

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL – INTEGRATION PRACTICE – LESSON 1: AVOIDING COMMON ERRORS

PART A

Integration Lesson

Knowing how and when to integrate a quote is an important skill for anyone who wants to write a successful university-level essay. We will work on integrating quotations from primary texts (like *Monkey Beach*) and secondary sources (essays on *Monkey Beach*). Remember that the goal of writing an essay is to enter and contribute to “a conversation.” Knowing how to navigate between quoting and paraphrasing other writers’ ideas (without letting your own ideas get lost in the process) is crucial to being a strong conversationalist!

Let’s take a look at three common errors aspiring academics make when attempting to include quotations in their writing.

- 1) **Awkward Introduction:** When a writer includes a quotation without adequately introducing where or who the quote is from.

Example:

The incongruities in DeLillo’s novels are the result of the disconnect readers experience between conception and perception. This disconnect can be described as the “subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it” (Schopenhauer 58). Humour represents our failure to adequately categorize our sense experience.

It’s important to make your reader aware of the source of the quote before you include it in your writing. Mentioning the author’s name, the title of their work, and their area of expertise goes a long way in conveying the gravitas of the quote to your reader.

How to fix the awkward introduction:

Perhaps the incongruities in DeLillo’s novels might benefit from being read alongside the writings of Arthur Schopenhauer, a nineteenth-century German philosopher who believed that laughter arose out of the disconnect between conception and perception. In his chapter “On the Theory of the Ludicrous,” Schopenhauer describes incongruity as the “subsumption of an object under a conception which in other respects is different from it” (58). For Schopenhauer, humour represents our failure to adequately categorize our sense experience.

Notice how the inclusion of a quote introduction in the passage above gives the reader much needed context about the nineteenth century origins of the incongruity theory. If our conception of the academic essay as a conversation holds true, then any skilled conversationist should provide details about the person they are introducing to their audience.

- 2) **Last word:** When the writer includes a quotation and doesn't follow-up on how the quotation is significant.

Example:

Mark Osteen sees this same sort of mechanization of language in *End Zone's* preoccupation with the jargon of nuclear warfare. "Just as the weapons themselves would simplify geography," he says, "so the jargon simplifies language by emptying it of referentiality and proceeding towards meaninglessness" (Osteen 38).

Take a look at this excerpt from an essay on *End Zone*, a novel by Don DeLillo that compares nuclear warfare to college football. Notice how, by placing the quote as the "last word," the reader is left to scratch his head over the abstraction of Osteen's point.

How to fix the "last word" problem:

Mark Osteen sees this same sort of mechanization of language in *End Zone's* preoccupation with the jargon of nuclear warfare. "Just as the weapons themselves would simplify geography," he says, "so the jargon simplifies language by emptying it of referentiality and proceeding towards meaninglessness" (38). Osteen is referring to Gary's ruminations on the language of nuclear war.

Explaining the significance of a quotation allows you to tie the quoted person's quote to your own argument, which, after all, is the most important part of your essay. It may be as simple as linking an abstract idea to a concrete example, as in the passage above, or it may involve a more extended analysis that can't be reduced to a single sentence, as in the passage below, where the writer goes on to describe how exactly Osteen's point is relevant to the writer's argument on mechanistic simplification:

Mark Osteen sees this same sort of mechanization of language in *End Zone's* preoccupation with the jargon of nuclear warfare. "Just as the weapons themselves would simplify geography," he says, "so the jargon simplifies language by emptying it of referentiality and proceeding towards meaninglessness" (38). Osteen is referring to Gary's ruminations on the language of nuclear war. Indeed, Gary admits to taking pleasure in words and phrases such as "thermal hurricane, overkill, circular error probability, post-attack environment, stark deterrence, dose-rate contours, kill-ratio"

and “spasm war” (21). At the same time, however, Gary is aware that these words have lost their meaning. To one of his instructors, an Air Force Major teaching a course on “Aspects of Modern War,” Gary stresses that “there’s no way to express thirty million dead. No words. So certain men are recruited to reinvent the language” (85). He goes on to say that the words behind nuclear warfare “don’t explain, they don’t clarify, they don’t express. They’re painkillers. Everything becomes abstract” (85). These words are simplified and therefore mechanistic ways of conveying the enormity of entire civilizations crumbling.

- 3) **Overquoting:** When the writer includes a quotation that is typically too long and would fit better as a paraphrased summary.

Example:

In her book *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva argues that “The abject is related to perversion. The sense of abjection that I experience is anchored in the superego. The abject is perverse because it neither gives up nor assumes a prohibition, a rule, or a law; but turns them aside, misleads, corrupts; uses them, takes advantage of them, the better to deny them” (15). Kristeva’s theory allows us to see how important the superego is in creating the subject’s experience of abjection.

On top of being too long, the quote above that the writer uses is also worded in a way that turns the writer’s essay, which is supposed to be about the writer’s thoughts on the abject, into Kristeva’s thoughts on the abject (notice how, in the quote, Kristeva says “the sense of abjection that I experience...”). When a writer overquotes, as we can see in this case, the argument in the quote(s) take precedence over the writer’s own unique argument.

How to fix the overquoting problem:

In her book *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva suggests that the experience of abjection is rooted in the superego’s disgust towards perversions of law. In fact, she describes the abject as “perverse” because of the various ways in which the abject plays with prohibitions, rules and laws in order to disgust the subject (15). Understanding the make-up of the subject’s superego, then, would be a fruitful exercise in figuring out how exactly the subject’s process of abjection works.

Sometimes, when paraphrasing, it may be useful for you to quote a single word or phrase that is especially memorable or central to the author’s argument. Above all, use paraphrasing as a technique to give your own writerly voice precedence in your essay.

Here’s a one-paragraph claim that demonstrates the proper way to integrate:

Lisa’s parents raise Lisa according to middle-class values. She’s expected to abide by certain etiquettes (since she’s a girl, this would mean being ladylike) and to prepare herself for university, where she would presumably escape the blue-collar life that binds much of her community on the reserve. Because of the white-collar aspirations her parents have for her, many Olympiads School students may find it easy to identify with Lisa. But what about the moments when Lisa deviates from the path her parents build for her, like when she takes up smoking, or drops out of high school and moves to Vancouver? Surely Olympiads School students feel uncomfortable, fearful, or even disgusted by Lisa’s behaviour in these moments. But this doesn’t necessarily mean they identify with her less. Esteemed psychoanalyst Julie Kristeva would argue that Olympiads School students still identify with Lisa in these moments because they spew out or “abject” the thought of themselves taking up smoking or dropping out of school. In her book *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva suggests that when we experience revulsion towards an object, it is not the disgusting qualities of the object per se that give rise to our fear, but how the object “disturbs identity, system,” and “order” (4). Olympiads school students do not identify less with Lisa because she drops out of school. They identify more with Lisa because she targets a part of their unconscious minds that they had all along, a part of their minds that threaten the conscious identities they (and their parents) have built for themselves.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Use the verbs and phrases in the word bank (along with any other verbs and phrases you can think of) to help you integrate quotations in the practice questions:

suggests	demonstrates	implies	alters	modifies
analyzes	creates	critiques	makes fun of	offers
questions	takes advantage of	adds	contests	disregards
builds off of _____’s idea by	explains	admits	sees	argues
complains	posits	advances the idea that _____	unearths	denies
entails	counters	observes	concludes	explains

Secondary Text Practice: Read the following quote from Sigmund Freud’s *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1932) and answer the attached question.

"One might compare the relation of the ego to the id with that between a rider and his horse. The horse provides the locomotor energy, and the rider has the prerogative of

determining the goal and of guiding the movements of his powerful mount towards it. But all too often in the relations between the ego and the id we find a picture of the less ideal situation in which the rider is obliged to guide his horse in the direction in which it itself wants to go."

Offer an example of the ego and the id in action (whether it's a true story or a made-up story) and integrate a quote from the passage above to help you explain your example to the reader (try to think of how you can use Freud's analogy of the rider and the horse to help your reader understand how the ego and the id are working in your example).

Primary Text Practice: Read the following passage from Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach* and answer the attached question.

The day I sketched my last art assignment, I decided to make dinner. Since I hadn't cooked anything in years, I decided to stick to rice, canned fish and seaweed. I bought a cake at Safeway and stuck a Congratulations! candle on top. Jimmy asked if he could bring Karaoke. Still high from surviving the first half of grade eleven, I said enthusiastically, "Sure!"

Mom and Dad exchanged a glance when Jimmy told them Karaoke was coming over. They sat beside each other at the table. We waited for her to show up. Jimmy stood by the window. I picked the skin off the salmon. Dad liked all of the salmon mashed together, but the rest of us could handle only the smaller bones and the dark flesh. As I was mixing in the mayonnaise and fancying the salmon up with pickles and carrots, Jimmy snapped to attention and I knew he'd seen her. He had that flushed, nervous

look. When he opened the door for her, his smile was so bright that it could have powered a solar car.

Karaoke herself was looking pale. She came in quietly, nodded to everyone and sat down, staring at her plate as if she expected to be chopped up and eaten herself. Jimmy made loud small talk about the weather.

“Well, it’s ready!” I said, bringing the rice and fish to the table.

“I don’t believe it,” Dad said, sitting back. “You cooked.”

“Three years of home ec and I think I still burned the rice,” I said.

“Mmm,” Jimmy said. “It’s crunchy too.”

Mom and Karaoke were quiet through the whole meal. I think this was probably the smartest thing Karaoke ever did. Mom warmed up to her enough to ask if Karaoke’s mother was okay. Karaoke nodded. She excused herself from dessert, saying she had to watch her weight.

I lit my candle and blew it out, glad that Mom hadn’t insulted Jimmy’s new girlfriend. If she had, Jimmy would’ve spent the summer not talking to her. Karaoke wandered out onto the back porch for a smoke. I went up and stood beside her. She stared out at the grass. “We used to live here. Our old house was a few feet away from your smokehouse. All this was marsh. In the summer, you could hear the frogs.”

“I remember that,” I said. We smoked. Jimmy came and leaned over Karaoke. They began kissing, so I went back into the kitchen and helped Mom load the dishwasher. She pursed her lips.

“Looks like you’re going to get grandkids after all,” I said.

“Bite your tongue.”

“Love is blind,” Dad said, pouring himself a cup of coffee. “I married you, didn’t I?” She gave him a withering look. “Men.”

“You weren’t exactly an angel yourself,” Dad said.

“Maybe a snow angel,” I said.

They looked at me, startled. Dad grinned.

“Who’ve you been talking to now?” Mom said, irritated.

“Mick told me. He said you got toasted and made snow angels on—”

“Na’,” she said. “Mick and his big mouth.”

“How long ago was that? Thirty years?” Dad said, kissing her.

Mom decided to scrub the stove. Recognizing the signs, I left the kitchen and headed back to my room. As I sat at my desk, I wondered how serious Jimmy was about Karaoke. With all the other girls, they did the phoning, they did the picking up and dropping off, they arranged the places to meet. Jimmy simply went along with them. Karaoke hadn’t called once. He called her every night. He went over to her house and drove her around. The weeks turned into their one-month anniversary. Mom’s expression went sour when he mentioned her name, which was every five minutes when he was home.

Write a paragraph that describes whether or not you think Karaoke and Jimmy have a healthy relationship that will work out. Try to think of the defence mechanisms the two of them, and any other characters, may be using. How are they using these defence mechanisms, and why?

Integrate at least two quotes from the *Monkey Beach* passage in your answer. Refer to the sample paragraphs and tips in this handout to make sure your paragraph has good integration.

(please do not exceed the lines provided)

PART B

The following passage is the beginning of an essay on Eden Robinson’s use of “strategic abjection.” The essay has been split into paragraphs, and each

paragraph has been given some context and an accompanying question. Integrate a quote from the accompanying paragraphs in each of your answers.

Strategic Abjection: Windigo Psychosis and the "Postindian" Subject in Eden Robinson's "Dogs in Winter"

Sugars, Cynthia . Canadian Literature ; Vancouver Iss. 181, (Summer 2004): 78-91.

In *The Postcolonial Aura*, Arif Dirlik takes issue with postcolonialism's "denial of authenticity" at a time when claims to cultural authenticity are proliferating around the world (220). Dirlik is particularly interested in contemporary indigenist movements which are committed to notions of Native identity as a step towards empowerment. In short, he argues that there are constructive ways of being essentialist (227).

Context: The Emory University Scholar Blog defines *essentialism* as "the reduction of the indigenous people to an 'essential' idea of what it means to be African/Indian/Arabic, thus simplifying the task of colonization."

(<https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/20/essentialism/>).

One might think of stereotypes, among other things, as a kind of essentialism. Imagine you are a Caliban-like figure being colonized, so to speak, by Prospero, and your goal is to end Prospero's colonization of you. Can you think of a constructive way to essentialize yourself while still being authentic to who you are?

In many instances, the invocation of an essential Native identity involves a form of "'self-Orientalization,' that replays the features ascribed to the Others of Eurocentric modernizationism [sic]" (224). In some cases, such as Thomas King's famous

evocations of Native stereotypes in *Green Grass, Running Water* and elsewhere, and Drew Hayden Taylor's comic send-up of similar stereotypes in his "Blues Quartet," "self-essentialization" (224) is mobilized for strategic purposes as a form of counter-discursive parody. King especially is well known for his images of Native "savagery" that mock dominant images of the Native as alien and abject other.¹

Context: Postcolonial theorists often use the terms "noble savage," "bestial savage," and "childlike savage" to describe how colonizers conceive their subjects. What are some depictions of Native "savagery" in *Monkey Beach*? How might these depictions mock the way colonizers typically view their subjects?

Eden Robinson's story collection, *Traplines*, and Robinson's subsequent novel, *Monkey Beach*, are both conspicuously violent. On one level, this pre-occupation with violence represents Robinson's engagement with the effects of colonization (or colonial attitudes) on Native peoples. Yet Robinson accomplishes this critique in an unusual way. First, she invokes the often negative imagery conventionally associated with Native peoples (hunting, cannibalism, savagery, primitivism, the windigo/sasquatch) and uses it to strategic effect. second, she frustrates the reader's desire to interpret her characters on the basis of their ethno-cultural identity. The ambiguity emerging from these mutually contradictory strategies is intentional, and it is central to Robinson's dislocation of conventional constructs of identity and abjection. In contrast to Dee Home's contention that "*Traplines* does not overtly challenge settler images or stereotypes of First Nations" (160), I would argue that it does so in an unprecedented way, enacting this challenge expressly because of the derogatory association of criminal and violent behaviour with aboriginal people. Robinson's approach represents one way of meeting

Gerald Vizenor's demand to "re-invent the invention' of 'Indianness'" (Home 161), or of undertaking what Ward Churchill speaks of as the "negation of the negation" (107). Robinson is at once appropriating and reformulating the discourse of savagery. At the same time, she negates racialized binaries through her own problematization of racial identity in her stories.

Context: Why might non-Native readers experience abjection when they read a novel by a Native writer that frustrates their conception of how Natives are supposed to behave? Bonus marks if you can figure out the difference between a liberal reader's abjection and a Trump supporter's abjection.

In short, her characters "perform" themselves as savage. However, this "savagery" takes a particular form in her work, for the violence is not specifically "native." Rather it is a symptom of the ills of contemporary urban society, a form of Western psychosis that has infected Native peoples in Canada. This is what both Jack Forbes and Deborah Root have identified as the cannibalizing and psychotic "wétiko sickness" that plagues Western society, a condition marked by greed, excessive consumption, violence, and egotism, and which was visited upon Native peoples at the time of colonization, infecting and steadily debilitating their descendants. Forbes and Root both make use of a Native legend concerning the taboo against cannibalism (the Ojibway/Cree story of the man-turnedmonster, the windigo/wétiko) to assess the malaise of contemporary Western culture.² What is perhaps most significant about the windigo story is the notion of infection, for the human who resorts to cannibalism in a sense becomes infected by bloodlust, and this acquired compulsion to cannibalize makes him/her a windigo. If the story of the windigo was originally intended as an ethical warning against giving in to

libidinous impulses, it has also been widely used as a metaphor for the violence of imperialism and the sickness at the heart of the modern capitalist world.³

Context: The windigo figure in Native mythologies is typically a man-eating creature or an evil spirit. Many legends describe how humans turned into windigos, such as the story Ma-ma-oo tells to Lisa about how the b'gwus came to inhabit Monkey Beach. The transformation from human to windigo often involves some kind of human failing such as greed, weakness, selfishness, etc. The windigo figure in particular belongs to Algonquin-speaking First Nations in North America, but let's analyze the b'gwus as a species of windigo. How might the sickness of the b'gwus in *Monkey Beach* be interpreted as "a sickness at the heart of the modern capitalist world"?

In an interview with Derrick Penner, Robinson has claimed that she makes the characters' identity unclear because she does not want to be pigeon-holed as a Native writer, someone who must write about Native issues only. The result is that Robinson's fictions themselves function as a series of traplines, performing "as tricksters which lure [readers] into believing one thing at their own expense" (Davidson et al. 55). Readers, then, are challenged to sort out the racial/cultural identity of her characters and are in a sense led to enact their own colonialist violence on the texts. The experience of reading (and teaching) Robinson's works thus forces one to engage in processes of abjection and othering.

Context: What has your experience of reading and analyzing the characters in *Monkey Beach* been like so far? Did you feel like Eden Robinson was adamant that you know her characters are Native, or not? Why? Imagine if we took the story of *Monkey Beach* and transferred it to a small Canadian town with an all-white population, and removed

the Native archetypes (such as the b'gwus) and replaced them western ones. Would the story be mostly the same? Why or why not?

Julia Kristeva develops Freud's thesis in *Powers of Horror*, where she explores the specific dynamics of abjection. The abject is that which haunts the self by continuously bringing it into crisis—generally in the form of some castoff part or product of the body (e.g., corpse, animal, flesh, excrement). In a colonial context, the abject becomes metaphorized as the subordinate colonial object that constantly brings the imperial self into question. When the abject assumes a specifically aboriginal form, conjured in the writing of a Native author, one might say that a strategic summoning of abject aboriginality is in operation. Like the abject body that hovers at the borders of civilization and/or subjectivity, aboriginal peoples were seen as both part of and not part of white society (and indeed are often still seen in these terms). In "Dogs in Winter," one might say that Robinson brings abject aboriginality into the foreground. The racially ambiguous serial killer in this story produces the ultimate abject entity in the form of a corpse or cadaver which propels the "I" (and by extension the civilized social world) into the vortex of abjection (see Kristeva 3-4).

Context: How might Kristeva's theory of abjection suggest that aboriginal peoples are "both part of and not part of white society"? How might a colonizer (or politically correct liberal) experience abjection (and therefore spew out part of themselves and feel as though their identity is being threatened) while reading *Monkey Beach*? Use at least one example from *Monkey Beach* in your answer.

By engaging in this strategic summoning of the abject, Robinson depicts how Native people in Canada were colonized by a system that has historically designated them as the abject side of the mind/body or self/other binary. We might think of this approach as a variation on strategic essentialism for women: it is a form of strategic savagery for the aboriginal woman. If, as Spivak writes, "the question of the abject is very closely tied to the question of being ab-original" (10),¹⁰ Robinson invokes a specifically aboriginal version of the abject: she destabilizes conventional racially inflected constructs of abjection, and she utilizes images of savagery often associated with aboriginal "primitivism" to depict the ills of contemporary society.

Context: How does Kristeva use "images of savagery often associated with aboriginal 'primitivism' to depict the ills of contemporary society"? In other words, think of the global capitalist western world as an individual. Personify it. How might the global capitalist western world experience abjection when reading *Monkey Beach*? List a few examples from *Monkey Beach* in your answer (and be as specific as you can!).

Robinson's approach might thus be one way of answering Gerald Vizenor's call for postindian "simulations of survivance" in contemporary Native cultural expression (5). Vizenor seeks an alternative to both the negative stereotypes and their idealized replacements. As many commentators have noted, the latest shift in configurations of aboriginality is marked by an idealizing of the Native (see Goldie, Tiffin, Torogovnick, Dumont). Robinson launches an effective counter-discursive response through her version of "postindian" parody. By exaggerating Western commodification of Native ' savagery, she highlights the violent history of Native-white relations, while resisting idealized versions of the Native. Robinson thus directs her message to Natives and non-Natives alike, an approach that is reflected in the racial ambiguity of her characters. The matriarchal serial killer in "Dogs in Winter" prefaces her forays by singing the children's rhyme "A-Hunting We Will Go." Yet Robinson's narratives leave one in doubt, finally, as to who is the hunter and who is the hunted.

Context: Recall how, in *Monkey Beach*, Ma-ma-oo watches soap operas on TV, and how Lisa's Uncle Mick is obsessed with Elvis, and how Lisa and Tab enjoy reading *True Story*, a confessions magazine (headquartered in New York) that has been very popular over the years for its pulpy, titillating stories. Why might the interests of these characters make them "racially ambiguous" and resistant to the reader's conception of the "idealized" Native? How might the reader's process of abjection (when encountering these characters) highlight "the violent history of Native-white relations?"
