

Division of Labor

Our group (*i.e.* manifestos) divided the work of the presentation and reference document via the same method. Before we began working on the project, we decided that we wanted it to be an extremely modular collection of case studies. Subsequently, we divided these four case studies up among ourselves thematically. I worked on both *Hacker Manifesto* and *The GNU Manifesto*, Mukul worked on the *Russell-Einstein Manifesto*, and Karthik worked on various Supreme Court dissents. Thus, each person wrote both his section(s) in the paper and relevant slide(s). On top of our case studies, each person was assigned an auxiliary section of the project on which to work. I wrote the slides and paragraph relating to our critical definition of manifestos as a genre, Karthik worked on the sections pertaining to the function of manifestos in socio-political systems, and Mukul worked on the parts concerning the effects of manifestos on society.

Challenges

The primary challenge we faced regarding our project was creating a concrete definition for the genre named “manifesto”. Over the course of our research, we discovered that the term is extraordinarily elastic in regards to what it describes, and there are very few set indicators for things bearing its name. Manifestos need not bear that word in their titles. Manifestos need not follow any syntactical format besides being short (and even this is not universal). The only ubiquitous trait we could identify in the various manifestos we studied was their function: persuasion. All manifestos take a point on a contentious topic and attempt to persuade the reader to their side via several methods enumerated by the critics Abastado and Berg. Thus, we turned this challenge into the primary point of our paper: the fuzzy borders as to what is and is not a manifesto.

Advice for the Future

The primary benefactor of our presentation were the critical sources describing the genre of manifestos rather than any particular one. These papers provided the bedrock for our subsequent research, and allowed us to look at manifestos through a critical framework. Additionally, I strongly recommend following the project life-cycle of first planning the outline of the project, dividing labor, and then integrating the various components into a contiguous whole.

Assessment of Success

I would say we were successful at relaying our primary point concerning manifestos (that being that the genre is incredibly inclusive and usually co-occurs with other genres). We provide individual case studies of four very different types of manifestos in our reference document, and analyze both their content and function in large society. Based off of this information, I believe one could write a thoroughly convincing document implementing the genre of manifesto.

Comparison to Unit I

We incorporated the primary idea behind unit I into this unit: the complexity behind perceived simplicity. Manifesto is a genre which is seemingly simple until one begins its study. At this point, it becomes evident that the term is far more broad than originally assumed, and that a new definition regarding the subset of literary works which intersect it is needed. We incorporated the Biss-like idea that our goal as writers is to provide the tools for our audience to come to their own conclusion as to what constitutes manifesto into both our presentation and reference document.

Relation to the Writing Program Learning Goals

This in-depth, microscopic look at manifesto has made me rethink the processes which I use to define genres as a whole. Looking at it, I realize that while genres may have very strict rules regarding what might be considered an implementation, there is an inherent fluidity awarded by the creative nature of writers which might push these boundaries. I think this mindset is the one which the Learning Goals proscribe as necessary to an individual, and I am likewise aligned with these ideals.