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*A knowledge base that seeks to do research on the terms and theories within the realm of rhetoric.*



# a story about everything

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Dear aspiring EWM major, this is a beautiful class. I mean really, it does not get much better than this. Andrew is just that nice a person and this class will drive you bonkers to the point where you will be laughing and chewing gummy bears through every assignment; your roommates might even hate you for the abundance of free time that it affords. You will do cool things like go to a building in the middle of campus that no one has heard of, but looks nice enough from the interior that you wonder how you missed it, and all in all it will make the hair's on your head fall out like a newly inaugurated White house lead actor (see: President). That might be a bad thing actually.

All that aforementioned stuff was just bull, incessant filler to get you somewhat interested in a lesson that I am supposed to convey. Truth is, unnecessary frothing is not necessary from my perspective for this topic, actually it is attached to just about anything and everything society intakes. Lo and behold it is actually being engaged right now. Think of the last time you, yes you, had to write a paper or a story, or some post on a social media site. More often than not, the way said piece of material was created stuck to a few conventions or rules. It has all become so customary at this point, that you do it subconsciously perhaps. Well those conventions or rules were created from a couple millennia of lecture, discourse, and basic retooling of ideas that have cropped up over and

over again. That, in a nutshell, is the concept of Commonplaces.

The term has been around since Aristotle walked around Greece in sandals, but the term itself has seen some retooling since its inception. “What attracted Aristotle to tropes was the observation that “relations are productive of thought. ... One could say, then, that topics are tropes that Aristotle examined in a new way,” (Oakley 4). Aristotle accepted the notion that as far as arguments and conversation went, the same things kept recurring like the same four chords in every pop song. Imagine going through life noticing that at the crux of most arguments was the same thing, with the same result, that is basically the definition of insanity, but I digress.

The function of the term commonplaces is not exactly new, it is relative to theme and as previously mentioned, tropes in the regard that they keep coming up. But commonplaces goes a bit further as being culturally sound, at least in the eyes of Edouard Glissant, “for Glissant, commonplaces are culturally specific formulae about being in the world, cultural truths that migrate through traditional channels or technological channels,” (Oakley 3). Such cultural truths are truly present in the world today. Highlighted by the boom of the internet age and the gigantic increase in media intake, if nothing else, the prevalence of commonplaces has become all the more noticeable. No longer are truths specifically catered or perceived to be gender, race, age, or culturally bound in my

opinion. At this point we can all relate to each other on some basic human level.

Oakley finally raises the point of one Ekaterina Haskins, whom I believe is spot on with this idea of cyclical history combined with commonplaces, “Each age ... generates the same ideas about the world, and these ideas are preserved, if only partially, in the form of sayings, maxims, and myths,” (Oakley 3). And that can all be boiled down really to literature. Commonplaces have lived and breathed through the writings passed down through generations, and simply the art of writing itself. There are few questions this term raises, though, one of which is; how original is a new thought?

At this point of human history, most ideas are simply transformations of older concepts, which are based on the stories which we tell, or in this case retell, and even the technologies we create. Each new story is a remix of the last, each new piece of technology an iteration of something that has come before. Take a look at these three posters, they



These are three of the highest celebrated films according to ratings in their respective categories. Chef is the most recent and a film noted for its unconventional take on family, while Father of the Bride is a classic film that inspired an excellent retelling by Steve Martin and co. The Incredibles occupies the animated genre



space, but its general importance on the idea of family has been praised from here to Timbuktu and maybe even Mars. The film is just that good. Commonplaces are in everything now, because the way people communicate has transcended talking and writing. Communicating ideas in



represent what I believe is a commonplace idea of family dynamics.



modern society now extends through film, video games, music, art, design, and architecture, and the concept of commonplaces extends through all of it. Next time you watch a movie, or even a sport, think of the last time you came across a similar story that media attempted to bring forward. You will then realize you’ve seen it maybe a thousand times.

