

Sample Assignment for *Animating Poststructuralism*

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View

Bolton, Christopher and Galen Corey. *Animating Poststructuralism*. *Christopher Bolton's Home Page*. 8 Nov. 2012. Web. [Date you accessed the page]. <<http://redcococon.org/mymedia.html>>.

Read

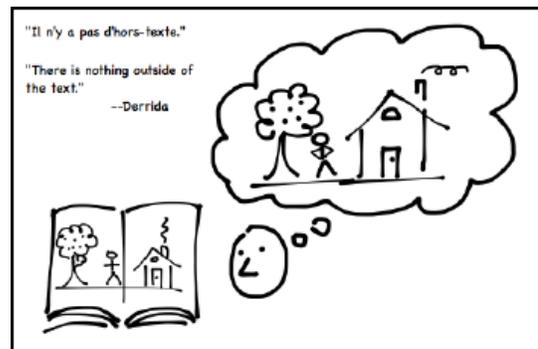
Saussure, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Ed. Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger. Trans. Wade Baskin. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966. 65-70, 111-27. Print.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." *Image, Music, Text*. Trans. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977. 142-48. Print.

---. "Myth Today." *A Barthes Reader*. Trans. Annette Lavers. Ed. Susan Sontag. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982. 93-149. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences." *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1978. 278-93. Print.

The video *Animating Poststructuralism* is my effort to summarize and relate these key essays in poststructuralism in a clear, concise, accessible presentation. On the one hand, the video is based on what I regularly do or ask students to do in my classes: explain a complex theory in simple terms, aided by examples (often visual ones). But some would argue that the format of the video—brief, visual, entertaining, and simplified in a way that is literally cartoonish or two-dimensional—undermines the efforts of these critics to consider how we can write about linguistic representation when we remain trapped within language itself.



The video tries to acknowledge this problem, which is connected with the dilemmas of poststructuralist art and criticism. As we'll see, some critics contend that postmodern art and literature present us with a flat surface devoid of deep meaning. But others paradoxically relate that flatness to a complex layering of meaning and language.

For this week, we'll use the video as a jumping off point to try to understand the essays, which will be our primary concern. To that end, please choose one of the four essays and write a 250-word paper (one-page, double spaced) that discusses whether the video accurately represents the ideas in the essay. (If you are not sure which essay to choose, "Myth Today" is a good option.) You can address something important in the essay that the video distorts or leaves out, or you can discuss specific questions you have about the essay's argument that the video does not help answer. Try to focus on the video content, but you can also comment briefly on the form—the advantages and disadvantages of video or animation as media for summing up theory.