who is disempowered by the argument in this article. People not heterosexual and anyone not in a traditional nuclear family configuration are obvious candidates for disempowerment. The single parent abandoned by a spouse or who has lost a wife or husband in death would seem to be disempowered by the article as well, for he or she is committing the sin of nontraditional structure. People living lifestyles that require movement and change would be disempowered also, and one cannot help but wonder what the article would say of military personnel who must often move as their assignments shift. Those in traditional, nuclear families,

those with stability of home life and of faith, would then be empowered. But let us consider how narrow a net that casts. An increasingly globalized economy creates increasing instability. Jobs are lost, and careers are changed, often not entirely by the choice of those affected. The article thus empowers a relatively narrow sample of the population: the Stable, the Nuclear Family, and the Traditional. How many among us match that description? One could say, then, that the article empowers an ideology much more than it empowers actual people. The implication is therefore that the article empowers those who would wield that ideology to obtain power over others. To empower a small priesthood, or community of those who meet a standard of morality, may, in fact, be the ultimate result of this article.

Summary and Looking Ahead

In this chapter, we have studied ways in which arguments may be read closely to enable us to detect some of the ideologies they support. *Argument* was defined as *a process by which speakers and writers, together with audiences, make claims about what people should do and assemble reasons and evidence why people should do those things*. We learned that an argument faces in two directions: It tells us a speaker's ideology, and it also urges that ideology upon an audience. It is both a symptom and a creator of ideology. Arguments add up over time and space to support ideologies, and an ideology is a *systematic network of beliefs, commitments, values, and assumptions that influence how power is maintained, struggled over, and resisted*. We learned that a key attribute of ideology is that it is often *out of awareness*. One cannot fruitfully just ask people what are their networks of belief and where they got them. Ideology is most often revealed through close reading, with the guidance of several theories and methods, such as Marxist theory.

Close reading of argument with a view to uncovering ideology is facilitated by asking four questions:

- What should the audience think or do?
- What must the text ask the audience to assume?
- How does the audience know what the text claims?
- Who is empowered or disempowered?

We learned that one may begin with any of these questions and that a given text will be more productively read by relying on some of these questions over others. Also, the questions merge into each other, so beginning with one leads to another.

In the next chapter, I explain some techniques for seeing *transformations* in close readings. Often, some part of a text will support meanings that go well beyond the literal meaning of what is said or shown. How to see beyond the surface of a text to what lies beneath is the purpose of our next set of techniques.