

**A GENRE ANALYSIS OF BOOK REVIEWS WRITTEN  
BY PROFESSIONAL CRITICS VERSUS  
ONLINE CONSUMER CRITICS**

**Umapa Dachoviboon**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts (Language and Communication)  
School of Language and Communication  
National Institute of Development Administration  
2019**

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February 2019

## ABSTRACT

<b>Title of Dissertation</b>	A Genre Analysis of Book Reviews Written by Professional Critics Versus Online Consumer Critics
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<b>Degree</b>	Master of Arts (Language and Communication)
<b>Year</b>	2019

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Online consumer reviews are a phenomenon emerged by the rise and expansion of the Internet technology. As a type of WOMs, it is regarded by potential buyers as source of information to reduce uncertainty in buying, and, therefore, is influential for a product's sales. This type of review is different from the conventional reviews written by professional critics because consumers themselves are empowered by the ability to write and publish their own reviews of a purchased product. As a result, online consumer reviews have become an attractive topic for the academic circle. However, comparative studies on the genre analysis of reviews written by professional and consumer critics are still scarce. This research then aims to explore the written structures of book reviews written by professional critics and online consumers critic using the framework of genre analysis in order to answer 2 main questions: 1) What are the generic structures of these two types of reviews? Are they different or similar? 2) What are the linguistic implications of the discrepancies found in the written structures of these two types of reviews? In order to analyze the structures of these two types of reviews, 25 book reviews were taken randomly from the New York Times websites as the research sample for reviews written by professional critics. After that, 25 book reviews of the same books were taken from Amazon.com website as the research sample for reviews written by consumer critics. The two types of reviews make the total of 50 book reviews as the research sample. The coding protocol was constructed based on past literature (Jong and Burgers, 2013; Khunkitty, 2005; Motta-Roth, 1995; Nicolaisen, 2002; Skalicky, 2013;

Valensky, 2010) and guidelines for writing book reviews. A pilot study was performed on the total of 30 book reviews (15 for consumer reviews and 15 for professional reviews) for reliability check. The coding protocol was then modified and applied for the whole set of the data. After applying the coding protocol, it was found that professional reviews are more structured and uniform as opposed to the lack of consistency in the structuring of online consumer reviews. It was also found that professional reviews tend to sound less personal and less persuasive. These differences could be a pointer to the writer's expertise. However, the expertise of the writer might not be a constant key factor in identifying reviews perceived as helpful by potential buyers as users on Amazon.com, it was found, tended to value more the articulation of personal experience, which was abundant in reviews written by consumer critics as opposed to those written by professional critics.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Assistant Professor Ora-Ong Chakorn, who has given me valuable guidance, and suggestions during my research. Moreover, I would like to thank to members of the Examination Committee for giving me their invaluable comments.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents who supported my study for the National Institute of Development Administration's Language and Communication program. With love and kindness, they always encourage me to accomplish this MA research.

Umapa Dachoviboon

January 2019

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

### **Abbreviations**

WOM

ESP

BR

CR

PR

M

SM

S

PISF

### **Equivalence**

Word of mouth

English for specific purposes

Book review

Consumer review

Professional review

Move

Sub-move

Step

Probable in some fields,  
but unlikely in others

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is an exchange of information about goods and services among consumers and has long been recognized as a powerful marketing tool, which can cause a significant impact on consumers' buying decision. Because buying a product is an investment in uncertainty, to reduce the risk, available information that could be obtained is valuable. One type of WOMs that have become more influential over these past decades is online consumer reviews. Such phenomenon is owing to the rise of the Internet technology. To assist possible customers with their buying decisions, online retailer stores such as Amazon.com provide a section of consumer reviews on each page of a product. As opposed to the more conventional reviews written by professional critics, consumers themselves can become the critics as such system enable them to comment and/or provide information about the purchased products.

The nature of these online reviews has consequently come to be a subject of academic interest. Various dimensions on the subject of online reviews have been explored, for example, the impact of these online reviews, the trustworthiness of online reviews, the difference on certain aspects between online reviews and professional ones, etc. Among existing research, influencing factors for the perceived helpfulness/effectiveness of the written reviews were also studied. Identified factors involve the expertise of the critics and language used in the written reviews. This paper will focus on the language aspect of the written review.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Previous studies on the language aspect of reviews showed that the language used in a particular review affects the perceived helpfulness and/or the impact of that review. It is found that reviews with abstract language are preferred to concrete language (Schellekens et al., 2010) and reviews with descriptive language are also preferred to evaluative language (Schindler & Bickart, 2012). However, comparative studies on the language aspect of these reviews written by professional critics and consumer critics, such as one by Skalicky (2013) are scarce. This current paper, therefore, proposes to investigate the issue of difference of language used between professional reviews and online consumer reviews by focusing on the generic structure of the written text.

As one of the biggest online retailer stores, Amazon.com is a rich source for WOMs. For each page of a product, there is a section dedicated solely to product reviews. Because Amazon.com originated as an online bookstore, one of the most common reviews on the website is book review. A lot of research can be found on the generic structure of book reviews (eg. Khunkitti, 2005; Motta-Roth, 1995); however, research on online book reviews are still lacking. This current paper, therefore, has chosen book reviews on Amazon.com as its research sample for online consumer reviews.

On the other hand, The New York Times' The New York Review of Books, established in 1963, is a well-known magazine that issues articles of book reviews by professional writers. Because The New York Times is an American newspaper with worldwide influence and readership, this research selected book reviews from The New York review of Books as research sample for professional reviews.

In an effort to understand if and how professional critics and online consumer critics write their reviews differently, the framework of genre analysis is selected. This research aims to provide a comparative genre analysis by identifying the rhetorical move patterns of professional reviews on New York Times website and consumer reviews on Amazon.com, for the reason state above, in order to pinpoint the possible similarities and/or differences between them.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Research**

This paper proposes to expand on previous studies on review genres by providing move and step analysis on both professional and online consumer reviews as well as their comparison by seeking to answer the following research questions:

1) What are the generic structures of online professional and online consumer book reviews? Are they similar or different?

2) What are the linguistic implications of the discrepancies found in the written structures of these two types of reviews?

The findings of rhetorical move patterns employed by each genre can be used as a reference for writing a book review.

## **1.3 Scope of the Research**

This research draws on the framework of genre analysis, focusing on move analysis to compare and contrast between professional and online consumers' writing of book reviews. The professional book reviews are review articles taken from New York Time's Sunday Book Review: Back Issues dated from February 2014 to April 2016. The online consumer reviews are most helpful reviews of the same books taken from Amazon.com. Because there are different types of books with genres that might expand beyond text writing, this research only selects reviews from books of fiction genre.

## **1.4 Definitions of Terms**

Book Review (BR) is a critical description and evaluation of a newly published book by a critic or a journalist published in a newspaper or a magazine. (Webster's encyclopedic unabridged dictionary of the English Language, 1989)

Consumer Review (CR) from now on will refer only to online consumer book reviews on Amazon.com as of our sample for this research

Discourse Community refers to a broadly agreed set of common public goals with mechanisms for intercommunication among its members and uses participatory

mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback in accordance with the common goal. (Swales, 1990)

Genre refers to “a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community, in which it regularly occurs.” (Bhatia 1993)

Genre Analysis refers to “branch of discourse analysis that explores specific uses of language by studying how individuals use language to engage in particular communicative situations” (Hyland, 2007)

Move refers to “a unit that relates both to the author’s purpose and to the content that s/he wishes to communicate” (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998 as cited in He, 2006)

Move Analysis is “a top-down approach to analyze the discourse structure of texts from a genre with the particular focus on communicative purpose.” (Biber et al., 2007)

Professional Review (PR) from now on will refer only to professional book reviews from New York Times as of our sample for this research

Step refers to “a lower level text unit than move that provides a detailed perspective on the options open to the author in setting out the moves.” (Dudley-Evans & John, 1998 as cited in He, 2006, p.12)

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the theoretical framework and the scope of this research as well as provides general background regarding Amazon.com and review as a genre. The investigated topics are categorized as follows:

- 1) Overview of The New York Times
- 2) Overview of Amazon.com
  - (1) Amazon.com as a discourse community
  - (2) Amazon.com review as a genre
- 3) Genre analysis
- 4) Move analysis
- 5) Related studies
  - (1) Book reviews
  - (2) Online reviews

#### **2.1 The New York Times**

The New York Times is an American newspaper based in New York City with worldwide influence and readership. Founded in 1851, the paper has won 125 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other newspapers. The New York Times' New York Reviews of Books, established in 1963, was described as "one of the most influential and admired journals of its kind, attracting a high-powered roster of writers" (The New York Review of Books, 2018). Writers publish essays and reviews of books every two weeks in this section. Because of its well-known influence, this research selects The New York Times' New York Reviews of Books as the research sample for

professional reviews. The reviews are taken directly from The New York Times website.

## **2.2 Amazon.com**

Amazon.com is the world's largest online retailer, and is regarded as one of the most successful e-commerce companies in the world (The Guardian, 2018). Initially originated as an online bookstore, Amazon.com over the years has diversified its range of items and branched off into separate retail websites for several countries with international shipping service. Additionally, Amazon.com allows its users to write and publish reviews to the webpage of each product as an aid for other users to read and make purchasing decisions. It also employs the voting system for users to vote for the value and level of acceptability of the reviews. Reviews with the highest number of positive votes are then labeled as most helpful and take a prominent place in the page of the product.

With the aforementioned system, past literature on Amazon.com mostly focus on the perceived helpfulness of the reviews on the website. To name a few:

Mudambi and Schuff (2010, p.187, 196) conducted an analysis on a corpus of over 1500 Amazon.com customer reviews to find the determinant of these reviews' helpfulness. Their research classified products into two main types: experience goods and search goods. Experience goods are products that customers must actually use before being able to confidently make a decision about (e.g., video games and movies) whereas search goods are those that customers can find existing information about without having to interact with. Their analysis focused on whether reviews on experience goods, namely the products that required subjective evaluations, were anymore helpful than those of search goods, which did not require subjective evaluations. Their findings showed that both type of products could be perceived as helpful; however, reviews on experience goods were more prone to personal bias and regarded as unhelpful due to its extreme rating.

Schindler and Bickart (2012) studied the perceived helpfulness of online reviews by focusing on the role of message content and style based on participants' judgment on book and automobiles reviews. The results of their study indicated the



preference for moderate review length and positive evaluative statements of products while non-evaluative production information and information about reviewer also contributed to perceived helpfulness. For stylistic elements, spelling and grammatical errors were associated with negative helpfulness whereas elements that make a review more entertaining were associated with positive helpfulness. These findings suggest that there are other factors that contribute to the perceived helpfulness of an online consumer review than just product information.

Skalicky (2013) provided a genre analysis on a corpus of 142 Amazon.com assorted product reviews to pinpoint the differences in rhetorical patterns between positive and critical reviews. He found that reviews that are similar to the “soft selling” form of advertisements (Cook, 1992) or reviews that contain the elements of “synthetic” personalization (Fairclough, 1989) are considered less helpful than those that focus on author or product of the review.

### **2.2.1 Amazon.com as a Discourse Community**

According to Swales (1990, p. 9), discourse communities are “socio-rhetorical networks that form in order to work toward sets of common goals” and that expert members of discourse communities “possess...familiarity with the particular genres that are used in the communicative furtherance of those...goals”. In other words, discourse communities are groups of people who share the same social interests, goals and values, and “whether implicitly or explicitly, have historically decided on preferred methods of communication that share, protect, and promote those values among the discourse communities” (Skalicky, 2013, p. 85). These forms of communication, thus, differentiate members of a discourse community from non-members. Based on these definitions, Amazon.com is, therefore, a discourse community formed, whether knowingly or not, by the authors and readers of Amazon.com customer reviews.

This research bases its analysis on the assumption that the most helpful reviews voted by members of Amazon.com discourse community contain the implicit and explicit values shared by the members in this discourse community, and thus reflects the preferred method of communication as transferred by the structure of the writing. In other words, the structural pattern of the voted most helpful reviews will

most likely represent the communicative purpose(s) and, consequently, the shared value of the genre of Amazon.com consumer reviews. The next section, henceforth, reexamined relevant literature on Amazon.com reviews as a genre.

### **2.2.2 Amazon.com Review as a Genre**

According to Fortanet (1999, p. 98), an “internet genre” benefits from affordances from the online medium that helps contribute to its uniqueness as a genre. He made an attempt to catalogue these affordances, including the inclusion of new roles for audiences of these genres; roles that edged audiences into being less passive receivers of information and more active participants. Amazon.com’s allowance of users to produce, rate, and read product reviews, henceforth, has given birth to a new genre in which the line between audience and author becomes blurry.

Racine (2002, p. 144, 146), however, argued that digital catalogues such as Amazon.com and other online retailers present sub-genres of the overall “catalogue” genre that has existed for decades. Nevertheless, she claimed that the use of customer reviews help separate Amazon.com from other online catalogues and gives Amazon.com a characteristic register, or tone, which she dubbed as “e-style” – a style that is much more personal, informal, and fluid than the typical professional product descriptions found in other online catalogues.

It is to be noted, though, that Racine (2002)’s study, dated over a decade by the time of this paper, is not up-to-date. Over the years, a shift has occurred in the spread of online customer review genre to other websites and services. Amazon.com reviews, consequently, are no longer the only one of its kind. This research, nevertheless, selects Amazon.com as the subject of study due to Amazon.com still being the largest online retailer, especially for books. Genre analysis is also applied as the chosen framework as this research has a different focus of analysis: instead of aiming to classify online consumer reviews as a new genre, this research focuses on identifying the similarities and/or differences in generic structures between online consumer reviews and professional ones.

### 2.3 Genre analysis

Past literature has provided various definitions of genre. Based on the definition by the pioneering work of Swales (1990), genre is a term used to characterize a category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations as summarized by Bhatia (1993):

Genre is a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community, in which it regularly occurs. Most often, it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purposes.

He then added that there are several aspects to be considered when defining a genre: 1) a communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purposes; 2) the structure of genres; 3) constraints on allowable contributions of a particular genre; and 4) these purposes are understood and often employed by members of the discourse community of the genre.

Martin (1984, 1993) defined genre as steadiness of staged and goal oriented social processes, and in addition to a form of discourse, he also classifies genre as typified rhetorical actions based on recurrent institutionalized linguistic situations. Bazerman (1994) further explicated Martin's notion that genre analysis relates to the development of single types of text through conventional use in similar linguistic situations. He elaborated that a repertoire of actions in a set of situations and the possible intentions enacted in communicative forms are concerned in identifying genre.

Hyland (2004) defined a social action and a speech event that has communicative goal shared by the members of a particular discourse community.

Despite these different definitions, it is obvious that there exist a congruence in which all these definitions agree on. To summarize, genres are communicative events with mutually identifiable and recognizable communicative purposes in a specific community and genre analysis is an analysis on the regularities of structure that differentiate one type of text from another.

The main objective of genre analysis is to understand and to account for the realities of the world of texts (Bhatia, 2002).

There are various definitions proposed by past literature regarding the analysis of genre. Miller (1984) and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) defined it as “typification of social and rhetorical action” whereas Martin (1993) provided a different definition, which is “regularities of staged, goal oriented social processes”. Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993), on the other hand, defined genre analysis as “consistency of communicative purposes”. Hyland (2007), henceforth, summarizes that genre analysis is a branch of discourse analysis that explores specific uses of language by studying how individuals use language to engage in particular communicative situations.

In performing the genre analysis, Bhatia (1993) proposed a seven-step model, which has been adopted and applied efficiently by many researchers in the field. The seven-step model of new genre analysis consists of the following steps:

- 1) Placing the given genre-text in a situational context
- 2) Surveying existing literature
- 3) Refining the situational/contextual analysis
- 4) Selecting corpus
- 5) Studying the institutional context
- 6) Linguistic analysis
- 7) Specialist information in genre analysis

Examples of academic papers of thick description employing the framework of this model include Brett (1994), Holmes (1997), Mulken and Meer (2005, as cited in Zhou, 2012) and Thompson (1994).

Bhatia’s pioneering work, following Swales (1990), has applied genre analysis to sales promotion and job application letters and identified moves and steps used in

the writing of the aforementioned letters (Bhatia, 1993). An analysis of moves and steps is an important element of genre analysis. The concept of move analysis is presented in the next section.

## **2.4 Move Aanalysis**

Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) has provided the definitions of move and step as follows:

Move refers to “a unit that relates both to the author’s purpose and to the content that s/he wishes to communicate”

Step refers to “a lower level text unit than move that provides a detailed perspective on the options open to the author in setting out the moves.”

The concept of genre analysis was introduced by Swales (1981, 1990) in his attempt to identify the structure of the introduction part of academic articles. Swales’ (1981) original model consists of the following moves and steps:

Move 1: Establishing the field

- 1) Showing centrality
- 2) Stating current knowledge
- 3) Ascribing key characteristics

Move 2: Summarizing previous research

- 1) Strong author-orientation
- 2) Weak author-orientation
- 3) Subject orientation

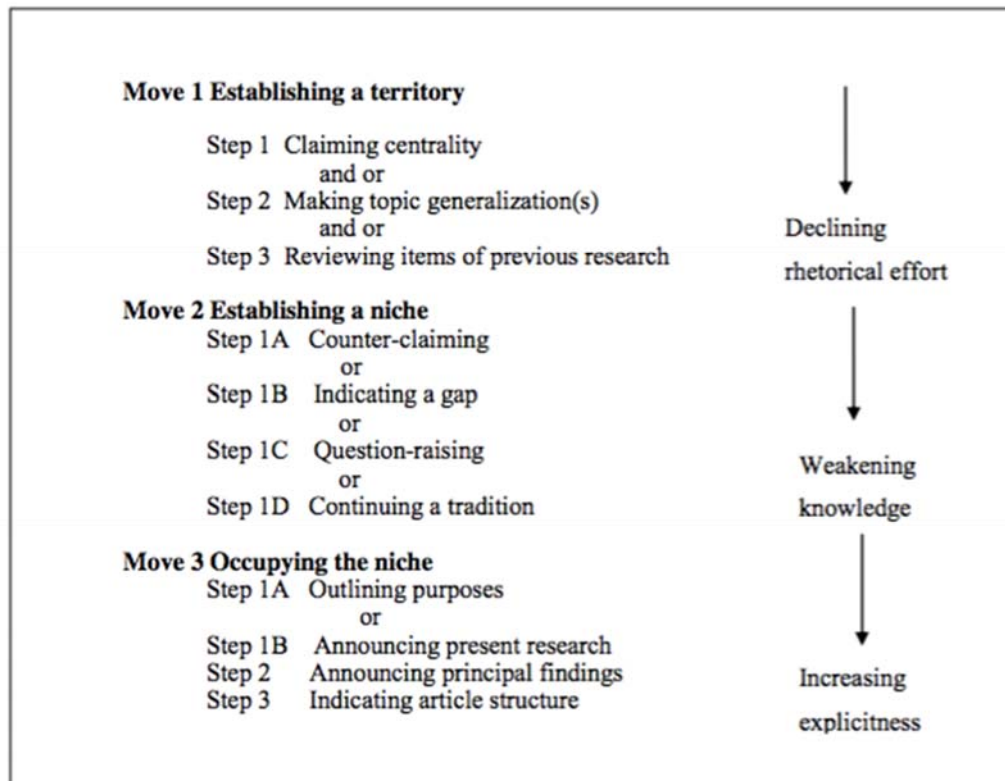
Move 3: Preparing for present research

- 1) Indicating a gap
- 2) Question-raising
- 3) Extending a finding

Move 4: Introducing present research

- 1) Stating the purpose
- 2) Describing present research

He then revised the original move model into a three-move model called Create a Research Space (CARS) model. (Swales, 1990, 141) which is illustrated in Figure 2.1



**Figure 2.1** Swales' CARS Model

**Source:** Swales, 1990, p. 141.

This model for the article introduction has then become influential on research and teaching in the EAP (English for Academic Purpose) field since.

In his later work, Swales (2004) has revised the CARS model due to the reason that for Move 3, there might be chances for the authors of research papers to develop upon the news value or interestingness of their work toward the end of their introductions. Swales's revised CARS model (Swales, 2004, p. 232) is as follows:

Move 1: Establishing a territory (citations required) (obligatory)

Step I: Topic generalizations of increasing specificity (obligatory)

Move 2: Establishing a niche (optional) (citation possible)

(Possible recycling of increasingly specific topics)

Step IA: Indicating a gap in previous research (optional) or

Step IB: Adding to what is known

Step II: Presenting positive justifications (optional)

Move 3: Presenting the present work (obligatory) (citations possible)

Step I: (obligatory): Announcing present research descriptively

And/or purposively possible

Step II: (optional) Presenting RQs or hypotheses

Step III: (optional) Definitional clarifications

Step IV: (optional) Summarizing methods

Step V: (PISF\*) Announcing principle outcomes

Step VI: (PISF\*) Staging the value of present research

Step VII: (PISF\*) Outlining research

\*PISF stands for probable in some fields, but unlikely in others.

Bhatia (1993) proposed that structural move analysis, which was originated by Swales (1990), could be applied to versatile text types. He demonstrated this by applying the move and step analysis on sales promotion letter, from which he identified its structure as follows:

Move 1: Establishing credential

Move 2: Introducing the offer

Step I: Offering the product or service

Step II: Essential detailing of the offer

Step III: Indicating value of the order

Move 3: Offering incentives

Move 4: Enclosing document

Move 5: Soliciting response

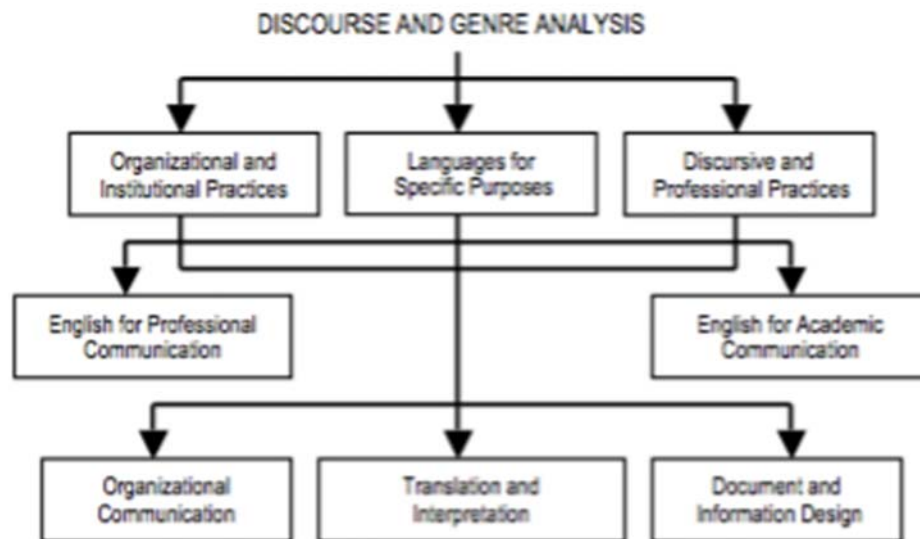
Move 6: Using pressure tactics

Move 7: Ending politely

From the model, Move 1 is for the writer to establish his company's credentials in order to draw the attention of the readers and convince them by showing the benefits of the services or products. Move 2, according to Bhatia (1993), is called introducing the offer due to its being recognized as product detailing in business terminology. This move is broken down into 3 more detailed steps: offering the product or service, essential detailing of the offer, and indicating value of the order. Since this move is an essential requirement of the sales effort to detail the value of the products or services, the most important feature lies in step 3, which is to indicate the value of what the company offers. Move 3 is to persuade possible customers to seriously consider the offered product or service. Move 4 is to enclose detailed descriptions of products or services as unnecessary details are usually removed from sales promotion letter to preserve brevity. This move, therefore, is an optional strategy in which the writers may or may not choose to apply. Move 5 is to encourage customers to respond or continue further communication. Regularly, the name of the person in charge and/or a contact address or number will be given. Move 6 seems similar to offering incentives; however, it is different from Move 3 in which Move 3 is to persuade possible customers to consider the offer whereas Move 6 aims to make possible customers to make quick purchasing decision. Move 7 usually employs formal politeness to maintain good relationship with the customers. It also signals the end of the communication.

Bhatia (2004, 2012) further explicated that all frameworks of discourse and genre analysis could offer useful insights into specific aspects of language use in typical contexts, and in his attempt to demonstrate it, he has moved away from the pedagogical application of the framework, namely the ESP, and focused instead on the professional practices. He also suggested implications of the development in genre theory for areas such as organizational communication, translation and interpretation, and document and information design as can be summarized in Figure 2.2





**Figure 2.2** Genre Analysis and LSP

**Source:** Bhatia, 2012.

## 2.5 Related Studies

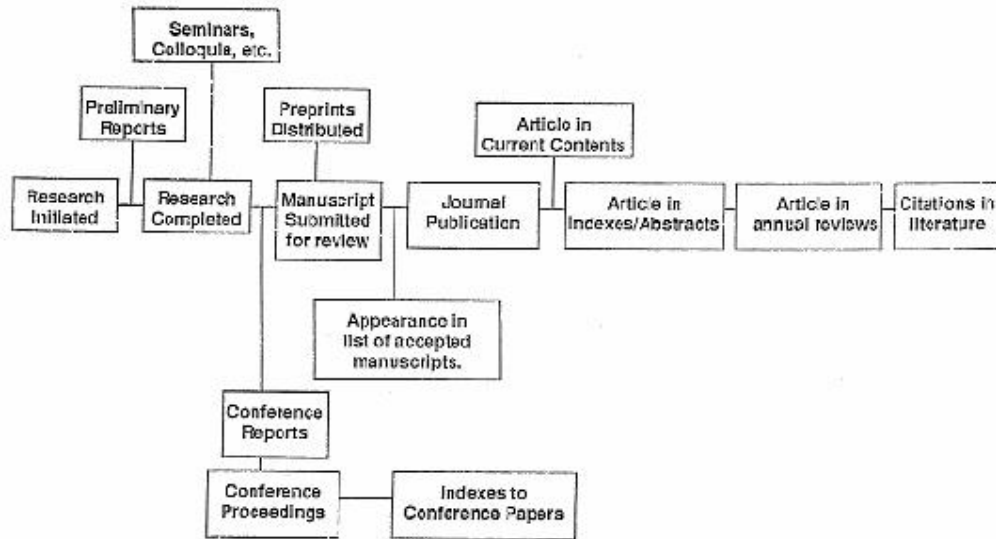
As this present paper employs the framework of genre analysis, past literature of related studies including previous research on book reviews as well as online reviews, particularly reviews on Amazon.com, are investigated in this section.

### 2.5.1 Book Reviews

A book review is a form of evaluation that provides literary criticism on a book based on its content, style and merit (Princeton, 2011). Just like other kinds of product reviews, book reviews can also cause an impact on the popularity, and consequently the sale, of a book.

The study of book review began in the academia as the genre itself is often questioned for its scientific worth. It was perceived to be “regularly charged with merely reflecting individual opinions, which, according to their critics, disqualifies them entirely as scholarly contributions” (Sabosik, 1988). However, the work of Spink et al. (1988) objected that book reviews are the result of the reviewer’s

synthesis and critical evaluation of the work of peers, which contributes to the development of new ideas, theories and research hypotheses. Consequently, they proposed that Garvey and Griffith's (1971) model of scholarly communication include book reviews.



**Figure 2.3** Garvey and Griffith's Model

**Source:** Garvey and Griffith, 1971.

While book reviews, just like other genres, differ in regard to their prototypicality (Swales, 1990), those of modern academic demonstrate a number of similar characteristics, which allow some generalizations. In other words, genre analysis is feasible.

Motta-Roth (1995) performed genre analysis on reviews in chemistry, economic, and linguistic journals and identified the following moves and steps:

Move 1: Introducing the book

Step I: Defining the general topic of the book (and/or)

Step II: Informing about potential readership (and/or)

Step III: Informing about the author (and/or)

Step IV: Making topic generalizations (and/or)

Step V: Inserting book in the field

Move 2: Outlining the book

Step VI: Providing general view of the organization of the book  
(and/or)

Step VII: Stating the topic of each chapter (and/or)

Step VIII: Citing extra text material

Move 3: Highlighting parts of the book

Step IX: Providing focused evaluation

Move 4: Providing closing evaluation of the book

Step XA: Definitely recommending/disqualifying the book (or)

Step XB: Recommending the book despite indicated short comings

Motta-Roth points out that each particular journal has its own idiosyncrasies when it comes to reviews. The reviews that she studied tend to be short (between 500-1000 words); however, she also specified that, sometimes, longer reviews that go beyond the usual length are also published depending on the significance of the text.

Nicolaisen (2002) further extended Motta-Roth's model when additional sub-functions were discovered during his study on L&IS book reviews. Nicolaisen's (2002) finding is illustrated in Figure 2.4

MOVE 1.	INTRODUCING THE BOOK
Sub-function 1.	Defining the general topic of the book
Sub-function 2.	Informing about potential readership
Sub-function 3.	Informing about the author
Sub-function 4.	Making topic generalizations
Sub-function 5.	Inserting the book in the field
MOVE 2.	OUTLINING THE BOOK
Sub-function 6.	Providing general view of the organization of the book
Sub-function 7.	Stating the topic of each chapter
Sub-function 8.	Citing extra-text material
MOVE 3.	HIGHLIGHTING PARTS OF THE BOOK
Sub-function 9.	Providing specific evaluation
MOVE 4.	PROVIDING EVALUATION OF THE BOOK
Sub-function 10.	Definitely recommending the book
Sub-function 11.	Recommending the book despite indicated shortcomings
Sub-function 12.	Neither recommending nor disqualifying the book
Sub-function 13.	Disqualifying the book despite indicated positive aspects
Sub-function 14.	Definitely disqualifying the book

**Figure 2.4** Typical Rhetorical Moves in Book Reviews

**Source:** Nicolaisen, 2002, p.128.

Move 1 is usually found in the first paragraph of the review and may provide information regarding central topic and format, readership, author, topic generalizations, and situating the book in the related field of study. Move 2 is found to be the longest and includes a detailed description of the book's organization; the topics treated in each chapters, the approach used, and additional information (i.e. graphs, pictures, tables etc.). Move 3 focuses on specific aspects of the book as well as provides positive or negative comment. Move 4 expands the perspective adopted in Move 3 into details, then provides a final evaluation of the whole book and additionally serves as the closing of the text.

The more recent work of Khunkitti (2005) investigated the rhetorical patterns of book reviews in English fields. 59 book reviews extracted from 3 English journals (ESP, ELT, and Applied Linguistics) were explored. Also using Motta-Roth (1995) as the basis of analysis, Khunkitti (2005) identified the moves and steps of the studied sample as follows:

Move 1: Introducing the book

Sub-Move 1: Making the book specification

Step I: Stating the title of the book (and/or)

Step II: Informing about potential readership (and/or)

Step III: Inserting book in the field/Introducing the field (and/or)

Step IV: Stating purposes/benefits of the book (and/or)

Step V: Giving general description of the book (and/or)

Step VI: Highlighting some parts/points of the book

Sub-Move 2: Providing reviewer's personal account

Step I: Giving reviewer's position in respected to the topic/field/book

Sub-Move 3: Providing editor/author's biography

Step I: Giving background to the editor/Author's credibility

Move 2: Describing the book

Step I: Providing General View of the Organization/Topic of the book  
(and/or)

Step II: Summarizing each section/Point with minor comments

Move 3: Criticizing the book

Step I: Providing positive comments (and/or)

Step II: Providing negative comments (and/or)

Step III: Making suggestions

Move 4: Providing evaluation of the book

Step I: Definitely recommending the book (or)

Step II: Recommending the book despite indicated shortcomings (or)

Step III: Concluding the book without recommending

Move 5: Giving other information

Step I: Providing references (and/or)

Step II: Providing biography/Contact information on the reviewer  
(and/or)

Step III: Providing some extra information

Despite having used Motta-Roth (1995)'s model as the basis for the analysis, Khunkitti's finding identified five moves of which four differed from those presented in Motta-Roth's that are: Describing the book (Move 2) in which the organization or topic of the book and/or summary of each section or point with minor comments is given; Criticizing the book (Move 3) in which positive and/or negative comments and/or suggestions can be given; Providing evaluation of the book (Move 4) in which the book can definitely be recommended or recommended despite the indicated shortcomings or the book is concluded without recommendation; and, Giving other information (Move 5) such as references, biography or contact information, or providing some extra information.

In her research on the genre analysis of book reviews in composition, however, Valensky (2010) differently identified the moves and steps from the corpus of 36 book reviews with the average word count of approximately 2,550 words. The result consists of moves and steps as follows:

Move 1: Situating the book

Step IA: Situating the books within composition pedagogy (and/or)

Step IB: Situating the books within the identity of the author (and/or)

Step IC: Situating the books within issue of the field

Move 2: Describing the book

Move 3: Evaluating the book

Move 1 is found more frequently in the beginning of the book review.

Move 2 identifies the characteristics of the book such as physical qualities, length, parts, sections, chapters, reading selections, or exercises. This move also covers the content of ideas within the book.

Move 3 can take several forms such as evaluation of the author, evaluation of the book itself, or evaluation of the content of the book.

### **2.5.2 Online Reviews**

A product review has a great influence in a buyer's decision. Because buying a product involves uncertainty of choices, consumers base their decisions on available information regarding the product. (Gemser et al., 2007). Aside from the more conventional reviews written by professional critics, the Internet technology has also given rise to a new market phenomenon known as online consumer reviews. These reviews are a type of word-of-mouth (WOM) by which information about goods and services are interchanged among consumers. According to Whyte (1954), these reviews are long regarded as a valuable and influential source of information.

The spread of WOM communication has been expanded by the rise of the Internet. As of 2004, the approximated number of online consumer reviews on Amazon.com was over 10 millions and the number is ever-increasing. Kumar and Benbasat (2006) claimed that the motivation behind this rapid growth was due to consumers' increasing interest in these online reviews. Online reviewers, henceforth, can in a way be perceived as online sales assistants since they provide other consumers useful information which not only contributes to the satisfaction with online shopping experience (Chen & Xie, 2008) but also to help online retailers benefit from increased customer loyalty and lower costs, such as when returning or

exchanging bought products (Voight, 2007).

The rise of online consumer reviews has given the academic circle various dimensions to be discussed. A number of literature focus on the effectiveness and/or perceived helpfulness of these product reviews. Some studies indicate that professional critics may have bigger influence on the buying decision of consumers (Berger et al., 2010; Boatwright et al., 2007; Reinstein & Synder, 2005) whereas another branch of studies suggest that professional critics may be subjected to more commercial biases and connections (Dobrescu et al., 2013), thus consumers expect them to be less trustworthy (Zhang et al., 2010).

Among these studies, various factors could be identified as influencing factors for the perceived helpfulness. One of them is the expertise of the critics (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009; Willemsen et al., 2010, Willemsen et al., 2011) and the other is the language used (Schellekens et al., 2010, Schindler & Bickart, 2012, Skalicky, 2013) in the written reviews.

The work of Skalicky (2013) applied the framework of genre analysis developed by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) to analyze the rhetorical patterns existed in Amazon.com's rated "most helpful" reviews in an attempt to understand the shared values of the Amazon.com discourse community on perceived helpfulness as reflected in this specific genre. The research compared the result of genre analysis between "most helpful positive" and "most helpful critical" reviews on a corpus of 142 product reviews from the website. The findings reported that reviews that are similar to the "soft selling" form of advertisements (Cook, 1992) or reviews that are reminiscent of elements of "synthetic personalisation" (Fairclough, 1989) are considered less helpful than those focusing on the author or product. The moves and steps identified by Skalicky (2013) are as follows:

**Table 2.1** Summary of Moves and Steps from the Findings of Skalicky

<b>Name of Move</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Steps</b>
<b>Evaluative move</b>	Author provides an evaluation of the product	Compliment or praise product Hedged compliment or praise Critique product or manufacturer Hedged critique
<b>User information</b>	Author provides information about the product gleaned through using the product	Tips & tricks Unclear information Solve problem Explain or confirm functions Additional capabilities Description Suggest improvement Target audience
<b>Title move</b>	Each product review is required to have a title, which is bolded and located at the top of each review	
<b>External information move</b>	Author provides information about the structure of the review itself (e.g., meta-commentary) or provide reasoning for writing or updating a review	



**Table 2.1** (Continued)

<b>Name of Move</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Steps</b>
<b>Overall statement move</b>	Author provides a comprehensive statement about the product, either summarizing the review or explicitly recommending for or against purchase	
<b>Personal experience move</b>	Author provides personal experience, typically through narrative, with the product being reviewed	Positive experience Negative experience Neutral experience
<b>Comparison move</b>	Author compares product with other products	Positive comparison Negative comparison Neutral comparison Suggest alternative product
<b>Background information move</b>	Author provides background information about themselves or about the products	
<b>Refer to reviews move</b>	Author refers to other reviews written about the same product	

**Source:** Skalicky, 2013.

After having classified the moves from the sample in the corpus, Skalicky (2013) further performed detailed analysis on 4 moves, which are 1) personal experience, 2) user information, 3) comparison, and 4) evaluation moves. The steps

found for each move, according to Skalicky, are meant to describe different methods of performing the moves rather than described a structure within the moves.

Another related study is the research of Jong and Burgers (2013), which addresses the difference between the writing of online film reviews by consumer critics and professional critics. The study also employed the framework of genre analysis on a corpus of 72 online film reviews. They classified the moves found into descriptive and evaluative move as illustrated in Table 2 and Table 3:

**Table 2.2** Overview of the Descriptive Moves and Corresponding Strategies.

<b>Descriptive Moves (Communicative Strategies Goal)</b>	
<b>1) Giving practical information about the movie</b> <b>(Providing information about the movie)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information about the movie theater</li> <li>- Information about the movie itself</li> <li>- Information about the review</li> <li>- Information about the critic of the review</li> </ul>
<b>2) Describing the movie</b> <b>(Informing the reader about the movie)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describing the story</li> <li>- Describing the character</li> <li>- Describing filmic elements</li> </ul>
<b>3) Placing the movie in context</b> <b>(Making the movie easily understandable to the reader by linking the object (movie) with the context in which it was created)</b>	<p><u>Part of the movie:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Based on the movie as a whole</li> <li>- Based on the subject</li> <li>- Based on the actors</li> <li>- Based on the director and film studio</li> </ul> <p><b>AND: <u>Comparison material:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compare with a different specific movie</li> <li>- Compare with a movie from the same film genre</li> <li>- Compare with (own national or other) culture</li> <li>- Compare with a different medium</li> </ul>

**Source:** Jong & Burgers, 2013.

**Table 2.3** Overview of the Evaluative Moves and Corresponding Strategies

<b>Evaluative Move (Communicative Goal) Strategies</b>	
<b>4) Giving criticism</b>	- About the movie as a whole
<b>(Forming an attitude and giving a view about the movie)</b>	- About the filmmakers
	- About filmic elements
	- About the story
	- About the character
<b>5) Recommending the movie to the reader</b>	<u>Recommend (group 1):</u>
	- Indicate that the reader must see the movie
	- Indicate that the reader should not see the movie
	<b>BECAUSE OF:</b> <u>Arguments (group 2):</u>
	- Argument as to the movie as a whole
	- Argument as to the filmmakers
	- Argument as to filmic elements
	- Argument as to the story
	- Argument as to the characters

**Source:** Jong & Burgers, 2013.

Jong and Burgers (2013)' findings also reported that online film reviews written by consumer critics tend to use more evaluative moves than professional critics and also often take on the first-person perspective whereas professional critics tend to give their opinions in a more objective way by using third person-perspective. The difference in terms of content may have important implications for discourse on the Internet.

In conclusion, this chapter investigates past literature and background information related to the present study, starting from the topic of Amazon.com, which covers the website's background and the website's identity as a discourse

community as well as Amazon.com as a review genre to the genre theory which covers the definition of genre, genre analysis and move analysis, and finally to previous related studies, which encompasses past research on genre analysis on book reviews and online reviews. Research methodology and procedures will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter reports the methods of data collection and analysis for this research.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the generic structures of online professional and online consumer book reviews? Are they similar or different?
- 2) What are the linguistic implications of the discrepancies found in the written structures of these two types of reviews?

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

##### **3.2.1 Research Sample**

As this research aims to compare and contrast between the professional and the consumer's writing, all samples in this research will be reviews of fictions that can be found and purchased on Amazon.com website. As for the number of sample, the researcher selected the total sample size from the estimate of the margin of error method (Niles, 2006), written as the following formula:

$$\text{The margin of error} = 1 / \sqrt{N}$$

Where N = the number of sample size

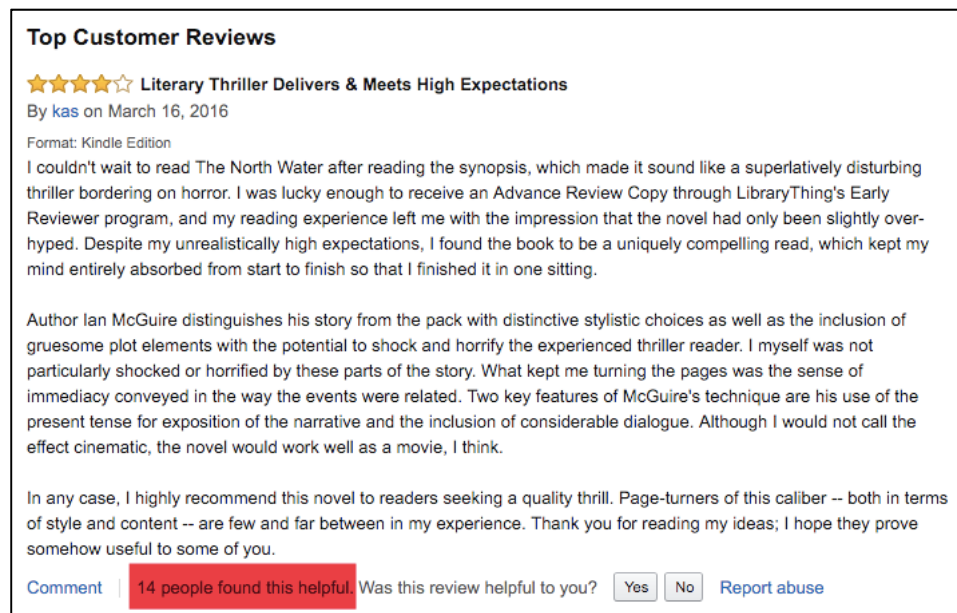
To effectively minimize the percentage of error with the minimum number of sample, the sample size of 50 with 14.1% of margin of error is chosen, given that it still falls within the 85% confidence interval.

The data are collected from two different sources to represent each type of book reviews as follows:

For professional reviews, 25 samples from the reviews of fiction books dated between February 2014 and April 2016 are randomly selected from The New York Times website. The overall average length of these reviews is 1,176 words.

For online consumer reviews, 25 samples of the same books selected from The New York Times are collected from Amazon.com for the purpose of comparison. All the samples used are reviews with the highest number of people finding the review helpful from Amazon.com's "most helpful" review section as illustrated in Figure 3. The overall average length of these reviews is 524 words.

In the case that the book reviewed on New York Times cannot be found on Amazon.com, the new sample will then be selected to replace the problematic one.



**Figure 3.1** Review with the Highest Vote on Helpfulness on Amazon.com

From the figure, the text in the highlighted box indicates the number of people voting the review as helpful, which reflects the Amazon.com discourse community's value. This present research collects only the reviews with the highest number of votes.

With these reviews, a corpus of 50 samples is formed for the data analysis. All the reviews can be found in Appendix A. The number of corpus size is 50 book reviews (BR), 25 for professional reviews (PR) and 25 for online consumer reviews (CR). The names of all 25 books are listed below.

- 1) The Silkworm by J.K. Rowling, as Robert Galbraith
- 2) The Bees by Laline Paull
- 3) The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon
- 4) Revival by Stephen King
- 5) Bryant & May and the Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler
- 6) The Laughing Monster by Denis Johnson
- 7) The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman
- 8) A Map of Betrayal by Ha Jin
- 9) Book of Strange New Things by Michel Faber
- 10) Viper's Nest by Martin Amis
- 11) The Children Act by Ian McEwan
- 12) The Monogram Murders by Sophie Hannah
- 13) The Paying Guests by Sarah Waters
- 14) Edge of Eternity by Ken Follett
- 15) The Bone Clock by David Mitchell
- 16) Tuesday Nights in 1980 by Molly Prentiss
- 17) The North Water by Ian McGuire
- 18) Arcadia by Iain Pears
- 19) The Queen of the Night by Alexander Chee
- 20) The Man Without a Shadow by Joyce Carol Oates
- 21) Dictator by Robert Harris
- 22) The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende
- 23) Numero Zero by Umberto Eco
- 24) Undermajordomo Minor by Patrick de Witt

25) After Alice by Gregory Maguire

### 3.3 Research Procedures

This section provides the research procedures of this present study, which consist of the following steps:

1) All book reviews (BR) both from The New York Times and Amazon.com are printed out and assigned specific labels: CR for Consumer Review and PR for Professional Review, following by the given numbers, for example, CR01 for Consumer Review No.1 and PR01 for Professional Review No.1.

2) As this research aims to differentiate between the writing of the professional book reviews and the consumer book reviews, the analysis will therefore focus solely on the content of the reviews. Graphics and materials that appear uniformly as a template or a given across the page such as the title of the review, the timestamp, the format purchased as well as the preliminary information (author, number of pages, price, publisher etc.) as already given by Amazon.com and as appeared at the end of every review from The New York Times will be excluded.

3) The reviews will be examined and analyzed for the move structure and the underlying communicative purposes of identified moves, sub-moves, and steps using the theoretical framework of genre analysis as previously delineated in Chapter 2: Literature Review.

(1) The coding protocol is developed using earlier research and guidelines on writing a book review from various online library sources (Appendix A) as previously explicated in Section 3.4: Data Analysis.

(2) The coding protocol is pilot-tested on a small sample of the corpus for reliability check.

(3) If discrepancies are found from the reliability check, the protocol will be revised. Otherwise, the research will proceed to the actual study using the obtained coding protocol.

4) As the move structure as well as the moves, sub-move, and steps are identified, the frequencies of each move, sub-move, and step will be calculated and presented as percentage in Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion.



5) The results of the analysis for both types of reviews are compared and contrasted. The researcher also provides discussion and replies to the research questions.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

This research draws on the theoretical framework of genre analysis, according to the work of Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). In order to analyze the move structure of the research sample, coding protocol will be developed based on previous literature (Jong & Burgers, 2013; Khunkitti, 2005; Motta-Roth, 1995; Nicolaisen, 2002; Skalicky, 2013; Valensky, 2010) and guidelines on writing a book review from various online library sources (can be found in the Appendix A).

#### **3.4.1 Pilot Study**

In order to verify the reliability of the coding protocol developed as already described in the earlier section, the coding protocol is pilot-tested on the total of 30 samples (15 for professional reviews and 15 consumer reviews). The samples used for the pilot study are the professional and consumer reviews of the following books:

- 1) The Silkworm by J.K. Rowling, as Robert Galbraith
- 2) The Bees by Laline Paull
- 3) The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon
- 4) Revival by Stephen King
- 5) Bryant & May and the Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler
- 6) The Laughing Monster by Denis Johnson
- 7) The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman
- 8) A Map of Betrayal by Ha Jin
- 9) Book of Strange New Things by Michel Faber
- 10) Viper's Nest by Martin Amis
- 11) The Children Act by Ian McEwan
- 12) The Monogram Murders by Sophie Hannah
- 13) The Paying Guests by Sarah Waters
- 14) Edge of Eternity by Ken Follett

## 15) The Bone Clock by David Mitchell

The detailed results of the pilot test can be found in Table: CR01-CR15 and Table PR01-PR15 in Appendix B.

In the next chapter, this coding protocol will be applied to the entire corpus. The frequencies of occurrence of each move, sub-move, and step will be calculated and summarized as percentage according to the template in Table 5. The more detailed table for the occurrence of the moves, sub-moves, and steps appeared in each particular sample can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 3.1** Frequencies of Occurrence of Moves, Sub-Moves, and Steps in BRs

<b>Rhetorical Structure</b>	<b>Communicative Purpose</b>	<b>CR XX</b>	<b>PR XX</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in CRs</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in PRs</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in BRs</b>
Move						
Sub-move						
Step						

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of the move analysis will be presented and discussed in relation to the research questions.

From the analysis, the frequencies of occurrence of moves, sub-moves, and steps in the BRs can be summarized as follows. (The detailed analysis as well as each move and step found in a particular sample can be found in Appendix B. Some parts of the text are excluded; the move analysis, however, has covered all the necessary details.)

**Table 4.1** Frequencies of Occurrence of Moves, Sub-Moves, and Steps in BRs

Rhetorical Structure	Communicative Purpose	Total Number of Occurrence in CRs (Percentage)	Total Number of Occurrence in PRs (Percentage)
M1	<b>Introduction</b>	84	100
SM1	<i>Capturing reader's attention</i>	52	76
SI	Raising a point from the related topic	24	52
SII	Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book	28	56
SM2	<i>Situating the book</i>	56	76
SI	Situating the book within the identity of the author	24	60

**Table 4.1** (Continued)

<b>Rhetorical Structure</b>	<b>Communicative Purpose</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in CRs (Percentage)</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in PRs (Percentage)</b>
SII	Situating the book within the genre of fiction	28	40
SIII	Situating the book according to readership	20	8
M2	<b>Describing the book</b>	92	100
SI	Describing the physical characteristics of the book	12	0
SII	Describing the story	80	100
SIII	Describing the character	48	68
SIV	Describing the reading experience	36	8
M3	<b>Evaluating the book</b>	100	96
SI	Providing evaluation of the author	64	76
SII	Providing evaluation of the book itself	28	4
SIII	Providing evaluation of the content of the book	64	84
M4	<b>Overall assessment</b>	92	84
SI	Recommending or disqualifying the book	36	12
SII	Summarizing the review or the content of the book	28	80

**Table 4.1** (Continued)

<b>Rhetorical Structure</b>	<b>Communicative Purpose</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in CRs (Percentage)</b>	<b>Total Number of Occurrence in PRs (Percentage)</b>
SIII	Leaving an ending with suspense	12	4
SIV	Giving comments related to personal experience	60	8
M5	<b>Reviewer information</b>	8	64
SI	Providing background information about the reviewer	4	20
SII	Providing a brief biography of the reviewer	4	40
M6	<b>Review information</b>	4	16
SI	Providing information/reasoning for writing the review	4	0
SII	Providing information/reasoning for updating the review	0	16

*Q1: “What are the generic structures of online professional and online consumer book reviews? Are they similar or different?”*

The results of the genre analysis and the summary provided in the above table show that both CRs and PRs share an almost similar generic structure albeit with difference in the occurrence of certain moves and steps used. According to the data, Move 1: Introduction and Move 2: Describing the book appear to be mandatory for

PRs. For Move 2: Describing the book, the Step that always appears (100% occurrence) in PRs is Step II: Describing the story. Move 2: Describing the character, Step IV: Describing the reading experience appears mostly in CRs (36%) while in PRs, the occurrence is very minor (8%). The total occurrence for Move 3: Evaluating the book is 96% for PRs and 100% for CRs and CRs tend to use Step II: Evaluating the book itself (28%) more than PRs (4%). For Move 4: Overall assessment, PRs tend to use Step II: Summarizing the review or the content of the book (80%) whereas CRs tend to use Step IV: Giving comments related to personal experience (60%). Step I: Recommending or disqualifying the book also appears more in CRs (36%) than PRs (12%). Move 5: Reviewer information and Move 6: Review information appear more in PRs (64% and 16% respectively) while in CRs, they are almost non-existent (8% and 4% respectively).

The following section describes each particular move and step as well as provides excerpts from PRs and CRs in which such move and step is presented as examples. For each move, an example of 1 CR and 1 PR (in the case that such move, sub-move, and step is presented in the CR/PR) for each sub-move and step will be presented. In the case that such move, sub-move, or step is not presented in the PR/CR, only one example will be presented.

#### Move 1: Introduction

The communicative purpose of this move is to introduce readers of the review to the book by either capturing the reader's attention (Sub-move 1) or situating a book in certain scopes (Sub-move 2). From the frequency of occurrence, this move is mandatory for PRs. Examples of these sub-moves can be seen in the following excerpts.

##### *Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention*

To capture reader's attention, available strategies are either raising a point from the related topic before introducing the book (Step 1) or highlighting certain aspects/parts of the book that might be interesting for readers (Step 2). Both of these steps can be found in both CRs and PRs. For example:

### Step I: Raising a point from the related topic

When it comes to matters of love and romance - why do some of us, with just one shot at life - choose safer harbors - despite being lucky enough to meet someone who's truly “the one”? When forced to think about the “one who got away” - obviously regrets are framed in higher relief as we pass 50, 60, 70, and - if we're like the Polish-American matriarch in this novel (Alma Belasco) - pass age 80 and beyond.

Source: CR22

Earlier this year, one of those BuzzFeed quizzes that tempt the idle with spurious but irresistible personality tests asked web surfers to click a box to identify their worst fear, choosing among nine popular forms of dread. Many of the choices in the Fear category were unsurprising — Failure, Cancer, Dying Alone — but one stood apart: Suddenly Becoming Stupid. Who would have thought, in this age of gung-ho, market-driven anti-intellectualism, that anxiety about fading brainpower was sufficiently potent and widespread to go viral? Who knew it was even, as millennials say, a thing?

Source: PR03

### Step II: Highlight parts/aspects of the book

The Peculiar Crimes Unit is now headed by Orion Banks and comes under the jurisdiction of the City of London Police. As a woman who plays by the book in order to further her career, she is determined not to let her stint in the unit ruin her careers and opted to play safe by asking the unit members to obtain prior sanction. But can a unit that is entrusted to tackle extraordinary cases as its name suggests follow the diktat of its new chief?

Source: CR05

There is a children's joke that goes something like this: Why was Dr. Frankenstein never lonely?

*Answer: Because he was good at making friends.*

The same might be said for novelists, whose solitary days of writing can lead — if the work is going well — to the creation of amusing companions. From Mary Shelley's monster to Bram Stoker's vampire, every variety of bizarre creature can come creeping up when a writer closes out reality and lets the imagination take over. If loneliness is to blame, then (M1-SM2-SI) Stephen King, who has created some of the most entertaining characters of any writer of his generation, must be one solitary guy.

Source: PR04

*Sub-move 2: Situating the book*

To give readers the scope of what the book is about, reviewers situate the book according to the identity of the author (Step 1), the genre of fiction (Step 2), and/or readership (Step 3). Example:

Step I: Situating the book within the identity of the author

Coming from an obscure, midlist, mystery author named Robert Galbraith such a statement might go unnoticed. But when the same passage is written by J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series and one of the most successful authors of all time, the words cannot help having a far greater impact.

Source: PR01

Step II: Situating the book within the genre of fiction

I couldn't wait to read *The North Water* after reading the synopsis, which made it sound like a (M1-SM2-SII) superlatively disturbing thriller bordering on horror.

Source: CR17

Step III: Situating the book according to readership

What do these very different volumes have in common? Only that, while embraced by a small but devoted followers, they are criminally underappreciated by the wider world.

Source: PR05



### Move 2: Describing the book

The communicative purpose of this move is to tell readers what book it is and what the book is about. The strategies include describing the physical characteristics of the books (Step I), describing the story (Step II), describing the characters (Step III), and describing the reader experience (Step IV).

From the frequency of occurrence, this move is mandatory for PRs. All PRs also exploit Step 2: Describing the book whereas Step 4: Describing the reading experience are almost non-existent in PRs but is more common in CRs. PRs also tend to use Step II together with Step III. Example:

#### Step I: Describing the physical characteristics of the book

This book weighs in at 552 pages and is densely packed with incident. It follows the career of Lilliet Berne, who when we meet her is an adored diva, a so-called “Falcon soprano” with a very distinctive, very sensitive voice who is the toast of Paris in the 1870s.

Source: CR19

#### Step II: Describing the story

In the not so distant future, the Meme, which is kind of like the most ridiculously amazing iPhone/iPad ever, has taken over. People love their Memes and rely on them a lot. Gone are books, paper, letters, dictionaries. . .

But what comes with this convenience? A virus. A word flu that is taking over, destroying coherent speech and causing individuals to become deathly ill.

Anana (like “banana” without the “A”) works at the Dictionary, where her father is in charge of one of the largest Dictionary rewrites in history. When he goes missing, and the word flu begins to rear its ugly head, Anana knows there is more to the story, including her ex-boyfriend potentially having caused this virus and disorder.

Source: CR03

The first takes place in 1984, when the 15-year-old Holly — who’s had strange episodes of hearing voices in her head — runs away from home and learns that her beloved little brother, Jacko, has disappeared. The second is in 1991, when a deeply cynical Cambridge student named Hugo Lamb (whom we met in the author’s 2006 novel, “Black

Swan Green”) falls in love with Holly, who is working as a bartender at a ski resort in the Alps.

The third is in 2004, when the war reporter Ed Brubeck — Holly’s partner (and the father of her daughter, Aoife) — tells her that he’s planning to leave them again to go back to Iraq. The fourth is in 2015, when Holly, now the best-selling author of a memoir about her paranormal experiences, becomes friends with Crispin Hershey, a middle-aged novelist who has exacted cruel vengeance on another writer who gave him a bad review.

Source: PR15

### Step III: Describing the character

Flora 717 may be the smallest character I have ever read about, but she is also one of the most fully-realized characters I have ever met, too. From the moment she’s born she’s... different. For her kind, “different” means instant death, but by the grace of a higher level bee, she is saved. Little did she know that her life would play a major part in a ploy for power, that so many difficulties would befall her and that she alone could change the fate her world. She is born as one of the lowest of the low on the hierarchical totem pole, but by both sheer luck and her own abilities, Flora 717 moves through various positions in her hive. As a result, the first half of the book is spent associating the reader to the hive and their way of life as Flora 717 is thrust from one role to another.

Source: CR02

E.H. is gentlemanly. E.H. “emanates an air of manly charisma.” E.H. is “unexpectedly tall.” His skin “exudes a warm glow.” He is “something of an artist,” the scion of a distinguished old Main Line family, a former seminary student and civil rights activist. To top it off, he is famous in a highly particular way. As Dr. Milton-Ferris, the principal investigator of Project E.H., says, he “will possibly be one of the most famous amnesiacs in the history of neuroscience.” In other words, E.H. is the kind of fellow to make an impressionable young neuropsychologist swoon.

Source: PR20

#### Step IV: Describing the reading experience

But I found myself completely absorbed in Faber's creation, tearing through this hefty volume in a matter of days. The characters all felt very real to me, with vivid personalities and abundant flaws. There were times when I would have liked more detail about certain events, particularly Peter's early days among the natives, but ultimately the book as a whole comes together very well. Various mysteries are satisfactorily resolved.

Source: CR09

When I finished the book, I stepped outside my door and into a spring day, full of buzzing and pollen, and I wanted to thank each and every bee for its service. Few novels create such a singular reading experience. The buzz you will hear surrounding this book and its astonishing author is utterly deserved.

Source: PR02

#### Move 3: Evaluating the book

The communicative purpose of this book is to provide assessment regarding the qualities of the author (Step I), of the book itself (Step II), or of the content of the book (Step III). To explicate, the assessment regarding the qualities of the author focuses on the ability of the author. The assessment regarding the qualities of the book itself chiefly talks about the physical characteristics of the book i.e. the cover, the page, the thickness etc. The assessment regarding the qualities of the content of the book talks about the story which is written inside the book.

This move is found in both CRs and PRs. And while the frequency of occurrence for PRs is not 100%, there are only few exceptions (PR18, PR19). Example:

#### Step I: Providing evaluation of the author

McGuire has an extraordinary talent for picturing a moment, offering precise, sharp, cinematic details. When he has to describe complex action, he -manages the physicality with immense clarity. He writes about violence with unsparing color and, at times, a sort of relish. The writing moves sometimes from the poetic to the purple, but McGuire is careful not to use too many metaphors or similes or too much fancy writing when he needs to make clear what cold feels like, or hunger or fear.

Source: PR17

### Step II: Providing evaluation of the book itself

Finally, the conceit of splashing Agatha Christie's name across fully half the book's cover and listing all Agatha Christie's books at the back of the novel strikes me as in the poorest of taste. This is NOT an Agatha Christie novel, and the use of Christie's name and the inclusion of the list of her own works smacks of presumption and crassness on the part of Hannah and the publisher

Source: CR12

### Step III: Providing evaluation of the content of the book

It's hard to believe that Jack would suddenly blow up their marriage of more than three decades by abruptly declaring his determination to have an affair, or that Fiona would have so little knowledge of his discontent over the years. The confluence of her sudden domestic crisis with the upsetting Adam Henry case feels equally contrived, as though the author were perfunctorily plugging his characters into a freeze-dried story without bothering to try to make any of it feel real.

Source: PR11

### Move 4: Overall assessment

The communicative purpose of this move is to conclude the reviewer's assessment of the book. Strategies include recommending or to disqualifying the book (Step I), summarizing the points made in the review or summarizing the content of the book itself (Step II), leaving an ending with suspense just so readers could become curious and persuaded (Step III), and/or giving comments related to personal reading experience (Step IV).

This move is found more in CRs than PRs, but the frequency of occurrence or both high (over 80%). In CRs, there is a trend that online consumer critics prefer to conclude their reviews with Step IV: giving comments related to personal experience. On the other hand, in PRs, professional critics tend to conclude their review with a summary of the review or the book and avoid articulating personal experience. Example:

### Step I: Recommending or disqualifying the book

Definitely recommended - especially if you are drawn to Umberto Eco's work.

Source: CR23

Do these observations take on more weight when we know that the writer is a superstar female author rather than a semi-obscure male one? I think they do.

Source: PR01

### Step II: Summarizing the review or the content of the book

Bottom line, it's a well told story with interesting characters, but it's a long way from any kind of historical veracity.

Source: CR14

In fact, Holly's emergence from "The Bone Clocks" as the most memorable and affecting character. Mr. Mitchell has yet created is a testament to his skills as an old-fashioned realist, which lurk beneath the razzle-dazzle postmodern surface of his fiction, and which, in this case, manage to transcend the supernatural nonsense in this arresting but bloated novel.

Source: PR15

### Step III: Leaving an ending with suspense

I ended up really liking this book. It is dark and disturbing and unlike any story I have ever read. It takes work to keep up with all the German names and ranks of the characters but that effort is worth it. It also takes effort to keep up with the plot as three very different narrators tell their stories bit by bit with overlapping timelines. These three very different points of view give very interesting insight into the minds and actions of the characters. I won't give any of the plot away because I do not agree with that type of book review. I think the reader should get to find out things as they go.

Source: CR10

#### Step IV: Giving comments related to personal experience

Perhaps I am too enamored of Masterpiece and BBC shows such as “Sherlock”, “The Bletchley Circle” and “Foyle’s War”, for, the entire time I was reading Sarah Waters’ wonderful new novel, “The Paying Guests”, I was casting it for a period-piece Masterpiece Mystery.

Source: CR13

I ended up really liking this book. It is dark and disturbing and unlike any story I have ever read. It takes work to keep up with all the German names and ranks of the characters but that effort is worth it. It also takes effort to keep up with the plot as three very different narrators tell their stories bit by bit with overlapping timelines. These three very different points of view give very interesting insight into the minds and actions of the characters. I won't give any of the plot away because I do not agree with that type of book review. I think the reader should get to find out things as they go.

I have been thinking about this book a lot after finishing it. The characters, their actions, the time in history it was based in, the madness... I fear ever having to look in such a mirror myself. I dread having to see what might be there.

Source: CR10

#### Move 5: Reviewer information

The communicative purpose of this move is to provide information about the reviewer, which can either be by providing background information about the reviewer (Step I) and/or providing the reviewer’s brief biography (Step II). This move is found mostly in PRs in which most reviewers leave a brief biography about themselves. This move is almost non-existent in CRs. Example:

#### Step I: Providing background information about the reviewer

Oh, I should add – (M5-SI) I am a professional editor and a very prolific reader.

Source: CR01

Step II: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer

Joe Hill is the author of a story collection, “20th Century Ghosts,” and three novels, most recently “NOS4A2.”

Source: PR25

Move 6: Review information

The communicative purpose of this move is to provide additional information about the review, which can be about the reason/information such review is written by the reviewer (Step I), and/or the reason/information such review is updated (Step II). This move does not appear often in both CRs and PRs and therefore optional. Example:

Step I: Providing information/reason for writing the review

I read a free review copy.

Source: CR04

Step II: Providing information/reason for updating the review

Correction: October 4, 2015

A review on Sept. 20 about “Undermajordomo Minor,” a novel by Patrick deWitt, misidentified a character who asks the hero what he wants from life. He is a strange visitor dressed in burlap, not the village priest.

Source: PR24

From the genre analysis, the sequence of Moves for each CR can be listed as follows:

CR01: M1-M3-M1-M2-M5-M4

CR02: M1-M2-M3-M4

CR03: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

CR04: M1-M3-M4-M6

CR05: M1-M2-M3-M4

CR06: M2-M4-M3-M4

CR07: M1-M2-M3-M4-M2-M3-M4-M3-M4

CR08: M2-M3-M4

CR09: M1-M2-M3-M2-M4

CR10: M1-M2-M3-M4

CR11: M1-M2-M3-M4

CR12: M1-M3-M2-M4-M2-M3-M4

CR13: M4-M1-M3-M2

CR14: M1-M2-M3-M4

CR15: M1-M3-M2-M3-M2-M3

CR16: M1-M4-M2-M3-M4-M3

CR17: M1-M3-M2-M4

CR18: M1-M3-M2-M3-M2-M3-M4

CR19: M2-M3-M4

CR20: M1-M2-M3-M2-M4

CR21: M1-M2-M3-M2-M3-M4

CR22: M1-M4-M2-M3-M4

CR23: M1-M3-M2-M3-M4

CR24: M1-M4- M2-M3-M4

CR25: M4-M2-M3-M4

From the genre analysis, the sequence of Moves for each PR can be listed as follows:

PR01: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

PR02: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

PR03: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

PR04: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

PR05: M1-M2-M3-M4-M6

PR06: M1-M2-M3-M4

PR07: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

PR08: M1-M2-M3-M4

PR09: M1-M2-M3-M2-M4-M5



PR10: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5-M6  
 PR11: M1-M2-M3-M2  
 PR12: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5  
 PR13: M1-M2-M3-M4-M3-M5  
 PR14: M1-M2-M3-M2  
 PR15: M1-M4-M3-M2-M3-M4  
 PR16: M1-M3-M2-M3-M4  
 PR17: M1-M2-M3-M5  
 PR18: M1-M2-M4-M3-M5  
 PR19: M1-M2-M4-M5-M6  
 PR20: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5  
 PR21: M1-M3-M2-M4-M5  
 PR22: M1-M3-M2-M3-M4-M5  
 PR23: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5  
 PR24: M1-M2-M3-M4-M6  
 PR25: M1-M2-M3-M4-M5

It can be noted that the moves and steps found in PRs are more structured. Most PRs follow the uniform of Move 1->Move 2->Move 3->Move 4-> Move 5 (Move 6 rarely appears, thus it is optional). All PRs always start with Move 1: Introduction and usually follow by Move 2: Describing the book or Move 3: Evaluating the book and conclude with Move 4: Overall assessment. Move 5: Reviewer information is often left at the end of the review. An interesting point here is that Move 2: Describing the book and Move 3: Evaluating the book are often used together and the sequence of their appearance are interchangeable. For example, the sequence of moves appeared in PR09 is Move 1->Move 2->Move 3->Move 2->Move 4->Move 5 and the sequence of moves appeared in PR16 is Move 1->Move 3->Move 2->Move 3->Move 4.

In contrast, CRs are much less structured. While some CRs follow the same pattern as PRs, the sequence of the rest is less consistent. Even though most CRs start with Move 1: Introduction, Move 2: Describing the story can replace Move 1: Introduction at the top of the review, resulting in that review having no Move 1. Such

reviews that start with Move 2 are CR06, CR08, and CR19. Move 3: Evaluating the story and Move 4: Overall assessment too can also appear anywhere in the review although Move 3 can be found often together with Move 2 just like in PRs.

*Q2: What are the linguistic implications of the discrepancies found in the written structures of these two types of reviews?*

The findings of this paper have illustrated that language used in book reviews may be a distinguishing factor to differentiate between reviews written by professional critics and reviews written by consumer critics. The most obvious difference is how the critics structure their reviews. PRs are apparently more uniform than CRs, which is a good indicator for the expertise of the writer. According to previous literature, expertise of the critics and the language used in the written review resulted in the effectiveness/perceived helpfulness of the review (e.g. Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009; Willemsen et al., 2010, Willemsen et al., 2011). It is likely that professional critics know how to exploit the use of ‘professional’ language.

It could be seen from the findings of this paper that professional critics tend to avoid mentioning their personal experience and opt instead to set the more neutral tone (despite the implicit positive/negative tone of the review) by describing and summarizing the content of the book or the review itself. They also use words such as ‘you’ or ‘readers’ instead of ‘I’ to describe what one might find from reading the book. This is in agreement with the previous research (Willemsen et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2010), which mention that professional critics might be less persuasive because some consumers might expect them to be less trustworthy. As a result, PRs tend not to recommend or disqualify a book directly. In my opinion, this can also be seen as a form of soft selling the idea because readers of such reviews could still be persuaded by the tone of the language given the illusion that they have come to such conclusion themselves. This is because PRs also set the positive/negative tone of the review, but end the review in the way that readers are ones to decide whether the book is worthy of investment. Therefore, it could be said that this might be the reason PRs are perceived as having more impact upon the readers.

On the other hand, consumer critics tend to express their personal experience. The use of the word 'I' is prominent across the reviews. While their CRs are less 'professionally' structured, for people who believe that PRs are more subjected to bias and personal connection might find that these CRs are more trustworthy. Because the CRs drawn as sample for this research are the ones voted by users on Amazon.com as most helpful, it can be said that for the Amazon.com discourse community, articulation of personal experience in a review is valued as trustworthy and helpful.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Online consumer reviews are a phenomenon emerged by the rise and expansion of the Internet technology. As a type of WOMs, it is regarded by potential buyers as a source of information to reduce uncertainty in buying, and, therefore, is influential for a product's sales. This type of review is different from the conventional reviews written by professional critics because consumers themselves are empowered by the ability to write and publish their own reviews of a purchased product. As a result, online consumer reviews have become an attractive topic for the academic circle. Many researchers have investigated the topic of online consumer reviews from different lights (Mumdabi & Schuff, 2010; Schindler & Bickart, 2012; Skalickly, 2013) while also comparing them to the conventional reviews written by professional critics (Jong & Burgers, 2013; Reinstein & Snyder, 2005). For example, the perceived helpfulness/trustworthiness issue of online consumer reviews, the impact of these reviews, factors that play significant roles in making a review effective, etc. One of the key factors identified is the writer's expertise (Jong & Burgers, 2013), which in turn, can be classified by the language used in the written reviews. A number of past literature have already studied genre analysis of book reviews and online reviews (Valensky, 2010; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Willemsen et al., 2010; Willemsen et al., 2011). However, research on online book reviews, in particular, is still lacking. This, coupled with the fact that comparative studies on the genre analysis of reviews written by professional and consumer critics are still scarce, is the reason why this paper aims to explore the structures of book reviews written by professional critics and online consumers critic utilizing the framework of genre analysis. The objective of this research is to answer 2 main questions: 1) What are the generic structures of

these two types of reviews? Are they different or similar? 2) What are the linguistic implications of the discrepancies found in the written structures of these two types of reviews?

The researcher has selected Amazon.com as a source for research sample for online consumer critics because Amazon.com is one of the largest online retailers up to date. As for the research sample for professional critics, The New York Times is a good candidate due to its being an influential magazine so well-known across the world. 25 reviews were first taken off The New York Times website at random, then 25 reviews of the same books were selected from Amazon.com website's "most helpful" section. Because Amazon.com can also be regarded as a discourse community, sample of reviews taken from the section users voted as "most helpful" may reflect the preference of the users on Amazon.com. This, henceforth, could be worthy taking note of as it may play a distinguishing role between these two types of reviews.

The coding protocol was adapted from the book review guidelines, previous research, and the pilot study. The findings from the application of move analysis have illustrated that professional reviews follow quite strictly the pattern of Move 1->Move 2->Move 3->Move 4->Move 5 with Move 6 being optional. Move 1 always appears at the top of professional reviews. Move 2 and Move 3 are also used together and can appear before or after each other in a review's sequence. The most used strategies for move 2 are describing the story and describing the character, which usually appear together. The review usually concludes with Move 4 with the most used strategy of summarizing the review or the content of the book. In contrast, online consumer reviews are much less structured. While most online consumer reviews start with Move 1, some reviews exclude Move 1 completely and start instead with Move 2. Except Move 1, all other moves can appear anywhere in the review. Move 5 and Move 6 are rare for online consumer reviews.

Furthermore, steps that involve personal experience tend to be avoided by professional critics. This could be because some potential buyers might expect professional critics to be subjected to bias and personal connection. Therefore, professional critics tend to write their reviews to sound less personal and less persuasive. This point is highlighted by the fact that professional reviews rarely

recommend or disqualify a book directly. They opt instead to summarize the review or the content of the book. This, however, does not mean professional reviews are completely neutral. The positive/negative tone is set by the writing (as would be more clearly shown in Move 3) while the summarization at the end might give readers an illusion of having come to such conclusion themselves. Therefore, while professional reviews might sound less persuasive, soft selling could also be a strategy at work.

On the other hand, the inconsistent structure of reviews written by online consumers is a speaker for itself regarding the writer's expertise. Jong and Burgers (2013) mentioned that the expertise of the writer could be a significant factor in the effectiveness of the review. However, the feedback on the Amazon.com discourse community might be different as these "less professional" reviews are the ones voted as most helpful. It could be possible that these online consumer reviews are perceived as more "more truthful" due to the story of personal experience relayed by fellow users, this making these "more truthful" reviews effective.

## **5.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

This paper only focuses on the written structures of the text without taking into account the possible impact of the design of the review system for each website, for example, the limitation of word count, the allowance to insert pictures and links, the presentation of the reviews, etc. These factors might play a role in users' preference, which might, in turn, affect the perceived helpfulness of the reviews. Future research could explore these issues and possible impacts in the light of multimodal analysis.

On the issue of the review's impacts on readers, a deeper investigation on the lexico-grammatical aspects of reviews as well as the attitudes of readers are also interesting.

As opposed to the customer reviews on Amazon.com, The New York Times website offers a much narrower selection of book reviews articles and limited access to a certain number of articles without subscription. For this reason, the researcher picked first random samples of book reviews from those available on New York Times website, then proceeded to fetching reviews of the same books on

Amazon.com. Therefore, the genre range of the books for the book review samples is very much likely limited to the selection on The New York Times website. Future research could also expand from this limitation of this paper's research sample by using reviews from other online book review sources i.e. Goodreads, Barnes & Noble, Kirkus Reviews. Genre analysis on other types of online reviews is also

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Guidelines for Writing a Book Review from Library Sources**

## Appendix A

### Guidelines for Writing a Book Review from Library Sources

Step	Description
Source A: <a href="http://guides.library.queensu.ca/bookreviews/writing">http://guides.library.queensu.ca/bookreviews/writing</a>	
1. Preliminary information	Author, publisher, place, date, background
2. Introduction	Capture reader's attention and set the tone of your view
3. Development	Develop your point of view (evaluation/descriptive)
4. Conclusion	Assessment (recommend/decommend)
Source B: <a href="http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/content.php?pid=54968&amp;sid=827653">http://guides.library.ualberta.ca/content.php?pid=54968&amp;sid=827653</a>	
1. Full biography info	Author, edition, publication, heading
2. Brief description	Brief description of contents
3. Assessment of author's authority/bias	Assessment of author's authority/bias
4. Evaluation of strength/weakness	Evaluation of strength/weakness based on author's purpose
5. Overall assessment	Overall assessment
Source C: <a href="http://oldwebsite.lautentian.ca/library/book_e.php">http://oldwebsite.lautentian.ca/library/book_e.php</a>	
1. General field	Subject the book fits into
2. Book's purpose	What the author wants to accomplish
3. Book's title	What the title of the book suggests, the fitness of title
4. Contents	-Type of book (descriptive, narrative, exposition) -Main idea -How they are develop (chronologically, typically, both; the outline of the book)
5. Book's authority	-Author's idea -Author's uses of sources -Author's background and qualification
6. Author's style	The style of the author's writing
7. Book format	The format of the book
8. Significance	The significance of the book






## **Appendix B**


### **Genre Analysis of Book Reviews**

## Appendix B



### Genre Analysis of Book Reviews

**CR01: The Silkworm by J.K. Rowling, as Robert Galbraith**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SIII) I adored the first book, so I had high hopes for this one. I mean, really, really high hopes. I arranged my entire week around reading it so that once I started, I wouldn't have to put it down.</p> <p>This is always a dangerous endeavor, because if the book turns out to be less good than I hoped, I'm deeply disappointed.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M3-SII) As you can guess by the title of this review, quite the opposite occurred.</p> <p>(M3-SI) In my opinion, Galbraith's greatest strength is the ability to build believable, unique characters who are realistic and have distinct speaking styles. Well, that and stunningly good prose.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself</p>
<p>(M1-SM2-SIII) It isn't necessary to read The Cuckoo's Calling first, but I think it's a good idea. This book begins a few months after the last one left off, and the relationships have progressed accordingly. There aren't particular heroes or villains, just real people who are good and bad, kind and mean, ugly and pretty -- where none of those three things necessarily correspond to any of the others.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M2-SII) In any case, Strike and Robin are going about their normal business, with all the usual small misunderstandings and unexpected skills, etc. that go along with most working relationships. Then, when Strike is exhausted and not thinking clearly, he takes on</p>	

<p>a new client, a rather worn-looking middle-aged woman who wants him to find her husband and thinks it'll be a short, simple job, and she's sure someone else will pay his bill.</p> <p>Ah hah. Sure that's how it's going to work.</p> <p>And so our story kicks off.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>Oh, I should add – (M5-SI) I am a professional editor and a very prolific reader.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) Of the dozens of new books I've read so far this year, this is the best.</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>



**CR02: The Bees by Laline Paull**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) THE BEES by Laline Paull is undoubtedly the most unusual book I have read in at least a decade (or more). The story does for bees and religion, “group think” and society roles what Animal Farm did for barnyard animals and government.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SII) While I disagree with the comparisons to The Handmaid’s Tale and The Hunger Games that THE BEES has been receiving, I can see the reasoning behind these comparisons. Fans of The Hunger Games will recognize the oppression of “the people” and admire Flora 717’s determination. The overall “feel” of the novel (of a young bee’s “coming-of-age” and questioning the structure of her current society) will also be a major draw for YA readers. (With that in mind, this comparison may be a smart marketing decision, overall.) As for The Handmaid’s Tale, I suppose you could find some logic in this when you consider the hierarchical position of the bees in the hive and Flora 717’s struggles in the later half of the book. But when it comes to the overall tone, plus the direction of the story and the manner in which it is told, I cannot help but compare THE BEES to Animal Farm. This book is dark, y’all. This book has a statement to make. As I have already said, THE BEES does for religion what Animal Farm did for government. I see this book as high school or college reading material some day. Or at least, I hope it will be. This is a story whose topics will easily withstand the passage of time and are so important for future generations.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
<p>(M2-SII) For a story that takes place almost entirely within a few square feet of space, there is so much to be said about the inhabitants of that space. Their world is so grand, full of societal rules, an all-encompassing “purpose” and almost (who am I kidding, this is more than “almost”) fanatical religion. The creative lengths the author took in tying the bee’s world into our own are astounding. I wish I could point out every way that</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>


she makes her characters sympathetic while making them so very “other” and obviously bees, but that would be a novel unto itself...

(M2-SIII) Flora 717 may be the smallest character I have ever read about, but she is also one of the most fully-realized characters I have ever met, too. From the moment she’s born she’s... different. For her kind, “different” means instant death, but by the grace of a higher level bee, she is saved. Little did she know that her life would play a major part in a ploy for power, that so many difficulties would befall her and that she alone could change the fate her world. She is born as one of the lowest of the low on the hierarchical totem pole, but by both sheer luck and her own abilities, Flora 717 moves through various positions in her hive. As a result, the first half of the book is spent associating the reader to the hive and their way of life as Flora 717 is thrust from one role to another. Her position is obviously uncommon for bees, since they are born into and usually die performing the task they were born into. She obtains a wider view of her world and is what we humans would call “enlightened” by what she learns. I enjoyed the tour, and Flora 717 is a most enjoyable guide.

Move 2: Describing the book  
SIII: Describing the character

<p>(M3-SIII) The story is rife with matters of chance and fate, faith and predisposed role expectations — I especially appreciate the questions THE BEES asks with regard to morality, religion and leadership. Just because Flora 717 is born “different”, does this automatically make her a sympathetic character? Does the knowledge she gains make her decision “good” or “right” when she tries to override the mindset that has been ingrained in her people since before time itself? Will her every action be met with agreement by the reader? Although Flora 717 is the “hero” of the story, she does make mistakes, she commits crimes against society, she makes highly questionable decisions. Her mistakes, as well as the impact they have on the hive, only adds to the depth of her character, her world and the story. Never does Flora 717 think of herself as “better” than others, never do her intentions become overly-preachy to the reader... I really appreciated this, though, sadly, the fear that this could happen sat in the corner of my mind as I read, and as Flora became more determined in her “purpose”.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>Ultimately, I loved where both Flora 717 and her hive ended up at the conclusion of THE BEES. It was fitting... and that epilogue was superb! What a touchingly sly little twist!</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>(M4-SII) Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inventive, original, unique... All of these words – and more – will be thrown around when you see or hear people describing THE BEES. The book is 100% deserving of these descriptions.</li> <li>- There is plenty of action and suspense. Correction: There is plenty of terrifying action and suspense. Even with the highly descriptive manner in which the story is told, I doubt that readers will become bored...</li> </ul> <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ... With that being said. Maybe some readers will grow bored learning more than they ever thought they would ever learn about bees. What do I know, right?</li> <li>- BEES.</li> </ul> <p>(M4-SIV) Come on, guys, we are talking about bees here... Let's face it. THE BEES will either make you shudder to think of such a small space crawling with thousands of insects – or it will open your eyes to a world you have never known. I will say it again: I have always despised bees. I have always been that girl who will run away screaming if one comes within 20 feet of her person. But my eyes have been opened. Maybe it's the idea of bees using "brooms and dustpans" to clean up messes (seriously cute visual!), maybe it's the motherly way they look over their larva in the nursery, maybe it's the endless thought of dripping honey... but I'm not so afraid anymore, but rather... intrigued.</p> <p>In contrast, I think I now despise and fear wasps 10 million times more than I had previously. Thank you, Laline, for that.</p> <p>THE BEES is destined to become one of my tops reads in 2014.</p>	<div> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p> </div> <div> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p> </div>
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(M4-SII) Plot: 10 Characters: 9 Setting: 10 Pacing: 9 Style: 10  Grade: 98	 <div>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</div>
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### CR03: The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) What if your iPhones and iPads were more than what they are? What if they could sense what you needed before you even asked? What if they could answer your questions, not by you asking them to Siri, but before you even realize you were doing to think them?</p> <p>The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon describes a similar type of world.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p>
<p>(M2-SII) In the not so distant future, the Meme, which is kind of like the most ridiculously amazing iPhone/iPad ever, has taken over. People love their Memes and rely on them a lot. Gone are books, paper, letters, dictionaries. . .</p> <p>But what comes with this convenience? A virus. A word flu that is taking over, destroying coherent speech and causing individuals to become deathly ill.</p> <p>Anana (like "banana" without the "A") works at the Dictionary, where her father is in charge of one of the largest Dictionary rewrites in history. When he goes missing, and the word flu begins to rear its ugly head, Anana knows there is more to the story, including her ex-boyfriend potentially having caused this virus and disorder.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SII, M3-SIII) The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon was an outstanding book, written in 26 chapters each named for a letter of the alphabet. Told from both Anana's and Bart's (her father's close co-worker) perspectives, The Word Exchange leaves you thinking. Are we really that far away from a society where everyone relies too much on electronic devices?</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) The Word Exchange is gripping, captivating, yet realistic as well. It's the kind of book that might encourage you to put down your iPhone and check out some books, letters, or even a physical dictionary.</p> <p>What word would you miss if it disappeared from the English language?</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Rebecca @ Love at First Book</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

**CR04: Revival by Stephen King**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) Finally, a return to the form of Stephen King we've been waiting for. Or at least I was - I'm one of those annoying Stephen King fans who says "nothing's as good as his first five books, blah blah" like I'm expecting everyone to stay the same writer they were at 65 as they were at 35.</p> <p>The dustjacket promises King's "most terrifying conclusion Stephen King has ever written," and that's a bold claim to make - especially when stacked up against "Pet Sematary" or "Salem's Lot." I'm not sure I would call the conclusion 'terrifying,' but I would absolutely call it dreadful - with a capital D.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) First and foremost - the overall editing is very tight, very controlled and on-point. I felt like a few of his recent books were overwritten and bloated; they looked good on a bookshelf maybe, but at 700+ pages the stories just went on so long. And there's a point where the tension fades away too much, and the reader is waiting for the next event to occur. For a thriller/horror that's not what I want as a reader.</p> <p>Here, in about 400 pages, the story always connects together. There were never any long lulls of boring exposition and mundane diversions. Everything matters to the story, and keeps the flow of the action moving.</p> <p>The story's overall villain may or may not be who you expect. What matters is that the motivations and reasonings behind various decisions makes sense - nobody behaves in a way that I feel like cheats the reader or jumps to an unearned conclusion or revelation. I'm accepting the actions of everyone, and again, earning that credibility is big for a thriller - it lets the reader invest with the story, and not get diverted by unrealistic events (even though the plot is of course unrealistic).</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>I wanted to see what would happen next. I plodded through "Dr Sleep" over weeks - I was just bored with it. Here, I actively wanted to get to the reading so I could find out how it was all going to conclude. I was invested, thrilled and dreading each new step.</p> <p>(SI) Dialogue is not one of King's present-day strengths, I'm sad to say, and that's not different here. People don't sound real. And the conclusion could have worked better if he'd been a little more subtle. He gets a little carried away with some over-the-top descriptions that might have achieved more horror with a little less reliance on shock value (again - not a spoiler, the dustjacket tells you it's going to be horrifying!). But I dunno - still very satisfying.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M4-SIV) I could easily have given this five stars, but it's tough with Stephen King where I automatically compare his recent books to the older books I loved so much. Fair? No. But whatever. It's just a star. This was my favorite ending since "Pet Sematary." And by favorite, I mean the one that creeped me out or unsettled me. Like I said, terrifying, maybe not. But dreadful? As in the dictionary definition - "terror or apprehension as to something in the future?"</p> <p>Like I said - with a capital D.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
<p>I read a free review copy.</p>	<p>M6: Review information SI: Providing information/reasoning for writing the review</p>

### CR05: Bryant & May and the Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) Bryant &amp; May and The Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler is the eleventh book in the Bryant &amp; May series and is as entertaining as ever. The Peculiar Crimes Unit is now headed by Orion Banks and comes under the jurisdiction of the City of London Police. As a woman who plays by the book in order to further her career, she is determined not to let her stint in the unit ruin her careers and opted to play safe by asking the unit members to obtain prior sanction. But can a unit that is entrusted to tackle extraordinary cases as its name suggests follow the diktat of its new chief?</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p>
<p>Two teenagers looking for a quiet place away from prying eyes witnessed a dead man rising from his grave in London's St. George's Gardens. One of them, Romain Curtis, is found dead a few days later on a pavement. As the PCU investigates the case, Arthur Bryant is tasked with investigating another puzzling mystery involving seven raven which disappeared from the Tower of London. Soon Bryant and his partner John May are surrounded by dead bodies as the two seemingly different cases intertwine.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SI, M3-SII, M3-SIII) Bryant &amp; May and The Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler is a crime mystery that is a real joy to read. Cleverly plotted with its twists and surprises all the way to the end, it is a real surprise that author Christopher Fowler has managed to write a series that is both thrilling and refreshingly enjoyable even after eleven books. Arthur Bryant and John May are truly fascinating characters, and with each book there seems to be a new dimension to their characters.</p> <p>(M4-SI) Fans who have enjoyed the previous books will definitely find this latest installment another great read.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing evaluation of the author  SII: Providing the evaluation of the book  SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p>





**CR06: The Laughing Monster by Denis Johnson**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M2-SIII) Roland Nair is not a scrupulous man. He's unfaithful to the woman he claims to love and sees nothing wrong with seeking the services of underage street prostitutes in various African nations. He feels no qualms about selling valuable American information to a sketchy Arab. He tells so many lies that not even he or the reader can be sure what's true. And his African friend, Michael Adriko, is just as ready to lie, cheat and betray his way to wealth. And both are capable of charming almost any woman or man, including readers of "The Laughing Monsters."</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M2-SII) After seven years apart, the two old friends meet up in Sierra Leone where neither will tell the other exactly what his latest schemes involve or why he needs the other's help. To complicate things, Michael is traveling in the company of his new fiancée, a strikingly gorgeous woman from Colorado who is all too willing not to question his shady dealings. When Michael's plans take them all to Uganda and Congo, thing go steadily downhill for everyone.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M4) "Laughing Monsters" is a delight to read, with a plot that continues to grow more complex and surprise the reader with almost every scene.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SI: Recommend or disqualifying the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Denis Johnson is a master at revealing layer after layer in the personalities and psyches of Nair and Michael, (M3-SIII) all with minimal prose and dialogue that moves so fast it practically sizzles. He weaves many of Africa's current social issues into a story that sounds completely plausible. At the novel's conclusion Nair and Michael claim to have learned from their, at times, harrowing experiences.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SIII) Indeed, each has been changed, but whether either will stick with his resolutions of improved behavior is the reader's guess.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIII: Leaving an ending with suspense</p>

**CR07: The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-SM1-SI, M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) The nitty-gritty: A magical history of Brooklyn, filled with mysteries and monsters, written in Alice Hoffman's incomparable style.	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</p> <p>SI: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
(M3-SI) Alice Hoffman used to be one of my favorite authors before I started blogging. I've read many of her books (although not all—she's written over thirty!), but as book bloggers know, once you start accepting books for review, many of your favorite authors fall by the wayside. But when this one came up on Edelweiss, I knew it was time to make time for Hoffman again. And I'm so glad I did.	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
(M4-SIV) Reading The Museum of Extraordinary Things was like a balm on my soul. Hoffman's familiar writing style is so comforting, and even though this book lacked the magic realism that she's known for, I found myself loving every word.	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
<p>(M2-SII) The story takes place in Brooklyn, New York in the year 1911, but flashes back to the early lives of the two main characters, as we get to know more about their family histories. (M2-SIII) Coralie is eighteen and has been part of her father's Museum of Extraordinary Things as a sideshow attraction for nearly half her life. She is the "human mermaid," forced to wear a fake mermaid tale and swim in a tank of water for hours a day. At night, Coralie practices swimming in the freezing Hudson River in order to increase her lung capacity, while dreaming of an easier life that doesn't include being exploited by her strict father.</p> <p>Parallel to Coralie's story we meet Eddie, (M2-SIII) a refugee from the Ukraine who has become adept at taking journalistic photographs of crime scenes. (M2-SII) When Eddie is hired by a stranger to find a missing girl named Hannah, Eddie's and Coralie's lives become linked through a series of events. As Hoffman reveals bit by bit what happened to Hannah, the paths of Eddie and Coralie slowly come together, before the mystery is solved.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>(M3-SI) Hoffman has clearly done tons of research for her book. One of my favorite things about the story was the amount of historical detail she wove into the narrative.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) Clearly 1911 was a great year for story fodder, because a lot of horrific (but interesting!) things take place.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) Focusing her writer's lens on Brooklyn, and in particular on Coney Island, the author includes such historic events as the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, the opening (and closing!) of the ambitious amusement park Dreamland, and the battle of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union to secure safe working conditions for girls and women in factories. Let's just say I learned a lot reading this book! You can tell that Hoffman loves New York and is passionate about the dangers young factory workers faced near the turn of the century. Some of her descriptions of the city are so detailed, it's almost as if she herself had stepped back in time to take notes.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SI) If you're looking for a fast-paced book, however, you need to keep looking. And this is not a criticism by any means.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI) One of Hoffman's skills is her ability to develop her plot and characters slowly in such a way that the reader never gets bored, but instead savors each discovery, knowing that the mystery will eventually be revealed.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) The story construction was hard to get used to at first, I'll admit. Each chapter focuses on either Coralie or Eddie, and switches back and forth between the two. The first part of the chapter is told in first person, as the character tells us about his or her past, and the second part switches to third person and takes place in the present. This jumping around confused me at first, but once I understood what the author was doing, it all made sense.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>(M3-SI) Hoffman is brilliant at introducing small details, and then pulling them through the story. For example, when Eddie is a boy working as a tailor in a factory, he steals an expensive pocket watch from the factory owner's son. This watch pops up again and again during Eddie's story, as he struggles with the idea of whether or not to return it. Hoffman is such a seasoned writer (she's been writing books for over forty years!) that it's no surprise that nothing in this story is random. (M3-SIII) Every item, every detail, and every character is there for a reason.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) As with most of Hoffman's novels, romance eventually blooms between Coralie and Eddie, but it's agonizingly slow (until they actually meet—then it almost feels like instalove!) and things don't go quite the way you expect them to. The author often writes about love and how it can be found in the most unexpected of places, and this novel is no exception.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SIV) There are so many things to discover in this book, and I've barely scratched the surface with this review. Simply put, The Museum of Extraordinary Things was a treat to read. It made me happy—despite the unhappy moments—and I am anxiously awaiting Hoffman's next book.</p>	 <p>M4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
<p>(M4-SI) Don't miss this one!</p>	 <p>M4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>



**CR08: A Map of Betrayal by Ha Jin**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Gary Shang's name wasn't really Gary. That was a name he adopted when he went to work for the Americans in Shanghai, leaving his new Chinese bride behind, as the struggle for domination over China came to a head between the Chinese Nationalists and Mao Zehdong's Communists. Over the years he kept his job, following the Americans first to Taiwan and then to America.</p> <p>In America he worked for decades as a translator for the CIA. He married an American girl, had a daughter, Lillian, and became a citizen. He also had a Chinese mistress that his American wife bitterly resented. He never went back to China, though he made a trip now and again to British-ruled Hong Kong. And he never said a word about the bride that he had married, left behind in China and never saw again. It took thirty years for the American government to realize that they had a mole in their midst. Gary Shang committed suicide in prison.</p> <p>Despite Lillian's repeated promise to her mother than she would never contact her father's mistress, she found her in Montreal after her mother died. Her father's diaries were waiting for her . . .</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>Grandma's \$0.02 - Ha Jin's A Map of Betrayal: A Novel is (M3-SIII) beautifully written, readily bringing both China and Gary Shang to life. Easy to read, (M4-SIV) I raced through this in a single sitting. Highly enjoyable.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) Recommended</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>

**CR09: Book of Strange New Things by Michel Faber**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-S2-SI) I really enjoyed Faber's earlier novel <i>The Crimson Petal and the White</i>, so I was excited to see that he'd written another one. (M1-S1-SII) The premise was also intriguing: a Christian missionary travels to another planet to work with the native population there, while receiving updates from his wife about the increasingly apocalyptic conditions back home on earth.</p> <p>(M2-SII) The book interweaves the story of Peter's missionary work among the aliens with the story of his increasingly strained relationship with his wife, which suffers from the vast distance between them and the enormous difference in their circumstances.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SI) There are some themes here that I don't normally find very compelling, namely issues of faith and marital difficulties.</p> <p>(M2-SIV) But I found myself completely absorbed in Faber's creation, tearing through this hefty volume in a matter of days. The characters all felt very real to me, with vivid personalities and abundant flaws. There were times when I would have liked more detail about certain events, particularly Peter's early days among the natives, but ultimately the book as a whole comes together very well. Various mysteries are satisfactorily resolved.</p> <p>The only aspect of the story that (M4-SIV) I found somewhat unsatisfying was its open-endedness; there are hints about how everything may turn out, but we don't actually see it all through to the end. I can understand why Faber stopped where he did; important decisions have been made and events have been put in motion, so that it might actually have been anticlimactic to pursue each thread down to its final resolution. I just wasn't quite ready to leave this story yet, which might speak as much to its power as to anything else.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SIV: Describing the reading experience</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>

<p>(M4-SIV) A word of warning: despite the central role of faith, this is definitely not what I would classify as "Christian fiction". It opens with a sex scene and contains plenty of profanity, along with descriptions of bodily functions, masturbation, etc. This is the sort of content that could have come across as gratuitous, but instead it adds an element of gritty realism. The religious message is also not entirely unwavering, which I appreciated as a non-Christian reader.</p> <p>I'd like to say more about the plot and the various issues that arise in the course of Peter's mission, but (M4-SIV) I think it's best to approach the story without too much prior information and just allow yourself to get caught up in the flow. There are plenty of surprising elements here whose impact might be diminished by reading about them beforehand. Peter sets off on a journey into the unknown, and I'm very glad that I had an opportunity to travel along with him. I just wish I could do a better job of explaining why I liked this book so much; it's a powerful novel whose impact I can't seem to express in words. Reading it was a fully immersive experience.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
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The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-SM1-SI) I got on the train and expected a wizard and a king. Even on the ramp as they lied, I wanted to believe. Then finally I gave in...	<div>Move 1: Introduction</div> <div>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</div> <div>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</div>
(M2-SII) This story is, as you probably have found out by now, a story that takes place in a concentration camp in Nazi Germany during World War 2. It deals with very difficult subject mater and handles it very well.	<div>Move 2: Describing the book</div> <div>SII: Describing the story</div>
The Amazon description calls it a love story. (M3-SIII) Maybe it is, but I didn't see it as one. It is a lot more, and a lot of other things as well. I found it to be a testimony to a very dark time, a mystery, a story of friendship, and of madness. A tale of bravery and of insanity, of hope in a hopeless place. I found it disturbing and unbelievable, maddening and frightening.	<div>Move 3: Evaluating the book</div> <div>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</div>
(M4-SIV) I ended up really liking this book. It is dark and disturbing and unlike any story I have ever read. It takes work to keep up with all the German names and ranks of the characters but that effort is worth it. It also takes effort to keep up with the plot as three very different narrators tell their stories bit by bit with overlapping timelines. These three very different points of view give very interesting insight into the minds and actions of the characters. I won't give any of the plot away because I do not agree with that type of book review. (M4-SIII) I think the reader should get to find out things as they go.	<div>Move 4: Overall assessment</div> <div>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</div>
(M4-SIV) I have been thinking about this book a lot after finishing it. The characters, their actions, the time in history it was based in, the madness... I fear ever having to look in such a mirror myself. I dread having to see what might be there.	<div>Move 4: Overall assessment</div> <div>SIII: Leaving an ending with suspense</div> <div>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</div>
(M4-SI) I recommend this book to you, as well as to every person I know who reads.	<div>Move 4: Overall assessment</div> <div>SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</div>

**CR11: The Children Act by Ian McEwan**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-S2-SI) I am a long-time fan of Ian McEwan and always look forward to his new books. This one is sterling and lives up to his best works.	<div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; line-height: 1;">}</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author </div>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Fiona Maye is a judge in London's family court. She oversees cases that deal primarily with children though she also handles divorce cases. As the book opens, Fiona is returning from a day at work and has just had a horrifying conversation with her husband Jack, a professor of ancient history. They have been married for 35 years and Jack has decided that he wants to have an affair though he still loves Fiona. (M2-SIII) He feels like his sexual needs have not been met by Fiona and there is a woman he is interested in. For him, it will be a last-ditch effort to find passion at the age of 60. For Fiona, age 59, if he goes through with this, it will be the end of their marriage.</p> <p>The novel examines the family court system and Fiona's role in it. She is especially involved in a particular case where a 17 year-old boy (almost 18) is refusing a blood transfusion that is essential to save his life. He and his family are Jehovah Witnesses and transfusing blood goes against their religion. The boy, Adam Henry, says that he agrees with his parents and the church elders - he does not want a transfusion. The doctors say that the transfusion is necessary because Adam has leukemia and without this transfusion he will die a very painful death. Fiona is to decide this case.</p>	<div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; line-height: 1;">}</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story  SIII: Describing the character </div>
<p>(M2-SIV) The reader goes through time with Fiona as she works on her cases and worries about her marriage with Jack.</p> <p>Will it survive or will it be like some of the miserable divorce cases that she proceeds over? She believes that she can do her job well despite her personal concerns.</p>	<div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; line-height: 1;">}</div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> Move 2: Describing the book  SIV: Describing the reading experience </div>

<p>The novel gets its name from Section 1(A), The Children Act, 1989, which states that "When a court determines any question with respect to . . . the upbringing of a child . . . the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration." (M3-SI) Mr. McEwan does an excellent job of showing how Fiona brings this act to life through her actions on the bench.</p> <p>(M4-IV) This book gives the reader a lot to think about, mull over and absorb.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
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**CR12: The Monogram Murders by Sophie Hannah**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI, M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) Regardless of the glowing praise on the back of the dust jacket, Sophie Hannah has not written "a new Christie" novel.</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SI) The beauty of the genuine Christie mysteries, and of the Poirot novels in particular, is their elegance of plot and character. Though she utilized the occasional red herring and sudden appearances of new characters to turn a plot, Agatha Christie's writing and plot lines were graceful and not unnecessarily complicated.</p> <p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) Sophie Hannah, on the other hand, has written a ham-fisted pastiche of a Poirot mystery that dwells unnecessarily on useless and obscure clues, far too many red herrings and a convoluted plot line that stretches credibility.</p> <p>(M2-SIII, M2-SIV) Her Poirot is charmless and flat, the Japp/Hastings substitute so bland and characterless as to be completely superfluous and forgettable. I generally enjoy Sophie Hannah's mystery work, but have found that the last two or three of her books have been tiresome in their overwrought attempts at psychologically twisted cleverness.</p> <p>(M4-SI) This attempt was as irritating as her last few books have been. Hannah's choice to set much of the story in the Culver Valley, as she has done with all her "own" mysteries, is, frankly, jarring and pointlessly twee.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Proving evaluation of the author  SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book  SIII: Describing the character  SIV: Describing the reading experience</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p>
<p>(M2-SI) Finally, the conceit of splashing Agatha Christie's name across fully half the book's cover and listing all Agatha Christie's books at the back of the novel strikes me as in the poorest of taste. (M4-SI) This is NOT an Agatha Christie novel, and the use of Christie's name and the inclusion of the list of her own works (M3-SI, M3-SII) smacks of presumption and crassness on the part of Hannah and the publisher.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SI: Describing the physical characteristics of the book</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing evaluation of the author  SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SI: Recommend or disqualifying the book</p>

**CR13: The Paying Guests by Sarah Waters**

<b>The Text in the Review</b>	<b>Move Analysis</b>
(M4-SIV) Perhaps I am too enamored of Masterpiece and BBC shows such as “Sherlock”, “The Bletchley Circle” and “Foyle’s War”, for, the entire time I was reading Sarah Waters’ wonderful new novel, “The Paying Guests”, I was casting it for a period-piece Masterpiece Mystery.	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
(M1-SM1-SII) All the ingredients are here: wonderful characters of all classes and temperaments, a richly moody time in London history, an arresting story of love, murder and betrayal that asks the ultimate question about doing the right thing and at what personal cost?	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p>
(M3-SI) Sarah Waters is a masterful storyteller, not just because her plots grab you, but because her prose is sublime. I have many reader pals for whom “prose is everything” and they will gobble this treat up like the richest dessert. Suspense like Waters’ takes my breath away, and the quality of writing reminds me why I love to read.	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>





<p>(M2-SII) The first third of the novel sets the stage and introduces us to the once happy home in a good area of London where Francis Wray and her mother now live. It's 1922 and the post-WWI economy has forced them to take in boarders, the "paying guests". Enter Lillian and Len Barber, a young married couple recently moved out of Len's parent's house to rent rooms with the Wrays. Francis is almost immediately attracted to Lillian, and Lillian is unhappy with Len; the stage is illuminated.</p> <p>(M2-SIV) The middle third of the novel contains the thrillingly suspenseful commission of several crimes. Here Waters speeds up the action and this reader couldn't turn the pages quickly enough.</p> <p>(M2-SII, M2-SIV) The last third deals with the aftermath of the crimes and is every bit as gripping and suspenseful. As the revelations of this early twentieth century investigation unfold and a trial begins, we have surrendered ourselves completely to Sarah Walters' bewitching tale.</p>	<div> Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story  SIV: Describing the reading experience </div>
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**CR14: Edge of Eternity by Ken Follett**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SIII) I really enjoyed the first two books in the trilogy, and looked forward to this one.</p> <p>(M2-SIV) As book three moved into the time period that I have lived through, I saw a definite bias that put the all the earlier depiction of eras into question. As the book moves through the 60's, 70's and 80's, democratic leaders are seen as dedicated, caring, intelligent characters driven by deeply held convictions. However, (M2-SIII) republican leaders and the military are portrayed as cold, calculating, power hungry individuals with no concern for civil rights and little recognition of the changing world scene. For instance, (M2-SII) one of the central story lines concerns the Berlin Wall and impact on the lives of German people on both sides of the wall, with the elation of the eventual fall of the Wall. However, the only mention of President Reagan during this entire cold war era is an accusation that he played a role in the murder of thousands of El Salvadorians, and an offhand conversation between two CIA operatives at the end of the book, regarding how they can make it look like Reagan had a role in opening the wall. I can accept a certain amount of revisionism in a work of fiction, (M3-SI) but this was just too over the top for me. Follett, I expected better from you.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p> <p>SIV: Describing the reading experience</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>Bottom line, it's a well told story with interesting characters, but it's a long way from any kind of historical veracity.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>



**CR15: The Bone Clock by David Mitchell**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) Six connected novellas: sound familiar? It was what David Mitchell did in CLOUD ATLAS, and what (for a while at least) it looks like he is doing here.	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
(M3-SIII) His latest novel, though, DOES work. It seems to have been constructed on much the same principles. Once again, there are six (M2-SI) 100-page sections, moving forward in time, each apparently with a different protagonist.	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SI: Describing the physical characteristics of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) The first, in 1984, introduces us to Holly Skyes, a 15-year-old runaway, leaving her home in North Kent after a row with her mother and a betrayal by her boyfriend. (M2-SIII) Holly is a plucky character with a marvelous voice; we have her in our hearts as she discovers the difficulties of life on the run as well as surprising acts of kindness. The second part, in 1991, has another protagonist, Hugo Lamb, a Cambridge undergraduate with a shady secret life, but the charm to carry it off. Holly reappears as a minor character at the end of his story too. Indeed, she will return in the next part, featuring an award-winning Iraq War journalist in 2004, and the one after that, in 2015, whose dubious hero is an egocentric once-famous novelist. (M3-SIII) [Why is it that, when writing about other members of their profession, authors turn to this kind of incestuous comedy? Here, and only here, I felt my interest wearing thin.]</p> <p>(M3-SIII) But the connections between the novellas are more pervasive than just the presence of Holly (who emerges as the undisputed heroine overall).</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the story</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
(M2-SIV) Mitchell keeps on inserting sly references to his previous books, for instance in the name of a restaurant or a peripheral character, giving the sense that everything is connected in unseen ways. As though there were a layer beyond the one we see. And indeed we begin to catch brief glimpses of something	

<p>paranormal, something inexplicable in everyday terms. Normally I am no fan of fantasy, but Mitchell held me from the start because, in each of these first four stories, the supernatural elements were no more than 5-10% of the whole, embedded in realistic writing peopled with characters who always engaged my interest.</p> <p>(M2-SII, M2-SIV) With the fifth (and longest) part, though, everything changes. Set in 2024, this is outright fantasy adventure, the kind of thing Tolkien might have written if he had read a little Dan Brown or Stephen King and, determined to outdo them, had moved from his customary Middle Earth to Manhattan and thence to the Swiss Alps. The various supernatural figures we have glimpsed in the wings now take center stage as they prepare for a cataclysmic conflict. Not generally my thing at all, but I was held spellbound, largely because Mitchell's storytelling does not become any less textured and nuanced when writing about a world beyond our normal experience.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIV) All the same, I was glad to get back to the humanity and simplicity of the last section, which is just about as straightforward as could be. Set in the southwest of Ireland in 2043, it is a vision of a rapidly collapsing future that is ecologically, politically, and socially all too believable. I had found the futuristic sections of CLOUD ATLAS hard to get into because they lacked sufficient connection to the world I knew. But here are characters we have come to care about, coping with the coming Endarkenment as best they know how, by keeping the fox out of the chicken run and caring for family and neighbors.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Mitchell is brilliant here in the restraint with which he introduces them. And he is inspired in allowing his long and complex novel to come back to earth with those qualities that really matter: love, character, and the simple business of living.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>

**CR16: Tuesday Nights in 1980 by Molly Prentiss**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M4-SIV) Tuesday Nights in 1980, set in a year prior to its author's birth (1984) is a lyrical painting-as-book, meant to be savored for the lush images evoked on each page.</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SII) This is the story of Manhattan back when it was "glamorous grime," in an era before AIDS emerged, before everyone was connected electronically 24/7, describing three transplants to the Big Apple: James, Raul, and Lucy.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the books</p>
<p>(M2-SIII) James is synesthetic, meaning that he sees colors everywhere; if he'd been born a generation later, he'd have been considered Aspergerish. Raul, a painter and Argentine refugee from the Dirty War, is trying to find his artistic voice, avoid entanglements, and suppress his memories of the sister he abandoned in Buenos Aires. Lucy, at the age of 22, is trading the familiar damp soil smells and snowy fields of Ketchum for the limitless opportunities and glamour of New York, a city of "sewer and trash and smoke and tar" that is struggling to reinvent itself</p> <p>(M2-SII) Their intertwined tales begin as 1980 begins. It's a year filled with an equal mix of incredible and horrific for each of the three, their lives converging in the electric and eclectic emerging art scene, one in which everyone is creating some kind of art and a gallery can display a matchbook with random scribbles alongside works by Diebenkorn and Hockney. Anything can happen, and often does, and it's the disasters, not the triumphs, that keep the thinnish plot chugging along.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the characters</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>

<p>(M2-SIV) Not having any artistic talents myself, I may have missed the essence of this book, but it never really grabbed me. Much as I enjoyed the writing, the meandering pace kept me checking my watch, and (M3-SIII) the two-dimensional protagonists were more frustrating than fascinating. Minor characters, all native New Yorkers -- roommate Jamie, artist Arlene, gallery owner Winona -- captured my attention, but spent too little time on the page. I missed their energy and brash New York spirit when they were away.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SIV: Describing the reading experience</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI) This is a brilliant debut novel, one that will acquire labels such as "luminous" and "transcendent" -- because the writing is. (M4-SIV) But I found myself wanting more than quirky protagonists with poor impulse control. Still, (M3-SI) Molly Prentiss is an author to watch: (M4-SI) Tuesday Nights is worth a read, but I'm looking forward to her next book.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>

**CR17: The North Water by Ian McGuire**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>I couldn't wait to read The North Water after reading the synopsis, which made it sound like a (M1-SM2-SII) superlatively disturbing thriller bordering on horror.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) Despite my unrealistically high expectations, I found the book to be a uniquely compelling read, which kept my mind entirely absorbed from start to finish so that I finished it in one sitting.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within genre of fiction</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Author Ian McGuire distinguishes his story from the pack with distinctive stylistic choices as well as the inclusion of gruesome plot elements with the potential to shock and horrify the experienced thriller reader. (M2-SIV) I myself was not particularly shocked or horrified by these parts of the story. What kept me turning the pages was the sense of immediacy conveyed in the way the events were related. (M3-SI) Two key features of McGuire's technique are his use of the present tense for exposition of the narrative and the inclusion of considerable dialogue.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>
<p>(M4-SI) In any case, I highly recommend this novel to readers seeking a quality thrill. Page-turners of this caliber -- both in terms of style and content -- are few and far between in my experience. Thank you for reading my ideas; I hope they prove somehow useful to some of you.</p>	<p>M4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p>

**CR18: Arcadia by Iain Pears**



The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) Science fiction, fantasy, and dystopia are not normally my favorite genres. (M1-SM1-SIII) But I do respond to intelligence and culture and the ability to dance across boundaries as though they didn't exist. And I am a sucker for a good story well told with interesting characters, all guided by a strong moral sense that is not too simplistic.</p> <p>(M3-SI) Iain Pears enfolded me in mystery and delight from the first few pages of his new novel and held me in his spell for five hundred more. In the first two chapters alone, he sets up the perfect working of an ideal world, then turns it inside out to show the mechanics, then enters it again from a totally different direction. Read only 20 pages, and just see if you are prepared to stop there.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) The opening lines, limpid and lovely. Perhaps a bit over the top, too self-consciously poetical? Indeed, and that is the point. (M2-SII) A few pages later, we get a middle-aged scholar, Henry Lytten, reading his fantasy to a group of other amateur novelists in an Oxford pub much as his friends Tolkien and CS Lewis used to do. "Bit of Ovid in there," one of them remarks, and indeed he is right; the holm oak gives it away, that tree that seems a staple of classical landscapes but you don't encounter anywhere else.</p> <p>(M2-SII) Lytten, with a thorough classical education, is recreating the Arcadia of Greek and Roman pastoral, that ideal world populated by amorous shepherds and shepherdesses, where the occasional visit by a demigod or nymph wouldn't be anything out of the ordinary. Professionally, (M3-SI) Lytten is an expert in Sir Philip Sidney, whose own ARCADIA was the prose equivalent of Ovid for the Elizabethans. He is also a lover of Shakespeare, who created many Arcadias of his own; later parts of the story (M2-SII) so closely recreate the scenes in the Forest of Arden from AS</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself</p>



<p>YOU LIKE IT that the (M3-SII) novel might easily qualify as one of the retellings in the Hogarth Shakespeare series.</p>	
<p>But it is so very much more. The literary references -- like the scientific, mathematical, and philosophical ones that will come in later -- are there for the adult reader, but (M3-SIII) the story is one that you could give to a young teen of either sex in full confidence that they would not put the book down until they were finished.</p> <p>(M2-SII) In those opening pages, a young shepherd named Jay encounters what he takes to be a fairy, the sudden appearance in a cave of a girl of about his age, smiling radiantly in a halo of light. In the next chapter, we meet Rosie Wilson, Lytten's fifteen-year-old neighbor who comes in occasionally to feed Professor Jenkins, his malevolent cat. Poking around in the basement to hunt for her absconding charge, Rosie walks through an old Victorian iron pergola that is being stored down there, and sees a young shepherd boy gazing up at her with awe.</p>	<div data-kind="parent" data-rs="2">}</div> <div> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> </div> <div data-kind="parent" data-rs="2">}</div> <div> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p> </div>
<p>There are other themes too. Lytten, for example, has had what is called "an interesting war," and still does occasional work for British intelligence. (M3-SIII) But I did not find the Le Carré elements as successful as the rest. And while I was always interested in the hunt for Angela Meerson and the secret of her machine, in the end this all took second place to the scenes in Anterworld, which opened out and took on a life of their own, going far beyond their Arcadian or Arthurian origins. Although I have spent a lot of time here describing all the things that intrigued me as an adult, (M4-SIV) my greatest enjoyment came when I returned to my thirteen-year-old self and settled down to this magnificent romance of young lovers, ancient rituals, and the pursuit of justice. I hated to see it end.</p>	<div data-kind="parent" data-rs="2">}</div> <div> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> </div> <div data-kind="parent" data-rs="2">}</div> <div> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p> </div>

**CR19: The Queen of the Night by Alexander Chee**




The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M2-SI) This book weighs in at 552 pages and is densely packed with incident. (M2-SIII) It follows the career of Lilliet Berne, who when we meet her is an adored diva, a so-called "Falcon soprano" with a very distinctive, very sensitive voice who is the toast of Paris in the 1870s. We quickly become aware that there are dark mysteries in her past, which may be exposed. Someone has written a book about a person very like her and wants it set to music and for her to play herself. Lilliet is thrown into panic. She does not want her past exposed and had believed it was well covered up, but someone knows the secret. She sets out to protect herself by discovering who that person is.</p> <p>(M2-SIII) Lillie's unlikely story begins as the daughter of settlers in Minnesota. When her family dies, she sets out to rejoin her only living relatives back in Europe. She makes her way to Paris where she has stints as a circus performer and then as a prostitute in the Paris of Louis Napoleon and falls into the hands of a tenor from Prussia who buys her out of her brothel and now owns her. He discovers her musical ability. The tenor, who is never named, is the dark villain of the story -- but he stands for all men in a way. Lilliet wants one thing above all -- her freedom. It is the one thing she -- and we are told all women of all time -- can never achieve. She escapes from him, fakes her death, and shows up as a maid to the Empress Eugenie in the Tuileries Palace. But he tracks her down and reclaims her. This feels to Lilliet like death. She fights and fights against her fate, struggles for freedom -- and ultimately discovers that no-one is actually free. The tenor is controlled by another more powerful hand and her true love is also bought and owned.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SI: Describing the physical characteristics of the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>(M3-SIII) This book is steeped in opera. At first, the plot of <i>Il Trovatore</i> seems to be the main metaphor -- the story of a women in love with one man but under the power of another. Lillie loves a composer but he himself is in thrall to more powerful forces and she is still owned by the nefarious German tenor who really claims to love her -- but not enough to give her freedom. Then, as the title suggest, Mozart's Magic Flute takes over. The author gives a long explanation of the fairly incomprehensible plot of that opera which has fantastic music but a lame story. The Queen of the Night's famous aria, "Hell's Vengeance Boils in my Heart" is slightly out of Lilliet's voice's range and singing it could ruin her voice. Yet, she does so, just once.</p> <p>There are many historical figures who appear in this book -- the composers Verdi, Bizet and Brahms, the great Russian novelist Turgenev, George Sand and the Empress Eugenie. None are brought to life at all. They remain just names. At the end of the book, Lilliet sings Carmen and that too becomes a metaphor for her fate.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book Step III: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) The failure to create convincing, three-dimensional characters is actually the main problem with the novel and the reason I give it only three stars. Others may disagree but I did not find that any of the characters seemed real. We're told about Lilliet's love for her composer but we don't feel it. We're told of her suffering but we don't feel that either. The description of the siege of Paris during the war of 1870, when the people were starving, eating zoo animals and tree bark to survive, falls woefully short. The fall of the Paris commune the following year -- which was a shocking bloodbath -- becomes another ho-hum event in this book.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) I felt by the end of the book that I had read an incredibly long political manifesto dressed up as a novel. The author has Lilliet tell us that nobody who ever had her life in her hands had yet tired of it -- except her. Well add me to the list. I tired of it.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>

**CR20: The Man without a Shadow by Joyce Carol Oates**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-SM1-SII, M2-SII, M2-SIII) Elihu Hoopes is the man without a shadow. Due to an infection and high fever, he sustained brain damage and has lost the ability to retain memory for longer than 70 seconds. Even though he doesn't remember her from one meeting to the next, the neuroscientist Margot who is studying and testing him, starts an illicit love affair with him.	<p>M1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing readers; attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the books</p> <p>M2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Ms. Oates is a master at composing complex novels that dig deep into the hearts and minds of its characters. (M3-SIII) I found this novel to be particularly thought provoking.</p> <p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) This scientist studies Eli for thirty years. He doesn't even know why he's there or what's being accomplished. He mistakes her for a doctor though her experiments aren't meant to cure him but are only to study his brain responses. She plays tricks on his mind, sometimes telling him things she shouldn't because she knows he'll forget she ever told him. Even she questions what she and her team are doing to Eli and whether they're showing cruelty to him or whether the benefits of the study are worth the results. (S2-SIV) Even while I questioned the Margot's ethics, my heart broke for these two lonely souls brought together through Eli's brain damage.</p> <p>(M2-SIV) To watch the relationship between Margot and her subject Eli and how it changes over the years is fascinating. There's a disturbing past memory of Eli's that haunts these pages, too. Most of the testing done on Eli is monotonous and repetitive and (M3-SIII) I think some readers may get tired of reading the same thing over and over. But I think that was necessary to show just what they were subjecting Eli to.</p> <p>(M4-SII, M4-SIV) All in all, I thought it was a very interesting book about the mind and science and I cared very much for both of the main characters.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>M2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p> <p>SIV: Describing the reading experience</p> <p>M4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>

**CR21: Dictator by Robert Harris**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SIII) This book is the last of the Cicero trilogy. (M1-SM1-SII) It covers the last fifteen years or so of his life, from 58 BC to 43 BC and it is largely dominated by the rise and fall of Caius Julius Caesar (hence the book's title). It ends with the beginning of a new struggle from which the new Caesar - and future Augustus - would emerge victorious and - almost literally - the "last man standing." (M1-SM2-SIII) I can also confirm that this book can reads perfectly well on its own. It is not necessary to have read the two previous episodes (Lustrum and Imperium), respectively on the rise of Cicero as Rome's prominent lawyer, with the case against Verres in particular, and his consulship and the Catiline conspiracy. This is exactly what I have done. It may help, however, to know a bit of the last years of the Roman Republic, although even this is not absolutely indispensable.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the books  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M3-SI) This is because - to put things bluntly - Robert Harris had done a wonderful job and come up with a rather superb novel which is extremely well-researched and contains excellent characterisation. (M2-SII, M3-SIII) The result is a superbly entertaining novel told in the first person by Cicero's secretary (Tiro) who really existed, who really was Cicero's slave (and then his freedman), confident and friend and who really wrote a biography (now lost but mentioned in various primary sources) of his master and published Cicero's letters after his death. Also, he did invent a kind of shorthand and we do owe him a number of abbreviations such as e.g. or etc...</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing evaluation of the author  SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book  Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M2-SIII) Interestingly, Tiro is perhaps the most sympathetic character of the whole book. All other characters, including Cicero himself, are presented "warts and all", with their qualities but also their shortcomings. Cicero himself is a complex mixture of selfishness, lucidity and puffed up self-importance, with a level of arrogance that is at times borderline stupidity, but also capable of streaks of remarkable</p>	 <p>M2: Describing the book  SIII: Describing the character</p>


<p>generosity, although the latest feature may have been somewhat “enhanced” by the novelist in order to make Cicero more sympathetic. He cannot resist a “bon mot” that may make others laugh at someone else’s expense and therefore mortally offend some powerful Roman who will never forgive him and treat him as a potential threat for ever after. He is also both aware of his extraordinary oratory talent, and rather vain about it. He is also aware of his major shortcomings compared to the other Senators, his competitors. Essentially, he is a “parvenu”, and upstart in the eyes of the “old money”. He was not an aristocrat from one of the old families, such as Caesar, Crassus, Cato or Brutus. He did not have the fortune to make up for this, such as Pompey, neither did he acquire such a fortune during his career, as Caesar (and Pompey) managed to do thanks to their conquests. Finally, he had no military skills whatsoever, contrary to both Caesar and Pompey (and even Crassus, to a lesser extent) and seems to have been somewhat of a physical coward, even if perhaps not always a moral coward.</p> <p>The portraits of the other characters are also quite remarkable. This is particularly the case of the skilful and utterly ruthless Caesar, with his winning charm hiding his cold mind. Also good are the portraits of the young Octavius/Caesar whom Cicero did both mortally offend and grossly underestimate, and that of the ageing Pompey whose military talent was largely in his qualities as a first class organiser and expert in logistics. Even Mark Antony is rather good, with the author having shown him as no mean orator himself and quite capable of hitting back and hurting Cicero through a public speech of his own.</p>	<p>M2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) The presentation and description of the historical events through the eyes of Cicero’s secretary are also excellent although, at times, (M3-SI) the author may have provided Cicero – his hero – with a bit too much clairvoyance that only hindsight could have provided. (M3-SIII) It is for instance a bit doubtful that Cicero would have been in a position to identify Caesar as the most dangerous threat to the Republic of the</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing the evaluation of the author SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>three (the other two being Pompey and Crassus) in 59 BC. However, apart from this and perhaps one or two similar exceptions, the rest is excellent, including the details, such as Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic Wars which were publicly read in the Senate but also in the street. They were very skillfully and very much used as a media for self-promotion. Another interesting feature is the change in Caesar's attitude after his final victory at Munda in Spain, against Pompey's sons. His "mercifulness" towards his ex-foes allowed him to assert his primacy and superiority, as Cato very well understood. The impression here is that his autocratic tendencies came to the fore. He was less and less careful in hiding them and he increasingly appeared as a tyrant, as opposed to the somewhat anachronistic use by the author of the term Dictator, with its modern sense.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>Another handful of (M3-SIII) superb features are the description of life in Rome and the life of a Senator, with their peregrinations from their houses on the Palatin hill (a few had also suburban palaces) and of the increasingly deleterious atmosphere in Rome during the 50s BC. Also excellent are the depictions of everyday life at the time, more generally, including the huge mortality rates that affected women during childbirth across all social classes and the marriage/divorce behaviours within the members of the Senate in particular.</p> <p>(M3-SI) To achieve this, the author has not only done his research thoroughly, he has also used extensively Cicero's correspondence with quotations and extracts of letters abundantly used throughout the book.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) The end result is one of the best novels I have read this year, and also one that is so well done that just about everything "feels and look" authentic. Five stars, easily.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing the evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>






**CR22: The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SIII) I was drawn to this book's provocative title because of three reasons: 1) I'm a Japanese-American who was born in Japan; 2) my extended family was touched by racial tensions during and after World War II, including incarceration in U.S. internment camps, and, 3) my wife is not Asian (she's Hispanic).</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SI) When it comes to matters of love and romance - why do some of us, with just one shot at life - choose safer harbors - despite being lucky enough to meet someone who's truly "the one"? When forced to think about the "one who got away" - obviously regrets are framed in higher relief as we pass 50, 60, 70 and - if we're like the Polish-American matriarch in this novel (Alma Belasco) - pass age 80 and beyond.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M4-SII) Author Isabel Allende's huge base of mostly female readers - just added a male fan. "The Japanese Lover," with a few exceptions, is a wonderful read, an epic romance that stretches from 1939 to 2013. It adds a wrinkle to the interracial "forbidden love" trope - by featuring a pairing between a Caucasian woman and an Asian man - which in my view, is still far less common in the U.S. today compared to pairings between Asian women and Caucasian men.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>



<p>Despite the 74-year-long timeline, (M3-SIII) the writing and plotting in "The Japanese Lover" moves smartly and swiftly, combining historic events with an international romance that endures many credible obstacles. (M2-SII) Readers are taken from Poland to Texas to San Francisco - as the author integrates a vast array of observations through dialogue and exposition, i.e., the desperate exodus of Jews before the Holocaust - the internment of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. - the cultural differences between peoples, East vs. West - the state of interracial relations in America, then vs. now - the life-long impacts of child pornography on its victims - the working culture inside assisted living and nursing homes - the ideology behind secret suicide planning among the terminally ill - the state of gay sub-culture before the 1970s - the politics of left vs. right in liberal San Francisco - and, most crucially to this story - the socio-economic class divisions and their relationship to women who choose mates for security and comfort - vs. women who choose mates based on romantic matters of the heart, despite their adverse impact on social status and on affluent lifestyles.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) Yet "The Japanese Lover" - for the first-time Allende reader - is still entertaining and well-paced, capturing a love affair that feels neither cheap nor tawdry nor explicit - while sub-textually presenting grand themes about aging and how they affect the way we look at past relationships - which in turn conjures up the old ponderable - that romance might be just an infinite series of "what ifs?" - while everything else is "life as it all turned out." While some might feel let down by the ending, I loved it because - without giving it away - it suggests that self-deception among mature adults is common to preserve a euphoria - that we once felt would be as eternal as our own youth.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) In sum, past regrets and guilt gives way to resignation - and finally - to a satisfied acceptance of a life well-lived, making the most of what's given as we pass quickly through the universe. This book is a winner. Grade: A-.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>




**CR23: Numero Zero by Umberto Eco**


The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) I never thought I would say this, but this was (M3-SII) an easy to read Eco novel! Not easy relative to most authors, but easy by his standards.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SI) There are still countless literary and cultural references (I stopped trying to keep count after about 10 pages) and it wouldn't be Eco without a few interleaved conspiracy theories.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SIII) The main protagonist, Colonna, has floated through life, mostly unsuccessful at school, work and love. In his own words, a loser.</p> <p>(M2-SII) He's given an opportunity as a lead editor at a brand new newspaper, and also given an opportunity to ghost write a book by the publisher – the reason for the book is the first layer of conspiracy. His fellow co-workers at the paper are equally unsuccessful in life, losers in their own ways. Colonna does find a love interest with the lone female employee, and gets drawn into another conspiracy (involving Mussolini and the Vatican) with the aptly named Braggadocio.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SII) Unlike many of Eco's work, this did not require a great deal of effort to read. Most of his novels (I have read everything published in English) tend to be a challenge to get through, though I enjoy the rewards and the complex storylines he develops.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) Numero Zero is not nearly as long, deep or complex as books like The Island of the Day Before or Foucault's Pendulum, but I really enjoyed the flow of the story, and it is still clearly an Eco work, just more concise.</p> <p>(M4-SI) Definitely recommended - especially if you are drawn to Umberto Eco's work.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SII: Providing evaluation of the book itself</p>  <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>  <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p>

**CR24: Undermajordomo Minor by Patrick de Witt**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) Literary history defines "romance" less as a love story than in terms of the fantastic world inhabited by the hero and the many adventures he has along the way. We are talking Tasso or Ariosto, Spenser or Cervantes. It was against these traditions that Tolkien and CS Lewis were writing, or more recently Kazuo Ishiguro in THE BURIED GIANT. And it is this tradition that inspires Patrick deWitt's thoroughly modern and comic subversion of the genre in UNDERMAJORDOMO MINOR.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) It is a curious book, thoroughly enjoyable on a chapter-by-chapter basis, even laugh-aloud funny. But surprisingly unfilling; there is no substance there, nothing to chew on when the book is done. And very little to write about.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
<p>(M2-SII) Lucien Minor, known as Lucy, leaves home to take up the position of Undermajordomo at the distant Castle Von Aux. It is hard to pin down the period; he travels by train, but the castle itself has the feel of 19th-century Gothic, and the local population seems to be fighting one of those perpetual 18th-century wars. But no matter. Lucy finds himself working for the majordomo, the dustily benevolent Mr. Olderglough. He and the culinarily-challenged cook Agnes appear to be the only inhabitants, until the Baron himself appears -- and this kicks us into higher gear, with even more fantastic happening and more grotesque outcomes. Meanwhile, Lucy falls in love with a girl from the village named Klara, whom he has to pry away from her soldier-suitor and larcenous father and brother.</p>	<p>M2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p> <p>M2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) I could go on -- and deWitt does go on, with charmingly understated humor and bizarre invention. But what's the point? At no time does the book go beyond skillfully executed entertainment.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) Which will be enough for some, I think; but not for me. [3.5 stars]</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>

**CR25: After Alice by Gregory Maguire**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M4-SII) Oh, this book is a treat. It dwells quite a bit more in the "real world" than I was expecting, but those scenes were part of what gives the book its depth. Maguire has quite a bit to say about the Victorian world, adolescence, class structure, etc, and he communicates this through the third-person omniscient structure of the narrative and the scenes involving the Real World folk. I actually found myself wanting a pencil while reading this, so that I could underline or star various passages for further musing. Lewis Carroll had much to say, as well, but without the historical perspective that a modern author can overlay. Maguire writes in the tradition of Carroll, with depth, humor, and imagination: I loved it.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) This is by no means a copycat book, but Maguire certainly does know his Alice. The scenes in Wonderland, especially, are often laugh-out-loud funny; far funnier, to me, than the original scenes, but perhaps that's because the original jokes are stale since I've heard them a million times.</p> <p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) These scenes take us back to Wonderland with a very different girl, a clever and prosaic one, who is much less apt to be befuddled by the Wonderland characters than to outsmart them.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>  <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>(M3-SIII) A caveat, though: this book is written at a very high level. It is not for children, but it is less the subject matter (although the philosophical musings would bore them silly) than the language. I literally just randomly picked a page toward the beginning of the book. The whole thing is written with an SAT vocabulary. If you are not accustomed to reading "high" language, you might just find this book boring.</p> <p>I think it would be a failure as a read-aloud for younger children because you'd have to stop over and over to explain vocabulary (and concepts, on many of the more philosophical chapters that detail a character's thoughts and dreams), and I know a lot of parents would be taken aback to find the word "rape" used (hyperbolically) by one of the roses or the F-word slipped in with minimal disguise in another character's thoughts.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) So, it's not for children. But for educated adults who will always have a soft spot for Alice, this book is a rare find: funny, thoughtful, and utterly respectful of its predecessor. (M4-SI) I can't recommend it highly enough.</p>	<p>M4: Overall assessment SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>

**PR01: The Silkworm by J.K. Rowling, as Robert Galbraith**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) During a cocktail party in Robert Galbraith's (a.k.a. J. K. Rowling's) endlessly entertaining (M1-SM2-SII) detective novel "The Silkworm," the publisher Daniel Chard gives a toast in which he observes that "publishing is currently undergoing a period of rapid changes and fresh challenges, but one thing remains as true today as it was a century ago: Content is king."</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SI) Coming from an obscure, midlist, mystery author named Robert Galbraith such a statement might go unnoticed. But when the same passage is written by J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series and one of the most successful authors of all time, the words cannot help having a far greater impact.</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SII) Therein lies the problem and the great joy of this book.</p> <p>You want to judge "The Silkworm" on its own merit, author be damned. It is, in fact, this critic's job to do so. But writing that type of blind review in this case, while a noble goal, is inauthentic if not downright disingenuous. If an author's biography always casts some shadow on the work, here, the author is comparatively a total solar eclipse coupled with a supermassive black hole.</p> <p>This is especially true because Rowling (let's stop pretending) makes matters worse (or better) by taking on the world of publishing.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some parts of the book</p>
<p>(M2, SII) Leonora Quine, the dowdy wife of the novelist Owen Quine, hires our hero, the British private detective Cormoran Strike (first seen last year in Rowling's "The Cuckoo's Calling"), to investigate the disappearance of her husband. Owen Quine has just written a nasty novel that reveals dark, life--ruining secrets of almost everyone he knows. Owen, his wife</p>	

tells Strike, is probably at a writer's retreat. Finding him should be a routine matter.

But, of course, nothing here is what it seems. When Owen Quine ends up gruesomely slaughtered — in a murder scene ripped from his new novel — Strike and his comely sidekick, Robin Ellacott (think Sherlock and Watson, Nick and Nora, Batman and, well, Robin), enter the surprisingly seedy world of book publishing. They investigate those who were thinly disguised in Quine's final manuscript, all of whom offer insights into the world of the writer.

The suspect pool includes his editor, Jerry Waldegrave ("Writers are different. . . I've never met one who was any good who wasn't screwy"); his agent, Elizabeth Tassel ("Have you any idea . . . how many people think they can write? You cannot imagine the crap I am sent"); his publisher, Daniel Chard ("We need readers. . . More readers. Fewer writers"); and the pompous literary novelist Michael Fancourt ("Like most writers, I tend to find out what I feel on a subject by writing about it. It is how we interpret the world, how we make sense of it").

(M2-SIV) As written by Rowling, "The Silkworm" takes "write what you know" and raises it to the 10th power. Is this crime fiction, a celebrity tell-all, juicy satire or all of the above? The blessing/curse here is that you turn the pages for the whodunit, but you never lose sight that these observations on the publishing world come from the very top. This makes complete escape, something mandatory for a crime novel, almost impossible — but then again, who cares? If you want a more complete escape, pick up another book. Reading Rowling on writing is delicious fun.

(M2-SII) Even the title of the novel (and the English translation of the poisoned-pen manuscript) is "The Silkworm" because a silkworm's life is "a metaphor for the writer, who has to go through agonies to get at the good stuff." On envy: "If you want a lifetime of

Move 2: Describing the book  
SII: Describing the story

<p>temporary alliances with peers who will glory in your every failure, write novels.” On Internet trolls: “With the invention of the Internet, any subliterate cretin can be Michiko Kakutani.” On a literary male writer’s inability to create realistic female characters: “His women are all temper . . . and tampons.” On a writer named Dorcus Pengelly (some of these names are straight out of Hogwarts): “She writes pornography dressed up as historical romance,” but our murder victim still would “have killed for her sales.”</p> <p>There is even a debate on the merits of self-publishing when Quine’s mistress whines that she’s going the “indie” route because “traditional publishers wouldn’t know good books if they were hit over the head with them.”</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>
<p>Are these opinions shared by Rowling? Don’t know, don’t care. In the end, despite the window dressing, Rowling’s goal is to entertain and entertain she does. If we can’t forget that she is a celebrity, we’re also constantly reminded that she is a master storyteller. Push aside J. K. Rowling (a gender-neutral pseudonym Joanne Rowling took so that boys would read Harry Potter) and judge the book on the merits of Robert Galbraith (a full-fledged male pseudonym with no such neutrality), and “The Silkworm” is still a suspenseful, well-written and assured British detective novel.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SII: Providing the evaluation of the book itself</p>
<p>(M2-SIII) Strike, who lost his leg to a land mine in Afghanistan, is described as a “limping prize fighter,” a man who looms so large, “the room seemed much smaller with his arrival.” Potter fans will want to make a connection between Cormoran Strike and Rubeus Hagrid, the beloved giant in the Harry Potter novels, but such comparisons feel forced. If J. K. Rowling never leaves our minds while reading “The Silkworm,” the world of Harry Potter, to Rowling/Galbraith’s credit, never enters it. We are squarely in the gritty, gloomy and glitzy real world of the Muggles, except maybe when she describes a noisy piece of furniture in Strike’s office as the “farting leather sofa.” For a moment, the reader can almost see the sofa coming to life in the halls of Slytherin House.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>



(M2-SII) “The Silkworm” most often feels like a traditional British crime novel albeit set in the present day, complete with eccentric suspects, a girl Friday (Oh, when will they see that they are meant for each other?) and a close friend in the police department whose life Strike saved in the war. But Rowling gives some of the old saws a new spin. Robin, for example, isn’t a longtime friend or ex-lover — she starts out as a young temp Strike first meets in “The Cuckoo’s Calling.”

(M2-SIII) Strike himself may at first appear to be something we have seen too often — a brooding, damaged detective, with a life--altering war injury, financially on the brink, who’s recently lost his longtime girlfriend — but there is an optimism to him that is refreshing and endearing. Even though he’s hobbling down the street, often in great pain, “Strike was unique among the men not merely for his size but for the fact that he did not look as though life had pummeled him into a quiescent stupor.”

Strike also shares a trait with many great fictional detectives: He is darn good company.

(M2-SII) There are musings on fame (Strike is the illegitimate son of the rock star Jonny Rokeby), the media (the book opens with a passing shot at the British phone hacking scandal that engulfed many celebrities, including Rowling), book marketing (Quine’s wife on her husband’s sluggish sales: “It’s up to the publishers to give ’em a push. They wouldn’t never get him on TV or anything like he needed”), not to mention e-books and the digital age of publishing.

But Rowling saves her most poignant observations for the disappointments of marriage and relationships. The likable Robin is engaged to a pill named Matthew and cannot see, as Strike and the reader can, that “the condition of being with Matthew was not to be herself.” When he thinks about his own sister’s marriage and those like it, Strike wonders about the “endless parade

Move 2: Describing the book


SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character



identity and we get the escapist mystery when we can. In the end, the fictional publisher Daniel Chard got it right: "Content is king," and on that score, both J. K. Rowling and Robert Galbraith triumph.	
Harlan Coben is the author, most recently, of "Missing You." His new young adult novel, "Found," will be published this fall.	Move 5: Reviewer information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer

**PR02: The Bees by Laline Paull**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) Laline Paull’s ambitious and bold first novel, “The Bees,” follows Flora 717, a sanitation worker doomed by her birth to the lowest caste of her community. She is large and ugly and — oh, yes — a bee. What could feel gimmicky or cute never does; Flora 717 is a brave and spirited soul, and it is a pleasure to follow her through the hive and the air. The brief prologue and epilogue are the only sections of the book with humans, aside from a single scene halfway through in which a man harvesting honey comes off something like Godzilla. Truly, who needs people when bees provide this much pathos?</p> <p>At first, the reader questions everything. Is this really how bees are born? Is this how they communicate? By the middle of the book, I stopped wondering which tasks Paull had imagined and which were real, because they all seemed equally plausible. By the end, I began passing off every detail of the book as fact — “Wax seeps out of the bands in a bee’s abdomen, you know” — as if I had a Ph.D. in apiology.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction SM1: Capturing reader’s attention SII: Highlighting some parts of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) It is the job of the Floras to collect the bodies of dead bees and dispose of them, to sweep the gutters. Like her thousands of sisters, Flora 717 understands what her fellow bees are thinking through scent and vibration and touch. Unlike her Flora sisters, however, Flora 717 is prone to speech and action, and through these attributes as well as her ugliness and size, she is singled out for duty.</p> <p>The Sages, a high-ranking order of priestess bees, see something in Flora 717, and they are proven correct — she can produce Flow, royal jelly, the descriptions of which are among the most accurate descriptions of breast-feeding in fiction. “As it opened its tiny mouth to cry,” Paull writes, “two pulses began flickering in Flora’s cheeks and her mouth began to fill with sweet liquid.” Flora thrives at her new job, despite being</p>	

looked down upon by the other nurses. They need her there — we know that supplies have been low because of cold and rain and lack of food — and so she remains. The first commandment of the hive is to “Accept, Obey and Serve,” and Flora is nothing if not dutiful. The dogma of the hive is paramount.

One day, when Flora 717 is lost in the transmission of the Queen’s Love (a daily communal prayer), she feels a strange sensation in her body, and the reader identifies the likely culprit before Flora does — she is carrying an egg, a blasphemous offense. This is where the book turns from a buzzy version of “Animal Farm” toward a story more inspired by Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novel “The Handmaid’s Tale.” Flora 717’s feelings for her offspring are wholly separate from her love for the queen. The novel examines what members of each class are permitted to say, think and know.

(M2-SIII) Even as Flora 717 feels intense guilt about her own body, she wants to do what she knows she should not.

Despite the honor of being asked to make Flow, Flora 717 is restless, and she quickly moves up the ranks, reinventing herself yet again as a skilled forager. Flora’s first few flights are remarkably vivid. “Below her spread the great plain of different greens,” Paull writes, “pushed together in crude four-sided shapes as if by some primitive insect ignorant of the beauty of the hexagon.”


(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Through all of her flights and dances, however, Flora’s thoughts are with her egg, which she has delivered and hidden in the nursery, alongside the queen’s. She is so busy foraging that she cannot visit it. When she finally makes it to the nursery, the fertility police have killed her child — a beautiful boy, a drone. It is hard not to read the plight of the working mother in Flora 717’s heartbreak. Soon, Flora produces another egg, and she vows to care for it. Before she delivers the egg, she crafts herself a rough crib out of wax and hides the baby away in a secret

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>chamber, one of many parts of the book that feel like a fairy tale. That egg is also lost, when the Godzilla man dismantles the hive to harvest the honey.</p> <p>Winter arrives, and the hive suffers. Day after day, bees die, their bodies exhausted from luckless foraging. In a scene like something out of a horror film, the remaining drones are murdered. (Another important piece of my forthcoming apiology dissertation: A bloody massacre is always great fun!) A cadre of spiders appears next to the hive, wise, truth-telling villains. They exchange bees for information, and one whispers to Flora that she will have one more egg</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) One of the most satisfying aspects of “The Bees” is Paull’s architectural awareness. We are in a beehive, after all, that beautiful feat of engineering, and it is great fun to see the antechambers and halls from the inside. Flora becomes something of a Zelig, which I felt grateful for, if only because the day-to-day life of a sanitation worker wouldn’t grant access to some of the more glorious rooms in the hive.</p> <p>Some of my favorite scenes are of Flora in the dance hall, the room where the foragers explain where they’ve been and where to find food, all communicated through rapturous dance. There is also humor here: The male bees — preening, strutting drones — are hilarious sex fiends. “Think now of those foreign princesses waiting for us. How fatigued, how impatient for love must they be? Would you bind them in chastity a single moment longer? Or shall we fill our bellies with the strength of this hive, then free them with our swords?” This is accompanied by a suitably lewd gesture.</p> <p>Though the book’s ending — the fate of Flora 717’s third and final egg — is visible halfway through, the brazenness and strength of the conceit is enough to make that a minor infraction. When a story is told with such rapturously attentive imagination, it feels very small indeed to quibble. Some aspects didn’t always work (the six “scent panels” in the queen’s library that narrate the life of the hive, the political schemings of the Sage sisters and the spiders), but the tale zooms along with such propulsive and addictive prose that I didn’t mind.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>(M4-SI) Forward-thinking teachers of high school environmental science and biology will add “The Bees” to their syllabuses in a flash. Not only is this novel a gripping story of a single bee’s life, it is also an impossibly well-observed guide to the important role bees play in our human lives.</p> <p>(M4-SIV) When I finished the book, I stepped outside my door and into a spring day, full of buzzing and pollen, and I wanted to thank each and every bee for its service. Few novels create such a singular reading experience. The buzz you will hear surrounding this book and its astonishing author is utterly deserved.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book</p> <p>SIV: Giving comments related to personal experience</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Emma Straub’s second novel, “The Vacationers,” will be published this week.</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information</p> <p>SII: Providing a brief biography the reviewer</p>

**PR03: The Word Exchange by Alena Graedon**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) Earlier this year, one of those BuzzFeed quizzes that tempt the idle with spurious but irresistible personality tests asked web surfers to click a box to identify their worst fear, choosing among nine popular forms of dread. Many of the choices in the Fear category were unsurprising — Failure, Cancer, Dying Alone — but one stood apart: Suddenly Becoming Stupid. Who would have thought, in this age of gung-ho, market-driven anti-intellectualism, that anxiety about fading brainpower was sufficiently potent and widespread to go viral? Who knew it was even, as millennials say, a thing?</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SII) In Alena Graedon’s first novel, “The Word Exchange,” a nervy, nerdy dystopic thriller set in New York City in the very near future, the risk of “suddenly becoming stupid” is not notional, it’s actual. A highly contagious, sometimes fatal virus called “word flu” has leapt from computers to their users, corrupting not only written language but also spoken words with gibberish and scaring the “pask” out of infected netizens.</p> <p>If you’ve ever received an indecipherable text message, you know the frustration of having language utterly fail to communicate. Now imagine that this nonsense issues from your own lips. Luckily, not everyone is equally vulnerable to the virus. Polyglots and brainy throwbacks who read books on paper and keep journals have some resistance, but the cyber-reliant legions who read only “limns” on screens (i.e., most people) make easy targets.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction SM1: Capturing reader’s attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction SM1: Capturing reader’s attention SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) In Graedon’s tomorrow-world, the web has invaded human life even more aggressively than it has today. Hand-held devices called “Memes” are so attuned to owners’ habits and tastes that they have nearly psychic powers (deciding what their hosts should order at restaurants, hailing a cab unbidden), and</p>	



they discreetly flash the definitions of “obscure” words whose precise meanings their under-read owners have forgotten, like “ambivalent” and “cynical.” The newest variety of Meme, the Nautilus, doesn’t even need a screen. It sticks to the skin like a glinting silver leech, beaming digital information directly into the user’s neural pathways and mining them for data.

For a while, the afflicted don’t realize they’re sick. Accustomed to inexact language, they don’t notice when opportunistic cyberfiends from the evil consortium Synchronic, Inc., buy up the rights to every word in the dictionary and start transmitting phony neologisms into Memes, minds and mouths. What’s in it for Synchronic? Well, the linguistic profiteers (correctly) anticipate that the human compulsion to understand and to be understood is so overpowering that once incomprehensible coinages (like “vzung” “eezow,” “jeedu” and “naypek,” to name a few) start popping up on their devices and on their tongues, Meme users will pay 25 cents per word to have the nonsense-ologisms instantaneously defined. By monetizing the impulse to verbal laziness, the speculators stand to make billions. Or rather they do until their client base succumbs to the unforeseen babble pandemic. Who can rescue the world from this plague of idiocy?

(M3-SIII) Clever, breathless and sportively Hegelian in theme (the book has three sections — Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis), “The Word Exchange” combines the jaunty energy of youngish adult fiction (boyfriend trouble, parent conflicts, peer pressure and post-collegiate jitters) with the spine-tingling chill of the science--fiction conspiracy genre.

(M2-SIII) Graedon’s 27-year-old heroine, Anana Johnson, is the loving, impulsive, creative but “relatively average” daughter of the “genius” lexicographer Douglas Samuel Johnson, longtime editor of the North American Dictionary of the English Language (NADEL). As the novel begins, Dr. Johnson

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>has gone missing, and foul play seems very likely. Anana (named for her father's favorite fruit, the pineapple — ananas in French) worries terribly about Doug (as she calls her father), but troubles of her own slow her sleuthing — like her breakup with selfish Max, a -cybergenius with murky ties to Synchronic, or the confusing attentions she's getting from her father's deputy at NADEL, a bookish young etymologist named Bart. And then there's the awkward Thanksgiving holiday she must spend with her mother, Vera, and Vera's pompous new boyfriend, Laird. Moreover, Anana is starting to talk kind of funny.</p> <p>(M2-SIII) Can she dodge the thugs of the Synchronic mafia and uncover the secret behind her father's disappearance before the language virus incapacitates her? Members of the Diachronic Society, an underground band of word purists loyal to Dr. Johnson (yes, Doug and the Diachronic disciples are well aware of his renowned forerunner), certainly hope so, but they have their doubts about Anana's suitability as an avenger, despite her impressive judo skills. For one thing, unlike her erudite parent, she's "addicted to Meme"; for another, "Clues must be v. obvious in order for her to find them." Nonetheless they concede that (M2-SIII) Anana is "highly motivated" to find Doug, as well as "pretty enough to receive slightly preferential treatment," though "not so pretty as to stand out in a crowd." Flawed or not, she will have to do.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) In the manner of most heroines who find favor with broad audiences, Graedon's Anana is brave but not terribly perceptive. The author has taken care to make her character suspensefully benighted — and to keep her that way. As the lexicographer's daughter stumbles from one dangerous encounter to another, the reader endures continual waves of panic, like a spectator at a slasher film watching through louvered fingers as the victim-to-be answers the phone, climbs into the dark attic or walks toward a car in an abandoned lot.</p>	<div> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p> </div> <div> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p> </div>
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<p>Should Anana descend into the sub-basement of her father's office building after hours to find out what's causing that burning smell and those alarming thuds? Is it wise for her to linger alone in her apartment right after it's been ransacked? Would a prudent person unbolt the door when a demented, raving visitor rings the bell? Again and again, you want to shout, "Don't do it!" (M2-SIV) Graedon makes you wring your hands for her heroine — and tremble for the future of the English language throughout her 26 chapters, achieving the singular feat of turning the alphabet into a cliffhanger.</p>	
<p>(M4-SII) As much fun as Graedon has with her Borgesian doomsday scenario, her novel folds serious meditations on language and society into its manhunt. The story is carried forward in alternating first-person accounts by Anana and by the besotted etymologist Bart, who struggles to decode his feelings for Anana and collate his philosophical and philological pensées, some of which originate from Anana's father's sage pronouncements. Sharing this trove of word-forged associations and impressions may be, he believes, "the only means for linking consciousnesses," and thereby the only path to love. But can the wordsmith woo his lady when, despite his ability to read eight languages and regardless of the fact that he has devoured libraries of hard-bound volumes, words like "zhaman," "krishka," "pinshee" and "shirsom" begin to infest his speech? (M4-SIII) Can he overcome the viral rush of stupidity that assails him? And, by the way, what has become of the good Dr. Johnson? At a time when a lapsus linguae can be as deadly as a knife in the back, it's hardly surprising that he's in no rush to come to the phone.</p>	<div style="position: relative; height: 220px;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; right: 0; width: 100%; height: 100%; border-left: 2px solid blue; border-bottom: 2px solid blue;"></div> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p> </div> <div style="position: relative; height: 116px;"> <div style="position: absolute; top: 0; right: 0; width: 100%; height: 100%; border-left: 2px solid blue; border-bottom: 2px solid blue;"></div> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SIII: Leaving an ending with suspense</p> </div>
<p>Liesl Schillinger is a regular contributor to the Book Review.</p>	<div style="text-align: right;"> <p>Move 5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p> </div>

**PR04: Revival by Stephen King**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) There is a children's joke that goes something like this: Why was Dr. Frankenstein never lonely?</p> <p>Answer: Because he was good at making friends.</p> <p>The same might be said for novelists, whose solitary days of writing can lead — if the work is going well — to the creation of amusing companions. From Mary Shelley's monster to Bram Stoker's vampire, every variety of bizarre creature can come creeping up when a writer closes out reality and lets the imagination take over. If loneliness is to blame, then (M1-SM2-SI) Stephen King, who has created some of the most entertaining characters of any writer of his generation, must be one solitary guy.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</p> <p>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SII) "Revival," King's 55th novel, introduces a fellow solitary genius, the Rev. Charles Jacobs, a Frankenstein-like mad scientist who sets out to decipher the "secret of the universe" and the "path to ultimate knowledge" by harnessing and using a "secret electricity" to open "doorways to the infinite." Jacobs is a man obsessed, ready to sacrifice the entire human race to get what he wants.</p> <p>But first things first. Before divine knowledge, Jacobs needs to understand the basic principles of his special electricity. Thus Jamie Morton, the book's narrator and a longtime observer of Charles Jacobs, finds himself a guinea pig in Jacobs's evil experiments. Before Jamie realizes the true nature of the work, Jacobs puts a plastic mouth guard between Jamie's lips, slips on some headphones and shoots a powerful dose of electricity into his brain.</p> <p>The shock is meant to cure Jamie's heroin addiction, but — this being a Stephen King novel, and Jamie being our only window into Jacobs's derangement —</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p>

the effects are far more nefarious. Jamie wakes up disorientated, his thoughts scrambling: “Something, something, something. Happened. Happened. Something happened. Something happened, happened, something happened. Happened. Something.”

The something, at first glance, appears to be that Jamie’s “brain had gone wrong.” In fact, the reader soon learns, Jamie’s trauma has little to do with brain freeze and everything to do with Jacobs’s secret electricity, which isn’t just a supercharged panacea but something far scarier. Jamie’s 30-second detox has made him an integral part of Jacobs’s sinister master plan.

Their relationship began long before, when Jamie was 6 and Jacobs was the minister of his community parish in small-town Maine. In the beginning, the reverend was a good and holy man. He led the Harlow Methodist Youth, where he taught the children the mysteries of God via lessons in electricity. Back then, before disillusionment and madness set in, Jacobs’s interest in electricity was purely metaphorical; lightning was an analogy for the divine. Explaining electrons and atoms, he would conclude that “science is fine, but it’s also finite. There always comes a point where knowledge runs out.” And into this vacuum divine knowledge rushed. Electricity led to the infinite. Open the door and there waits God, a big grin on his face.

While Jacobs may have started out with good intentions, these quickly turn dark after a random auto accident on a quiet country road kills Jacobs’s family, destroying his faith and maybe his sanity. (King’s longtime fans will recognize shades of “Pet Sematary” in the accident and the hand of fate.) Jacobs loses his religious conviction, tells his parish that “religion is the theological equivalent of a quick-buck insurance scam,” and spends the next several decades working amusement parks and carny circuits, healing the sick by administering small amounts of electricity to their brains. Jacobs’s belief that “all diseases are electrical in

Move 2: Describing the book  
SII: Describing the story

<p>nature” and “electricity is the basis of all life” proves correct, and he becomes a miracle worker, healing the sick as he pursues his private — and much less altruistic — experiments. Jacobs’s purpose? “I want to know what happened to my wife and son,” he explains. “I want to know what the universe has in store for all of us once this life is over.” Jacobs has lost his faith in everything but science.</p>	
<p>(M3-S3) Readers will find in Jacobs’s behavior echoes not only of “Pet Sematary” but also, and more strongly, of “Frankenstein,” which King openly references. Whereas “Frankenstein” is subtitled “The Modern Prometheus,” a reference to the dangers of approaching divine knowledge, “Revival” could easily be subtitled “The Modern Frankenstein.” Like Jacobs, Dr. Frankenstein uses electricity (or galvanism, as the occult study of electricity was called in the 18th century) to power his experiment. Frankenstein, too, is grieving untimely deaths in his family. And like Frankenstein, Jacobs is none too happy with the ultimate results of his experiment.</p> <p>Yet “Revival” is pure Stephen King. Like many of King’s novels, it is filled with cultural allusions both high and low: In addition to the Bible and “Frankenstein,” there are references to Thomas Edison’s work at Menlo Park, Dan Brown, “The X Files,” the “Forbidden Books” (that is, grimoires banned and burned by the Catholic Church) and particularly Ludvig Prinn’s “The Mysteries of the Worm,” which the American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft used as the basis of his fictional grimoire “Necronomicon.” If you’re one of those readers who, like me, look up references as they read, you’ll find that most of these story elements are — as Jamie tells us — easily verifiable. As the Kingian references pile up, and become layered into the events of the fictional world, you fall deeper and deeper under the story’s spell, almost believing that Jamie’s nightmarish experiences actually happened.</p> <p>That said, while I love a good mad scientist, I found</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>Charles Jacobs less harrowing than other of King's characters. He doesn't linger with the grim malevolence of, for example, Jack Torrance ("The Shining") or Annie Wilkes ("Misery"). Perhaps this is because the target of Jacobs's madness is too often abstract — he's aiming to understand divine knowledge and death itself, and will go to any lengths to do so, even if he destroys humankind. I may be alone here, but the threat of species extinction felt far less terrifying than the act of strapping Jamie Morton down and frying his brain until he couldn't put a sentence together. Jacobs is more brutal, and thus more thrilling, when his lunacy finds an individual outlet and we, the readers, experience the particular dangers of that lunacy. At times like these, one can't help feeling that Jacobs enjoys the pain he causes, that he's having some really twisted fun.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) And so too King. Reading "Revival" is experiencing a master storyteller having the time of his life. All of his favorite fictional elements are at play — small-town Maine, the supernatural, the evil genius, the obsessive addict, the power of belief to transform a life. King even plays games with his characters' names, calling one character Shelley, another Victor and another Mary, recasting his inspirations — Mary Shelley, Victor Frankenstein — into his own fictional universe. For the reader, it is fun to map it all out, to experience King's mind at work. For King, these inside jokes might offer some relief from the solitude of writing, a way to laugh alone at the keyboard when nobody else is watching. I'd like to imagine all of these characters keeping vigil at the edge of Stephen King's desk, keeping him company as he writes them into existence.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Danielle Trussoni's most recent book is the novel "Angelopolis." Her memoir "The Fortress" will be published next year.</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

**PR05: Bryant & May and the Bleeding Heart by Christopher Fowler**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) Christopher Fowler's latest book is the 10th installment in his delectably droll Bryant &amp; May Peculiar Crimes Unit series, and his second book published in America this year. The other is "Film Freak," described as a "grimly hilarious and acutely observed trawl" through the nether regions of the British film industry, where Mr. Fowler embarked on a try-everything career in the late 1970s.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SIII) What do these very different volumes have in common? Only that, while embraced by a small but devoted following, they are criminally underappreciated by the wider world.</p> <p>Mr. Fowler is crazily prolific to the point where his arch-British mystery series is only the tip of the iceberg. And it may not accurately represent his taste. The author's likeness on his blog biography is that of a graphic-novel-style portrait of a dumbstruck green Mr. Fowler with a hatchet in his head. His book titles far from the Bryant &amp; May vein include "Disturbia," "Psychoville," "City Jitters" and "Nyctophobia," not to mention "How to Impersonate Famous People" and "The Ultimate Party Book," and a critically lauded childhood memoir, "Paperboy." Clearly, this is a multifaceted guy.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p> <p>SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) The two main characters, London's most curmudgeonly detective, Arthur Bryant, and its most patient one, John May, are polar opposites in ways that are guaranteed to amuse. In "Bryant &amp; May and the Bleeding Heart," May's work space is said to hold a stylish table lamp, a few treasured paperbacks and white china coffee cups. Bryant has a dynamite fuse, sealing wax, a cricket bat full of nails, rare books ("Re-creating Renaissance Masterpieces With Cheese") and a small black kitten nibbling on a mildewed sandwich. Dead things, too.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>



If Bryant did not have Holmesian gifts, he might not be tolerated by any modern law-enforcement agency. And in this book, when the Peculiar Crimes Unit is transferred from its turf in Bloomsbury to the tiny, compact, immensely important part of London known as the City, the unit's new boss certainly entertains that thought. Happily, the crime at the heart of this book involves a newly buried corpse of a man who appears to have risen from his grave several days after his so-called death. The occult, the creepy, the just plain weird: this is exactly the kind of thing that ordinary detectives fob off onto the Peculiar Crimes team, if they possibly can.

There are witnesses to the rising of the undead man. In what is perhaps a nod to his own horror-smitten youth, Mr. Fowler puts a teenage boy and girl in the burial ground in the presence of this bizarre event. (Is the corpse in a graveyard or a cemetery? This is the type of hair that the Bryant & May books, which are actually exceptionally informative for their genre and place great emphasis on history, love to split.) The boy "didn't explain himself very coherently, just said something about it looking like a scene from a horror film," one investigator says. "I think he was quite taken with the idea." Some kids, he explains, never get over their fascination for the paranormal.

And that cues Arthur Bryant's entrance line: "Someone was whistling 'Oh, Happy the Lily' from Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Ruddigore' very badly indeed." Mr. Fowler writes in a chipper tone that never flags throughout this novel, despite its undead corpse issues. May sticks his head out to see an approaching figure wearing scuffed brown Oxfords and thumping an ancient walking stick. "The remnants of Bryant's hair had entered the new day without the benefit of a comb and thrust out horizontally from above his ears, lending him the appearance of a barn owl."

These books follow the outline of police procedurals, but an abundance of attitude makes them special.

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>Bryant &amp; May's new female supervisor brings out the worst in Bryant, who does not appreciate someone with an "M.B.A. in advanced gibberish" using the euphemism "senior sensibility," as she alludes to him, a man who lived through the Blitz. Being sent off to investigate at the Tower of London makes for sourpuss merriment, too. Bryant resents having to find out why the seven ravens that live there have disappeared. He resents the Tower, now that it is dwarfed by skyscrapers. And he especially resents being laughed at by May when he gets back to the office. "So England will fall unless you find who swiped the ravens?" May asks. "Are you sure you didn't fall asleep reading an Agatha Christie?"</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Just as Mr. Fowler knows his film references (he has worked in film marketing, with credits on "Reservoir Dogs" and "Trainspotting," among many others), (M3-SIII) Bryant &amp; May seem well aware of the world of detective fiction. They rarely mention it openly, but they have been created as sweet, fusty holdouts against pointless violence and cogitation-free thrillers, endearing throwbacks to a time when this genre was brainy and pure. They are the last of a breed and they know it. They remain exactly where they belong. (M4-SII) Mr. Fowler has no trouble convincing readers that London is a place where the occult lives on, the dead might rise, and a detective might absently pluck a kitten out of his pocket. Their very credibility puts quaint old Bryant &amp; May in a class of their own.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M6-SII) Correction: December 2, 2014</p> <p>The Books of The Times review on Thursday, about "Bryant &amp; May and the Bleeding Heart" by Christopher Fowler, misstated the number of books in Mr. Fowler's Bryant &amp; May Peculiar Crimes Unit series. The new book is the 11th, not the 10th.</p>	<p>Move 6: Review information SII: Providing information/reasoning for updating the review</p>

**PR06: The Laughing Monster by Denis Johnson**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) On the plane I was reading this book.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SI) “Do you like Denis Johnson?” the woman beside me asked.</p> <p>That part was a little vague, but we didn’t talk much after the child spilled juice all over us. (M1-SM1-SII)</p> <p>The book, “The Laughing Monsters,” was untouched however, immune to our discomfort — as were its characters, who were experiencing far more severe discomfort in an unpleasant and unenchanted Africa. The Laughing Monsters are some hills in the Democratic Republic of Congo, so named by a missionary before he was murdered, but they might just as well refer to the characters, the scammers and rogue spies Nair and Adriko.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2:</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Nair (an inspired name, close as it is to “nadir,” which as we know is the lowest point of, well, anything) is a black-haired Danish-American working for NATO Intelligence Interoperability Architecture, or N.I.I.A., and why not. Michael Adriko is a large, merry, lethal-looking African who is on his fifth fiancée, the beautiful if clueless Davidia, a Colorado girl who happens to be the daughter of the camp commander for the United States 10th Special Forces Group from which Michael is currently AWOL — or, as he prefers to say, “detached.”</p> <p>Nair and Adriko have played here many years before, during the civil war, making some money, having some fun. Nair particularly relishes the mess that is Africa. The anarchy and madness. The things falling apart. He even likes the lobbies and rooms of the hotels with their distinctive chemical odor that says: “All that you fear, we have killed.”</p> <p>Ostensibly, Nair has come in an N.I.I.A. capacity to check up on Adriko, who has been indiscreetly</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>

suggesting access to a crashed planeload of enriched uranium, but he's also here because his friend has summoned him — to attend the wedding to Davidia in his childhood village of New Water Mountain with the blessing of his people. The real plan, however, is for both men to become rich in the world that 9/11 has brought to full term. Excitement and opportunity now reside only in the arenas of information, be it false or true, regarding security and defense.

“The world powers are dumping their coffers into an expanded version of the old Great Game,” Nair informs Davidia. “The money's simply without limit, and plenty of it goes for snitching and spying. In that field, there's no recession.” While Adriko crows: “Oh my goodness, Nair, you just tickle them in their terrorism bone, and they ejaculate all kinds of money.” (The hundred grand that Nair picks up selling the location of the United States military's fiber optic cables is chump change.)

Poor Davidia. She thinks she's going to have a lovely, unique wedding in the jungle to her man. But where, she wonders, is the jungle exactly?

“The people cut it all down,” Nair says. “They burned it to cook breakfast, mostly.”

En route to the fantasized nuptials in a stolen Land Cruiser, Adriko plows over a woman bringing a basin of harvested termites to market. His unconcern disillusions Davidia somewhat, and it soon becomes obvious she's not cut out for further adventures after circumstances in the bloody board game that is Africa devolve into shooting, pillaging, imprisonment and interrogation. She's taken out of the picture by Daddy in a helicopter while the men find their way to New Water Mountain separately and quite the worse for wear.

The village is not a happy one. The animals and most of the children are dead, the land and water toxic because of the extraction of gold and hydrocarbons. A grotesque

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>“queen,” La Dolce, rules and harangues the demented residents (who have “the puffy look of corpses floating in formalin”) from a giant leafless tree. She’s fat and laughing with “a buzz-cut Afro on her hippopotamus head, eyes leaping from the sockets and eyelids like birds’ beaks closing over them — her mouth is tiny and round, but it opens to shocking hugeness, displaying many square white teeth.” A couple of Seventh Day Adventists are present in this pit of gruesome, but even they’ve become fed up. One describes the scene as “the outworking of a spiritual travesty,” but adds: “After a while, everything’s funny.”</p> <p>Not much more comes of this. The village is left to its doom, Adriko and Nair hitch a ride out with the Adventurists (“We’ve crawled from the wreck, we’ve walked away,” Nair muses), and, after freshening up, begin to consider where to try next. Abidjan? Maybe Liberia. (“Much is possible there.”) Uganda, Ghana, Senegal. . . . “There’s always Cameroon.”</p> <p>One doesn’t feel warmly toward these buccaneers. They’re comedians, irredeemable. This is the world after 9/11 (many lifetimes past, now) with its new equations, fluid alliances and casuistries. To the question here, “Are you any kind of believer?,” the only answer can be no.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Denis Johnson is closest in sensibility to the great Robert Stone, though he lacks that writer’s command of plot and structure. Yet we don’t read Johnson for methodology but for troubled effect and bright astonishments. A writer should write in such a way that nobody can be ignorant of the world and that nobody may say that he is innocent of what it is all about. Sartre says this, more or less, in “What Is Literature?” Johnson writes in just such a way. Life is ludicrous and full of cruel and selfish distractions. Honor is elusive and many find the copious ingestion of drugs necessary. Our ignorance is infinite and our sorrows fearful. We have made an unutterable waste of this world, and our passage through it is bitter and unheroic. Still, the horror can at times be illuminating,</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>

<p>and it is necessary that the impossible be addressed. Here is the hapless murderer Bill Houston at the end of Johnson's first novel, "Angels," strapped down in the gas chamber, listening to the sound of his heart:</p> <p>"Boom. . . Boom! Was there ever anything as pretty as that one? Another coming . . . boom! Beautiful! They just don't come any better than that. He was in the middle of taking the last breath of his life before he realized he was taking it. But it was all right. Boom! Unbelievable! And another coming? How many of these things do you mean to give away? He got right in the dark between heartbeats, and rested there. And then he saw that another one wasn't going to come."</p> <p>Writing, like old age and Wyoming, is not for sissies.</p> <p>Johnson was born in Munich, and his childhood was peripatetic. "Every move meant a chance to reinvent myself," he's said. His books take that same opportunity. This is his ninth novel. Others include the best-rendered post-nuke Florida Keys dystopia ever ("Fiskadoro"), the big and boldly retro Vietnam novel "Tree of Smoke" and the curiously hypnotic academic novel "The Name of the World." There's also the elegant and gloomy Americana novella "Train Dreams," and lesser merely impressive and enjoyable entertainments, sly riffs on our orphanhood, our muddled dreams, our historical tininess, our moral wobbliness. He's also written poetry, some plays, a single collection of short stories — the perversely divine "Jesus' Son" — and a solid collection of political and travel essays, "Seek." He probably plays the cello too.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M4-SII) "The Laughing Monsters" is a minor work — there's no rocketing prose or conceptual jumping of lanes. Cheerfully nihilistic, it's a buddy book dependent for much of its situation on several of Johnson's early journalistic pieces about Liberia and Charles Taylor and the "atmosphere of happy horror" pervasive at the time. The whores and martinis and low-rent espionage seem no more than familiarly nostalgic, as does a time pre-</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>

<p>Ebola. Africa is a hard land and it's getting even harder.</p> <p>The single catastrophe is what fuels the demands and mysteries of literature. The wreckage is what essential writers particularize, and Denis Johnson's interests have always been in wreckage, both individual and universal. If "Train Dreams" (a Pulitzer finalist) dealt with the dignified tragedy of a past American anonym, "The Laughing Monsters" addresses the vanishing present, a giddy trickle-down of global exploitation and hubris — the farcical exploits of cold dudes in a hard land.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
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**PR07: The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) Alice Hoffman has always celebrated the marvelousness of what's real in the world, even as she creates the distinctive atmosphere of uncanniness and magical potential that looms over her fiction. Her devoted readers expect melodramatic stories imbued with the atmosphere of folk tales. Omens and portents are her stock in trade. Feminist themes and generous amounts of Renaissance Faire-style potted history make her storytelling all the more suggestive. Eerie and powerful acts of nature signify undercurrents of mood the way irregular minor chords in the background music tell us how to feel during ominous scenes at the movies. Lost in a dark forest of one kind or another, Hoffman's characters have a heightened awareness of the hidden meanings that surround them as they struggle toward the light.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M1-SM2-SIII) "The Museum of Extraordinary Things" will not disappoint readers longing to be swept up by a lavish tale about strange yet sympathetic people, haunted by the past and living in bizarre circumstances. But those who have admired Hoffman's best and most gracefully literary novels ("At Risk," "Seventh Heaven," "Turtle Moon," "Second Nature," "Practical Magic," "The River King") will be less enchanted, unable to ignore the hackneyed and thinly sketched writing that diminishes many scenes in these pages.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 2: Situating the book SIII: Situating the book according to readership</p>
<p>(M2-SII) The museum of the novel's title is a Coney Island boardwalk attraction presided over by Professor Sardie, part mad scientist and part shrewd magician. Adjacent to Luna Park, the Steeplechase and the soon-to-open Dreamland, this showcase of "living wonders" has at various times over the years included the Wolfman, the Butterfly Girl, the Goat Boy, the Bird Woman, the Bee Woman and the Siamese Twins, along with a menagerie of frogs, vipers, lizards, hummingbirds, a 100-year-old tortoise — and Sardie's</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>



daughter, -Coralie, who has, from the age of 10, spent hours suspended in a tank of water playing the Human Mermaid for paying customers. (As she grows older, her sinister father compels her to perform lewd after-hours displays for a select audience of patrons willing to pay a premium.)

(M2-SIII) Coralie, who narrates parts of the story in an elegiac tone, has a freakish affinity for water. Her father has trained her from girlhood to swim extraordinary distances, even in the icy November Atlantic, most often at night. Before she reaches adolescence, she can swim five miles from Coney Island, and she's at home in the tidal currents of the Hudson River. Her conditioning regimen is extreme: "My father believed that we took on the attributes of our diet, and he made certain I ate a meal of fish every day so my constitution might echo the abilities of these creatures. We bathed in ice water. . . . My father had a breathing tube constructed so that I could remain soaking underwater in the claw-foot tub, and soon my baths lasted an hour or more. I had only to take a puff of air in order to remain beneath the surface. I felt comfortable in this element, a sort of girlfish, and soon I didn't feel the cold as others did, becoming more and more accustomed to temperatures that would chill others to the bone."

Continue reading the main story Continue reading the main story

Continue reading the main story

Coralie has a secret shame. "My father insisted I wear white cotton gloves in the summer and a creamy kid leather pair when the chill set in." Her bare hands are displayed only when she is the Human Mermaid, and then they're dyed blue to match her silk-covered bamboo tail. She was born with webbed fingers.

Coralie seems to accept her oddness, and she's even seen hopefully searching her own throat for signs of gills, although Hoffman tells us "she despised herself because of this single flaw." Once she tried to cut

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

through the webbing, but, as Hoffman explains, fairy-tale style, “Beads of blood began to fall onto her lap after she nicked the first bit of skin. Each drop was so brightly crimson, she had startled and quickly dropped the knife.” Accompanying her father on his rounds of whorehouses and morgues in his ceaseless search for living freaks, and for the human and animal body parts he can fashion into grotesque exhibits for his museum, Coralie often carries “the same knife she had used to draw blood when she cut through the webbing on her hands” — only now it’s to protect herself from men who might pay her unwelcome attention.

Professor Sardie’s plan for his museum’s renewal is set in motion at the start of 1911, when there are repeated sightings of a sea monster in the Hudson, a silvery, scaled creature, “a being that was dark and unfathomable, almost human in its countenance, with fleet, watery movements.” This apparition is, of course, the now-18-year-old Coralie, who swims through the night, “keeping pace alongside the striped bass that spawned upriver, certain of herself even in uncertain tides.” The newspapers are filled with stories about the so-called Hudson Mystery. “All she had done was show a glimpse of what might be possible, a waterlogged and furtive river-fiend that had drifted out of nightmares and into the waterways of the city of New York.” If the Museum of Extraordinary Things can display the captured Hudson Mystery, the crowds that have been lost to newer, gaudier entertainments will return and the professor’s faltering business will survive.

As Coralie emerges from the river one evening, she catches a glimpse of a reclusive photographer named Ezekiel Cohen, who likes to take nocturnal walks with his dog in the woods of northern Manhattan. An Orthodox Jewish immigrant who has abandoned his faith and his community, he has changed his name to Eddie. He’s a boy of the streets straight out of a Horatio Alger story, and he’s also a witness to the horror of the Triangle shirtwaist factory fire. The photographs he takes on that terrible day lead him to a mission — solving the mystery of a young woman’s disappearance.

Move 2: Describing the book  
 SII: Describing the story  
 SIII: Describing the character

<p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) Hoffman's depiction of the Triangle fire only vaguely conveys the pathos and urgency of that historic disaster, which took the lives of 146 garment workers in a matter of minutes. Her treatment, later in the novel, of the Dreamland conflagration, which occurred almost exactly two months later, is more authentic and vivid, perhaps because it's less familiar, allowing Hoffman to be more imaginative as she incorporates it into her plot.</p> <p>Once Coralie and Eddie discover each other, their profound, mystical attraction and mutual obsession become forces of their own, driving the story forward. Despite the novel's heavy-handed passages about the rights of children, women and workers, and despite its lapses in historic tone and ambience (Eddie's habit, for example, of saying things like "no problem"), a big, entertaining tale emerges.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Evaluating the author SIII: Evaluating the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) "The Museum of Extraordinary Things" is, in a way, a museum of Alice Hoffman's bag of plot tricks: girls with unusual talents, love at first sight, mysterious parents, addiction and alcoholism, orphans raised by unsuitable people. Does it rank with the best of her work? In the words of Professor Sardie: "Our creature will be whatever people imagine it to be. For what men believe in, they will pay to see."</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>Katharine Weber, the author of five novels and a memoir, is the Richard L. Thomas Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at Kenyon College.</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

**PR08: A Map of Betrayal by Ha Jin**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM-SI) Many years ago, the F.B.I. coined an acronym, MICE, to describe the motivations of the spy. This stands for Money, Ideology, Compromise and Ego. All spies, it is argued, are drawn into espionage by some combination of these factors.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Gary Shang, a long-term Chinese Communist mole within the C.I.A. and the protagonist of Ha Jin's latest novel, fits uneasily into this template: Greed, it seems, plays only a minor part in his motivation, though it is money that eventually leads to his exposure; his adherence to his native country's ideology is habitual more than passionate; he is pressured to continue spying by a veiled threat to his family in China, but he is never openly coerced; his ego is tempered by self-doubt.</p> <p>Gary's nebulous motivations make him more believable than most fictional spies. He simply drifts into the espionage world and gets stuck there. For long periods, nothing much happens to him. In this, Gary's story is close to that of many real spies: Moles tend to burrow inside the system and then lie dormant, often for years. Gary Shang is unobtrusive, unremarkable and rather dull — important attributes in a genuine spy, but less than gripping in a fictional one.</p> <p>We meet Weimin Shang in Shanghai in 1949 as a young, newly married Communist, a graduate of Tsinghua University recruited to infiltrate the spy networks of the retreating Chinese Nationalists. He isn't very skilled at spycraft. He can't shoot straight or dismantle a bomb, but he speaks good English, and thus is detailed to infiltrate an American cultural agency, a covert C.I.A. offshoot. He changes his name to Gary, "which sounded savvy and fashionable for a young Chinese man." "Why are you interested in this kind of work, Mr. Shang?" one of his superiors asks. "I need to eat and have to take whatever is available," he replies tamely. James Bond, he isn't.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>

When the “cultural agency” moves out of Shanghai to Okinawa, Shang follows Beijing’s orders and goes along, despite the dawning awareness that he is now an exile from the Chinese wife he barely knows and the children he will never see. From there, he moves on to suburban Virginia, as a trusted translator for the C.I.A. Ultimately he becomes a naturalized United States citizen, an agency stalwart, with access to some of the crown jewels of American intelligence.

In chapters alternating with Gary’s chronological story, Ha Jin follows the journey of Gary’s half-American daughter, Lilian, as she searches for the truth about her father by reading his diaries and by traveling to modern-day China. We see America through the eyes of a Chinese émigré, torn between an old loyalty and growing affection for the adopted land he is betraying. Simultaneously, we see China through the eyes of his daughter, discovering whatever she can about the family her father left behind.

Gary bigamously marries an American waitress called Nellie, but secretly pines for his Chinese family. He finds solace in the country-music bromides of Hank Williams and inspiration in Nietzsche. “He began to believe in the superman, though he never succeeded in mastering his own life or outgrowing the herd -values ingrained in him long ago.” With his C.I.A. salary (and the far smaller stipend deposited in a Hong Kong bank by his Chinese bosses), he buys a suburban home and begins to fall for America, but only provisionally: “He loved some aspects of American life — the orderliness, the plentitude, the privacy, the continuity of daily life, the freedom of travel.”

And he spies, not dramatically but efficiently, to the point where Mao himself declares that Shang’s work is equivalent in value to four armored divisions. Every few years, Gary meets his spymaster in Hong Kong and is told that he must not come back yet, that his family is being looked after, that he is rising through the ranks and deeply valued. He is homesick, but not so much

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>that he insists on being brought back; he is settled in America, but not so rooted as to switch his loyalty. He prefers his Chinese mistress to his American wife, but won't rock the boat by fully loving either.</p> <p>Gary Shang's politics seem childlike, unchanging because they're unexplored and unchallenged. The sight of an official British car in Hong Kong "reminded him that he'd been engaged in fighting imperialism. China had to drive all the colonial powers off its soil, and he'd better stop indulging in self-pity and fretting about his personal gain and loss."</p> <p>When the end comes, Gary is hung out to dry by Beijing. A cynical spymaster tells Gary's daughter that her father was never going to escape once he had deeply penetrated the C.I.A.'s bureaucracy and earned America's confidence. "A nail must remain in its position . . . and rot with the wood it's stuck in, so a spy of the nail type is more or less a goner. . . . It's in the nature of our profession."</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) "A Map of Betrayal" is an uneven novel. Lillian's discovery that her Chinese nephew, Gary's grandson, is also a minor spy offers too simple a parallel. Some of the characters veer close to stereotypes: the grumpy American wife, the manipulative spymaster, the rebellious niece in the Chinese pop band. But in Gary himself, Ha Jin has captured the painful, often humdrum essence of the hidden agent, living a double life but only half a life, like those Soviet spies bedded down in the West and enjoying the gifts of democracy while working to wreck them, or the latest crop of "sleepers" uncovered in the United States, serving Russian intelligence while tending their suburban gardens.</p> <p>At the start of the novel, Gary is announced as "the biggest Chinese spy ever caught in North America." Yet, like most real spies, his motivations are small: a little money, a brushing of patriotism, a hint of coercion, a whiff of egotism.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Evaluating the content of the book</p>

<p>Kim Philby, the notorious British spy who hid in plain sight as a K.G.B. agent for more than 30 years, once explained: "To betray, you must first belong. I never belonged." Gary's tragedy is that of most moles. He never belongs: not to America or China; not to his wives, mistress or children; not to the Chinese intelligence service or the C.I.A.; and not, in the end, to himself.</p>	<p>M4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
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**PR09: Book of Strange New Things by Michel Faber**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) I'm not the first person to observe that the Apollo missions showed us, above all, the extraordinary beauty of our own planet. Maybe it's a bias of our species, and maybe space tourism will one day make the view seem commonplace, but the aura of our singularly blue marble, seen turning in the cosmos, has yet to diminish.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SII) A comparable journey takes place in the best works of science fiction — an imaginative visit to speculative realms that returns the reader more forcibly to the sad and beautiful facts of human existence.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
<p>(M2-SII) At the outset of Michel Faber's latest novel, "The Book of Strange New Things," its protagonist, Peter Leigh, is about to venture into space. Peter is a pastor who has been selected to travel to a newly colonized planet at the request of its native population. His official job title is "minister (Christian) to indigenous population." His vocation will set new records for both missionary work and long-distance relationships: Peter is going to be separated by light-years from his wife, Beatrice. Leaving Bea; their cat, Joshua; and a 21st-century planet Earth where the current sense of climatic and geopolitical chaos has been magnified by a couple of sadly too-plausible degrees, Peter heads off to take up his new ministry.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SI) In his previous novels, Faber chose to work in the kinds of disreputable genres that tend to elicit indifference, at best, from reviewers and prize committees. Starting from genre premises, Faber then enriches his material with a care for writing and an attentiveness to character that stake his work's claim to be considered literature, whatever the word means. His second and most commercially successful novel, "The Crimson Petal and the White," took the blowsiness and sprawl of Victorian melodrama and recast it according to a darker and more modern sensibility. In his remarkable debut, "Under the Skin" (whose story I</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing the evaluation of the author</p>



can't bring myself to spoil for people who haven't yet experienced it), a science fiction conceit is raised into a profound examination of the nature of empathy that has haunted this reader for a decade.

(M3-SIII) Similarly, the ingredients of "The Book of Strange New Things" don't exactly break new ground. They include a planet, named Oasis by the mysteriously acronymed corporation (USIC) that runs it; a complacent and incurious human work force at a base on the nascent colony; a predecessor who has gone missing in unexplained circumstances; and an inscrutable alien people. But readers of "Under the Skin" will recognize the method: taking a standard science fiction premise and unfolding it with the patience and focus of a tai chi master, until it reveals unexpected connections, ironies and emotions. "The Book of Strange New Things" squeezes its genre ingredients to yield a meditation on suffering, love and the origins of religious faith. As Faber reminds us, the phrase in the Old Testament that is variously rendered as "of old" or "long ago" in different versions means, in Hebrew, something closer to "from afar." It is as though the moral precepts that govern much of the world's behavior are derived from far-off and alien civilizations.

(M2-SIII) Once arrived on Oasis, Peter uncovers his new world and his new mission an inch and an insect at a time. And Faber is exactly the writer you want as your guide to an unfamiliar planet. He is a master of the weird, able to paint dozens of shades of odd, from the incidental strangeness of a hitchhiker with a misspelled sign, to the flora and fauna of Oasis; from the disorienting effects of interstellar travel, to the intergalactic irony of the missionary showing a picture of his pet cat to an uncomprehending member of his new indigenous congregation. Oasis and its inhabitants are rendered gradually visible through both the mundane and the extraordinary. The hermetic human base resembles an airport terminal at nighttime, with Muzak playing in the commissary, and hearty crew

Move 3: Evaluating the book  
SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of  
the book

Move 2: Describing the book  
SII: Describing the story

members hinting that a Christian missionary is a pointless extravagance. But beyond its walls lies the purpose of Peter's journey: Oasis itself, with its three-day nights, beautiful spiral rainstorms and otherworldly denizens.

"Here was a face that was nothing like a face," Faber writes, describing Peter's first encounter with a native. "Instead, it was a massive whitish-pink walnut kernel. Or no: Even more, it resembled a placenta with two fetuses — maybe 3-month-old twins, hairless and blind — nestled head to head, knee to knee. Their swollen heads constituted the Oasan's clefted forehead, so to speak; their puny ribbed backs formed his cheeks, their spindly arms and webbed feet merged in a tangle of translucent flesh that might contain — in some form unrecognizable to him — a mouth, nose, eyes."

Peter's mission, which he takes to with great enthusiasm, is to satisfy the Oasans' mysterious hunger for religious instruction. Not the least of the obstacles is the Oasan language, which thanks to their strange physiognomy "sounded like a field of brittle reeds and rain-sodden lettuces being cleared by a machete." On the page, this is rendered by an unfamiliar orthography that transmits an alien shock to the reader. (This may not flatter speakers of Thai, which seems to be the basis of the Oasan alphabet.)

Their bizarre appearance aside, the calm, agrarian life of the Oasans so closely resembles a Christian ideal that it risks making Peter's preaching redundant. But as the novel goes on, it becomes clear that the Oasan condition is in its way as unenviable as the human one.

An unimaginable distance from his own planet, Peter first dutifully records his impressions in messages sent at great financial cost through the cosmos to his wife. Then, gradually, he finds himself separated from her concerns and from the series of calamities that are testing her religious faith. One of the great tricks the novel pulls off is to show Peter's progressive alienation from his own species.

Move 2: Describing the book  
SII: Describing the story

<p>(M4-SII) Since the critical and commercial triumph of Hilary Mantel, the historical novel is newly respectable. One hopes that Michel Faber can do something similar for speculative writing. Defiantly unclassifiable, “The Book of Strange New Things” is, among other things, a rebuke to the credo of literary seriousness for which there is no higher art than a Norwegian man taking pains to describe his breakfast cereal. As well as the literature of authenticity, Faber reminds us, there is a literature of enchantment, which invites the reader to participate in the not-real in order to wake from a dream of reality to the ineffability, strangeness and brevity of life on Earth.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Marcel Theroux’s latest novel, “Strange Bodies,” was published in February.</p>	<p>M5: Reviewer information</p> <p>SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

**PR10: Viper's Nest by Martin Amis**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) When Elie Wiesel approached the -author François Mauriac in the 1950s with a draft of the memoir that would become “Night,” Mauriac was skeptical — not of the book’s quality, but of its necessity. What on earth could “this personal rec-ord, coming as it does after so many others and describing an abomination such as we might have thought no longer had any secrets for us,” have to add to the already vast body of literature about the Holocaust? he wondered. One reads this now with an ironic chuckle. As we approach the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the Holocaust, among all its other perverse distinctions, has become the most documented genocide in history. There are memoirs by both survivors and high-ranking Nazis; diaries of life under Nazi rule; collections of letters between SS -officers and their families; specific investigations of the Nazi doctors, the last few months of the war and the structure of the SS; and multiple biographies of figures major and minor. And that list includes only the books Martin Amis mentions in the afterword to his new novel.</p> <p>An unintended consequence of this documentation glut is that it is harder now than it has ever been to write (M1-SM2-SII) a novel about the Holocaust. Fiction grows out of hypotheticals — what would happen if . . . — and when so much is known, what remains? In general, the most successful novels have grappled not with the war years but with their aftermath: W. G. Sebald’s “Austerlitz,” for instance, about a child who was brought to England by Kindertransport and grew up unaware of his true family history. But Amis has given himself the most difficult task of all: a novel set in Auschwitz, the killing machine that has become so gruesomely familiar — the transports, the selections, the as chambers.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within a genre of fiction</p>

<p>(M3-SI) In a writing career that now stretches to 14 novels, Amis has never allowed himself to coast. A linguistic chameleon, he -remakes his style and form for every book. But the pressure to make it new seems to bear down on him even more stringently with regard to this subject. In his first treatment of the Holocaust, the 1991 novel “Time’s Arrow,” he told the life story of a Nazi in reverse, starting with his death and proceeding backward through his years in exile under a series of assumed identities, climaxing with Auschwitz. (The point of this chronological trickery originates with Primo Levi, who said that the concentration camp was “a world turned upside down,” where doctors were murderers and crimes were rewarded.) Now, in “The Zone of Interest,” he spins out a (M2-SII) love story between a midlevel Nazi functionary and the camp commandant’s wife, with a member of the Sonderkommando — the prisoners charged with cleaning out the gas chambers and disposing of the bodies — as onlooker.</p> <p>Alas, even the idea of love at Auschwitz is not new: The poet and political prisoner Tadeusz Borowski wrote love poems to his girlfriend set in the camp, and others have explored the network of sex-for--favors that existed there. But a bigger problem with this novel is that (M3-SI) Amis, -always a dedicated researcher — he read “several yards of books” about the Soviet Union before writing “Koba the Dread,” his nonfictional but novelistic examination of Stalin’s crimes — cannot transcend his documentation. (M3-SIII) “The Zone of Interest” is a Holocaust novel consciously of its moment, written for a 21st-century audience that will nod knowingly at the allusions to David Rousset, Paul Celan and Primo Levi. But it offers no new insights into questions that those writers have more thoughtfully -examined.</p>	<div> <p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p> </div> <div> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing the evaluation of the content of the book</p> </div>
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(M2-SII, M2-SIII) There are three strands here, each narrated by a different voice. Angelus (Golo) Thomsen is in charge of overseeing the construction of Auschwitz III, a labor subcamp also known as Buna or Monowitz-Buna, where prisoners produced synthetic rubber for the firm I. G. Farben. Thomsen seems to be disturbed by the way the Jews are treated, and at one point he counts himself among the “obstruktiv Mitläufere,” or uncooperative fellow-travelers: “We went along . . . doing all we could to drag our feet and scuff the carpets and scratch the parquet, but we went along.” But his thoughts are mainly occupied by his sexual obsession with Hannah Doll, a sensitive woman tormented by her husband’s work. Can he get away with seducing her, “here . . . where everything was allowed”?

Hannah’s husband, Paul Doll, narrates the second strand. Amis has never been afraid to be ugly in order to make a point, and his Doll — loosely based on Rudolf Höss, it appears — is hideously convincing. He speaks in a kind of grotesque -gibberish, his diction at once larded with clichés — “enough on my plate,” “takes the cake” — and the convoluted, euphemistic constructions that characterized Nazi jargon. (He refers to prisoners, in a direct translation of the German, as -“pieces” rather than human beings.) Somehow the sprinkling of German vocabulary heightens his vulgarity, especially with regard to Hannah: “She ground my face roughly and painfully into the brambles of her Busche, with such force that she split both my lips, then released me with a flourish of contempt. I opened my eyes, and saw the vertical beads of her Ruckgrat, the twin curves of her Taille, the great oscillating hemispheres of her arsch.” (No knowledge of German is required to decipher this.)

Golo’s language, too, is infected by the debased camp jargon, although somewhat less successfully. For some reason, in his sections Amis spells out KZ, his chosen term for Auschwitz and the abbreviation for the German Konzentrationslager, in English as Kat Zet,

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

which approximates the correct pronunciation but is weirdly reminiscent of the Kit Kat Klub. Also -unfortunate is the shortening of “crematorium” to “crema” (the Nazis used the term “Krema”), which looks like something you might put in your coffee. A more seriously questionable judgment is Amis’s transformation of a line from Celan’s -famous poem “Death Fugue,” in which a Nazi officer symbolically “plays with his vipers,” into Doll “playing with his Viper” — that is, masturbating.

Something more than taste is an issue in Amis’s choice of the third narrator: Szmul, the leader of the Sonderkommando. This group, whose members were known in the camp as “crematorium ravens,” has come to personify the nadir of degradation. Little is known about them, because almost none survived — they were replaced every few months, with each incoming group tasked with disposing of their predecessors — and with the exception of Levi, very few have written about them. Rather than drawing a portrait of depravity, Amis renders Szmul as morally exhausted, one of “the saddest men in the history of the world.” But it’s unclear what function Szmul serves in the novel, other than to demonstrate that Amis dares imaginatively to go places where almost no one else will venture. And while no subject should be off limits for fiction, one hesitates to see words put in the mouth of such a character — -especially, as (M3-SI, M3-SIII) Amis does, in a sentimental parable comparing Auschwitz to a “magic mirror” that “showed you your soul.”

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character

<p>(M4-SI) Amis is one of the most inventive users of language currently at work in English — his sentences cannot help crackling — as well as a uniquely talented satirist. But when it comes to the deeper problems of the Nazi pathology that gave rise to the jargon he so brilliantly parodies, he does not have much to offer. Is the brutal Paul Doll correct in his repeated insistence that he is “completely normal”? Is Golo Thomsen, as he claims, one of “hundreds of thousands . . . maybe millions” of -Nazis who passively tried to obstruct the regime? Was Auschwitz truly a mirror of the soul that reflected people as they -really were? (M4-SII) Such questions may be unanswerable. Still, a novel that raises them should at least make an attempt at grappling with them.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SI: Recommending or disqualifying the book  SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Ruth Franklin is the author of “A Thousand Darknenses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction.” She is working on a biography of Shirley Jackson.</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information  SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>
<p>(M6-SII) Correction: October 19, 2014</p> <p>A review on Oct. 5 about “The Zone of Interest,” a novel by Martin Amis set in Auschwitz, misidentified the historical figure on whom one of the book’s characters, Paul Doll, the camp commandant, seems loosely based. He was the Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss, not Rudolf Hess , who was deputy leader of the Nazi Party.</p>	<p>Move 6: Review information  SII: Providing information/reasoning for updating the review</p>



The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) In many Ian McEwan novels, there is a moment of crisis or extremity that shatters his characters' lives, reveals the innermost workings of their hearts or triggers a reassessment of everything they've believed.</p> <p>In "The Child in Time" (1987), a man's 3-year-old daughter suddenly disappears during a trip to the supermarket. In "Enduring Love" (1998), a hot-air balloon takes off with a boy trapped in its basket and a would-be rescuer falls to his death. And in "Black Dogs" (1992), a woman, taking a walking tour in southern France, has a frightening encounter with two menacing dogs that "emanated meaning."</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SII, M2-SII) The pivotal moment in Mr. McEwan's suspenseful but very spindly new novel, "The Children Act," concerns a ruling that Fiona Maye, a British High Court judge, must make on the case of a 17-year-old boy named Adam Henry, who has refused a lifesaving blood transfusion on religious grounds. (He and his parents are strict Jehovah's Witnesses.) If the judge grants a hospital permission to overrule Adam's wishes and go ahead with the transfusion, his chances for recovery are decent; if she refuses, and Adam is not transfused quickly, his prognosis is grim: He could die or suffer brain and kidney damage. Fiona's involvement in the case will not only have a momentous impact on Adam and his family, but will also mark a turning point in her life, changing forever the way she thinks about herself.</p>	<div> <div>Move 1: Introduction</div> <div>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</div> <div>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</div> <div>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</div> <div>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</div> </div>
<p>(M2-SIII) Fiona is very much an avatar of that reasoned, logical approach to life. As a judge, she thinks, "she belonged to the law as some women had once been brides of Christ"; she believes in rules and reasonableness and exactitude.</p>	<div> <div>Move 2: Describing the book</div> <div>SII: Describing the story</div> </div>

<p>Like one of those Hawthorne characters who is guilty of the sin of intellectual pride, Fiona prizes the mind over the heart. Jack, her husband of 35 years, has accused her of being cold and “no fun”: He abruptly announces that he intends to have an extramarital affair, because Fiona hasn’t had sex with him for “seven weeks and a day,” and he says he needs some passion back in his life. Fiona herself worries that she is “selfish, crabbed, dryly ambitious.”</p> <p>Immediately after Jack’s alarming announcement and departure from their apartment, Fiona must start dealing with the Adam Henry transfusion case, a case she finds she cannot grapple with tidily through the careful weighing of evidence and precedent. In fact, the combination of her marital woes and her growing emotional involvement with Adam — who reminds her of her own childlessness — will derail the gleaming smooth trajectory of her life, which she has been on since girlhood.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>This setup is all extremely schematic, and Mr. McEwan’s stilted description of the showdown between (M3-SIII) Fiona and Jack is almost as implausible and mannered as the ridiculous exchanges between the newlyweds in his artless 2007 novel, “On Chesil Beach.”</p> <p>It’s hard to believe that Jack would suddenly blow up their marriage of more than three decades by abruptly declaring his determination to have an affair, or that Fiona would have so little knowledge of his discontent over the years. The confluence of her sudden domestic crisis with the upsetting Adam Henry case feels equally contrived, as though the author were perfunctorily plugging his characters into a freeze-dried story without bothering to try to make any of it feel real.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>The narrative picks up when Mr. McEwan turns his attention to the developing relationship between Fiona and Adam. (M3-SI) Mr. McEwan did an inspired job of depicting Briony, the teenage girl in “Atonement” whose impulsive lie results in the shattering of her family, and here he delineates Adam with acuity, capturing the boy’s intelligence, naïveté and instinct for self-dramatization.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Adam is, at once, eager to become a martyr — to fulfill what he thinks are his parents’ expectations, and in doing so, become a doomed Romantic hero — and also longing to be allowed to live and investigate the world beyond his parents’ circumscribed existence. Fiona sees him as the son she never had, while at the same time pouring much of her emotional upset about her collapsing marriage into Adam’s case.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>Matters do not end with her court decision. Adam will try to insinuate himself into Fiona’s life, eliciting a reaction from her that will have fateful consequences for them both. (M3-SIII) The suspense in the last half of the book (unlike that in the novel’s opening chapters) is genuine, because it stems not from artificially concocted plot points, but because it goes to the question of who Fiona really is, and whether she has learned anything from earlier events about herself or the human yearning for connection.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>

**PR12: The Monogram Murders by Sophie Hannah**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI, M1-SM2-SII) Nobody would dispute the fact that Hercule Poirot, the elegant Belgian detective, he of the patent-leather shoes and the waxed mustache, is dead. Agatha Christie brought him to an end in her appropriately named novel, "Curtain: Poirot's Last Case," and The New York Times itself marked his death with a fictional obituary. But the demise of the hero, and of the author, no longer needs to be the end of the story. The literary executors of James Bond's creator, Ian Fleming, have held this view for some years, and there seems to be no end to the public's enthusiasm for rewritten versions of a whole host of literary favorites.</p> <p>The purists, of course, shake their heads in disapproval, arguing that fictional characters are the product of a particular imagination and should not be endlessly reimagined by later generations of authors. Others, while not objecting in principle, believe writers should concoct something new rather than reheat old dishes. That might seem a bit stuffy. If we like fictional characters, why should we not have more of them? Those of us who are fans of E. F. Benson's Mapp and Lucia novels are nothing but grateful that Tom Holt and Guy Fraser-Sampson have given us a stream of new reports from the world of those formidable ladies. More power to them. Fans of Babar will also surely applaud Laurent de Brunhoff for continuing where his father left off. Without the son's sequels, there is so much we would never have known about Celesteville.</p> <p>The Agatha Christie estate has been cautious about joining in this sort of literary resurrection. And with good reason. It has been estimated that some two billion of her books have already been sold throughout the world, and their continued popularity is astounding. Film and television adaptations abound, and her (non-Poirot) play "The Mousetrap" is now in its 62nd year on the West End stage.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>

<p>And yet a writer's popularity may not last forever. Even those who have enjoyed massive fame — W. Somerset Maugham, for example — can eventually become something of a minority taste. Even if Christie appears immune to this literary mortality, it might have been with one eye to encouraging a new readership that her estate agreed to allow a new Hercule Poirot novel. And now we have it, from the pen of Sophie Hannah, a British writer of psychological crime novels and an avowed admirer of the Queen of Crime.</p>	
<p>So at last we come to the crucial question: (M3-SI) Does Sophie Hannah's Poirot live up to our expectations? Yes, he does, and markedly so. Set in London in the winter of 1929, (M3-SII, M3-SIII) "The Monogram Murders" is both faithful to the character and an entirely worthy addition to the canon. It follows something of the formula of a country house murder, complete with bodies in locked rooms, although the scene of the crime is actually an elegant hotel near Piccadilly Circus where three people (two women and a man) have been poisoned. Each corpse has been carefully positioned, "as a doctor might lay out his deceased patient," and left with a monogrammed cuff link in its mouth. (M2-SII) The case is presented to us by a young Scotland Yard detective, Edward Catchpool, who lives at the boardinghouse where Poirot has taken temporary lodging, intent on enjoying "one month at least of restful inactivity" to conserve the energy of his brain's "little gray cells." But, of course, the investigation proves irresistible. Especially, as Poirot notes, because "cuff links come in pairs," suggesting that a fourth murder may yet occur.</p> <p>(M4-SII) The plot is as tricky as anything written by Agatha Christie. Nothing is obvious or predictable in this very difficult Sudoku of a novel. "The Monogram Murders" has a life and freshness of its own. Poirot is still Poirot. Poirot is back.</p>	<div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; margin-left: -10px;">}</div> <div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; margin-left: -10px;">}</div> <div style="font-size: 4em; color: blue; margin-left: -10px;">}</div> <div> <p style="text-align: center;">Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SII: Providing an evaluation of the book itself</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SII: Describing the story</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p> </div>
<p>(M5-SII) Alexander McCall Smith is the author of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency novels and three other series.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Move 5: Reviewer information</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

**PR13: The Paying Guests by Sarah Waters**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) In Sarah Waters's previous and much--acclaimed novels, whether they're set in the Victorian period ("Tipping the Velvet") or in the 1940s ("The Night Watch"), the tectonic plates beneath the storytelling are formed by British society — how its attitudes shift, how they don't. Along class lines. About lesbian sex. Concerning the place of women.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of author  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
<p>(M2-SII) Waters's latest novel, "The Paying Guests," provides her with a fresh patch of the past — the London of 1922, a city with quite a bit of the stuffing knocked out of it. Waters's latest novel, "The Paying Guests," provides her with a fresh patch of the past — the London of 1922, a city with quite a bit of the stuffing knocked out of it. In Frances Wray's family alone, two brothers have been lost in the recent war. Her father has also passed on, leaving behind a nasty stack of debts. Facing these reduced circumstances, Frances, at 26, has given up her girlfriend in the heart of the city, as well as her plans to throw herself into the 1920s that are roaring by without her in London. Instead she finds herself duty-bound to remain in the suburbs, keeping house and cooking for her mother, tasks previously performed by servants. A shared conceit is that, at 55, Mrs. Wray is unable to lift a dust cloth herself. Or boil an egg. Frances imagines her mother's stunned behavior in the kitchen, where "she might have been a passenger on a stricken liner who'd just been bundled into the engine room and told to man the gauges." Considerately, Frances saves the heavier work for times when Mrs. Wray is out of the house and won't have to witness her daughter's struggles.</p> <p>This housekeeping is a grim, relentless business. Lunch might be a "cauliflower cheese" and dinner some skirt of beef beaten tender with a rolling pin, then the next day pulled out of the meat safe (whatever that is, it can't be good) for leftovers and run through a mincer.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>

Wallpaper has to be varnished (don't ask me why). Skirting boards need daily dusting. An outhouse is also part of this frugal domestic picture. As is reading by a window on the west side of the house to use up the last bit of daylight before turning on a lamp.

But these economies haven't been enough. And so the Wrays have made a separate apartment upstairs to rent to "paying guests." The lodgers who turn up are Leonard and Lilian Barber. Like Frances, they are in their 20s, but from a lower social rung. Len clerks at an insurance firm in the city. Lilian stays home, lounging about and making herself attractive in a tarty way. She dresses in a panorama of whimsical clothing — Japanese wrappers and Turkish slippers — and decorates their rooms by "adding lengths of beading and swaths of macramé and lace to picture rails and mantelpieces, arranging ostrich feathers in jars." In her spare time, she reads "Anna Karenina" and smokes. She has a tambourine.

As she and Frances pass, time and again, on the landing — one bored, the other oppressed — the air begins to thicken with possibility. Soon enough they're picnicking in the park, then kissing in the hall, then pressing each other against the scullery tub in the middle of the night, hitching up nightgowns. Waters's sex scenes are meticulously detailed, a practice that seems, regrettably, to have gone slightly by the wayside in literary fiction. The erotic passages in this novel offer an argument for reviving the art.


The affair steams along. The lovers play out a fantasy-based romance. But then reality arrives, as it will, with its dampening effect. Lilian turns out to be pregnant, with no interest in a baby she would then have to care for. She is no stranger to this predicament, though, and confidently sets off to a sketchy pharmacy to get some pills that will eliminate the problem. No muss, no fuss. What ensues, however, is grisly and in this matter, as well, Waters spares the reader none of the details. What was a bedroom when Len left for the office has become

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

<p>a field hospital by the time he returns. When he finds out why his wife looks like death, why no doctor has been called and why Frances is the sole member of Lilian's medical team, an unpleasant argument arises, one that winds up with Lilian seriously whacking him with a standing ashtray.</p> <p>When, the next morning, Len is found dead on a garden path, the police cast a wide net for suspects and witnesses, inevitably including Frances and Lilian. Events conspire to separate the lovers. Lilian goes back to live with her mother and sisters. After Len's funeral, Lilian, wedged in the back of a family car, "put up a gloved hand to the glass, she might have been gazing hopelessly out at her, Frances thought, through flowing water; she might have been drowning."</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) From there, the plot is constructed of not always probable nuts screwed onto not terribly likely bolts — an investigation, an arrest, a trial, a verdict — with new developments at every turn. But we've seen this movie before. Much more interesting are Frances' emotions — raised like the hair on one's arm in a cold room — as she moves from a life of no interest at all to one with way too much.</p> <p>(M3-SI) Although Waters is definitely up to constructing a big, entertaining story, her strength seems to be in blueprinting social architecture in terms of its tiniest corners and angles, matters measurable by inches rather than feet — small moments we recognize but have never articulated, even to ourselves. One such arrives when the Barbers are moving in, with a borrowed van and a helpful friend, and Frances comes through the front garden: "The Barbers turned, and greeted her through the tail of their laughter — so that the laughter, not very comfortably, somehow attached itself to her."</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M4-SII) The story is laid out along serious lines — postwar hard times, forbidden love, murder, justice — but it is equally a comic novel. The ridiculous martyrdom of Frances' chores. The tackiness of Lilian's wardrobe and décor. The mesmerizing</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>



<p>ghastliness of her relatives. From Lilian's mother, Frances hears "stories of other family catastrophes. Hard confinements there'd been plenty of, sudden deaths, maulings, scaldings. A Midlands cousin had got her scalp torn off by a loom."</p> <p>(M3-SI) Perhaps Waters's most impressive accomplishment is the authentic feel she achieves, that the telling — whether in its serious, exciting, comic or sexy passages — has no modern tinge. Not just that no one heats up the cauliflower cheese in a microwave or sends a text message, but that the story appears not merely to be about the novel's time but to have been written by someone living in that time, thumping out the whole thing on a manual typewriter.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Carol Anshaw's most recent novel is "Carry the One."</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) On the night of Aug. 8, 1974, many Americans gathered before their television sets to watch Richard M. Nixon announce his intention to resign as president of the United States. (M1-SM1-SII) That moment is part of “Edge of Eternity,” the last and fattest installment in (M1-SM2-SI) Ken Follett’s 20th-century trilogy. And for him, (M1-SM2-SII) the political is always very personal. So a man and a woman sit watching Nixon’s fall. They have been platonic friends for years. They cheer, and then they start kissing, and wind up having fantastic sex. (Duration: half a page out of 1,098.) This is Mr. Follett’s favorite way to keep history interesting.</p> <p>He has a limited lineup of other methods. And yet he has already drawn readers through the trilogy’s first two installments of global upheaval. “Fall of Giants” swept through the Russian Revolution, the struggle for women’s suffrage, the upstairs-downstairs outrages perpetrated by Britain’s male aristocracy, the verboten love affair between an Englishwoman and a German spy, the new world opening to immigrants fleeing Europe for the United States, and President Woodrow Wilson’s worries about bringing America into World War I. That was tricky business, since “He kept us out of war” had been Wilson’s 1916 second-term campaign slogan.</p>	<div> <div>Move 1: Introduction</div> <div>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</div> <div>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</div> <div>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</div> <div>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</div> <div>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</div> <div>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</div> </div> <div> <div>Move 1: Introduction</div> <div>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</div> <div>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</div> </div>

The first book was the most satisfyingly soap-operatic, with empires at stake and readers close to the action. The second, “Winter of the World,” covers World War II, and is necessarily more shocking. One of its most indelible scenes involves two Germans, (M2-SIII) Rebecca, 13, and Carla, a generation older, surrounded by vicious Russian troops. In an act of terrible courage, Carla persuades the soldiers to gang rape her but leave Rebecca alone.

Mr. Follett quickly equates East Germans' loss of freedom with the situation of blacks deprived of civil rights in the American South. Whatever else one might make of this comparison, it introduces George Jakes, the mixed-race Harvard student whose grandfather, Lev, fled Russia in the first volume (and whose father, a white senator, likes George but doesn't acknowledge paternity). (M2-SIII) George is a terrific character, and it's not even a stretch when Mr. Follett makes him

Move 2: Describing the book  
 SII: Describing the story  
 SIII: Describing the character

<p>central to truly important historical moments. This book's description of what happens to a bus full of Freedom Riders (George among them) in Alabama is authentically terrifying. Its descriptions of George's heroism sound credible, too.</p> <p>(M2-SII) George, later a lawyer, winds up as the obligatory black face (or so he sees it) in Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy's inner circle. Meanwhile, another of the book's black characters winds up as one of President John F. Kennedy's favorite girlfriends. The details of the president's romancing come straight from Mimi Alford's 2012 tell-all, "Once Upon a Secret," right down to his fondness for rubber ducks in the bathtub. But it is one of Mr. Follett's trademark maneuvers to link George's destiny with this woman's heartbreak on the day she has to be told that "my Johnny," as she thinks of him, has been shot.</p> <p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) Mr. Follett is harshly critical of the Kennedys' true commitment to civil rights, especially when that commitment became a political liability. But he never lets a political discussion bog down for very long. Over in the Kremlin, the highly placed Dimka Dvorkin (grandson of the first book's firebrand Bolshevik) manages to be at the side of Nikita S. Khrushchev and every Russian leader to follow him, keeping readers informed about how Communist policies are working out. But he, too, has oft-described troubles with women to break up all that Politburo chatter. And he has risen to the role of mentor by the time a bright young reformer named Gorbachev comes along.</p> <p>Also touched on here, pretty feebly: the evolving youthquake culture that began in the mid-'60s and peaked by the end of that decade. This book distributes space so unusually that Mr. Follett is nearly halfway through it before he gets past 1963; he devotes almost 200 pages to that year alone. But two cousins, a German and a Briton, form a rock band that's supposed to be good, and there are unconvincing observations</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
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<p>about the Hamburg club scene. Beatles albums are also dutifully mentioned. A long chapter on 1968 covers the tumultuous events of that year, which are enough to jolt George out of politics, at least for a while; the Vietnam War is seen at its worst. The Nixon flameout, the stirrings of a new conservatism and the Iran-contra fiasco all get their due. Mr. Follett makes a point of treating Ronald Reagan's rousing statement "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" more as a grandstanding aside than a moment of glory. The book has strong opinions about why Communism collapsed, too.</p> <p>(M2-SII) "Edge of Eternity" does end on the brink. Its 2008 epilogue has the same people who watched so much other history unfold on television now watching Barack Obama's election-night victory speech, which makes perfect sense in terms of the timeline Mr. Follett has chosen. A child asks: Why is an old man in the group so moved? The simple truth: "It's a long story."</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p>
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The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
(M1-SM1-SI, SM2-SI) David Mitchell once said he preferred “to discuss the human heart through characterization, and to address the human condition through plot.”	Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book
(M1-SM1-SII) In his new novel, “The Bone Clocks,” his heroine, Holly Sykes — a feisty teenage runaway when we meet her, and a worried grandmother at the book’s end — attests to this highly cerebral author’s ability to create a thoroughly captivating character. Holly’s poignant charm and Mr. Mitchell’s sheer fluency as a writer help the reader speed through this 600-plus-page novel with pleasure.	Sub-move 2: Situating the book SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author
(M4-SII) But the plot — which seems to borrow from such disparate sources as “Minority Report,” “The Da Vinci Code,” “Men in Black” and Shirley MacLaine’s writings about reincarnation — proves a creaky, jerry-built vehicle that devolves into lots of silly mumbo-jumbo. The resulting novel is simultaneously dazzling and hogtied, genuinely moving and sadly unconvincing.	Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book

<p>(M3-SIII) As with Mr. Mitchell's earlier novels "Ghostwritten" (2000) and "Cloud Atlas" (2004), structure is all-important to "The Bone Clocks," and, as in those books, overlapping stories, deliberate echoes and leitmotifs, and seemingly coincidental encounters are used to create a musically patterned narrative that underscores the author's interest in free will and destiny, causality and randomness and contingency, and the interconnectedness of our fragile, globalized world.</p> <p>Characters and themes from Mr. Mitchell's previous books also recur here — hints, Mr. Mitchell has suggested, that all his novels somehow link together in a kind of "uberbook" — though, at this point, these reverberations and cross-references tend to feel more like clever high jinks than like the articulation of a genuine fictional universe.</p> <p>"Ghostwritten" featured stream-of-consciousness monologues by an array of characters in far-flung locations whose stories intersect or converge. "Cloud Atlas" gave us half a dozen characters over several centuries whose stories nestle one inside the next, and who may or may not be reincarnations of one another. And "The Bone Clocks" breaks Holly's life into six sections, told from her point of view, and from the perspectives of people who play important roles in her life.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluation of the book SIII: Providing evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) The first takes place in 1984, when the 15-year-old Holly — who's had strange episodes of hearing voices in her head — runs away from home and learns that her beloved little brother, Jacko, has disappeared. The second is in 1991, when a deeply cynical Cambridge student named Hugo Lamb (whom we met in the author's 2006 novel, "Black Swan Green") falls in love with Holly, who is working as a bartender at a ski resort in the Alps.</p> <p>The third is in 2004, when the war reporter Ed Brubeck — Holly's partner (and the father of her daughter, Aoife) — tells her that he's planning to leave them again to go back to Iraq. The fourth is in 2015, when</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>

<p>Holly, now the best-selling author of a memoir about her paranormal experiences, becomes friends with Crispin Hershey, a middle-aged novelist who has exacted cruel vengeance on another writer who gave him a bad review.</p> <p>The last two sections take a giant leap from a more or less recognizable world into the genres of fantasy and dystopian fiction. Section 5 takes place in 2025, when Holly gets caught up in a war between two groups of semi-immortals — good guys known as Atemporals of Horology, who live in an involuntary “spiral of resurrections,” being reincarnated again and again in different bodies; and bad guys, known as Anchorites, who defy death in vampire-like fashion by killing people (ideally children) and imbibing their souls.</p> <p>Section 6 is set in 2043, when climate change and various economic and political fiascos have turned Europe into a lawless frontier, menaced by marauding gangs and increasingly desperate food and medicine shortages.</p> <p>(M3-SI) Mr. Mitchell is able to scamper nimbly across decades of Holly’s life, using his prodigious gifts as a writer to illuminate the very different chapters of her story. Like a wizard tapping his wand here and there, he turns on the lights in a succession of revealing little dioramas.</p> <p>(M2-SIII) We see Holly as a smart, rebellious teenager on the lam in the English countryside, where she has a strange encounter with an old, possibly crazy woman, fishing off a jetty. We see her some two decades later at a family wedding at a seaside hotel in Sussex with her young daughter. And we see her as a woman in her 70s, trying to care for her two grandchildren in a small Irish village, as the world crumbles around them.</p>	<div> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p> </div> <div> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> </div> <div> <p>Move 2: Describing the book SIII: Describing the character</p> </div>
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(M3-SI) Mr. Mitchell's heavy arsenal of talents is showcased in these pages: his symphonic imagination; his ventriloquist's ability to channel the voices of myriad characters from different time zones and cultures; his intuitive understanding of children and knack for capturing their solemnity and humor; and his ear for language — its rhythms, sounds and inflections.

But while those gifts are more vibrant than ever, Mr. Mitchell's writing has also become increasingly self-indulgent. (M3-SIII) "The Bone Clocks" is a novel desperately in need of an editor, who might have pruned some of the Tristram Shandy-esque digressions (like Crispin Hershey's endless natterings about the literary world, which seem to exist simply to give Mr. Mitchell an excuse to make satirical observations), and helped turn the New Age blather about the Atemporals and Anchorites into something resembling a convincing cosmology.

The section narrated by Marinus (a character we met in Mr. Mitchell's 2010 novel, "The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet") is an even bigger hodgepodge than the awkward sections in "Ghostwritten," told in the voice of a disembodied spirit who can move from host to host.

There is a lot of portentous talk here about things like carnivores who "decant souls," "animacides committed by a syndicate of soul thieves" and "psychosoteric DNA" tests. At one point, Marinus says of several characters' interactions with Holly: "As a parting gift, Oshima redacts a broad swath of Nancy's present perfect and induces unconsciousness before egressing her and ingressing the traumatized Holly."

Passages like this feel less like the work of a gifted fantasy writer intent on creating a fully imagined alternative world than like the absent-minded riffing of a novelist who has read a lot of genre fiction and who wants to inject Holly's story with some paranormal hokey. Worse, it's distracting from the more real and keenly observed aspects of Holly's life.

Move 3: Evaluating the book

SI: Providing an evaluation of the author

SIII: Providing an evaluation of the  
content of the book

<p>(M4-SII) In fact, Holly's emergence from "The Bone Clocks" as the most memorable and affecting character Mr. Mitchell has yet created is a testament to his skills as an old-fashioned realist, which lurk beneath the razzle-dazzle postmodern surface of his fiction, and which, in this case, manage to transcend the supernatural nonsense in this arresting but bloated novel.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
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**PR16: Tuesday Nights in 1980 by Molly Prentiss**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) In her debut novel, “Tuesday Nights in 1980,” Molly Prentiss sets an almost impertinently high bar for herself. She’s determined to write (M1-SM1-SII) a love letter in polychrome to a bygone Manhattan; to recreate the squalid exuberance of Jean-Michel Basquiat’s and Keith Haring’s art scene; to explore all the important, hairy themes — love, creativity, losing your innocence in one cruel swoop.</p> <p>(M3-SI) That she mostly pulls it off is impressive, thrilling. That she sometimes sorely tests the elasticity of your patience with her excesses is also part of the deal. Give her a mulligan on them. She knows exactly where she wants her book to go.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SII) After a brief prologue, “Tuesday Nights in 1980” starts at a New Year’s Eve party on Dec. 31, 1979, in the home of Winona George, a larger-than-life New York gallerist who says things like, “You’ve got the I-was-born-with-its and the self-taughts and something-somethings” to the artists she loves. It’s a moment when the art scene is changing — “there was a new air of possibility and a new wave of capital coming in” — and the guest list reflects it. The California conceptual artist John Baldessari is there, shivering from the New York cold. So is Keith Haring.</p> <p>(M2-SIII) But most important, so are two of the novel’s three main characters: Raul Engales, a handsome young painter who has fled Argentina’s “Dirty War”; and James Bennett, a synesthetic art critic with overlarge ears and undersized social confidence who is nevertheless the toast of downtown, thanks to his impeccable taste. Later that night, Engales will leave the party and meet Lucy — a radiant gal from Ketchum, Idaho, who’s come to New York because she “didn’t want to have only one story” (who does?) — and fall giddily in love.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>(M2-SII) Eventually, their three lives converge. How they converge is a matter of both chance and fate (Ms. Prentiss is big on omens and symbols, scattering them like seeds), but as a practical matter, it's through James, the book's tortured soul and most captivating character.</p> <p>Synesthesia, though theoretically exotic, usually manifests itself in modest ways. (Vladimir Nabokov saw letters in specific colors, for instance.) Not in James's case. His brain is a nest of crossed wires and snarled circuits, not unlike the hacked ("phreaked") pay phones of the era, sending out and receiving signals from everywhere, free of charge. (While listening to John Cage, he "tasted, quite distinctly, black pepper, which even made him sneeze.")</p> <p>Then, just after that New Year's Eve party, Marge, James's wife, has a miscarriage. James's synesthesia vanishes; his mind becomes a whistling conch shell, just like that. Nothing can summon his powers back. He can no longer write: "He stared at blank pages, and cursed his blank brain."</p> <p>It is only when he sees one of Engales's paintings at an auction that his sensorium is suddenly ablaze again. But Engales is going through his own crisis as he gallops toward fame. Just days before his first solo show, he suffers an accident so astonishing and abrupt it practically leaves skid marks.</p> <p>To say what it is would be rotten — it's one of those Jesus-Mary-and-Joseph moments you'll remember long after you've put the book down.</p> <p>But it would not be a spoiler to say that James winds up sleeping with Lucy as an indirect result. The plot has to unknot itself from there.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Ms. Prentiss has a flair for the thumbnail sketch. Her first description of Winona George: "She had the kind of hair that was popular that year, a curtain revealing only the first act of her face: a queenly nose, confusingly colored eyes (where they violet?), cheekbones for days."</p>	

Unfortunately, Ms. Prentiss's writing can also be overripe on occasion, especially when she describes James's synesthesia. (By the time you get to the phrase "she watermeloned and heliumed on top of him," you may wish the doors of perception would shut just a little.) And there are a few sentences that would appear even to a non-synesthete in bright purple: "James Bennett's eyes reached into some special, dark spot inside her."

But then Ms. Prentiss will follow up with a sharp image — garbage trucks are "nocturnal, mechanical armadillos" — or better still, a sage observation. "It isn't enough to be beautiful," Marge calmly — almost maternally — tells Lucy, rather than screaming, when she discovers that her husband had an affair with her. "Beautiful is for other people. You have to be something for you."

New York is its own dynamic character in Ms. Prentiss's hands. (M3-SIII) It's a city of towering grime, with graffitied koans on the sidewalks and store windows that advertise "BEST PORN IN TOWN XXX." Her book falls neatly into the current New York grit nostalgia, captured in Garth Risk Hallberg's "City on Fire" and HBO's "Vinyl."

(Most of all, New York is a place where kooks and loners can still afford to move and find redemption. Weaknesses magically become strengths in this place — where else would James's synesthesia be a marketable quality, and where else would he find a wife who understands him?

It's where Engales paints "as a way into life," rather than out of it, as a means of escape from the political hell of Buenos Aires. It's where Lucy can, for the first time, feel what it's like to be in love with someone who'll enlarge her world.

"And surely (his tongue in her ear), most definitely (his sticky body on top of hers), undeniably (his eyes like he loved her), he would change her fate," she thinks the first night she spends with Engales.



Move 3: Evaluating the book




SI: Providing an evaluation of the author

SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content  
of the book

<p>In one sentence, Ms. Prentiss captures a sense of intoxication and possibility that six seasons of voice-overs from Sarah Jessica Parker never could.</p> <p>Yet we also get older. The saddest and wisest passages in “Tuesday Nights in 1980” are about the awful folly of trying to recapture lost happiness. Walking through Greenwich Village, her marriage in shards, Marge mourns the days when she was still in college, doing collages at the kitchen table while James wrote.</p> <p>That self is gone but there are new selves to be had, and new people to shape our lives. Ms. Prentiss concludes her novel on a note that’s both ethereal and brutally realistic. She cauterizes wounds, but they’re still visible and bare.</p> <p>(M4-SII) But for her characters — for this promising author — it’s enough.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
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**PR17: The North Water by Ian McGuire**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) In a note written in 1917 about his novel “Lord Jim,” Joseph Conrad referred to “the acute consciousness of lost honor.” “Lord Jim” deals with the first mate of a ship who, in a moment of crisis, panics and jumps to safety and is later excoriated by an official inquiry so that his very name and presence become anathema to those who care about codes of decency. Jim is a hunted man, moving away, in the narrator Marlow’s account, from his own substance to become a strange shadow that leaves -merely clues and hints about his identity or motives.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention  SI: Raising a point from the related topic  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the novel</p>
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) Just as Conrad will not offer his Lord Jim any easy redemption, and seems, in any case, more concerned with the texture of the prose and the -novel form itself than he is with his wayward story of guilt and loss of honor, so too McGuire seeks to use this tale of unredemption as a way to animate his own style and allow it to flourish. His ship going north toward destruction is propelled by a vision that is savage, brutal and relentless, but that same vision also loves adjectives, sonorous sentences and a sort of jagged, grim lyricism. “The North Water” feels like the result of an encounter between Joseph Conrad and Cormac McCarthy in some run-down port as they offer each other a long, sour nod of recognition.</p>	 <p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the novel</p>

<p>(M2-SII) The central characters are all men. The novel begins with the most vicious and unpleasant of them, Henry Drax. As he wanders the town on the night before the -Volunteer sets sail, he visits a brothel, tries to get free drinks in a bar, and eventually rapes and murders a young boy. (M2-SIII) He is presented as a man with no history, just all appetite. We are not burdened with how he thinks or what his worries are or his plans. We merely see what he does. He is, like many of the characters in “The North Water,” a force of nature, a piece of fierce and willful energy.</p> <p>Patrick Sumner is handled more -tenderly, but his back story comes mainly in his dreams. His addiction to opium and the guilt he feels hit against his innate decency. But, most of the time, decency and morality seem almost futile and are certainly useless against the incessant violence and pitilessness that emerge in scene after scene in the book.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SI) McGuire has an extraordinary talent for picturing a moment, offering precise, sharp, cinematic details. When he has to describe complex action, he -manages the physicality with immense clarity. He writes about violence with unsparing color and, at times, a sort of relish. The writing moves sometimes from the poetic to the purple, but McGuire is careful not to use too many metaphors or similes or too much fancy writing when he needs to make clear what cold feels like, or hunger or fear.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) Slowly we learn that the purpose of the voyage is not to bring back seal skins or blubber from whales but, with another ship close by, to commit a dangerous act of insurance fraud.</p> <p>Sumner’s spirits are kept high by the opium, but there is always a darkness at the core of him. He is not going to be redeemed by endurance or anything as simple as that. When one of the crew talks religion, it sounds more like magic or prophecy. (M3-SIII) The novel is more attracted by action, by the next cruel discovery or</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>



<p>possible catastrophe, than by character. There is little time, in any case, for introspection; this, oddly enough, makes Sumner more forceful and physically present in the book. He is, or he has become, what he sees.</p>	
<p>What is exciting is the idea that no one on this ship is going to learn anything, or change in any way. They will be lucky to survive, that is all, the ones who do survive.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) McGuire's characters do not -merely have fierce weather and pure evil to reckon with, they also have the fearful, encroaching shadows of characters from Melville and Conrad and Patrick O'Brian who have also gone down to the sea in ships with all the elaborate, manly descriptions of winds and storms and para-phernalia at their disposal. "The North Water" is careful to avoid pastiche; there is not a trace of irony or a moment when the author descends into period-piece writing. McGuire moves briskly and -forensically with no time for colorful -episodes or long maritime descriptions or technical asides about ropes.</p>	
<p>(M3-SI) Even when he writes about bears — a feat I had imagined highly inadvisable if not impossible for any contemporary novelist — McGuire almost manages to make us believe that these bears were -actually present. He is careful, I suppose, not to -allow the bears to stand for untamed -nature or any large question, and this is a relief. Although a she-bear's head is "like the pale prototype of some archaic undersea god," calmness and credibility are soon restored as "Drax, standing upright in the still--rolling whaleboat, lifts up the boat spade and plunges its chisel edge hard down into the bear's back."</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>McGuire takes pleasure in the body and how much it can endure, as he does in setting scenes. Late in the book, when all seems lost, the survivors set up their tent on the ice: "At night, they camp on the floe edge, raise the bloodstained tent, attempt to dry and feed themselves. Near midnight, the bluish twilight thickens briefly to a gaudy and stelliferous darkness, then an</p>	

hour later reasserts itself. Sumner sweats and shivers, dips in and out of an uneasy and dream-afflicted sleep. Around him bundled bodies grumble and gasp like snoozing cattle; the air inside the tent feels iron cold against his cheeks and nose, and has a stewed and crotch-like reek to it.”

Soon, we have descriptions of what it is like to suck and swallow the juice from a seal’s eyeball. And then we have Sumner drinking the “hot black liquid — blood, urine, bile” — from a bear’s innards. And then, as Sumner operates on a priest’s infected abdomen, the discharge first spatters across the table and then “it pulses out from the narrow opening like the last twitching apogee of a monstrous ejaculation.” This would be all good fun, except that McGuire manages to hold and wield his dark story in full seriousness. The tone throughout remains somber, direct, tense, fierce.

(M3-SIII) The tightness of the tone suggests that there is, behind the narrative, a theory being worked out of how historical fiction can be credibly managed now. Although there are no anachronisms in the book, there are also no long, wearying pages describing the clothing of the period, or the system of belief, or set pieces about the political or social background.


(M3-SI) This means that McGuire can isolate his characters, and because they are on a ship and going through immense physical trials, they can be further set apart. This gives them a sort of purity of line; there is an intensity in the way they live, breathe, and respond to the world that etches them more deeply on the page and on the imagination of the reader.

Even though there are many minor players and moments where the camera of the novel moves away from its main characters, McGuire makes sure we know this is, in fact, the story of two men, Sumner and Drax, and it is their fates (rather than the fate of the ship or its crew or its owner) with which we are concerned. This focus is managed with tact and intelligence so that, even in the passages of the book that do not deal with

Move 3: Evaluating the book

SI: Providing an evaluation of the author

SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content  
of the book

the two figures directly, it is clear they are not being sidelined but are merely waiting to emerge more powerfully again.		Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author
(M2-SII, M3-SI) By the end of the book, their story becomes even more vivid. It is possible at certain moments to sense the battle between them as a clash between darkness and light, good and evil. It is a mark of McGuire's subtlety as a novelist, however, that he leaves this in the shadows while placing at the forefront enough felt life and closely imagined detail to resist any simple categories. He allows each of the two men their due strangeness and individuality.		Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story
(M2-SII) Colm Toibin is the author, most recently, of the novel "Nora Webster."		Move 5: Reviewer Information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer

**Table 47: PR18: Arcadia by Iain Pears**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI, M1-SM2-SII) Nobody can tangle a text like Iain Pears. His best-known novel, “An Instance of the Fingerpost,” explored a 17th-century Oxford murder and its aftermath through the memoirs of four unreliable narrators, each hotly disputing the others’ versions of reality, science, religion and justice. After nearly 700 pages of deposition, when the guilty are finally sorted from the hard-to-call-innocent, many readers will understandably have already lost track of their scorecards. Now, almost 20 years later, Pears’s latest novel presents a complexly interwoven series of narrative entanglements that stretch across time, alternate universes and at least several textual realities — from Elizabethan pastoral romance and multiple universe theory to a Narnia-like fantasy world and Cold War international intrigue. What’s the difference between all these systems of order, knowledge and storytelling? the attentive reader might ask. And the answer might well be: no difference at all. They are equally “real” and equally “unreal” — take your pick.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author  SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
<p>(M2-SII) With a nod to Philip Sidney (and Tom Stoppard), Pears unreels a series of stories that travel in several directions at once: from past to future, from future to past, and from fictive to actual and back again. With one foot set in the 1960s, the novel’s central character, Henry Lytten, is an Oxford fellow with a fondness for the fantasy landscapes of local celebrities like C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. When Henry’s not working for the British government flushing out Russian spies, he meets with an Inklings-like group of popular-fiction fans at a local pub and reads aloud from his rapidly accumulating notes for the tale of a sociologically believable fantasy realm called Anterwold. There the political differences of the inhabitants — urban and pastoral, rich and poor, insider and outsider — are kept in what-should-be-eternal balance by a ritual known as the Abasement.</p> <p>In the meantime (or somewhere before or after the</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the stor</p>

meantime, it's not always clear) what Henry doesn't know is that a far-future totalitarian bureaucracy is trying to impose its own system of permanent order on a hysteria-prone population. In response, a "psychomathematician" named Angela Meerson designs a "time machine," journeys back to 1936 and ultimately turns Henry's "outline" for a fantasy novel into a self-contained physical universe threatening the stability of her so-called real one. When her colleagues try to fetch her home, paradoxes and conundrums abound, and it grows increasingly difficult for even the most astute reader to distinguish the "fictive" from the "real," the "now" from the "then" and the "what might be" from the "what has already been." (To help readers keep track, Pears even designed an app to accompany the British edition: It resembles a choose-your-own-adventure plot or one of those multicolored subway maps that fill London tourists with the false assurance that they know exactly where they are.)

It's hard to decide when or where a story like this begins or ends and what marks its most important stops along the way. Take Rosie Wilson, the teenage girl who feeds Henry's cat. Early in the novel, she descends into Henry's cellar (which is cluttered with Tolkien's displaced possessions) and crosses a doorway into Henry's Anterwold, much like her fictional predecessors in the Narnia novels. When she comes out again, she leaves behind a doppelgänger who develops a stubborn ability to live her own life and send the Abasement ritual off course. And so it grows increasingly difficult to tell which "story" (and which "Rosie") takes precedence over the other one. Who did what, where and when? Where does history (which the far-future totalitarians of this novel consider a form of "the occult") end and fiction begin? Does any story possess a true origin or beginning, or is it always already implicated in the imaginings of other books, other people, othernesses? "He who understood the darkness," one of this novel's numerous altercating storytellers concludes, "would also understand the Return, for the beginning and the end were one and the same."

Move 2: Describing the book  
SII: Describing the story

<p>(M4-SII) “Arcadia” is not an easy book to summarize, but it’s a book that spends a lot of time trying to summarize itself. Most of its lengthy scenes involve significant characters exchanging expository dialogue about their various inter-involved stories and plot trajectories. And while there’s usually a pleasurable sense that the numerous narrative entanglements are well designed and just perplexing enough to inspire curiosity (for the most part), the physical landscapes often feel anonymous and inexplicit, whether it’s Anterworld’s pastoral bits (“a wooded landscape; clumps of trees and brushwood mainly, no river and no valley”) or the far-future’s mother of all libraries, described simply as “20 miles long, four wide and 12 stories high.” (M3-SI) Pears is a great writer of ideas and intellectual adventure, but not quite so good at envisioning worlds.</p> <p>“Generally speaking,” Angela Meerson reminds herself late in the book, “our minds impose an entirely artificial order on the world. It is the only way that such an inadequate instrument as our brain can function. It cannot deal with the complexity of reality, so simplifies everything until it can, putting events into an artificial order so they can be dealt with one at a time, rather than all at once as they should be.” In other words, if you want to actually see how the real universe operates, get dementia.</p> <p>“An Instance of the Fingerpost” succeeded by inhabiting the often disastrously mistaken scientific and religious notions of four very different 17th-century men. Not quite so successfully, “Arcadia” leads readers into an escalating series of interconnected textual worlds and deliberately avoids helping them to achieve any final utopian vision. Find your own way home, this book seems to tell them. And good luck devising your maps along the way.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Scott Bradfield’s most recent novel is “The People Who Watched Her Pass By.”</p>	<p>M5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>

**PR19: The Queen of the Night by Alexander Chee**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) In opera, voice is everything. The narrator of “The Queen of the Night,” Lilliet Berne, is a star of the Paris Opera. She possesses a rare and delicate Falcon soprano range, named for -Marie-Cornélie Falcon, whose voice famously shattered in the middle of a performance and never recovered. Lilliet’s world is one of silence and sound, of risk and fragility, and the balance between vocal power and expression.</p> <p>Voice is everything in historical fiction, too: One of the novelist’s critical creative decisions is how to present the voices and world views of people in the past, while making them accessible for modern readers. (M1-SM2-SII) Many authors of popular historical novels attempt something that simply sounds a bit old-fashioned, in an attempt to create a sense of authenticity, as if that were actually possible. But what is assumed to be “authenticity” is a genre convention that owes more to the influence of early historical fiction than to genuine speech patterns of ancient Rome or the real pirates of the Caribbean.</p> <p>There are other approaches, such as the vaulting ventriloquism of Sarah Waters or Peter Carey, or the postmodern voice showcased in Jeanette Winterson’s “The Passion.” In “Wolf Hall,” Hilary Mantel mastered the transparent voice; subtly reflecting Tudor speech and language, without us tripping over a single “prithee” or “gadzook” — while in “The Luminaries,” Eleanor Catton reproduced a syntax and vocabulary reminiscent of Dickens. Whatever the author’s particular spin, the characters’ voices, especially in first-person narration, create an imagined past for the reader, and need to sing in tune.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>

<p>(M1-SM1-SII) “The Queen of the Night,” Alexander Chee’s salute to the music and literature of the 19th century, is also all about voice. The rags-to-riches plot is an intentionally improbable picaresque featuring all the glorious elements of great operas of the era: love at first sight, disguise, intrigue, grief, betrayal, secrets, scheming aristocrats, a besotted tenor, dramatic escapes, grand settings, fabulous costumes, murder, fallen women, sacrifice — the follies of humans at the mercy of Fate. “Victory, defeat, victory, defeat, victory, defeat” is a refrain.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) Lilliet’s story begins at a state ball, naturally, before her memories take us from childhood on a bleak Minnesota farm to a circus, from a Paris brothel to the stage, and finally back to the world of the traveling circus. At different -stages she performs as a daughter, acrobat, prisoner, servant, friend, courtesan, spy and celebrity — an astonishing arc that circles back when she is invited to appear in a new opera based on her own secret life story.</p> <p>One of her roles is Amina, the sleepwalker in Bellini’s “La Sonnambula,” who “is grieving, raging at her fate, in love, ultimately despairing of all hope, unaware she is in terrible danger until she wakes to her rescue, exultant.” (M2-SIII) Like Amina, Lilliet moves through her many incarnations and settings as if from scene to scene, character to character. She finds little joy in singing and is beyond the audience’s reach, behind makeup and costume. She tells us that she too is grieving, raging and exultant, but she has been trained to use her face and her voice as a mask, to “give and never give anything away.” At times Lilliet loses, or pretends to lose, or refuses to use her speaking voice, seeking refuge in silence, another “mask of a kind,” she says. “It let me be whatever or whomever they needed me to be.”</p> <p>(M2-SIV) While the novel is infused with an operatic sensibility, it doesn’t feel like an opera — there’s little transcendental magic or soaring tragedy. Lilliet’s passive narration has a distant, formal tone, seemingly</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>



<p>meant as a re-creation of 19th-century voice, but executed without the mastery of a Catton or Waters, dulling the drama, even at the most theatrical moments. Flat notes and stilted phrasing create a “performance of alienation” that positions the reader as a spectator viewing a world produced by exposition, flashbacks and jump cuts between memories, illusory subplots and red herrings. An abundance of detail and a chorus of historical personalities lead to a few plot inconsistencies and diversions and also slow the pace.</p> <p>(M2-SII) But the story and the murky mystery within it take off in the fourth act, in a dark and hungry city devastated during the siege of Paris and the Commune. Here, the narrator’s dissociated voice is more suited to her horror at the corpses in the streets, the blood in the fountains. Always a survivor, (M2-SIII) Lilliet transforms herself from the girl to whom things happen into a diva defying fate while her voice lasts.</p> <p>Her fictional life intertwines with those of real women of the era: Empress Eugénie, regent during the war; the composer Pauline Viardot-Garcia, who finally provides the training Lilliet’s voice needs; the Comtesse de Castiglione, who wove intrigue across Europe — it is she, in a masquerade costume, who adorns the book’s cover in a remarkable early photograph. Even George Sand has a cameo role, looking like “an old elf.”</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character SIV: Describing the reading experience</p>
<p>“The Queen of the Night” is a celebration of these women of creativity, ingenuity, endurance, mastery and grace — a gala in their honor. We may feel like we are watching the action from the dress circle, but their voices reach us still.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book SIV: Giving comments relating to personal experience</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Kelly Gardiner’s latest novel is “Goddess,” based on the life of the opera singer and swordswoman Julie d’Aubigny.</p>	<p>M5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>
<p>(M6-SII) Correction: March 6, 2016 A review on Feb. 21 about “The Queen of the Night,” a novel by Alexander Chee, misidentified the type of event with which the protagonist’s story began. It was a state ball, not a masked ball.</p>	<p>M6: Review information SII: Providing information/reasoning for updating the review</p>

**PR20: The Man without a Shadow by Joyce Carol Oates**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SII) Joyce Carol Oates's latest novel makes for uncomfortable reading. Even before the narrative begins, a hint of disquiet creeps in with the epigraph: "The annihilation is not the terror. The journey is the terror." Forget the explicit reference to terror; a clammy sort of eeriness settles on the reader who pauses to research the identity of the epigraph's supposed source, Elihu Hoopes, who turns out to be the "man without a shadow" of the title. To enter these pages is to enter a world of smoke and mirrors, rendered all the more insidious by the realization that this purports to be a world of objective truth, a world of scientific inquiry.</p> <p>A peculiar stylistic device adds to the book's penumbral chill: the omniscient narrator's penchant for isolating words within a sentence, whether quarantining them inside quotation marks, sequestering them within parentheses, setting them off by dashes or distinguishing them by font. The effect is "distancing" — disorienting — disconcerting. As if certain words were so suspect — sordid — as to require "handling" by tweezers or being pinched between fingertips, the way one might hold a (soiled) tissue.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the novel</p>
<p>(M2-SII) "The Man Without a Shadow" spans three decades and is set almost entirely within the confines of the University Neurological Institute at Darven Park, Pa. Its plot focuses on the relationship between Margot Sharpe (she is about to turn 24 when we meet her in 1965, a graduate student and brand-new research assistant in the memory lab) and Elihu Hoopes, or E.H., as he is called in the scientific literature. An infection left him, at 37, suffering from untreatable anterograde amnesia. That is, he remembers most of his life leading up to the illness but is incapable of forming any new memories. Once a successful businessman, he now lives with an elderly aunt and spends his days undergoing tests (sometimes cruel, even sadistic) at the institute.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story  SIII: Describing the character</p>

(M2-SIII) E.H. is gentlemanly. E.H. “emanates an air of manly charisma.” E.H. is “unexpectedly tall.” His skin “exudes a warm glow.” He is “something of an artist,” the scion of a distinguished old Main Line family, a former seminary student and civil rights activist. To top it off, he is famous in a highly particular way. As Dr. Milton -Ferris, the principal investigator of Project E.H., says, he “will possibly be one of the most famous amnesiacs in the history of neuroscience.” In other words, E.H. is the kind of fellow to make an impressionable young neuropsychologist swoon. Or go “dry-mouthed and tremulous,” as Margot Sharpe does, encountering him for the first time. But she’s a practical young woman, and even in the midst of being dazzled by this vision of preppy, tragic masculinity she doesn’t fail to register the boon he might be to her career, or to intuit the impact he will have on her life. In fact, E.H. becomes her life — or, more accurately, what she chooses in lieu of a life. He serves as the unwitting tabula rasa on which she projects all her hopes and fantasies. If Elihu Hoopes is the helpless prisoner of his affliction, Margot Sharpe will spend the better part of her years contorting herself into an amalgam of jailer, savior and ultimately fellow -captive.



At once ferocious and submissive, Margot is acutely aware of the caste system she must navigate in order to succeed as a female scientist. She learns to think of herself as the Chaste Daughter to Milton Ferris’s all-powerful paterfamilias. When they enter into a sexual affair, she recasts herself adeptly (with the aid of whiskey and willed forgetfulness) so as to reap professional benefits while tamping down shame. She turns powerlessness into attainment through an alchemy of the most morally dubious sort. We are frequently told that she is thin, possibly anorexic, and her self-starvation carries over into her emotional life. Not only does she have very little relationship with her family, she seems oblivious to the meagerness of that relationship. Not only is she virtually friendless, she seems unaware of the impoverishment of her entire existence.

Move 2: Describing the book

SII: Describing the story

SIII: Describing the character



<p>For obvious reasons, E.H. also lacks awareness, but as he ages, memories from his early life increasingly trouble him and his chivalrous demeanor begins to betray alarming cracks. The threat of violence has been telegraphed from the novel's opening pages, and Margot has fantasized about E.H.'s ability to hurt her.</p>	
<p>(M3-SIII) The book devotes much space to a mystery in E.H.'s past. He obsessively draws a drowned, naked girl floating in a stream. We hear repeatedly about a plane crash, knives, a jilted fiancée. We are subjected to many reminders of E.H.'s commitment to civil rights — always in the most generic terms: He “marched with Negroes” and considered Martin Luther King Jr. a hero. It's hinted that his work in “the Movement” might have sparked an appetite for violence. All these threads are developed excessively and unconvincingly, and when the knots are at last unraveled, the payoff is anticlimactic, perhaps because this whole subplot was never integral to the book's central concerns.</p> <p>These concerns involve vital questions: What is the nature of the self, and what is the relation of memory to the self? What kind of personal identity is possible when we lack the ability to sustain a continuous narrative? What kind of identity is possible when we choose stagnation and delusion over growth and reality? And no less trenchant: What -sources of power are available to a woman in a male-dominated field? How does she negotiate the collision of professional ambition, sexual desire and medical ethics? How does a person whose memory is not impaired construct a narrative of the self?</p> <p>(M3-SI, M3-SIII) Throughout her career, Oates has demonstrated an uncanny knack for plowing straight into difficult, essential terrain. But why “uncanny”? Why not simply say “a knack”? Because of the fault line that runs between the subjects she re-hearses again and again — violence, betrayal and shame, sexual and otherwise — and the sense that although she is drawn to them, she has not discovered much that is new about them. It's as if this material mesmerizes her so utterly</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>

<p>that it impedes the full range of her power to interrogate it, as if she's examining it not in full daylight or even in the bright glare of the laboratory but only in the bleakest reaches, only in the shadows. Oates could hardly be accused of writerly timidity. In terms of her output, her unapologetic appetite for working across genres, her incisive intelligence, she's a paragon of boldness. Yet this novel, much like its protagonist, seems an unstable alloy of ferocity and submission. As I read it, I couldn't help thinking of Oates's assertion that when watching a boxing match she tends to identify with "the losing or hurt boxer," and wondering if this notion of victimhood continues to hold her in thrall. The book poses such large questions, yet restricts itself to such small answers.</p>	 <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing an evaluation of the author  SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>Early on, we learn that E.H. has a flattened affect, "as a caricature is a flattened portrait of the complexity of human personality." (M4-SII) In confining her search to the realm of darkness and depravity, Oates has flattened the potential complexity of her own novel.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment  SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Leah Hager Cohen's most recent novel is "No Book but the World."</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information  SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>

**PR21: Dictator by Robert Harris**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) Cicero, the Roman statesman whose talent for oratory was such that he remains to this day a byword for eloquence, has always divided opinion. A key player in the death agony of Rome's traditional republican system of government, he was lauded by his admirers as a defender of constitutional propriety and dismissed by his foes as a vacillating opportunist. Posterity has proved similarly conflicted. While America's founding fathers revered him as a model of civic duty, he was excoriated by the most formidable German classicist of the 19th century, Theodor Mommsen, as a precursor of that lowest class of writer, a "newspaper columnist." A person's attitude to Cicero can often be most revealing.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SI) What, then, does it say about Robert Harris that he should have made Rome's greatest orator the hero not just of one novel but of an entire trilogy? Perhaps that he likes and respects politicians to a degree unusual among contemporary writers. This is not to say that he gives them a free pass. His portrait in "The Ghost Writer" of a former British prime minister not a million miles from Tony Blair was notably unforgiving, and the character sketches he provides in "Dictator" of some of the giants of Roman history, from Pompey to Julius Caesar, are similarly unsparing. (M1-SM2-SI) Nevertheless, Harris clearly prefers activists willing to get their hands dirty to those who sit on the sidelines, preserving the spotlessness of their virtue. As a former correspondent for the BBC and political editor for The Observer, he is as well qualified as anyone to appreciate that nothing is ever achieved in a democratic system of government without a measure of give-and-take. "Dictator" is the work of a novelist who refuses to buy into the fashionable dismissal of politicians as inherently contemptible.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader's attention</p> <p>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>

<p>(M1-SM1-SII) “How easy it is for those who play no part in public affairs to sneer at the compromises required of those who do.” So declares the narrator of “Dictator” in the early pages of the novel. As he did in “Imperium” and “Conspirata,” the first two volumes of the series, Harris ventriloquizes through the person of Tiro, a slave who served Cicero as his secretary and reputedly invented the Latin shorthand system. As a character, he is so pallid as to be almost invisible, barely intruding on the action except every so often to fall ill. “I seem to have been blessed,” he admits, “with the sort of personality that nobody notices.” Yet it is precisely this transparency that makes him so well suited to Harris’s purposes. Ultimately, “Dictator” is interested in a single theme: the great game of Roman politics. Tiro, almost constantly by his master’s side, provides the perfect bird’s-eye view.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction  Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention  SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book  Sub-move 2: Situating the book  SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>To render convincingly a period as remote as that of Cicero’s is a stiff challenge for a novelist to meet, (M3-SI, M3-SIII) but it is the measure of Harris’s achievement that we experience a 2,000-year-old crisis as though we were reading about it in a contemporary memoir. He has done prodigious research. In his three pages of acknowledgments, he cites many scholars in the field, including me (far too generously, given our limited contact). The events he describes in “Dictator” were as dramatic as any in European history, and peopled by a cast of characters who remain household names.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book  SI: Providing an evaluation of the author  SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>M2-SII) The novel opens in 58 B.C., with Cicero driven into exile by the machinations of his enemies, and Julius Caesar heading off to conquer Gaul; it climaxes in the wake of Caesar’s assassination, when Cicero briefly but gloriously defied the deepening shadows of military autocracy and paid a terrible price for his show of courage. Woven skillfully into its fabric are the authentic records of what is perhaps the single best-documented period in ancient history. Since many</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book  SII: Describing the story</p>

<p>of these were written by Cicero, whose wit and talent for vituperation were justly celebrated, the portraits of his adversaries are invariably memorable, with Harris himself ever ready to supplement the source material. “She had huge charcoal-black eyes and a painted ruby mouth — an ageless slattern’s mask even at the age of 11.” So much for Cleopatra.</p>	 <p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M4-SII) Yet the real triumph of “Dictator” is how successfully it channels what is perhaps the supreme fascination of ancient Rome: the degree to which it is at once eerily like our own world and yet profoundly alien. The challenges faced by Cicero will be recognizable to many a contemporary senator: welfare dependency; the legacy of illegal wars; anxiety that a venerable constitution is no longer fit for its purpose. “The best way for us to show confidence in our institutions is to allow them to function normally and to elect our magistrates as our ancestors taught us in the olden time,” Cicero declares at one point, as though sounding off on a TV news show. Yet what is familiar serves only to make what is strange all the more disconcerting — and to give to the gathering implosion of the Roman Republic, that military and financial superpower dominated by dynasts, bumptious populists and ambitious plutocrats, the character almost of science fiction. Returning to Rome in the wake of Caesar’s assassination, Cicero and Tiro pass “burnt-out villas, scorched fields, slaughtered livestock; even once a body hanging from a tree with a placard reading ‘Traitor’ round its neck.” It is a scene as redolent of “The Hunger Games” or “The Road” as of ancient history. If it is indeed a mirror that “Dictator” holds up to the present, then the reflections it offers are unsettling and admonitory. This is historical fiction that is the very opposite of escapist.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Tom Holland’s most recent book is “Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of the House of Caesar.”</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>



**PR22: The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) Isabel Allende has built her reputation on romantic love. But her new fairy tale of a novel, “The Japanese Lover,” doesn’t allow love to get in the way of comfort. (M1-SM1-SII) As in all of Allende’s fiction, we find a large, colorful cast of characters, this time swirling around the octogenarian Alma Belasco, happily if peculiarly ensconced in Lark House, a retirement home in San Francisco. Foremost is Irina Bazili, the young Moldovan immigrant whose repressed “terrors” of adolescence form a drumbeat of foreshadowing through the three years of her service to Alma. But as the story lurches back to the late 1930s and then to the highlights between, we also meet Alma’s Jewish family in pre-World War II Europe; the San Francisco relatives who adopt her; the entire family of her Japanese lover, Ichimei Fukuda; and a host of other lovers, care givers, evildoers and saints.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) No character is so minor as to lack a back story. At the same time, no character, including Alma and Irina, manages to fill in his or her outlines and command our undivided attention.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII) Lark House itself is a fairy-tale setting: a graduated-care facility on a “magnificent property,” intended for “elderly persons of slender means.” It serves organic food, showcases a wide range of sensibilities (though not of race or class) and gives its residents both complete freedom and individualized attention. Isn’t it pretty to think so? More problematic is the very real history forging the lives of its residents, particularly Alma.</p> <p>Although it skips the Vietnamese conflict, which featured in Allende’s novel “The Infinite Plan,” “The Japanese -Lover” covers a lot of historical and social ground: the European Jewish diaspora, World War II concentration camps, pre- and postwar racism, illegal abortion, AIDS. But the headlines vanish quickly and almost without leaving a mark. A prominent</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p>

<p>midcentury Jewish family never encounters anti-Semitism: They are welcomed at the best clubs and debutante parties; their son attends Harvard with no mention of quotas. Traumas like the loss of family members to the Nazis merit nods toward horror, but material pleasures do much to overcome their -effects.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) The range of characters with which -Allende peoples her story quickly devolves into a series of stereotypes: the wealthy Jews, the “serene” Japanese, the traumatized and possibly alcoholic Eastern Europeans. Such a large cast inevitably produces forgot-to-tell-you flashbacks, as when Alma’s lost brother suddenly appears, recounts his story, vanishes and then later reappears with a parenthetical reminiscence involving -Israel, Ben-Gurion and the Mossad.</p> <p>(M3-SI) A brief, vivid scene in Tijuana suggests the textured writing Allende is capable of, but the lengthy expositions that dominate most of the narrative lose their grounding, serving instead to instruct us in well-worn 20th-century history. Dialogue either conveys information (“I have an inoperable brain tumor”) or gives vent to direct emotions (“You know I’ve loved you for three years”). This last utterance is typical of the novel’s “great loves,” which the reader is meant to accept at face value. Like knights on horseback, the men in this story rescue the women — and when they issue orders (“Well, -Irina, that’s going to have to change”), the women are grateful.</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) Millions of people have traded great passion for conventional happiness or been enticed into love by a desirable lifestyle. But only in fairy tales do such compromises occur without many palpable consequences. When Allende sets her tales in distant or exotic locales, it’s easy to go along for the ride. Unfortunately, love’s intoxication, like the scent of the gardenias Ichimei sends Alma over many years, fails to lift this new novel above its thin plot and weakly motivated -characters.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarising the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SI) Lucy Ferriss’s latest novel is “A Sister to Honor.”</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SI: Providing background information about the reviewer</p>

**PR23: Numero Zero by Umberto Eco**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM2-SI) Umberto Eco's early novels gained a reputation as intellectual entertainments, dense with esoterica and dotted with Latin, of a heft you'd rather not drop on your toe. By contrast, his new conspiracy thriller is a fleet volume, slim in pages but plump in satire about modern Italy.</p> <p>This witty and wry novel — Eco's sixth since his best-selling fiction debut, "The Name of the Rose" — also contains a few flimsy elements and peculiar digressions. Still, it's hard not to be charmed by the zest of the author. I imagine the gray-bearded 83-year-old professor chortling away as he typed in some book-lined sanctuary. (Eco boasts 30,000 volumes at his Milan apartment, 20,000 more at a country home outside Urbino.)</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) The narrator of "Numero Zero" is a 50-ish sad sack, Colonna, who dropped out of college and has flitted from job to job: tutor, hack journalist, proofreader, copy editor, slush-pile reader, even ghostwriter of detective fiction for a pseudonymous author — that is, he's too unimportant even to be the real fake. Lately, he works in Milan at a start-up newspaper that is preparing dummy issues, chiefly with the intent of blackmailing the powerful. When a muckraking colleague claims to have unearthed a political conspiracy, all goes awry. So what's the dynamite scoop?</p> <p>Eco reveals it, but not in a hurry. First, he savors his fiasco of a newspaper — the kind that hears of a weeping Madonna statue and orders a banner headline. The unscrupulous editor in chief, Simei, informs his staff that their target audience is nitwits. Crossword clues must be no more challenging than "The husband of Eve."</p> <p>The publication is named Domani for its intent to stay</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>aloof to daily news in favor of tomorrow's stories. But soothsaying — tricky enough for paid psychics, and in especially short supply among the punditocracy — is simpler if you already know what will happen. So, Simei has the inspired idea of backdating the mock-ups, permitting the journalists to fill their articles with ex post facto insights.</p> <p>The setting for these inky shenanigans is 1992, when the Clean Hands scandal broke, revealing a system of kickbacks that implicated much of the Italian establishment. Political parties collapsed, thousands of people were arrested and a few committed suicide. From the chaos emerged a wealthy Milanese entrepreneur, Silvio Berlusconi, who formed his own party the next year and was elected prime minister in 1994, proclaiming himself savior of a vitiated nation.</p> <p>The novel never mentions him by name. However, the owner of Domani is described as an ambitious businessman known by his honorific, Il Commendatore, who aims to leverage media power into access to the upper echelons. (Opponents of Berlusconi, who is commonly known by his title, Il Cavaliere, have long accused him of applying his vast media holdings to political ends.)</p> <p>As scandal grips the nation, Colonna is occupied with the scoop of his seedy colleague Braggadocio, who claims that Mussolini was not killed by partisans in 1945 but survived in hiding, and that the dictator's fate was linked to extremist political violence in postwar Italy. In a crescendo of conspiratorial thinking, Braggadocio links a series of notorious crimes and alleged plots, each still debated in Italy: the Piazza Fontana bombing, the murder of Aldo Moro, the sudden death of Pope John Paul I, the Vatican banking scandal, the P2 Masonic lodge, the shooting of Pope John Paul II.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book</p> <p>SII: Describing the story</p> <p>SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SI) Conspiracies — many faked, some veritable — have long enthralled Eco, from “The Name of the Rose” (1980), set in a medieval abbey where monks keep getting bumped off; to “Foucault’s Pendulum”</p>	

(1988), about three book editors who invent a conspiracy theory that gets out of control; to his previous novel, “The Prague Cemetery” (2010), a portrait of a 19th-century malefactor who creates a notorious anti-Semitic forgery.

Eco’s predilection for cryptic truths traces back to his other career as a distinguished professor of semiotics, a branch of humanities whose practitioners are cursed to spend their lives explaining to strangers what they do. A central aim of the field is the deconstruction of human communications, reckoning with the unspoken codes and signification around us, from advertising to eating to the movies. Meanings are hidden everywhere, they argue — a view not far from that of the conspiracy theorist. Which is not to equate scholars with cranks. Only to note that Eco is professionally attuned to clandestine meanings, and to the risk of overinterpretation.

Another cause of Eco’s conspiratorial bent, I suspect, is Italy itself, where politicians have indulged in skulduggery since long before Machiavelli. Where conspiracies really do exist, is one nuts to expect them? When I arrived as a journalist in Italy a decade after Clean Hands, I was startled to discover that some people considered the villains of that scandal not the prosecuted but the prosecutors. Berlusconi himself routinely referred to the judiciary as flush with Reds plotting against conservatives like himself.

In the most stable of countries, scandals lead to disgrace, contrition (sincere or not) and resignations. In Italy, scandals are where history bifurcates, with parallel lines of explanation never to meet, disputed guilt, no crashing end and little regeneration as a result.

(M3-SIII) “Numero Zero” suggests that the interminable Italian political arguments over responsibility and blame trace back to World War II. “The shadow of Mussolini, who is taken for dead, wholly dominates Italian events from 1945 until, I’d

Move 3: Evaluating the book

SI: Providing an evaluation of the author

SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content  
of the book


<p>say, now,” Braggadocio remarks. Of course, he’s a paranoiac. But is he wrong? Still today, Fascist and Communist graffiti blights walls across Italy, and Rome retains a prominent obelisk chiseled with the name of Il Duce. Imagine a Nazi-era tribute to Hitler in central Berlin today — it’s inconceivable. But in the Italian political opera, there are few finales, just encores nobody asked for.</p> <p>Bogus or not, Braggadocio’s conspiracy theorizing leads to blood, which is perhaps Eco’s point: Fantastic claims have real costs. When Colonna feels imperiled, he takes to the arms of his young love interest, Maia. And she — previously a character more quirky than plausible — gains full voice, railing against the chicanery everywhere. “The only serious concern for decent citizens is how to avoid paying taxes, and those in charge can do what they like — they always have their snouts in the same trough.” She proposes running away to an even more corrupt country, where the venality will at least be in the open.</p> <p>Colonna retorts that there’s no need to venture far. “You’re forgetting, my love, that Italy is slowly turning into one of those havens you want to banish yourself to,” he says. “All we have to do is wait: Once this country of ours has finally joined the third world, the living will be easy.”</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book</p> <p>SI: Providing an evaluation of the author</p> <p>SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) Remember, this is 1992, when dirty hands were exposed and cleaner hands were to follow; all those perp walks and prison terms presaged a better domani. Enter stage right a dapper gent with a few trillion lire in his pocket and a satisfied grin on his chops. Berlusconi dominated Italian politics from 1994 until 2011, serving as prime minister three times. The Italy that he was to rescue is today one of dejection, unemployment, cynicism. Wanting to laugh, the impish Eco — along with many of his compatriots — is inclined to sigh at the state of his nation.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment</p> <p>SII: Summarising the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Tom Rachman is the author of two novels, “The Imperfectionists” and “The Rise and Fall of Great Powers.”</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information</p> <p>SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI, M1-SM1-SII, M1-SM2-SI) What does it mean to say that a writer has a “take” on a genre? This question has been popping around my mind since I read Patrick deWitt’s new novel, “Undermajordomo Minor,” which is, let’s just say this straight out, quick and funny and thoughtful and moving and super. But what else is it? The book feels like a take on a certain genre — and let’s figure out what the genre is in a minute — but I’m suspicious of that phrasing, a take, which is often used to draw a divisive line. It is said, for instance, that Margaret Atwood does a take on science fiction and therefore is a literary writer instead of a science fiction writer, and then we wonder why there are so few science fiction writers who write as well as Margaret Atwood, while the science fiction writers glare at us and order another round. This is bad. “The Handmaid’s Tale” is science fiction and should not be disqualified as such on the grounds that it has good sentences and makes you think, as does the work of Patrick deWitt.</p> <p>(M1-SM2-SII) Therefore, “Undermajordomo Minor” is a terrific piece of genre writing, and that’s that.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention</p> <p>SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>
<p>Is it, though? It’s tempting, for the whole of (M1-SM2-SI) deWitt’s career, to say he’s doing takes. His first novel, “Ablutions,” caught my eye in a bookstore, and my eyes stayed riveted for the whole brisk read. Many first novels chronicle the basically banal lives of various characters, presumably based on the author’s acquaintances, in far too much detail; “Ablutions,” subtitled “Notes for a Novel,” conversely and cleverly abbreviates that sort of book into flaky fragments, and is thus a take on a typical first novel, although it also is a first novel, and so I found it hard to tell whether deWitt was doing a spot-on performance of slackerdom or was just kind of a slacker. “The Sisters Brothers,” his glorious second novel, cleared everything up, if only because we could be certain that deWitt was giving us a take on the western and was not just actually a cowboy.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction</p> <p>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</p> <p>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</p> <p>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</p>

<p>While, say, Cormac McCarthy takes the conventions of a western and finds a dark and savage underworld beneath frontier heroism, “The Sisters Brothers” reads more deadpan than “Deadwood,” and the result is a tale of comic ineptitude and dusty melancholy. But the lasting appeal of “The Sisters Brothers” is that it is not a satire of the western — at least, not just a satire. The novel has a lovely fragility and an emotional core that rises above its clever premise and style. Rather than McCarthy or Zane Grey or even “Blazing Saddles,” “The Sisters Brothers” reminds me most of John Ford’s “My Darling Clementine,” with its plain grace in the context of some goofy dialogue and plotting. But of course, “My Darling Clementine” is not a take on a western; it’s (just) a really good western. So here we are.</p> <p>If there’s a film that “Undermajordomo Minor” recalls most, it’s “The Princess Bride,” which manages to be a thrilling adventure while looking askance at thrilling adventures, and like “The Princess Bride,” it’s in a genre we all know but maybe can’t quite define. DeWitt’s novel is something of a fairy tale, although there’s not much magic in it; it’s something of a folk tale, with trickery but not talking animals. There are some gothic touches, and it’s something of an adventure story, and you could call it a bildungsroman, from the time before bildungsromans were all about boys from Brooklyn learning that maybe they shouldn’t sleep around so much. In “Undermajordomo Minor” there’s a fair maiden, a cruel soldier, a mad baron, a creaky castle, sneaky pickpockets, secretive servants, mysterious correspondence, star-crossed romance, brooding betrayal and 10 other things you’re already thinking of — a melting pot of assorted old European scraps, cooked up into something that makes superb and utter sense as long as you’re not a stickler for authenticity, in the same way Edward Gorey gives us Victorian England or the Decemberists give us traditional chanteys.</p>	<div> <div>Move 1: Introduction</div> <div>Sub-move 2: Situating the book</div> <div>SI: Situating the book within the identity of the author</div> <div>SII: Situating the book within the genre of fiction</div> </div>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) The hero of “Undermajordomo Minor” — Lucien Minor, slyly called Lucy throughout — is similarly familiar yet slippery: He’s a simpleton</p>	



<p>with a few tricks up his sleeve, pursuing selfish interests but still a nice guy, yearning for something but also eager to take the afternoon off. Early in the book, a strange visitor dressed in burlap asks him what he wants from life and waits for a reply. “Lucy’s thoughts were slothful, and the man’s query was a restless puzzle to him. And yet an answer arrived and spilled from his mouth, as though he had no control over the sentiment: ‘Something to happen,’ he said.”</p> <p>Something does happen, and the something in which our hero is embroiled is equal parts mystery, adventure, romance and quest, but for me the thing to examine is that keen phrase “restless puzzle” — a little startle that takes us out of this somewhat decorated passage and into Lucy’s shaky head. It’s a small moment, but an honest one, and (M3-SIII) the whole novel works in this way, balancing its narrative whimsy and rhetorical flourish with bona fide heart. For every comic digression, there’s a breath of quiet stillness; for every bout of old-fashioned frippery, there’s a time for authentic and moving introspection, so the entire project of “Undermajordomo Minor” feels less like a postmodern exploration — a take, if you will — and more like the genuine article, a tale that engages us and haunts us just like the best tales of yore.</p> <p>(M3-SIII) Late in the novel, the plot veers suddenly into an oddball detour, a trick also employed in “The Sisters Brothers” but a better fit here. In the previous novel, the sudden new elements felt a bit frantic; here the device harks back to the most ancient of epics. Reading those texts nowadays, written on parchment before the rules of narrative were carved in stone, can feel off-putting, and deWitt tips his hat to those readers who are craving something more fashionably straightforward than “Undermajordomo Minor”</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p> <p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>
<p>(M4-SII) There we are, we are here: a little grace note that adds some gentle depths to what otherwise might just feel too glib. Rising over its self-consciousness,</p>	

<p>“Undermajordomo Minor” not only salutes the literature of a bygone era but fully inhabits it, and the result is a novel that offers the same delights as the fairy tales and adventure stories it takes on, while reminding us that in the long game of literature, what lasts is what thrills. My take on Patrick deWitt is that he is a thrilling writer likely to last past our own soon-to-be-bygone time.</p>	 <p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarising the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>Correction: October 4, 2015 A review on Sept. 20 about “Undermajordomo Minor,” a novel by Patrick deWitt, misidentified a character who asks the hero what he wants from life. He is a strange visitor dressed in burlap, not the village priest.</p>	<p>Move 6: Review information SII: Providing information/reasoning for updating the review</p>

**PR25: After Alice by Gregory Maguire**

The Text in the Review	Move Analysis
<p>(M1-SM1-SI) Imagine finding yourself in a place where delusion is enforced by custom and law, no one really understands what anyone else is saying, facts are suspect, lies relished, heads roll for arbitrary and fanciful reasons, and only children are perceptive enough to observe that nothing makes sense. Where might you be? Wonderland? A Ted Cruz rally? In “After Alice,” Gregory Maguire suggests Lewis Carroll’s Oxford might well match that description.</p> <p>(M1-SM1-SII) During the reign of Victoria, this ancient college town of peculiar men and unexamined double standards was every bit as confounding as the world little -Alice discovered at the bottom of the rabbit hole. The one is contrasted against the other in a narrative that purrs with all the warm confidence of a Cheshire cat.</p>	<p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention SI: Raising a point from the related topic</p> <p>Move 1: Introduction Sub-move 1: Capturing reader’s attention SII: Highlighting some aspects/parts of the book</p>
<p>(M2-SII, M2-SIII) Ada Boyce is puffy, bent-backed and unlovely, confined to an agonizing iron corset meant to correct her unladylike posture. Mother drinks, father sermonizes, baby shrieks and the governess entertains daydreams of drowning her charge. Ada’s closest (and only) companion is dreamy Alice Clowd, who lives at the Croft, a short walk along the River Cherwell from Ada’s home. On a dazzling midsummer morning in 1860-something, Ada slips away from her adult guardians to hunt down her best friend, plants a foot wrong and goes for a long tumble into literature’s most famous fantasia, the nonsense world -Carroll introduced in “Alice’s Adventures in -Wonderland.”</p> <p>At first, hardly anyone notes the disappearance of two children (it was an era when parents worried less about the sort of creepy fellows who fixate on little girls — creepy fellows like Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, a.k.a. Lewis Carroll, who history suggests might not have been an ideal babysitter). Ada’s family has no great use for her. Alice’s big sister, Lydia, is glad not to have a</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>

<p>couple of brats underfoot. And Alice's father has only just emerged from mourning his prematurely deceased wife to play host to a visiting celebrity, Charles Darwin. Mr. Darwin has brought a fetching young American abolitionist along with him, Mr. Winter, who is himself accompanied by a child escaped from slavery: quiet, serious Siam.</p> <p>Winter may be handsome, idealistic and eligible, but he's also too old for -Lydia Clowd, who is just 15. That doesn't stop Lydia from luring him on a long walk that will give her a chance to experiment with grown-up flirtation (in this novel, everyone is a victim of impossible daydreams). But romantic preoccupations give way to growing alarm, after little Siam goes missing as well, falling through the looking glass while no one is paying attention. Suddenly the somnolent summer afternoon has devoured three children whole, and only Lydia and Ada's governess have any sense that all is not entirely right.</p>	<p>Move 2: Describing the book SII: Describing the story SIII: Describing the character</p>
<p>(M3-SIII) Maguire effortlessly leaps between the absurd illusions of Wonderland and the building suspense of the search for the children in antique Oxford. Down below, Ada and Siam grapple with the maddening nonsense of the White Rabbit and the Mad Hatter. Up above, Lydia finds herself no less befuddled by her own mysterious longings and the motives of the adults around her. She's also haunted by a darker and more serious disappearance than the absence of a few wandering children: the heart-sickening loss of her mother. Her faith is of no use to her. Darwin's theories of evolution have made the comforts of religion look as silly as a story out of Mother Goose. Nor can Lydia turn to that seat of 19th-century authority, her father, for wisdom. Mr. Clowd has long since vanished down the rabbit hole of his own grief and confusion. The territory of mourning is unmapped country; so too is the geography of courtship, desire and cultural expectation. "Lydia will spend her entire life in a nexus of Victorian social understandings too near to be identified by the naked eye, like viruses, or radiation," Maguire notes, in typically elegant fashion. "After Alice" offers an almost</p>	<p>Move 3: Evaluating the book SI: Providing an evaluation of the author SIII: Providing an evaluation of the content of the book</p>

embarrassing harvest of delightfully stated observations like that one.

Lydia may be stranded in an adult world of unreasonable and ridiculous obligations, but in Wonderland, Ada has slipped free of both her insufferable corset and the equally iron-shod confines of her time, place and status. Siam finds the neighborhood even more to his liking. As a slave, Siam was once offered his freedom, if he could scoop up a hundred pennies that had been baked white-hot in a campfire. His palms are still horribly marked by the burns. But his blackness and his scars don't bother anyone in Wonderland, a place beyond the reach of history's brutality. "There is no back story in dream. Time slips all its handcuffs." For an orphaned black kid in the era of the Civil War, that place on the other side of the looking glass looks a lot like real freedom.

As Ada and Siam draw nearer to Alice, the continually off-screen object of their quest, and as time runs out to find the vanished children in the world above, -Maguire closes in on some big, haunting ideas himself, about the loss of loved ones and religious faith, about cultural and romantic subjugations, and about the evolutionary value of imagination. Heady stuff. (M3-SI) Maguire confronts his weighty themes with a light touch and exquisite, lovely language. A sample page offers us such word candy as "bosh" and "gallootress," and when stout Ada spies her own reflection, she feels she is staring upon "a rotten packet of fairy." Maguire's playful vocabulary may be -Carroll-esque, but his keen wit is closer to Monty Python:

"'I may be drowning,' she called.

"'Please don't,' came a reply."

(M3-SI) The author's mastery of his material occasionally falters, in small ways. He renders the social and historical tensions of long-ago Oxford so well, in such compelling fashion, that Wonderland itself

Move 3: Evaluating the book  
SI: Providing an evaluation of the author  
SIII: Providing an evaluation of the  
content of the book

<p>occasionally loses its luster. And each reader will have a different tolerance for characters who speak in riddles. For myself, I'll take a monstrous Jabberwocky over circular and meaningless jibber-jabber any day. Still, it seems wrong to quibble when presented with such a tasty froth of incident and such a fine, unforced sense of play.</p>	
<p>(M4-SII) Gregory Maguire has made a cottage industry out of reframing famous children's stories to explore neglected side characters and misrepresented villains. He has tracked through all of the precincts of Oz and a lot of the landscape of Grimm's fairy tales, and one would not be surprised if his heart was no longer in such expeditions. Furthermore, Alice's Wonderland has been so often revisited — in novels, films, games and comics — that it would seem everything worth discovering there must have been strip-mined long ago. Even that phrase, "down the rabbit hole," is so overused that it now has all the life of a taxidermied white hare. But Maguire's enthusiasm is intact, his erudition a joy, and his sense of fun infectious. What could have been a tired exercise in the familiar instead recharges a beloved bit of nonsense. By book's end, most readers will be hoping for a sequel (Maguire leaves the door open to one). As we say in Maine, my old home state: wicked.</p>	<p>Move 4: Overall assessment SII: Summarizing the review or the content of the book</p>
<p>(M5-SII) Joe Hill is the author of a story collection, "20th Century Ghosts," and three novels, most recently "NOS4A2."</p>	<p>Move 5: Reviewer information SII: Providing a brief biography of the reviewer</p>

## **Appendix C**

### **Occurences of Moves, Sub-Moves, and Steps**

	CR01	CR02	CR03	CR04	CR05	CR06	CR07	CR08	CR09	CR10	CR11	CR12	CR13	CR14	CR15	CR16	CR17	CR18	CR19	CR20	CR21	CR22	CR23	CR24	CR25	Total	Total Percentage
M1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	84
SM1		1	1		1		1		1	1		1	1		1		1			1	1	1		1		13	52
SM1-SI			1				1			1		1									1			1		6	24
SM1-SII		1			1				1			1		1		1				1	1					7	28
SM2	1	1		1			1		1		1	1		1	1		1	1			1	1	1			14	56
SM2-SI				1			1				1	1			1								1			6	24
SM2-SII		1					1		1			1			1		1	1								7	28
SM2-SIII	1													1				1			1	1				5	20
M2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23	92
SI												1			1				1							3	12
SII	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	80
SIII			1				1	1	1			1	1		1	1	1			1	1	1				12	48
SIV										1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1					9	36
M3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	100
SI	1			1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1					16	64
SII	1		1		1							1							1			1	1			7	28
SIII		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1			1		1		1	1	1	1	1				1	16	64
M4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	23	92
SI					1	1	1	1		1		1					1			1			1			9	36
SII		1	1			1								1		1			1			1				7	28
SIII						1				1						1										3	12
SIV	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1		1			1		1	1	1	1				1	15	60
M5	1		1																							2	8
SI	1																									1	4
SII			1																							1	4
M6				1																						1	4
SI				1																						1	4
SII																										0	0



	PR01	PR02	PR03	PR04	PR05	PR06	PR07	PR08	PR09	PR10	PR11	PR12	PR13	PR14	PR15	PR16	PR17	PR18	PR19	PR20	PR21	PR22	PR23	PR24	PR25	Total	Total Percentage
M1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	100
SM1	1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1	19	76
SM1-SI	1		1	1		1			1	1	1		1		1	1		1			1				1	13	52
SM1-SII	1	1	1			1								1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1			1	14	56
SM2	1			1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1	1		19	76
SM2-SI	1			1	1	1	1				1		1	1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1		15	60
SM2-SII	1				1				1	1		1	1	1				1	1						1	10	40
SM2-SIII					1		1																			2	8
M2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	100
SI																										0	0
SII	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	25	100
SIII	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	1			1	1			1	1	1				1	1	17	68
SIV	1																		1							2	8
M3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	24	96
SI	1				1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1		1	19	76
SII	1																								1	4	
SIII		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	21	84
M4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	84
SI	1	1								1										1	1	1	1	1	1	3	12
SII	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	20	80
SIII			1																							1	4
SIV		1																	1							2	8
M5	1	1	1	1			1		1	1		1	1				1	1	1	1		1	1		1	16	64
SI													1					1	1	1		1				5	20
SII	1	1	1	1			1		1	1		1					1						1		1	10	40
M6					1					1									1						1	4	16
SI																										0	0
SII					1					1									1						1	4	16

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### **NAME**

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Master' s Degree Co-Program in  
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