

Student analyses own parody
(Lang in Cultural Context)

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Question: If the text had been written in a different time or place or language or for a different audience, how and why might it differ?

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Note. inclusion of appendices
to make task clear.

Outline:

If the text had been written in a different time or place or language or for a different audience, how and why might it differ?

- [If the text “Guide to Hiring Women” was written for a modern day women’s magazine, to what extent would it differ and why?]
- First text: 1943 Guide for Hiring Women- Eleven Tips on Getting More Efficiency Out of Women Employees
- Second text: Parody of Guide for Hiring Women- Guide for Hiring Men- Eleven and a Half Tips on Getting more Efficiency out of Male Employees:
- Part of the course related to: Language and Cultural Context
 - This will examine the language of gender used when referring to women and men.
 - It will analyze how and why might the original change if it had been written as a parody quick list for a modern women’s magazine.
 - This essay will also examine the social contexts and gender roles of men and women during the writing of the original and the social settings of the parody.

The original text of the "Guide to Hiring Women" was published in 1943 during World War II, when many working men were drafted into the army, meaning that women needed to replace them. The original guide was published for male factory owners to hire the most "efficient" working women, while the parody was written by me in response to what many would see as a patronizing attitude towards women prevalent in the original. The parody is set in a company's women's magazine as a quick list, common in many business magazines, to women hiring men in a company engaged in intense business competition with a rival company, but it differs from the original in that the original served as a guide to hiring women for any company in general. Both guides' formats are numbered paragraphs with numerous imperative statements. The parody has shown that if the original had been written in a different time and place for the opposite gender, it would differ significantly and possibly lend itself to be humorous.

The original text is reflective of the underlying male perception of the stereotypical weaknesses of women, being overly self-conscious and flirtatious, which became apparent when women started working in factories, since women were expected to remain as housewives. This can be seen by the phrase "*women make excellent workers... but that they lack initiative in finding work themselves.*" And "*pick young*

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unmarried women... they're less likely to be flirtatious... they need the work or they wouldn't be doing it". The modal verb "need" could imply that the women worked from necessity rather than from a free choice. The phrase "or they wouldn't be doing it" may imply that the women were reluctant to work. The text uses an informal lexis, seen by its colloquial usage of contractions such as "they're" and "wouldn't", likely because the writer wanted to connect with its strongly male audience, supposedly showing some 'insider' information on how to increase a woman's work efficiency since "they lack initiative in finding work themselves". This shows how women were perceived as inefficient with employment outside of the home.

I have changed the original text to be written for a company's women's magazine where many of the gender roles and seemingly patriarchal statements are reversed. Magazines aimed at adult women would seem to be more open in discussing their views towards men and frequently offer advice such as '7 tips to get a promotion', '10 tips to finding the perfect guy' or parodies that mock men, so it would be reasonable to find this parody in a modern context. The parody's use of "Eleven and a half tips" rather than the original's "Eleven tips" adds to the humor of the parody by adding in a seemingly unnecessary tip as an extension of the last point rather than 'Twelve tips'.

I have changed the original's style and tone, exaggerating it slightly for a comic effect with a sardonic tone which mocks the sexist approach of the original guide, for example in point 5 of the parody "*Stress the importance of their working salary and threaten them with a pay deduction if they tarry along with their work*". A "pay deduction" links back to "working salary" which emphasizes the stereotype of men as miserly who "care a lot about the green paper". The words "green paper" are a slang term for money, the adjective "green" referring to the common color of money and the concrete noun "paper" making money seem insignificant, insulting the stereotypical man for valuing something seemingly worthless, contrasting with the original guide's use of the abstract noun "time", something commonly acknowledged as valuable, to be conserved in the quote "*stress at the outset the importance of time [for women]*".

The parody also brings out the modern satirical ideas of women being smarter and more civilized than men, which would contrast with the ideas of the society in 1943. The words in paragraph 7 "*Be sure to have a trusted female supervisor with men who are changing tasks in the office... Men are slow learners*". That men are "slow learners" entails their supposed difficult time in "*changing tasks in the office*". This shows how I changed the original text in the parody for the purpose of humor, since modern conceptions of men being the ultimate provider and ruler of the household have

generally been abolished in favor of a more inclusive view of both a man and woman providing for their family. The words "*trusted female supervisor*", an equivalent example lacking in the original, seems to entail a lack of trust towards the male workers and reverses the traditional social hierarchy of men being dominant over women.

Men are also portrayed as barbaric in paragraph 3 "*Men have an inborn tendency to hunt and fish for animals and use every last bit of the animal for some cruel task, like sausages or tent making.*" This is mocking the stereotype of men as hunter-gatherers, juxtaposing this with modern society, rendering this characteristic incompatible with modern times suggested by the negative connotations of "*cruel*". This is contrasted with the original's portrayal of larger women as "... *likely to be more even-tempered*", suggesting imagery of the traditional mother figure as proportionally large and kind-"*even-tempered*".

The purpose of parodies is to entertain, and the fact that there were only minor changes that I made to the original to turn it into satire, making it seem completely ridiculous, and shows strongly that the original might already be seen as humorous. This shows how amusing different social trends revolving the role of men and women can be. Language evolves according to differing social and cultural contexts, and the

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original guide has shown that language used in reference to one gender 70 years ago would now be seen in a completely different light, showing that if the guide were published in a modern context- a women's magazine- it would differ extensively in gender references but only be altered slightly, thus lending itself to be humorous.

Appendix:

Eleven and a Half Tips on Getting more Efficiency out of Male Employees:

There is no longer any doubt about it; male employees have now become a necessity for our *prestigious* company. We are in great danger of losing the stocks that we have invested, and because of the door-to-door sales tactic that we have decided on using against our rival company, we are now forced to hire men to do office work. To find a bus-load of new male employees and to break them into doing what they are told-- this is the top priority on our list.

Here are some tips to do so:

1. Pick the young-unmarried-skinny-geeky ones. They were born to do office work. They generally tend to submit to the orders that are given them rather than question our authority or concentrate on unimportant matters. Treat them with kindness and always be sure to keep large smiles at them because this will become the motivating force behind their work. As they fall in love easily, if you can keep on smiling, they'll do the work.

2. If you absolutely must pick the more elderly ones, pick the ones going through a mid-life crisis. These generally tend to try to act and look young while slowly aging away. Tell them that "it's cool" or "it's hip" (whatever that means) to moisten stamps and seal envelopes. These men generally tend to be more efficient if told so because they think that they will be with the "in crowd". Be sure to keep this up because men tend to become distracted with the pictures on the stamps and (regretfully) don't work as efficiently as women.

3. If you choose men of more "larger" proportions, then you will need to keep a stash of small snacks and a few cans of soda on the shelf behind the desk to keep them running efficiently. Don't put the snacks on the desk because men tend to be clumsy and may ruin our computers. Also, don't keep any of the small company animals, like fish, in the office near men. Men have an inborn tendency to hunt and fish for animals and use every last bit of the animal for some cruel task, like sausages or tent making.

4. Keep a psychiatrist and a doctor that specializes in male problems at hand at all times. Men generally don't speak about their problems at work and this can accumulate to

violent behavior in the office. Be sure also to tell the doctor to be aware of Dunlap disease in the more elderly men who are put to work in the storage room and kitchen.

5. Stress the importance of their working salary and threaten them with a pay deduction if they tarry along with their work. This point cannot be stressed enough to them. Men care a lot about the green paper.

6. Keep the men busy with lots of paper work, but not too much. Men are whiners and will complain easily about "stress" or "my back" if given too much. If men have too little to do, they tend to watch sports and slack off on their work. Be sure to give them clear instructions because they tend to be forgetful. Write down their task on those yellow sticky pads and stick it on the wall so that they will remember if they space out.

7. Be sure to have a trusted female supervisor with men who are changing tasks in the office. Watch the paper cutter carefully when he's working with the printer, and visa-versa. Men are slow learners, and be sure to put gloves on the men who are dealing with scissors. If they get cut, that's money out of our pockets for Band-Aids.

8. Give every man a lunch break and about an hour to watch some sports every day.

You may have to take an extra mile to arrange a lounge of some sort to allow for some male psychology. Men need time to be lazy or do some pointless repetitive activity like scratching themselves or gelling their hair which increases their efficiency and tames their ego.

9. Make sure that you speak very loudly to a man in giving instructions and criticisms.

What men hear usually goes through one ear and out the other, and they only retain what they want to hear about themselves, but don't go too far with the insults because the greatest prize that a man has is his ego, and if it is hurt, his behavior may grow erratic, affecting the mood of the office and may drive away potential investors.

10. Swear vociferously around men. As said before, men have a selective hearing defect, but if you say something strongly with lots of colorful adjectives, he will be more likely to hear you. Also, be sure that the men never open the door for you; let them know that you are perfectly capable of opening it yourself. If you allow this to happen, men may begin to grow a feeling of dominance, and this will NOT be good for the development of our *highly* prestigious company.

~~Team Blankship~~

11. Get a massively wide range of clothing sizes. Men can be anywhere from 5' to a freakishly tall 6'5". If this is not done, the men will go about the day all smelly in clothes that are too large or that make it look like they have socks for pants.

11.5. Oh yes, and a last piece of advice, don't let men get into any alcoholic beverages of the company fridge. No further explaining is necessary.

Appendix 2 Original text

Eleven Tips on Getting More Efficiency Out of Women Employees

There's no longer any question whether transit companies should hire women for jobs formerly held by men. The draft and manpower shortage has settled that point. The important things now are to select the most efficient women available and how to use them to the best advantage. Here are eleven helpful tips on the subject from western properties:

1. If you can get them, pick young married women. They have these advantages, according to the reports of western companies: they usually have more of a sense of responsibility than do their unmarried sisters; they're less likely to be flirtatious; as a rule, they need the work or they wouldn't be doing it — maybe a sick husband or one

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who's in the army; they still have the pep and interest to work hard and to deal with the public efficiently.

2. When you have to use older women, try to get ones who have worked outside the home at some time in their lives. Most transportation companies have found that older women who have never contacted the public, have a hard time adapting themselves, are inclined to be cantankerous and fussy. It's always well to impress upon older women the importance of friendliness and courtesy.

3. While there are exceptions, of course, to this rule, general experience indicates that "husky" girls — those who are just a little on the heavy side — are likely to be more even-tempered and efficient than their underweight sisters.

4. Retain a physician to give each woman you hire a special physical examination — one covering female conditions. This step not only protects the property against the possibilities of lawsuit but also reveals whether the employee-to-be has any female weaknesses which would make her mentally or physically unfit for the job. Transit companies that follow this practice report a surprising number of women turned down for nervous disorders.

5. In breaking in women who haven't previously done outside work, stress at the outset the importance of time — the fact that a minute or two lost here and there makes serious inroads on schedules. Until this point is gotten across, service is likely to be slowed up.

6. Give the female employe in garage or office a definite day-long schedule of duties so that she'll keep busy without bothering the management for instructions every few minutes. Numerous properties say that women make excellent workers when they have their jobs cut out for them but that they lack initiative in finding work themselves.

7. Whenever possible, let the inside employe change from one job to another at some time during the day. Women are inclined to be nervous and they're happier with change.

8. Give every girl an adequate number of rest periods during the day. Companies that are already using large numbers of women stress the fact that you have to make some allowances for feminine psychology. A girl has more confidence and consequently is more efficient if she can keep her hair tidied, apply fresh lipstick and wash her hands several times a day.

9. Be tactful in issuing instructions or in making criticisms. Women are often sensitive; they can't shrug off harsh words the way that men do. Never ridicule a woman — it breaks her spirit and cuts her efficiency.

10. Be reasonably considerate about using strong language around women. Even though a girl's husband or father may swear vociferously, she'll grow to dislike a place of business where she hears too much of this.

11. Get enough size variety in operator uniforms that each girl can have a proper fit. This point can't be stressed too strongly as a means of keeping women happy, according to western properties.