

Interpretation

Interpretation, AI, Gong

Matt Williams

GTM Leadership Enablement





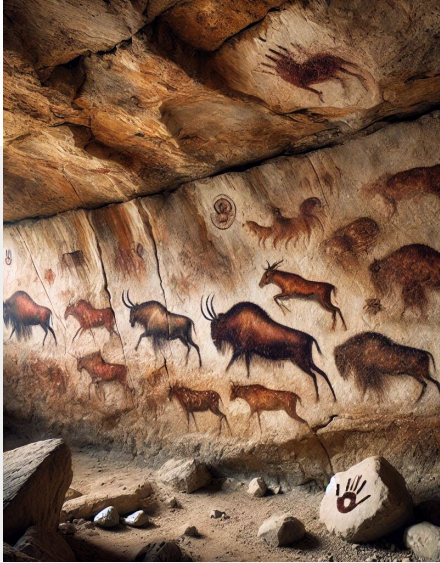
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It is always the case that interpretation of this type [looking for deeping meaning] indicates a dissatisfaction (conscious or unconscious) with the [art]work, a wish to replace it by something else.

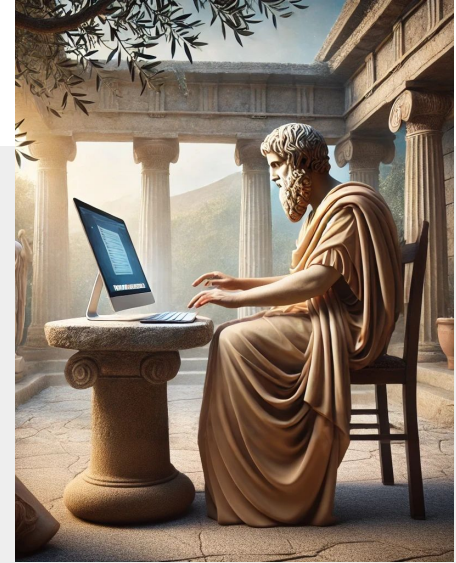
Susan Sontag

“Against Interpretation” (1964)

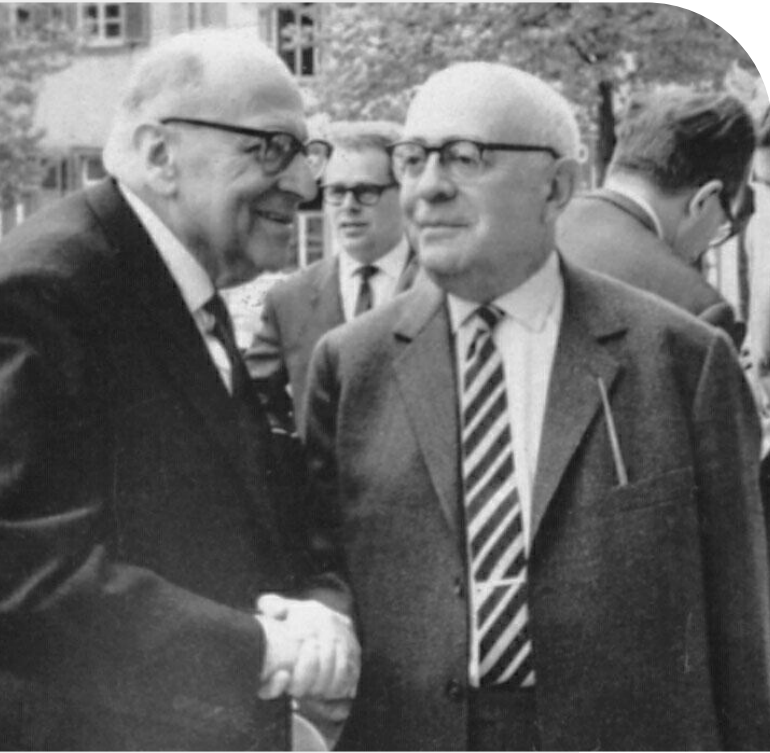
Experience versus Theory



AI-Generated



AI-Generated



Max Horkheimer (left) and Theodor Adorno
in April 1964 in Heidelberg, Germany.
(Jeremy J. Shapiro / Wikimedia Commons)

The wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity.

“Enlightenment, understood in the widest sense as the advance of thought, has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters. Yet the wholly enlightened earth is radiant with triumphant calamity. **Enlightenment’s program was the disenchantment of the world. It wanted to dispel myths, to overthrow fantasy with knowledge.**”

Dialectic of Enlightenment, 1.

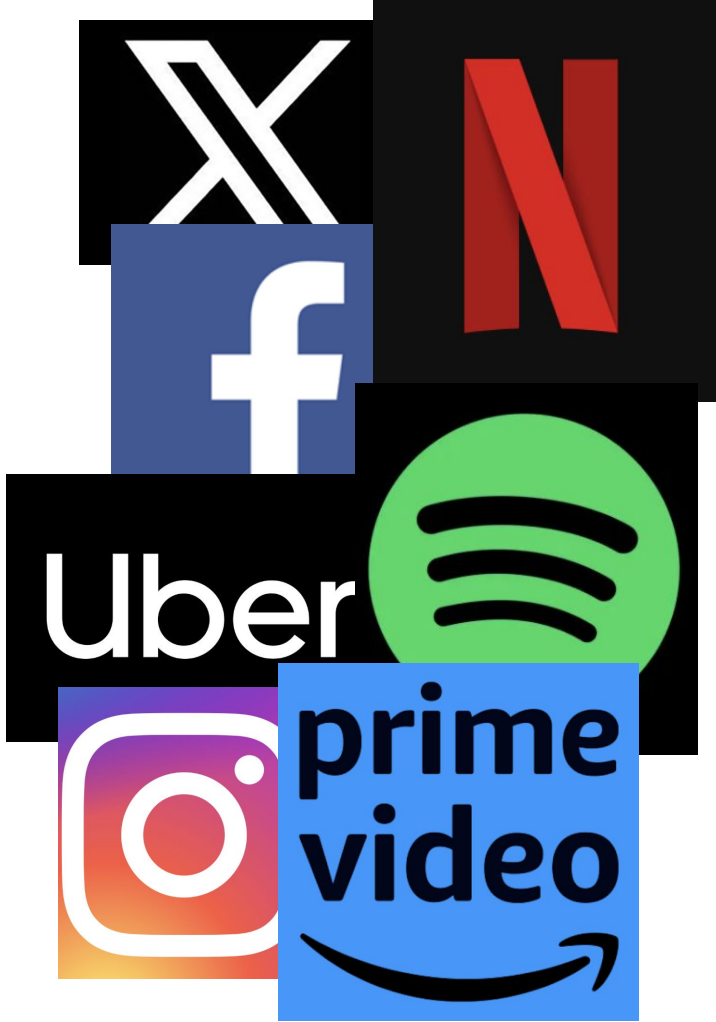
If we would be led by [Nature] in invention, we should command her by action.

Therefore, no doubt, the sovereignty of man lieth hid in knowledge; wherein many things are reserved, which kings with their treasure cannot buy, nor with their force command; their spies and intelligencers can give no news of them, their seamen and discoverers cannot sail where they grow: now we govern nature in opinions, but we are thrall unto her in necessity: but if we would be led by her in invention, we should command her by action.

Quoted in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 1.



Paul van Somer I, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Platform Decay

Far different than the 1990s ideas of information superhighway utopias, the “enshittification” of platforms (like Uber’s surge pricing and reduced driver payments) show how knowledge comes at a price.

Plato's *trompe l'oeil*

Art is a lie

Gustave Eiffel's conception of the tower in his mind during planning and construction.



Imaginary Ideal

**Physical
Representation**



Robert Delaunay, *Eiffel Tower*, 1911

**Artistic Representation
of Physical
Representation**

Two examples

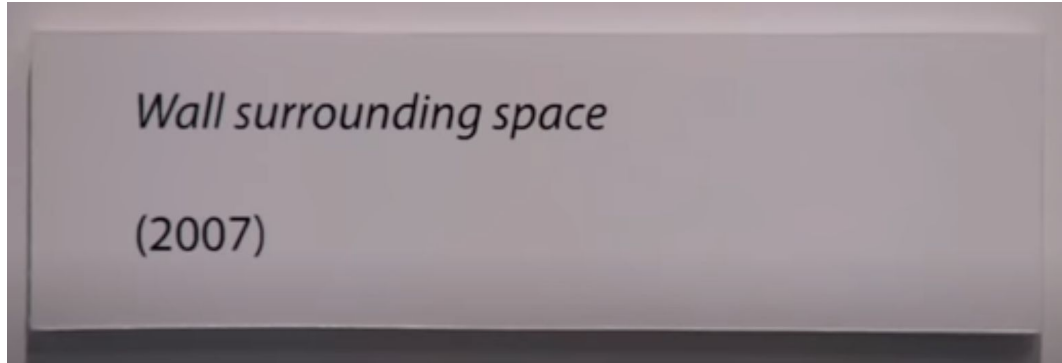


William Turner, *Calais Pier* (1803)

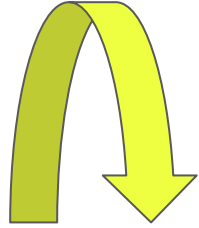


Jackson Pollack, *17A* (1948)

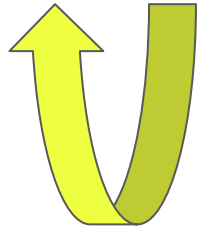
What is it trying to say?



Still from *Untitled*, 2009, dir. Jonathan Parker



Form | Content



Thing in Question	Form	Content
Beethoven's 3rd	Symphony, sonata	"Triumph"
Teeth falling out	Dream	"Fear of failure"
Haussmann's Parisian Buildings	Places of residence, storefronts, concrete	"Commodification of streets," "displacement," "unification"



Interpretation as defense

Must things mean more than their surfaces? Are our interpretations actually mere defenses against the supposed cultural rejection of appearances? Are they attempts at legitimizing things that, in our current culture, would be deemed unnecessary or superfluous? Or, do objects actually have content that requires excavation?

Find out in the ***completely made up paper***:

“Wings of Meaning: The Butterfly as a Symbolic Marker in Urban Semiotics”

What might we learn if we “read into” texts?

“One of the great accomplishments of seventeenth-century culture was the development of a vocabulary by means of which dramatic characters and actions could be delineated in music. The techniques for emotional and rhetorical inflection we now take for granted are not, in fact, natural or universal: they were deliberately formulated during this period for purposes of music theater.”

Feminine Endings, 35.



Susan McClary, Case Western
Reserve University

***L'Orfeo* (1607) by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)**

“Rosa Del Ciel” (Rose of the Heavens)

Orfeo's Part

First Section

Orpheus, confident and seductive, dazzles the heavens with his singing, all over a single chord.

Second Section

Twice delays the listener's expectation of the conclusion, and ends differently than expected; creating a new (harmonic) reality that matches his love's.

Third Section

Continues unexpected twists and impulsive meanderings, ending in the new reality created just before..

***L'Orfeo* (1607) by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)**

“Rosa Del Ciel” (Rose of the Heavens)

Euridice's Part

Hesitation

Descent from D→A extended with an unexpected G-sharp.

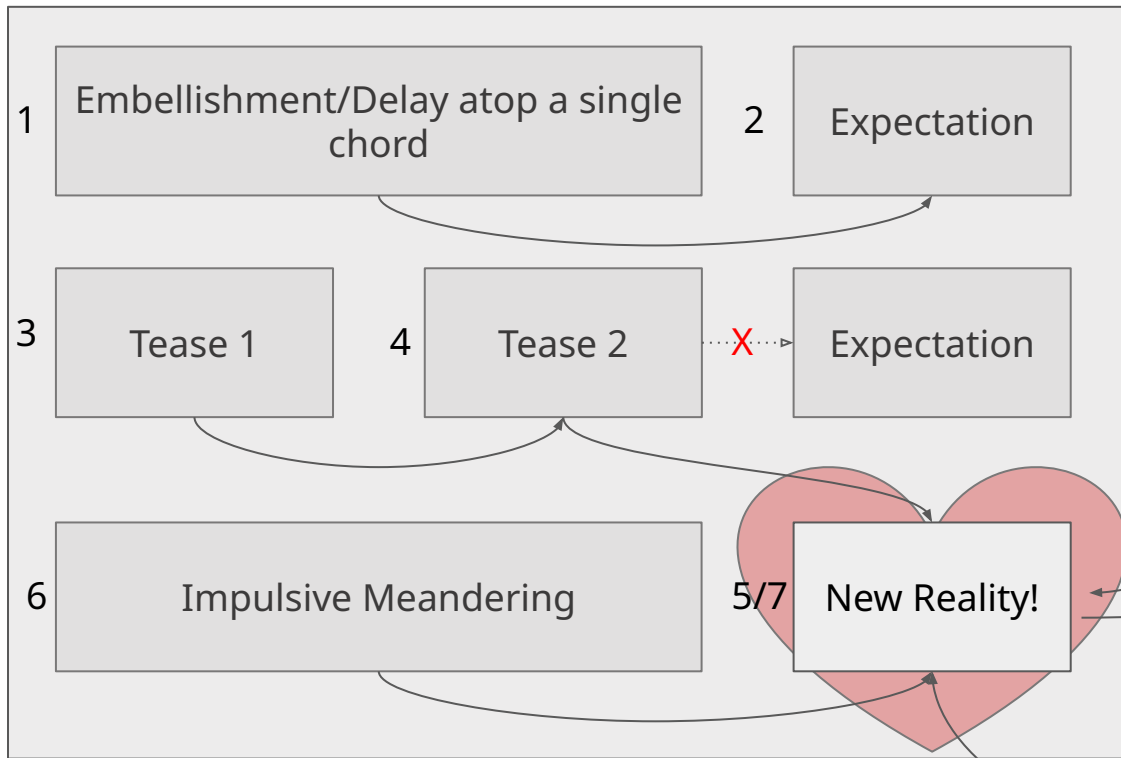
Commitment Issues?

Stops at multiple “home bases,” implying shyness or ambivalence about her soon to be wedded love.

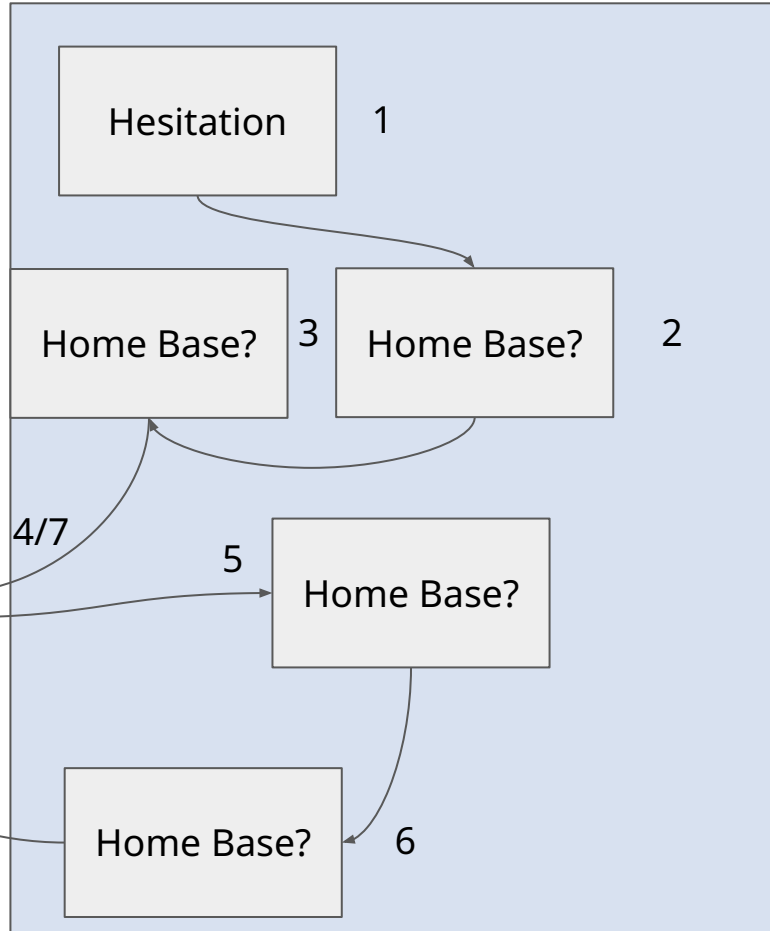
Overall a “simpler” tune

“[McClary] does not suggest that Monteverdi wrote inferior music for Euridice or that this is what he thought of women. But his musical construction of “maidenhood” is informed by what his audience would expect to hear as the utterance of a young girl.” (44)

Orfeo's Section - "confident," "rhetoric of seduction"



Euridice's Section - "shy," "self-deprecating"



"Rosa Del Ciel" (Rose of the Heavens), Monteverdi



For if audiences can be made to believe that what is presented on stage is literally the re-presentation of reality itself, then questions of what gets represented, how, and by whom become vital political concerns to rulers and the ruled alike.”

Feminine Endings, 35.



Thank you!