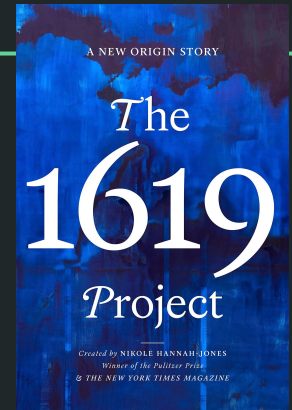


# *Notes From the Field & The 1619 Project*

Interdisciplinary Unit  
English Daily Slides  
Week 4



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# Lesson 13

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# Objective

You will analyze a monologue for diction and perspective through annotation and paired discussion.

# Agenda

Word of the Day: Consciousness

Introduction to *Twilight* by Anna Deavere Smith

*Twilight* Monologue Reading and Discussion

Review of Summative 2

Notes on Diction and Perspective

# Agenda Cont.

Discussion on the Relationship Between Diction and Perspective

Close Reading of Excerpts of 'Injury' for Diction and Perspective

Independent Monologue Reading Exercise

Restorative Narrative Discussion and Debrief

# Word of the Day

## Definition

Noun; the awareness or perception of something by a person.  
the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings.



## Consciousness

Example sentence: “But you can’t have a memory like that without it creating a kind of injury. A kind of consciousness of wrongfulness. A consciousness of hurt. That’s what I mean when I say I’m broken, right?” (136)

## Notes

- Common mistake: conscience is NOT the same as “conscious” or “consciousness.”

# ANNA DEAVERE SMITH TWILIGHT LOS ANGELES, 1992



"An American masterpiece...the heart and soul of an American tragedy,  
as expressed by the hearts and souls of the people who were part of it."

—JACK KROLL, *NEWSWEEK*

## *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*

Twilight is a one-woman play written and performed by Anna Deavere Smith. It explores the Rodney King beating in 1991, the violent aftermath of the 1992 verdict, and the enduring impact of these events on Los Angeles and the nation. The play's monologues are based on oral histories Smith collected from individuals affected by these events.





## Who Was Rodney King and What Happened to Him?: A Brief History

### Rodney King (1965 - 2012)

Rodney King, a native to Sacramento, California, was a victim of police brutality in 1991.

**Overview:** In March 1991, Rodney King was involved in a high-speed chase with the Los Angeles Police Department. After being stopped, King was brutally beaten by four officers: Stacey C. Koon, Theodore J. Briseno, Timothy E. Wind, and Laurence Powell. The assault was captured on video by George Holliday, who recorded the incident from his apartment balcony.

**Results and Aftermath:** The four officers were tried for excessive force, but all were acquitted. This verdict sparked the "Rodney King riots" in Los Angeles, driven by widespread frustration over racial injustice and police misconduct. The riots, which lasted six days, resulted in 63 deaths and over 2,000 injuries, and were quelled only after the California National Guard was deployed.

## Monologues from *Twilight*

As you read think about the following questions:

1. What do you think about this story? Do you have any reactions to it?
2. How does this monologue compare to the monologues we've read in this unit?
3. Which elements of monologues, including imagery, characterization, perspective, diction, and point of view, do you see here?

The [Summative](#) can be found at this link:

1. A **monologue and transcript of interview** (Criterion B, Synthesizing): A dramatic monologue of your oral history with original transcript.
2. A **rationale** (Criterion A, Evaluating): Explain how you conducted your oral history and how you developed that into a monologue.
3. A **reflection** (Criterion C, Reflection): This is process journals #1-5

## Diction and Perspective

### Notes on diction

- Word choice
- How does word choice work when the creator is adapting an oral history? How is the process different from creating a more traditional piece of creative writing?
- How is creating a monologue from an oral history similar to the poem “Fugitive,” which we read last week?

### Notes on perspective

- is the values, experiences, views, opinions, and aspects of identity that inform how a person sees the world and interprets their experiences.
- It’s their lens on the world, as established by their experience of it.

**What is the relationship between diction and perspective?**

## Close Reading #1

Excerpt from “Injury,” speaker:  
Bryan Stevenson. Pages  
134-135.

- Find a moment where the **word choice** is powerful. Why?
- What are some of the values or experiences revealed in this excerpt, which shapes Stevenson’s experience.
- Where does Smith’s diction intersect with perspective?

And I was thinking about how broken he was, and I just couldn’t understand: Why do we want to kill broken people? I—that’s one of the things I don’t understand. What is it about us that when we see brokenness, we get angry? We want to hurt it. We want to crush it. We want to kill it. And then I realized: All of my clients are broken people. I represent the broken. Everybody I represent has been broken by poverty or disability or addiction or dependency or racism. And then I realized that the system I work in is a broken system. People with power are unwilling to get close to people who are suffering. They’re locked into these narratives of fear and anger. They’ve lost their hope. They won’t do uncomfortable things or inconvenient things. And in that moment, I said, “I don’t want to do this anymore.” And I was sitting there awhile just thinking and something said, “You better think about why you do what you do if you’re not gonna do it anymore.” And it was in that moment that I all of the sudden realized why I do what I do. And it surprised me. And what I realized is that I don’t do what I do because I’ve been trained as a lawyer. I don’t do what I do because it’s about human rights. I don’t do what I do because if I don’t do it, no one will. What I realized is that I do what I do because I’m broken, too. And that’s the —the discovery?

## Close Reading #2

Excerpt from “Injury,” speaker:  
Bryan Stevenson. Pg. 135.

- Find a moment where the **word choice** is powerful. Why?
- What are some of the values or experiences revealed in this excerpt, which shapes Stevenson’s experience.
- Where does Smith’s diction intersect with perspective?

I—I—I don’t think brokenness is something that we necessarily wear? It’s—it’s much more, um—it’s about a consciousness. And I don’t think it’s a bad thing. I actually think it’s in brokenness that we understand our need for grace, our need for mercy. It’s actually brokenness that helps us appreciate justice. It’s in brokenness that we—we begin to crave redemption. That we understand the power of recovery. It’s the broken among us that actually can teach us what it means to be human. Because if you don’t understand the ways in which you can be broken by poverty or neglect or abuse or violence or suffering or bigotry, then you don’t recognize the urgency in overcoming poverty and abuse and neglect and—and bigotry.

## Your Turn

1. Choose one of the monologues from the IU Text that you really enjoyed or found compelling.
2. Re-read it.
3. Find a moment where you feel that the character's **perspective** is exceptionally clear.
4. In your notes, explain **why** that character's perspective is so clear, **and how diction or word choice plays into that clarity.**

## How does this text function as a restorative narrative?

The features of a restorative narrative are:

- Acknowledgement of harm
- Empowerment through truth and/or validation
- “These aren’t positive, happy-go-lucky fluff pieces. They explore the tough emotional terrain of disruptions... But they’re “positive” in the sense that they focus on themes such as growth and renewal” (Tenore).

Do you feel that this text is **restorative**? Does it create a **shared past, meaning, or understanding**?



# Homework

## Read:

- Read Khalil Gibran Muhammad's 'Sugar' from *The 1619 Project*.

## Write:

- No new writing.

# Lesson 14

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# Objective

You will analyze nonfiction texts for narrative and discuss how we would use the elements of dramatic texts to write the nonfiction text as a dramatic monologue.

# Agenda

Word of the Day: Insuperable

Close Read and Discuss Selected Excerpts from 'Sugar' by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Review the Goals and Elements of Adapting an Oral History into a Monologue

Monologue Writing Activity

# Word of the Day

Definition  
Adjective

Impossible to overcome



insuperable

“In Europe at that time, refined sugar was a luxury product, the back-breaking toil and dangerous labor required in its manufacture an insuperable barrier to production in anything approaching bulk.” (IU 143)

Notes

“In” as a prefix often means “not”

“Super” as a root means over or more

“Able” as a suffix makes a word an adjective

*How does this text begin? Where is the hook, the background, and the thesis?*

## *Domino Sugar's Chalmette Refinery in Arabi, La.,*

sits on the edge of the mighty Mississippi River, about five miles east by way of the river's bend from the French Quarter, and less than a mile down from the Lower Ninth Ward, where Hurricane Katrina and the failed levees destroyed so many black lives. It is North America's largest sugar refinery, making nearly two billion pounds of sugar and sugar products annually. Those ubiquitous four-pound yellow paper bags emblazoned with the company logo are produced here at a rate of 120 bags a minute, 24 hours a day, seven days a week during operating season.

The United States makes about nine million tons of sugar annually, ranking it sixth in global production. The United States sugar industry receives as much as \$4 billion in annual subsidies in the form of price supports, guaranteed crop loans, tariffs and regulated imports of foreign sugar, which by some estimates is about half the price per pound of domestic sugar. Louisiana's sugar-cane industry is by itself worth \$3 billion, generating an estimated 16,400 jobs.

A vast majority of that domestic sugar stays in this country, with an additional two to three million

tons imported each year. Americans consume as much as 77.1 pounds of sugar and related sweeteners per person per year, according to United States Department of Agriculture data. That's nearly twice the limit the department recommends, based on a 2,000-calorie diet.

Sugar has been linked in the United States to diabetes, obesity and cancer. If it is killing all of us, it is killing black people faster. Over the last 30 years, the rate of Americans who are obese or overweight grew 27 percent among all adults, to 71 percent from 56 percent, according to the Centers for Disease Control, with African-Americans overrepresented in the national figures. During the same period, diabetes rates overall nearly tripled. Among black non-Hispanic women, they are nearly double those of white non-Hispanic women, and one and a half times higher for black men than white men.

None of this — the extraordinary mass commodification of sugar, its economic might and outsize impact on the American diet and health — was in any way foreordained, or even predictable, when Christopher Columbus made his second voyage across the Atlantic Ocean in 1493,

bringing sugar-cane stalks with him from the Spanish Canary Islands. In Europe at that time, refined sugar was a luxury product, the back-breaking toil and dangerous labor required in its manufacture an insuperable barrier to production in anything approaching bulk. It seems reasonable to imagine that it might have remained so if it weren't for the establishment of an enormous market in enslaved laborers who had no way to opt out of the treacherous work.

## What was reading an informational text like for you?

- What was your experience of reading?
- How did this text differ from the monologues? Consider the opening, the content, and how it tells a story.
- Did anything in this article surprise you?

## Close read

What is powerful about this section?

Why?

What is the purpose of this section?

How do you know?

How does this **nonfiction article** use narrative similarly to the monologues and plays we have been reading?

Louisiana led the nation in destroying the lives of black people in the name of economic efficiency. The historian Michael Tadman found that Louisiana sugar parishes had a pattern of “deaths exceeding births.” Backbreaking labor and “inadequate net nutrition meant that slaves working on sugar plantations were, compared with other working-age slaves in the United States, far less able to resist the common and life-threatening diseases of dirt and poverty,” wrote Tadman in a 2000 study published in the *American Historical Review*. Life expectancy was less like that on a cotton plantation and closer to that of a Jamaican cane field, where the most overworked and abused could drop dead after seven years.

Most of these stories of brutality, torture and premature death have never been told in classroom textbooks or historical museums. They have been refined and white-washed in the mills and factories of Southern folklore: the romantic South, the Lost Cause, the popular “moonlight and magnolias” plantation tours so important to Louisiana’s agritourism today.

**When I arrived** at the Whitney Plantation Museum on a hot day in June, I mentioned to Ashley Rogers, 36, the museum’s executive director, that I had passed the Nelson Coleman Correctional Center about 15 miles back along the way. “You passed a dump and a prison on your way to a plantation,” she said. “These are not coincidences.”

The Whitney, which opened five years ago as the only sugar-slavery museum in the nation, rests squarely in a geography of human detritus. The museum tells of the everyday struggles and resistance of black people who didn’t lose their dignity even when they lost everything else. It sits on the west bank of the Mississippi at the northern edge of the St. John the Baptist Parish, home to dozens of once-thriving sugar plantations; Marmillion’s plantation and torture box were just a few miles down from Whitney.

The museum also sits across the river from the site of the German Coast uprising in 1811, one of the largest revolts of enslaved people in United States history. As many as



Do you feel that this text is restorative?

Does it create a shared past, meaning, or understanding?

(Acknowledgement of harm, or empowerment through truth and/or validation)

Lewis is himself a litigant in a separate petition against white landowners. He claims they “unilaterally, arbitrarily and without just cause terminated” a seven-year-old agreement to operate his sugar-cane farm on their land, causing him to lose the value of the crop still growing there. Lewis is seeking damages of more than \$200,000, based on an independent appraisal he obtained, court records show. The landowners did not respond to requests for comment.

But the new lessee, Ryan Doré, a white farmer, did confirm with me that he is now leasing the land and has offered to pay Lewis what a county agent assessed as the crop’s worth, about \$50,000. Doré does not dispute the amount of Lewis’s sugar cane on the 86.16 acres. What he disputes is Lewis’s ability to make the same crop as profitable as he would. Doré, who credits M.A. Patout and Son for getting him started in sugar-cane farming, also told me he is farming some of the land June Provost had farmed.

Lewis and the Provosts say they believe Doré is using his position as an elected F.S.A. committee member to gain an unfair advantage over black farmers with white landowners. “He’s privileged with a lot of information,” Lewis said.

Doré denied he is abusing his F.S.A. position and countered that “the Lewis boy” is trying to “make this a black-white deal.” Doré insisted that “both those guys simply lost their acreage for one reason and one reason only: They are horrible farmers.”

It’s impossible to listen to the stories that Lewis and the Provosts tell and not hear echoes of the policies and practices that have been used since Reconstruction to maintain the racial caste system that sugar slavery helped create. The crop, land and farm theft that they claim harks back to the New Deal era, when Southern F.S.A. committees denied black farmers government funding.

“June and I hope to create a dent in these oppressive tactics for future generations,” Angie Provost told me on the same day this spring that a congressional subcommittee held hearings on reparations. “To this day we are harassed, retaliated against and denied the true DNA of our past.” ♦

## Monologue Work Time

- The main goal of adaptation is keeping the words and spirit of the oral history **intact**
- Elements that can be utilized to achieve said goal
  - Dialect
  - Ellipses (...)
  - Dashes (--)
  - Stage Directions (Before or during monologue)
  - *Italicized text*
- Work to create a **300-500 word monologue** with a **beginning, middle, and end**. It should **reflect** on an event or inequity.

# Homework

## Read:

- Read 'A Tree Out of the Ground' from *Notes From the Field*

## Write:

- Finish writing your monologue.

# Lesson 15

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# Objective

You will learn and practice the process of adapting an oral history interview into a monologue.

# Agenda



Review the Word of the Day



Discuss the Elements of Adaptation and the Process of Adapting an Oral History into a Monologue



Whole Group Analysis of Anna Deavere Smith's 'A Tree Out of the Ground'



Small Group Analysis of Anna Deavere Smith's 'Brother'



Formative 5 Revisions



Introduction to Journal Prompt #5



# What goes into adaptation? What decisions have to be made to transform an oral history into a monologue?

- The main goal of adaptation is keeping the words and spirit of the oral history **intact**
- Elements that can be utilized to achieve said goal
  - Dialect
  - Ellipses (...)
  - Dashes (--)
  - Stage Directions (Before or during monologue)
  - *Italicized text*



What is the effect of each element? Why might you use each while adapting?



# Practice adapting this into a monologue, together.

Butler: In 1925 – how old were you in 1925? You were twenty years old?

Mrs. Royster: And still going to school.

Butler: And still going to school. How many of your brothers and sister finished school?

Mrs. Royster: I ain't got but one sister no way, but Ethel and [Harley] finished school. And Lester, he didn't finish [indiscernible].

Butler: Were you required to finish school in your family? Was that emphasized? Was school an important thing?

Mrs. Royster: Well people then, you know, they stopped their children for - to do different kind of work - jobs, you know. Like – well, if Momma going to wash today she wants you to bring that water up and everything and it just kept you away from school maybe that day. Or maybe two days you might have to do something else. So, you know they did just like they wanted in other words.

Butler: You didn't have to go to school? Nobody bothered you if you didn't go?

Mrs. Royster: No, but that came up later though that we had to go to school. It was later that they had to send their children to school. The whites continued, but the coloreds didn't.

Butler: They continued going to school?

Mrs. Royster: Yeah, white did, never stopped. But they had better conveniences than what we had, you see, for to keep that child in school. We had to stop to do this and do that, you know. Butler: [Indiscernible]?

Mrs. Royster: Which the parents should have been doing - after later years, then they had to do it right on just the same because they made a change in the schools.

Butler: Right.

Mrs. Royster: Uh huh. And so therefore – well, at that time then I was growing older and older and so I had to work.

Butler: You found time for –

Mrs. Royster: Working.

- The main goal of adaptation is keeping the words and spirit of the oral history **intact**
- Elements that can be utilized to achieve said goal
  - Dialect
  - Ellipses (...)
  - Dashes (--)
  - Stage Directions (Before or during monologue)
  - *Italicized text*

Government policy directly and indirectly impacts communities and individuals, which can be discovered through personal narrative.

# Let's return to Deavere Smith's *Notes from the Field* to consider creative choices in adaptation

STEPHANIE WILLIAMS

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEACHER

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

“A Tree Out of the Ground”



## Let's analyze the choices Deavere Smith made in *adaptation*

### “A Tree Out of the Ground”

*(African American woman, mid- to late-twenties. Healthy, friendly, vulnerable, emotionally available, generous. Wonderfully expressive with hands as well as voice. Hand and body movements are always connected to meaning, never random—almost like choreography. Sitting on a sofa, horizontally. Lots of pillows. Fast-talking, like a saxophone, except when thinking something through. Musician is onstage.)*

It was (*very long pause*) Huey Elementary School? I was an emotional support teacher. And itttt was...it was rough.

I never...realized...how bad a situation could be...until...I worked with that population.

You have *ten* of the most needy children—kids that need *food*. *Shelter*. *Clothes*. *Love*, like...an *education*. They—just—need—so—much. And you're just one person.

How does Deavere Smith use stage directions? Why?

How do you learn about Stephanie Williams directly and indirectly?

What do you notice about the way sentences are constructed? How are you able to figure out Deavere Smith's delivery? (Remember, the monologue text is a script for performance!)

## Continue analyzing Deavere Smith's choices in *adaptation*

But it's like, like everybody y'know, I had a little bit of self-esteem issue, but my mom, whenever—she—would—drop—me—off—to—school, she'd always—say, “Why do you have to work harder than everybody?” And I would have to say back to her, “Because I'm black and I'm a female.” And like her saying that and embedding that in my head? *Ev-er-y day*. She would drop me off at school and be like, “*Why do you have to work harder than everybody?*” “*Cuz I'm black and I'm a female!*” That would be like what I would say back to her. And like just keeping that in mind? And always knowing that like: things were gonna come up, like, *being* the only black kid in school, being the only fat kid in school, being the only...kid with a single parent in school, being the only kid that lived in the *hood*, in my school. Like it just kinda gave me enough grit to be able to just be confident enough to *go to Moun' Holyoke*, ask for help when I need it, and just kind of like you know! Explore.

How does Deavere Smith use stage directions? Why?

How do you learn about Stephanie Williams directly and indirectly?

What do you notice about the way sentences are constructed? How are you able to figure out Deavere Smith's delivery? (Remember, the monologue text is a script for performance!)

Government policy directly and indirectly impacts communities and individuals, which can be discovered through personal narrative.

## Congressman John Lewis “Brother” from Deavere Smith’s *Notes from the Field*

And I took it. And I will hold on to it forever. But he hugged me. I hugged him. I cried some more. And you had Democrats and Republicans in the church. *Cryin’*. And his young deputy assistant. A young African American. Was sittin’ down. He couldn’t stand. He cried so much, like a baby, really.

It was the first time that a police chief in any city where I visited or where I got arrested durin’ the sixties ever apologized, or where I was beaten. Or where I was beaten. It was a moment of grace. It was a moment of reconciliation. [The chief] was very young, he was not even born fifty-two years ago. So he was offerin’ an apology and to be forgiven on behalf of his associates, his colleagues of the past. [It’s a moment of grace.] It means that sufferin’ and the pain that many of the people have suffered have been redeemed.

**Read** the excerpt and notice how Deavere Smith adapts an oral history/interview

- What specific, textual decisions does she make in her adaptation?
- What effect do said decisions have on you, the audience?

**Watch** the clip of Deavere Smith performing this excerpt

- How does she utilize the monologue as a script?
- How does she follow the choices in adaptation while performing?



# Use what you have learned!

Return to Formative 4. If you submitted it, you have received feedback and it has been unsubmitted back to you so that you can continue to work on it.

Add to/edit your work to include specific elements of adaptation that we have discussed.

I will walk around and check in on you!

When we come back together, I will call on you to talk through decisions you are making in your adaptation.

Be intentional!



## Journal #5

What have you already learned in your classes that will help you adapt your oral history into a monologue and make it a restorative narrative? Think about the content and/or the process that you will use or are using to complete your oral history. Name specific class activities, readings, and formatives you've done that will help.

# Homework

## Read:

- No New Reading

## Write:

- Complete Journal #5