

MONUMENTS & MEMORY HIST 322| Dr. Juilee Decker 2205 | Spring 2021

Handout for Reading Responses

Please approach your response in the following manner:

Estimated Length: 300 words/approx. total; about 100 words per paragraph/step.

Due 11 am to MyCourses Assignment Box on the date listed on your syllabus—these are Mondays!—and for the corresponding reading noted on the Syllabus.

Step 0. Complete the reading listed on your syllabus or, when applicable, posted to MyCourses. (Some readings may be from your textbook/s.) As you read, search for the author's thesis.

Step 1. Identify the author's argument or thesis. Then offer evidence to support this claim.

1 paragraph: After identifying the author's argument or thesis, try to state this thesis in a single sentence or two. Or, quote the exact thesis statement from the article/chapter, using quotation marks, and identify the page number where you located this statement (since you are directly quoting the material written by the author). *What is the author's argument, and are you persuaded? If so, what evidence is particularly persuasive? If not, what evidence does not fit? Are you familiar with similar sources/points of view? How did you reach this conclusion?*

Begin your paragraph with the following: *In "Article or Chapter Title" (Year Published), Name of Author offers...*

Using week 1's Stonehenge reading as an example:

In "Stonehenge: A New Understanding" (2013), Mike Pearson Parker offers a new framework for understanding Stonehenge. By building upon research of the Madagascan archeologist and anthropologist Ramilisonina, who believed "stone monuments are for the ancestors" (10), Parker describes an analogy between Ramilison's culture and that of Stone Age Britain. This connection provides evidence of the materiality of both Stonehenge and its neighboring site, Durrington Walls, where stone "can be used to express concepts of eternity in contrast to life's temporality" (12). Even with my limited knowledge about Stonehenge, I found Pearson's claims convincing because he has built upon the two critical premises of analogy and materiality that we discussed in class. Analogy is "an equivalence, or a parallel" while materiality is the "use of physical materials to express intangible meanings" (11). Even with the evidence supporting this position, Pearson has provided counters to his argument (pages 13-14) and refuted these successfully.

Step 2. How does it relate to our course topic (monuments + memory)?

Use vocabulary from our course to answer this question.

Consider past and present practices about monuments & memory.

1 paragraph: *What does the article reveal about the past or present practices related to monuments and memory? Can you cite evidence (material from the reading, our class, or other readings from other classes) that show this? Add citation in the form of parenthesis or a footnote.*

Using week 1's Stonehenge reading as an example:

This particular reading focused entirely on materiality—permanence of stone and the impermanence of wood—and the idea that Stonehenge was built as a place of the ancestors, while Durrington Walls was a place for the living. Further, the critical point is that the stone and timber circles "were all part of one system" joined by the River Avon. This chapter, while brief, does explore how the humans may have interacted in Neolithic Britain, focusing on material and site. Importantly, Parker notes that the association of stone with the eternal was not only shared between Britain and Madagascar, nor are these associations innate across all cultures. Instead, "our cultural metaphors change as our surroundings change" (13). (The facet of memory isn't approached in this reading as much as the monument practices, such as the building of these two sites.) The article also discusses the term materiality, which means being composed of matter, and specifically the relationship between that matter and the human beings who interact with it. Why build of stone or wood? The significance for our course is in relation to the material—stone is an everlasting material used to honor

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the dead while perishable materials, such as wood, are used exclusively for the living. In the same way, we look at monuments and memorials today as having been “cast” or “carved” of stone or metal, not wood.

Step 3. Take-aways from the reading *Take aways from the reading (what did you find relevant due to your interests, topics we’re discussed in class, as well as your opinion).*

1 paragraph: *It’s usually helpful if you can reflect on the author’s training/position. What is their point-of-view. What is the profession/discipline of the author?*

Using week 1’s Stonehenge reading as an example:

As a field archeologist based at University College London (previously at University of Sheffield) and writing in 2013 after a decade of his own primary research doing excavations as part of the Stonehenge Riverside Research Project, Mike Parker Pearson is writing from the perspective of a seasoned archeologist. His chapter demonstrates evidence from his critical primary research. He also builds upon the field work of Ramilisonina, conducted in Madagascar, although Ramilisonina did in fact travel to Wiltshire, England in the 1990s. This book, and its decade-plus of research, posits that Stonehenge was built as a site and domain of ancestors while the nearby Durrington Walls and Woodhenge were built as a site of the living. Building upon my earlier comments about materiality, this reading led me to re-consider what I knew about Stonehenge – which has always been taught in a cursory way, that it relates to Druids, mysticism, and possible ritual. Clearly, the peoples who built this monument or memorial created not only an architecturally sophisticated work. They created a work in context, as part of a larger inhabited terrain with additional architectural features (made of wood) that are no longer extant today.

The rubric for this assignment is below and may be found on MyCourses.

Criteria	Awesome	Very Good	Good	Let’s talk!
Author’s Thesis and Claims	Clearly and thoroughly identifies the author’s argument or thesis & offers evidence to support this claim.	Identifies the author’s argument or thesis & offers evidence to support this claim, though brief.	Identifies the author’s argument or thesis but merely restates or quotes, without explanation.	No attempt made.
Past & Present Practices about m+m; uses vocabulary; relates to course content	Clearly and thoroughly identifies the connection to our course content; uses vocabulary from class; and talks about past and present in some way.	Identifies the connection to our course content; uses vocabulary from class occasionally	Identifies the connection to our course content; uses vocabulary from class; OR talks about past and present in some way.	No attempt made.
Take-aways from the reading + opinion + point of view of author	Clearly and thoroughly identifies the author’s point of view; identifies one or more take-aways (points of importance on the part of the student); and offers opinion on the reading.	Identifies the author’s point of view; identifies one or more take-aways (points of importance on the part of the student); and offers opinion on the reading.	Identifies the author’s point of view OR identifies one or more take-aways (points of importance on the part of the student); OR offers opinion on the reading.	No attempt made.