

CONCLUSION ANALYSIS

Limitation – While this statement is more of a concession to his opposition than an acknowledgement of an argumentative limitation, the admission that progress towards tolerance has been made by working within the capitalist system works against the author’s overall claim that capitalism itself must be opposed. This bolsters the author’s credibility by showing his reader that, though he ultimately rejects them, he has genuinely considered opposing viewpoints.

Evolved Thesis – The opening sentence of the conclusion restates the essay’s thesis that “homosexuality has occupied positions both inside and outside the capitalist system” but that “a common element throughout this dynamic relationship... is the capitalist control of homosexuality and homosexuals in increasingly insidious ways.” It also reestablishes the tension inherent in this thesis between the shifting *function* of homosexuals within capitalism and their static *position* within the system. The opening sentence also effectively sums up the essay by using terms—“nuisance,” “industrial capitalism,” “tool,” “late capitalism”—that have been given specialized meanings within the body of the paper. Restating the thesis in the opening sentence of the conclusion allows the author a chance to explore the essay’s broader implications, as he does in the sentences that follow.

Evolved Motive – The motive of the conclusion takes the same form as the one the author employs in the introduction to his essay: the truth is not what it would appear to be on a first reading. However, the motives in the intro and conclusion differ significantly in function. In the introduction, the author argues that, “contrary to what a quick stroll through the GAP or five minutes of watching *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* would tell you about homosexuality’s exalted status in modern consumer culture, the history of the relationship between homosexuality and the capitalist mode of production has been a complex and troubled one.” The motive in the introduction ushers the reader into the world of the text by motivating an issue of *interpretation*. The motive in the conclusion ushers the reader back into the world of daily life by motivating an issue of political *action*, which is the overall goal of the essay. This incitement to action derives from the author’s claim that, though it may seem that homosexuals are making progress towards tolerance by working within the system of capitalism, the only way to truly achieve tolerance is by resisting capitalism itself.

While the status of homosexuality within American capitalism has evolved from *nuisance* under industrial capitalism to *tool* of late capitalism, the interests of capital have always in some way been in opposition to those of the gay community. While, admittedly, progress has been made in the realm of tolerance, it has not been enough; capital has simply found new and more insidious ways to manipulate, marginalize, and oppress homosexuals. If America’s gays and lesbians desire liberation and authenticity, then they must align themselves with the enemies of capitalism and employ new theories and strategies in their struggle. The American gay community has nothing to lose but their overpriced Diesel jeans. They have a world to win.

Look Ahead – While the author does not pose a new question directly, he suggests a further realm of inquiry. Having established in his essay that homosexuals cannot achieve tolerance by working within the system of capitalism, he looks to the next logical set of questions which require an examination of *how* to most effectively resist capitalism. While the author does devote some space in the latter part of his essay to sketching out some possibilities, these ideas are not as fully realized as his argument about the impossibility of full tolerance of homosexuals within capitalism. Thus, this new question is also an implicit acknowledgement of a limitation in the author’s previous arguments.

Final Thought – The author’s reference to the “overpriced Diesel jeans” functions as more than a sort of witty gimmick. As the author moves the reader from the highly theoretical arguments that comprise the majority of his essay into the real world of the reader’s daily life, he concretizes his abstract concepts using an object from that world. In addition, the reference to giving up Diesel jeans is juxtaposed with the idea that homosexuals have “a world to win” through resistance to capitalism. When placed in these terms, the sacrifice of the material object seems pithy in comparison with the toleration that the author argues homosexuals stand to achieve by aligning themselves against capitalism.

WRITING EFFECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

Though the final paragraph in an essay is commonly referred to as the conclusion, it is not traditionally the place in which the author draws new conclusions that were not mentioned previously in the essay. Rather, the goal of an essay's conclusion is to bring the paper full circle by revisiting the large-scale ideas stated in the introduction, but with the refined perspective created by the preceding arguments in the body of the paper. Conclusions often return to the thesis—which the preceding essay has attempted to make compelling—in an attempt to briefly assess its significance in some larger context.

Conceptual Components

Revisiting the Thesis – Just as the preceding body paragraphs have drawn more general conclusions from specific pieces of evidence, the concluding paragraph of an essay reestablishes the essay's main claim, which has been built on the more specific sub-claims argued throughout the body. Though the thesis is generally reintroduced in the first sentence of the conclusion, the remainder of the paragraph should ensure that its content moves beyond simply restating the ideas in the introduction.

Recontextualization – Just as your introduction acts as a bridge that transports your readers from their own lives into the textual space of your analysis, your conclusion provides a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. This is done most effectively by emphasizing a context for your ideas that makes them relevant or meaningful for your reader. This can include summarizing how your argument contributes to existing research, identifying a new question for further inquiry, or suggesting a new course of action based on your findings.

Structural Components

Evolved Thesis – Using different language than the introduction, most conclusions restate the essay's main claim in the first sentence. This allows the concluding paragraph to avoid simply reproducing the introduction in which the thesis is usually stated near the end. Restating the paper's overall argument at the beginning of the conclusion sets up a brief exploration of your essay's larger context or broader implications in the final paragraph.

Evolved Motive – In guiding your readers out of the textual space of your paper, it is important to remind them why your arguments are significant. You don't want your readers to finish your paper thinking "so what?" To prevent this, use your conclusion to reestablish the significance of your thesis.

Limitation – Qualifying or acknowledging the limitations of your argument, while optional, can be an effective way of clarifying the scope of your thesis, particularly in an essay that defends a rather ambitious claim. Acknowledging that there are questions that need further research or that your argument is unlikely to convince those who approach the topic with a different set of assumptions is also a useful strategy for bolstering your credibility.

Look Ahead – Because an essay is a small part of a larger discourse on its topic, a common move made in conclusions is to describe how the main claim may serve as a stepping stone for further research. Implicitly you are saying, "Now that I have proven the thesis of my essay, what new questions can we ask about this topic?" In a way, looking ahead to a new question does the work of the three previous components: proposing new areas of inquiry reinforces that you have proven your *thesis*; showing that, with further research, your claims could have broader implications *remotivates* your argument; acknowledging that other questions still remain acknowledges the *limitations* of your central claim.

Final Thought – Since it is the last thing they will read, you want your final sentence to stick in your readers' minds. Whether you choose to end with emphasis, wit, or wonder, your final sentence should be memorable in some way without departing significantly from the overall tone of your essay.