

## SECOND ANALYTICAL PAPER

**Instructions:** Write an original essay analyzing how the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal cover the same news event, using George Lakoff's liberal "nurturant parent" and conservative "strict father" frameworks to assess how each article's framing aligns with these moral models.

**Length:** AT LEAST 4–6 full pages of text, double spaced, following MLA format precisely, plus an accurate Works Cited page. A template is available at <http://citizen.obenauf.net>. Papers that do not meet these baseline scholarly expectations cannot receive credit and are not eligible for rewrite or resubmission. See the syllabus for more information.

**Due:** Monday, March 9, 2026, in hard copy at the start of class.

**Notes:** You should choose a significant national hard-news story that took place sometime in February. Focus on original reporting by each newspaper; do not rely on syndicated wire reports (e.g., AP, UPI, etc.) except for accompanying graphics. Editorials, opinion columns, book reviews, obituaries, retrospectives, pop-culture stories, soft news, and specialized business or science reporting are not suitable for this assignment. The two articles must cover the same discrete event and should appear on the same day when possible. You may use either print or online versions of the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, accessed through their websites or through a reputable database such as ProQuest. The articles should be comparable in scope, length, and timing.

Your analysis should use Lakoff's theories to examine how each article frames the event, rather than using the news coverage to test Lakoff's theories. You might consider who the reporter interviewed and how quotations are deployed as you examine how each article assigns responsibility, explains causes, and presents appropriate responses. Do any of the same quotes or tweets appear in both? How are they framed? Are they cut differently? You are invited to describe any photographs, maps, charts, or other graphics that accompany each article, as well as the captions for such materials, insofar as these contribute to the publication's framing of the story. You may also wish to address other factors that shape interpretation, such as where each publication placed its article (e.g., front page vs. buried on p. B23) and the relative length of coverage. Your goal is to show how ideological bias operates within ostensibly objective reporting, using Lakoff's moral frameworks to explain what you see.

This assignment should represent your own analysis, writing, and revision. AI use at any stage is prohibited. Take pride in that work!

Sample outline:

A. Your **introduction** should establish the context of your topic, identify the framework guiding your analysis, and orient readers toward the interpretive question at stake. Provide the key background necessary for readers to follow your argument before advancing a thesis that may only become clear as you work through the evidence. Here is one approach to the introduction for you to use, adapt, or scrap as you see fit:

The American essayist E.B. White observed in his 1956 essay “Bedfellows” that “I have yet to see a piece of writing, political or nonpolitical, that doesn’t have a slant” (104). He suggests that even balanced reporting in newspapers of record like the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal carries a discernible bias. In his 1995 article “Metaphor, Morality, and Politics,” the cognitive linguist George Lakoff argued that American political discourse is shaped by two competing moral frameworks: the “nurturant parent” model of liberal morality, and the “strict father” model of conservative morality. In Lakoff’s “nurturant parent” morality, responsibility develops through empathy, protection, and social support, with guidance and care functioning as the primary means of fostering moral agency and collective well-being; by contrast, “strict father” morality holds that virtue emerges through obedience, self-discipline, and deference to authority, with punishment functioning as a corrective force that reinforces responsibility and maintains social order. In their coverage of [event], published on [date], both newspapers agree on the central facts. Both report, for instance, that [shared fact #1] and that [shared fact #2]. Yet the two accounts frame the event differently. In “[article title],” [reporter’s name] of the Times emphasizes [forecast feature(s)], whereas in “[article title],” [reporter’s name] of the Journal emphasizes [contrasting feature(s)]. Read through Lakoff’s framework, these differences in framing suggest that the New York Times leans toward [Lakoff-aligned slant], while the Wall Street Journal reflects [contrasting Lakoff-aligned slant].

B. The **body** of your paper will have three main components. First, you will explore the slant of the New York Times article fully. Begin by describing key details and laying out your evidence before commenting on what the evidence suggests, signals, implies, or points to, so as not to give the appearance that you began with a predetermined conclusion and projected it onto the article. Second, you will do the same for the Wall Street Journal article. Third, you will compare and contrast the two accounts as you build toward your conclusion. **Throughout your analysis, you should draw on Lakoff’s article as an interpretive framework, quoting it and citing it as you connect your observations to his account of nurturant-parent and strict-father moral reasoning.**

C. Your **conclusion** may be brief (a paragraph or two), but it should move beyond summarizing your main points. This is where your analysis might make connections to this historical moment, or where you slip into the first person to share personal remarks emerging from your work. You could use this space to situate your comparison within the broader political context of the event and consider what it suggests about the operation of Lakoff’s nurturant-parent and strict-father moral frameworks in contemporary journalism. You may also wish to reflect on how your interpretation developed as you worked through the evidence—including any tensions, surprises, or limits you encountered—as you arrive at the larger implications of your analysis.