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CTA 203
Dr. Gernant
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CTA 203 Take Home Exam II 2010

Section One (100 pts):

- 5) *Describe a situation in which you have experienced cognitive dissonance which needed to be overcome or which persuaded you to change an opinion. Be VERY explicit about how the theory serves to explain your dilemma and what happened as a result.*

Author: [Bryce Tellmann](#) 

Date: February 23, 2010 8:38 AM

During the first part of this past summer, I worked for L.S. Enterprises (which, by the way, is a shady and morally bankrupt operation) selling Kirby vacuums. My job was to do the in-home demo and try to convince people they needed a \$2800 vacuum.

It didn't take long for some cognitive dissonance to kick in. I didn't like what I was doing, trying to get people to buy something they probably didn't need for more than it was worth (I had seen my managers bargain as low as \$800), yet I was still doing it. This idea, combined with my action, was incompatible (205).

Even though I had the benefit of selective exposure, since I was always with others who worked for the company and thought "slinging chrome" (selling Kirbys) was wonderful (207), that was not enough to reduce my cognitive dissonance. Since I was unable to change my attitude toward my actions, I was forced to change my actions (205). So I quit.

Now I found myself alone in a city 700 miles from home, in an empty apartment I still had to pay rent for, and without a job (they also never paid me a cent [long story]). Needless to say, I dealt with some postdecision dissonance (208). I sought and found reassurance by looking on the Internet at horror stories from other people who had dealt with Kirby distributors. This information conformed to my decision, and helped me feel better about my action.

Bryce's post helped flush out the points that lead to cognitive dissonance. The first thing that led to his cognitive dissonance was that his behavior and his beliefs didn't match up. "The tension of dissonance motivates us to change either our behavior or our belief in an effort to avoid that distressing feeling. (p.205). One thing that Bryce could have expanded on was how much cognitive dissonance he was feeling. Was it a violent tension or just a wavering tension that he was feeling between his behavior and beliefs? This would help us see just how much these two aspects were in conflict.

Bryce chose to stop his behavior rather than give into the beliefs of his fellow employees. I do find it interesting how Bryce does hint that he tried to sway his beliefs by "selectively exposing" himself to others in the trade (p.207). Perhaps if he had had more in common with these people it would have been easier to sway his beliefs. If his exposure would have been limited to just these people without other people to challenge their views it would have been easier to do his job.

Even though Bryce was at ease with his decision to stop "slinging chrome" it wasn't long before his post decision dissonance (p.208) kicked in. Since there was tension between his behavior and beliefs once this tense was relieved it isn't alarming that there would still be some dissonance left over. Especially when Bryce was relying on his behavior in order to have a place to live. Even though his behavior was troubling his beliefs, now his lack of behavior was causing discomfort when it came to paying bills. At first it may not have been very clear, but now we can see the depth of tension that Bryce was facing at the beginning of his story. Without a job to support himself Bryce was still questioning his beliefs since it was his beliefs that resulted in him giving up his job. As you can see his dissonance didn't go away when it resolved the first tension.

I would have liked Bryce to expand on his story to tell us how he dealt with the minimal justification hypothesis. This hypothesis is a claim that the best way to stimulate an attitude change in others is to offer just enough incentive to elicit counter attitudinal behavior (p.209). The other people who worked at selling Kirby's did not offer a large enough incentive for Bryce to keep working for the money. Maybe as Bryce had hinted at the company wasn't paying Bryce enough money to outweigh the cognitive dissonance that he was feeling. If the company had treated its employees well and on time Bryce would have kept his job.

6) *Each of us participates in small groups and small systems all the time. So far in class, we have talked about how individuals make meaning, how social systems like relationships impact meaning making, and how we as individuals attempt to influence others. We are now moving on to how social groups make decisions collectively.*

Author: [Alicia Wosepka](#) 

Date: February 24, 2010 4:22 PM

1. My senior class (around 40 of us) had class meetings about once a month during second semester to discuss graduation related matters. Our advisors (select teachers on the staff) were usually present, but the meetings were facilitated by four class officers. Topics that our class saw as worth our input would spark group discussions that could turn into heated debates at any moment. One such topic was "the class trip". I did not so much care how everything would pan out, but it was interesting to watch the decision making process of my peers who did. We had a pretty sound class budget and had those who cared had decided before discussing with the larger group that we were going to Valley Fair in MN. Those individuals had not done their research, as obstacles started popping up all over the place. The faculty immediately shut down their request and our group was left to determine "the nature, extent, and cause(s) of the problem" (223). Apparently: 1) The school would not provide transportation across state lines for non-educational purposes, 2) Valley Fair was set to open 3 days after we graduated, 3) We could not engage in a "school sponsored activity" after we had been given our diplomas. During the next 3 steps of the functional perspective, the class officers were the promotive forces, the faculty served as counteractive help, and unfortunately many of the students attending the meetings brought up enough irrelevant material and side bars so as to divert our attention. Our class examined the positives and negatives of other places to go or ways to work around the Valley fair barriers, and ended up arriving at a solution that in my opinion did not meet our set goal of having as many people attend the trip as possible. A well-off classmate's parent donated money so that we could rent passenger vans to take to Valley Fair the day it opened - only 16 people made the trip.

Alicia's example focuses on how individuals make meaning and how these meanings can clash. It sounds like her class was having a hard time fulfilling the four functions of effective decision making (p.223). These four functions are problem analysis, goal setting, identification of alternatives, and evaluation of positive and negative consequences. I am going to focus on the areas of goal setting, identification of alternatives, and evaluating positive and negative consequences.

A lot of the problem was that individuals were not willing to listen to others comments and ideas for setting. "A group needs to establish criteria by which to judge proposed solutions. If the group fails to satisfy this task requirement, it's likely that the decision will be driven by politics rather than reason." (.224). With high school students it is easy for politics to take over especially if one group of friends has a strong desire to go to one location. When this group of students weren't able to support their goal the other groups of students (and faculty) found this as an opportunity to shut down this proposed goal. It is probably safe to say that this group then felt attacked and this leads to a political debate rather than a group effort.

Once this idea was shot down it was hard to come up with other goals because students hadn't done any research on alternatives. With one group of friends possibly feeling attacked they were probably willing to attack any other ideas. "If no one calls attention to the need for generating as many alternatives as is realistically possible, then relatively few may be introduced, and the corresponding possibility of finding the acceptable answer will be low." (p.224). It is hard to say, but the students should have been encouraged to find as many senior trip locations as possible so that during the meeting they would be able to work with more ideas.

Since groups of friends (political parties if you will) were personally invested in their suggestions it was hard for the group as a whole to identify the positive and negative characteristics associated with each alternative senior trip location. "After a group has identified alternative solutions, the participants must take care to test the relative merits of each option against the criteria they believe are important. (p.225). In Alicia's post she states the criteria with a few school rules and the goal that as many students as possible would be able to attend the trip. Since the group wasn't able to effectively communicate and move through the four functions of effective decision making they were not able to meet their goals.

7) *Think about a group of which you are a part--this could be a team, an apartment, a dorm floor, a class. Choose a very specific situation in which you used a functional "cost-benefit" type analysis to solve a problem. What worked and what didn't work? Were their individuals in the group that functioned to promote, disrupt or counteract as you worked through the problem? How did that impact outcomes?*

Author: [Alicia Wosepka](#) 

Date: February 24, 2010 4:22 PM

2. Our class definitely spent a lot of time at the conflict phase. For awhile when the topic came up, all I heard were classmates' "own positions" (236) rather than strides toward unity. We then moved to the coalescence stage when we were finally able to come up with all around acceptable options for place/time of trips and officers recorded our alternatives. The ideas we proposed were based upon the rules that were mentioned once regarding what we could/could not do and then were not brought up again. We went to work brainstorming and concentrated on the materials and abilities (resources) we did have, such as a large class budget and parents who would chaperone rather than faculty, to come to a conclusion. I believe we were still in the development phase when we came to a decision - my classmates were "involved and excited" (236) about our probable choice but "tension-free solidarity" (236) had not been achieved.

Alicia used elements of the phase model to describe how her senior class was able to conduct a meeting. For high school students it can be hard to differentiate between personal desires and what is best for the group. Even though they were able to move through a few of the proper stages there were not able to successfully make it through the four stages. These stages are orientation, conflict, coalescence, development, and integration.

Orientation is hard for any group. There has to be a conscientious effort to clearly state the group goals and the roles that each person can fulfill. At this stage many members are in need of hearing information rather than giving information out. (p.236) Since the orientation stage wasn't clearly hashed out before her senior class moved onto the conflict stage some people were left behind (leading to side arguments) and other people became focused on their personal desires rather than the group goals.

"Factions disagree on how to approach the problem and argue against other view points; members justify their own positions." (p.236) Conflict as I mentioned in my above reaction leads to social politics where people stop participating in the conversation because they realize that they won't be acknowledged, or they do not want to upset the social group

who is dominating the conversation. When social “rankings” get in the way of discussion the democracy of the group is compromised.

The coalescence stage was skipped by Alicia’s group probably in the interest of time. It would have taken a lot of time to cool everyone off and to realize that they had already skipped through important steps. The students should have come to the meeting fully aware of the goals and what they were to be talking about. Unfortunately conflict will usually upset a group enough that the original goals may be forgotten or abandoned.

The Development state is when a group focuses on ways to implement a specific goal. Since Alicia’s group hadn’t fully decided against going to Valley Fair some groups kept pushing in order to make the school rules and group goals fit their plan. The development plan became more of a “lets rewrite rules/goals or find a way around them” planning time rather than having everyone work together to find a common interesting activity.

The integration stage would be a time of “tension-free solidarity”. Obviously the group did not reach this stage due to some people being ignored or suppressed by social power. The democracy of the group had been compromised and many students may have decided they didn’t want to argue over a trip that they didn’t care enough about where they went. Some students had a higher desire to participate in the trip than others causing these students to most likely dominate the conversation.

9) *Read both the preface to the organizational communication chapters and the chapters themselves. Write a short "story," fairy tale or piece of creative non-fiction that elucidates the interworking of an office, dorm floor, team, cast or church in which you are a part. Explain how this story can actually tell us more about the group than a description of the facts of the group might.*

Author: [Rebecca Reek](#) 

Date: February 26, 2010 1:48 PM

1. Once upon a time there were two girls that didn't get along with other girls. Throughout high school they both hung out with all boys because they were scared of being judged by other girls. Because of this, they always kept a distance from other girls. The names of these two girls were Becky and Jessica. Becky began to date AJ, and AJ was friends with Jessica. Jessica had been dating Keith for two years. AJ said to Jessica, "We should go on a double date, I think you and Becky would really get along!" Jessica agreed, but on the inside said, "This is going to be hell." AJ brought up the idea to Becky, and Becky thought to herself, "This is going to be hell." So the two couples went on a double date, and Becky and Jessica found out they had a lot in common: they both lived in Omaha, they both moved away, they both had brothers that passed away, and they both were die hard fans of one particular band. Becky was a fan of The Doors, and Jessica was a die hard fan of The Beatles. However, their fears of other girls still got in the way of a fantastic friendship. History went on, Becky and AJ broke up a few times, and Keith and Jessica got engaged. Then Becky and AJ started to date again. Jessica and Keith were going through a problem, and Jessica called AJ (as was her normal fashion) and he said, "I think this is more of a girl problem, why don't you call Becky?" Jessica again thought, "This is going to be hell, but I don't have any other solution." Becky and Jessica talked about her problem, and the next week the two girls went out to coffee on their own, and their friendship grew. A year later, Jessica met Becky's dad, Dirkie. Dirkie and Jessica began talking and he realized that Jessica's brother that passed away was the roommate of Becky's brother who passed away while the two brothers were in the hospital as young children...

Since then Becky was maid of honor in Jessica's wedding, they are no longer afraid of other girls and have learned how to develop meaningful relationships with other women that have helped them grow more than they will ever realize.

I think this story shows the norms that Jessica and I would go through that kept us away from developing meaningful relationships with other women. This story also demonstrates how we are the type of people that need a push to ask for help, and can be really prideful and think that we can solve our own problems. I think this story also shows that she and I used to suffer from terminal uniqueness, and that there is no way anyone would understand us, but now we realize that is not the case.

Becky did a great job of telling us more about the main characters rather than just tell us facts about them. She relied on common culture performances, ethnography and thick description in her story in order to address the social issues and different relationships. She primarily focused on how the relationship between Becky and Jessica developed against the odds of both of them not getting along with other girls.

Cultural performances are actions that members of a do to reveal their culture to themselves and others (p.251). These social performances are slang terms, idioms, and common phrases. Becky used the phrase "This is going to be hell." to represent the emotions that both girls were going through at the idea of being friends with another girl. This phrase could have a different meaning depending on the society in which you use it. In our society we say that it means "this is going to be difficult and a horrible experience."

Ethnography is the mapping out of social discourse; discovering who people within a culture think they are, what they think they are doing, and to what end they think they are doing it (p.252). Both Becky and Jessica had convinced themselves that they were not able to get along with other girls. They had been thinking this for long enough that they believed that a friendship with another girl was impossible. Once they took the chance to form a relationship they changed what they thought about themselves and others, and they changed what they were doing and to the extent that they were doing it. Once they realized that one girl wasn't bad and that they had common interests they were less afraid of forming a close friendship with another girl.

Thick description is a record of the intertwined layers of common meaning that underlie what a particular people say and do (p.152) When Becky and Jessica started talking they realized that they were both diehard fans of famous rock bands. The underlying meaning there is that they like similar music and could understand each other's devotion to a particular music group from a similar time period. Another area of thick description is how they both had lost their brothers at a young age. This coincidentally commonality is only made deeper when they realize that the boys had both shared a hospital room. This deep connection in relation to a hard time in their life forms a bond between them that other people would not be able to fully experience or understand.

As you can see Becky relied on three areas that expand on how culture, society trends, and interpersonal relationships are connected. Our daily cultural performances, ethnography, and use of thick description help us understand the underlying messages that we send each other throughout a day. Once we are aware of how a culture views its self and its people we are better able to use the cultural trends to make meaning.

10) *Compare the mechanistic view of organizations (in the preface) with the corporate colonization description offered by Deetz. Then take your work one step further and discuss how Deetz's ideals of stakeholder participation could serve to benefit organizations with these more top-down styles.*

Author: [Rebecca Reek](#) 

Date: February 26, 2010 1:48 PM

2. The one with the most money gets to make most of the decisions. It would be really great that the idea people are the ones that make things happen, but the reality is, "(corporations are) more powerful than the church, state, or family in their ability to influence the lives of individuals" (p. 262). This is very true because we do live in a society that says, "If I buy (this

product) I will be happy." This may not even be the actual thought process, but while working in retail there are so many women that put unrealistic expectations on a product to make themselves, their marriage, or their self-esteem better. I hear weird comments all the time about the unrealistic expectations put on the products we sell, as if their hope was in the product itself rather than on God and the relationship. I also really liked the point made in the book, "Despite the fact that 85% of families with children now have mothers working outside the home, their real standard of living has decreased over the last two decades" (p. 262-263). Could this be because we are still trying to "keep up with the Joneses?" We exhaust ourselves to buy the things for play, but need to keep working to pay off the things for play, and we don't get an opportunity to actually play? This was a very interesting topic to read!

In a material driven society it is easy for corporations to have more influence than religious groups. The idea of self satisfaction in material possessions is so widely broadcasted around the country that is hard to fight an idea or way of life that is so heavily supported by the media. Becky touches on the dangerous effects of consumerism and the role that corporate colonization has in it.

Corporate colonization is the encroachment of modern corporations into every area of life outside of the workplace (p. 262). "Within a lifetime of most of today's college students, the average American workweek has increased from 40 to 50 hours, and leisure time has declined by a corresponding 10 hours." Since we have so many material possessions that we want to own or experience the joy of buying we have to work more to support our habits and the habits of others in society. Becky wasn't kidding when she mentioned idea of "keeping up with the Joneses" we see that someone else has a new toy or item and we think we need to have it for ourselves.

If we took the time to approach consumerism from another perspective outside of corporations we would be able to see the web we have created. "The corporate executive suite is the place where most decisions are made regarding the use of natural resources, development of new technologies, product availability, and working relations among people." These companies have immersed themselves in our daily lives in order to make society dependent upon them. Since they have so much sway in our culture they now have a monopoly on all the resources it takes to create or market their product.

A long time ago there was the Roman Empire that spread Catholicism to every land they contained. Even at this time the church was in full power and was able to influence large populations of people. Just like large corporations though it became corrupt with selfish desires and people who wanted to have complete control. Anybody or group that has a lot of influence will become corrupt with the desire for power. It is important to remember this when dealing with large corporations or groups so that we are able to step back and look at them from a perspective that isn't immersed in their web.

Section II—Essay (50 pts): Rhetorical Analysis

Using the speech by Dr. Rehab available at the link below, apply each of two theories of rhetoric to show in what ways the speech was rhetorically effective and ineffective and theoretically what was happening in the speech that made it effective. Apply specific points made below as well as other points or explanations from the text. Use specific examples from the speech itself to support your claims surrounding these points. Include page numbers. Each theory application should have no fewer than five points of application or critique. ([mms://media.cune.edu/staff/david.werner/raheb.wmv](https://media.cune.edu/staff/david.werner/raheb.wmv))

The Rhetoric of Aristotle

- 1) *Logos: Identify at least one logical argument that Dr. Raheb makes (other than the one below)? (See your text for example of how to structure a logical proof and present your argument in that fashion.*

Logos is the logical proof which comes from the line of argument in a speech (p.281). Logical appeals cause the audience to sometimes be shocked or to have a “light bulb” moment once the argument is made. Dr. Raheb used the idea that since his family lineage is from Bethlehem then it is very likely that some of his early relatives may have seen Jesus or been converted to Christianity by his apostles. As Americans we tend to forget that the people in the bible are real and that some of their descendents are still living today. The light bulb moment of his argument is when we realize that we are seeing someone who does have lineage that is from the town Jesus was born in and he could be a descendant of someone who is in the bible or lived during the time of the bible stories.

- 2) *Ethos: How does Dr. Raheb establish his credibility to discuss this topic?*
e.g. a. *Perceived Intelligence: Practical Wisdom and Shared Values*
b. *Virtuous Character: The Image of the Person as a good and honest person.*
c. *Goodwill: A Positive Attitude Toward the Audience*

Ethos is ethical proof, which comes from the speaker’s intelligence, character, and good will towards the audience (p.283). It was easy to pick up on Dr. Raheb’s ethos throughout his message. He focused on building up the people in his community so that they would be able to have strong leaders with a solid education, he cared enough about the people that he would live in a war-torn zone in order to help build up the Christian community.

- 3) *Pathos: How does he establish a positive emotional chord? (If needed, look on page 284 to review various ways that we can think about this.)*

Pathos is the emotional proof, which comes from the feelings the speech draws out of those who hear it (p.284). Since Dr. Raheb was talking about the tension between Israel and Palestine he used jokes and dry humor to help break the sadness or anger that could build up in his audience. He was able to keep the “mob mentality” from getting out of hand and to keep us focused on the overall message. He also promoted the saying “Plant olive trees today not tomorrow” as a phrase of hope. It helped the audience realize that they cannot give up hope on this war-torn zone because there are people there and they are working to make it the best that they can.

- 4) *To what degree would you argue that Raheb’s Rhetoric Meets “The Golden Mean”: One who avoids excess on any side is the virtue? To what degree would he say that you can’t say just what people want to hear? To what degree would he also say that you should disregard the thoughts and feelings of the audience?*

Dr. Raheb used moderation in all of the points of his speech. He would acknowledge both sides of an issue, recognize the actions that each party was making on an issue, and then tell it from his perspective. He worked so that our evidence was well rounded and not a one-sided debate. He makes sure that all evidence was laid out as best as possible so that the audience was able to form their own opinions with respect to the opinions of others. It also gave the audience a chance to understand another perspective on an issue that we don’t always hear through our media. Since he had built up ethos with us we trusted the information that he gave us.

- 5) *Aristotle assumes that educated people are able to engage in and make decisions based in reason. In what ways does this speech work to support a rational, reasoned persuasive argument? Or does it?*

Within his speech Dr. Reheb made five points that a conservative audience would acknowledge. He pointed towards less peace talk and more working towards peace making. He wanted there to be less politics and more focus on the human conditions, more faith in what people believe rather than focusing on all the differences among people, he also wanted the people of the region to be able to support themselves rather than just relying on others to support them, and for people to recognize that people in this region experience too much “yo-yoing” between a pessimistic and optimistic view point. All of these are rational and reasonable arguments. He was able to deliver them in a way that was persuasive in a humble way. His position never felt pushy or demanding of the audience.

Dramatism

- 1) *How does he establish a common ground between the speaker and the audience?*

Dr. Reheb used phrases such as “plant olive trees today not tomorrow”, common faith, and humor to bridge the gap between his culture and ours. He used terminology that we were familiar with, but used it in terms of his culture. This helped us understand that the opposition that we face may be different in each culture, but we have learned to cope or deal with it with similar sayings. Our common faith in Jesus was a big connecting factor since our faith and religion are closely linked with the location of his culture. The humor also helped us realize that even though we face different situations, maybe eat different food, and live our days in different fashions we still find the same things humorous and are able to laugh.

- 2) *How is the speakers worldview made clearer by the parts of the “drama” that he emphasizes? (Typically there is a stronger emphasis on one or two parts of the “drama” and that impacts how we see the “story” overall. Does he focus on what is or was done? Does he emphasize the context for where and when the action was performed? Does he emphasize the character and the agent of the people who doing the action? Does he emphasize the way things or the effectiveness of things done? Does he focus on the goal or the meaning of the drama?)*

The “drama” that I remember the most from his speech is when he said he had to stop preaching in church because the gun fire in the area was too loud. None of his church members were able to hear him over the noise. It is a scene that is hard to imagine in our country. Even in small towns during hunting season we have never heard guns at that proximity or noise level. This image helped us see how different our cultures can be and how daily life may be impacted. It helps us understand the importance of the work they do each day and why it is important not to put work off for the next day.

- 3) *How does he establish a guilt-redemption cycle? (Think beyond the literal.) How does the speaker help the audience to conceptualize the problem and overcome our guilt for not being able to solve the problem?*

He reminds us that the area has always been at war clear back to the time of the Old Testament. It is relieving to know that while we would want to the fighting to stop there are too many people and too many years of people fighting over the land to make it an easy fix. Even though we want to help the people achieve peace it is more important to

realize that there is fighting and to help the people create the means to deal or deter fighting in their cities.

- 4) *Burke assumes that we are drawn to an argument because of the ways in which the speaker balances parts of the argument to draw our attention to the things most likely to alter our view of situation. How does this speech change the focus of discussion in this particular realm of human discourse?*

The one way that this speech is different than any other article or speech given on this topic is that it has that faith connection. It does not shy away from the material and faith that keeps our two cultures connected. It recognizes the commonalities that we share and how we can work together to achieve common goals of education. He helped us see how we can get involved and what he as an “insider” feels would be the most helpful and that is education. Since we are at a university and a university that is known for its education department it isn’t surprising that we identify with his points and are looking forward to seeing how his goals turn out. From the ethos he created in his speech we realize that he is a hard worker and his phrase “plant olive trees today not tomorrow” reminds us that he is going to work towards his goals and not be all talk and no action.