

JOURNAL ENTRY FEEDBACK from CML

Before you complete the next Journal Entry, review the Center for Media Literacy's feedback on the previous one. This feedback will help you develop your media literacy skills to deconstruct any media message, anywhere, anytime.

Different people experience the same media message differently. How might different people understand this message differently?

The following samples were submitted by students in response to the Journal Entry for Key Question #3. Students provided many differing insights regarding the photo — and the student responses themselves are **evidence** that *different people experience the same media message differently*. Each student “saw” different things, felt different things, pointed out different examples from the photo — yet the photo itself didn't change, the text was exactly the same in each person's viewing.

This Core Concept helps us understand that a photo — or a media text of any kind — has no emotion. It has no context that speaks for itself. It is **WE** who react to the photo/media message. It is WE who bring our experience, our point of view, our knowledge, to the media message. The media message itself is just a thing. But we as humans bring an infinite variety of perceptions and feelings to a media message.

This is why it's important for us to consciously try to separate ourselves from the media message — to step back from it and “see” it from multiple perspectives, and to realize that we often “see” what we want to see in a message (confirmation bias), because we are who we are, and we ultimately cannot separate ourselves from our own interpretation, even though we might learn to have more empathy or understanding of another person's point of view.

From a producer's standpoint, media target us and often try to identify our similarities so that they can reach the biggest audience possible. But ultimately, we are all individuals who only have some things in common, and other things that are different. But our common humanity is something that we must accept when it comes to understanding media messages, because we bring our flaws and our strengths to our interpretations — and so does everyone else.

As we like to say at CML — when we go to a movie, we may see the same text, but we never “see” the same movie as anyone else in the audience. This is the essence of Core Concept, Key Question #3.

STUDENT RESPONSES

Please review student responses prior to fulfilling assignment for next journal entry.

- A filmmaker may feel that this image is highly produced and is exploiting the woman.
- A citizen could view this image and feel empathy for the woman's situation, perhaps it may even cause them to donate to a certain cause.
- An activist could find this image political and connect it to the way our government responds to disasters.
- A religious person may look at this and “thank god” that the lady made it out alive.
- A person could also view this with sadness and a deep connection if they knew someone who was affected the way this lady was.
- A different person may grow numb to such an image if they have no relation to it.
- A person of color could feel excluded.

I do believe that different people experience the same media message differently, we all come from different backgrounds and view life in different aspects. I think our background and our upbringing has a lot to do with our perspective on things. I think people might understand this message differently because some may have experienced a hurricane before, unlike myself. This photo might bring more emotions into play rather than someone who hasn't.

Different people, based on their religion, race, knowledge, can get a different meaning from this photo. For example, I think maybe an older woman can relate to this picture more, someone who has worked so hard to have a home and see it fall down due to a natural disaster. I also see that, someone who has ever lost something or someone during a hurricane/earthquake (experience) can relate to this woman more.

I believe ANYONE can benefit from this message. This message is trying to let the audience know how this hurricane affected her and her home. Its showing everyone who didn't live through it get a gist of what really goes on a time like this. The people that might be harmed by this photo might be the people that don't want to remember when they personally went through a time like his. This might bring memories to people that aren't ready to be reminded of such a time.

This message to me means that everyone should stick together and help everyone around the world during a time like this. It made me reflect on my life and how blessed I really am to know have ever gone through this. My aunt actually lives in Florida where the hurricane just occurred and it makes me feel that natural disasters don't discriminate on race or color, so no one is invincible. This means that we should all stick together and help anyone out in need during ANY time not just when a natural disaster occurs. It does affect my feelings but it makes more sensitive to know this is REAL, this is what happens around the world on a daily basis.

- Different people will understand this message differently depending on personal knowledge and outside experiences they bring when they see the photo. An individual with broad knowledge on event in the world would pay close attention to the artifacts surrounding the subject and could probably end with a conclusion that she is a victim of natural disaster. While a contrary individual to the one previously described might not think as critically about the photo and assume that the subject is extremely impoverished or from a third world country. It is difficult to attempt to decipher what two separate individuals might see in this form of media because we need to take into account all the personal experiences they bring to the media itself, their sense of knowledge not only with media but what goes on in the world.

-What someone experiences from the photo of the victim of Hurricane Maria standing on her veranda has to do not only with all the outside experiences the individuals bring to the media itself but the emotion the media evokes in them. An individual that was stricken with grief, pain, and sadness can be very motivated to take some form of action to help hurricane victims while a different individual might say "Wow this sucks" and goes about their day wasn't as moved by the media. The experience people receive from the media is very dependent on how images are presented and the types of cues that follow the image. If we compare this stand alone image to the same image with a cue that grabs the reader the type of experience people would pull from them would be different.