[meta]Theoretical Lions

Pratt Institute
School of Information and Library Science
May 8, 2012

Agenda

• Five SILS faculty members will attempt to explain to the audience a metatheory of their choice using the metaphor of a lion
• Welcome and introduction to [meta]Theoretical Lions (3 min.)
• Panelists (20 min.)
• Q & A with the audience (7 min.)

Think of this as a *gedankenexperiment* “thought-experiment”

• The process of employing imaginary situations to increase understanding.

Rules of the game

• Five panelists will have 4 minutes each to explain their theory using the metaphor of a lion.
• The panelists will answer three questions:
  1. What does the lion’s reality look like?
  2. What constitutes information for the lion?
  3. What is information behavior in the lion’s world?

The panelists

• Dr. Anthony Coccio – Existentialism
• Dr. Irene Lopatovska – Evolutionary theories
• Dr. Chris Sula – Empiricism
• Dr. Debbie Rabina – Political economy
• Dr. Jessica Hochman – Feminism
• Dr. Cristina Pattuelli – Introduction and moderator.

Our inspiration:

*Patience and Fortitude*
A 90 sec. introduction to **metatheory**

*Cristina Pattuelli*

**Metatheory**

"The philosophy behind the theory, the fundamental set of ideas about how phenomena of interest in a particular field should be thought about and researched"

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**Existentialism**

As experienced by Simba the Lion.

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Evolutionary theory
Irene Lopatovska

Evolution is gradual process of modification

Evolution involves creation of information that provides a selective advantage:
- the organism that possesses the new information has an edge over those that do not

What does the lion’s reality look like?

What constitutes information for the lion?

Information behavior is identifying useful information

Evolution of information behavior

the Lion becomes information
Empiricism

Chris Sula

“Let us then suppose the mind to be, as we say, white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? ... To this I answer in one word, from experience... Our observation, employed either about external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected on by ourselves is that which supplies our understandings with all the materials of thinking.”

—John Locke (Essay Concerning Human Understanding II:1:2)
Political Economy
Debbie Rabina

“...the theory or study of the role of public policy in influencing the economic and social welfare of a political unit.

Merriam Webster Dictionary

Q.1: What does the lion’s reality look like?
Finding himself between a rock (copyright law) and a hard place (law suits) our lion lacks the courage to act.

Q.2: What constitutes information for the lion?
In an environment that promotes profit by diminishing citizen sovereignty, the role of public libraries is eroded.

Q.3: What is information behavior in the lion’s world?
“In the domain of Political Economy, free scientific inquiry meets... the furies of private interest.” Karl Marx

In the political economy the belief is that the private sector can better deliver (i.e. sell) information directly to the citizen, bypassing the library.

To paraphrase Bill Clinton: “It’s about the political economy, stupid.”
Political and economic forces postulate that the *private sector* can more efficiently meet information needs directly to the consumer, *bypassing the library*.

**Feminism**

Jessica Hochman

“The program of feminism is not one in which we might assume a common set of premises and then proceed to build in a logical fashion a program from those premises. Instead, this is a movement that moves forward precisely by bringing critical attention to bear on its premises in an effort to become more clear about what it means and to begin to negotiate the conflicting interpretations, the irrepressible democratic cacophony of its identity.”


Jessica Hochman

Jessica's slides here

Hey girl.

We don't need arbitrary beauty archetypes steeped in historically biased ideologies pumped out to us by mediocre, archaic forms of media to define our sexuality.
We gladly give credit where credit is due

- We are indebted to Dr. Jenna Hartel, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, who came up with the idea of Metatheoretical Snowmen.
- You can read more on Dr. Hartel’s website: [http://www.jennahartel.com/metatheoretical-snowmen.html](http://www.jennahartel.com/metatheoretical-snowmen.html)