Morgane AUGRIS

Science Turns Out To Be A Fiction : Damaging consequences

Université d'ORLÉANS

UFR Sciences & Techniques

TD de L.V. Anglais (maths)

Contrôle continu 2 L2 S3
2026-2027

Prénom/nom : ……

Expression orale en continu et en interaction (présentations en groupes)

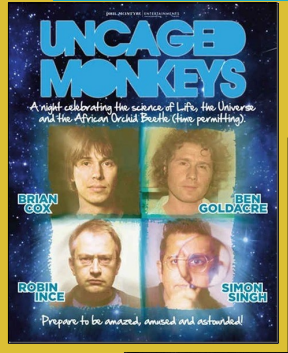
Critères	Commentaires

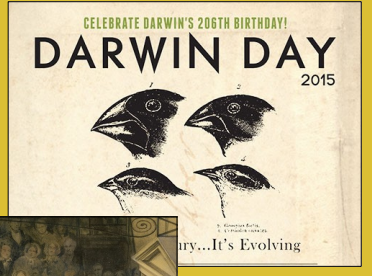
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Le sujet des candidats doit s'apparenter à l'un de ces quatre cas de figure :

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Story-telling in Sociable Science









Work in groups to prepare a synthesis of three short texts about "Popularizing science."

You cannot show your text to the other members of your group.

Read your text and rephrase what it is about orally in your own words to the members of your group.

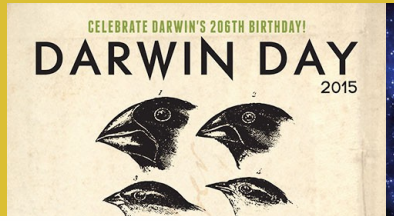
Together write in a couple of lines a synthesis of your three excerpts. (max 100 words)

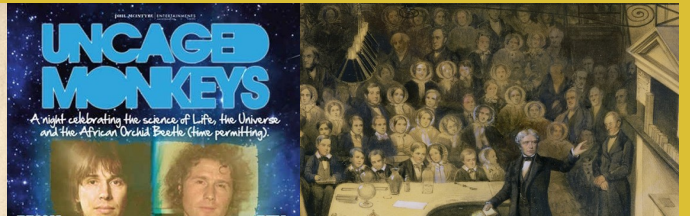


Try and use the structure and linking words
to organize your thoughts.

Story-telling in Sociable Science







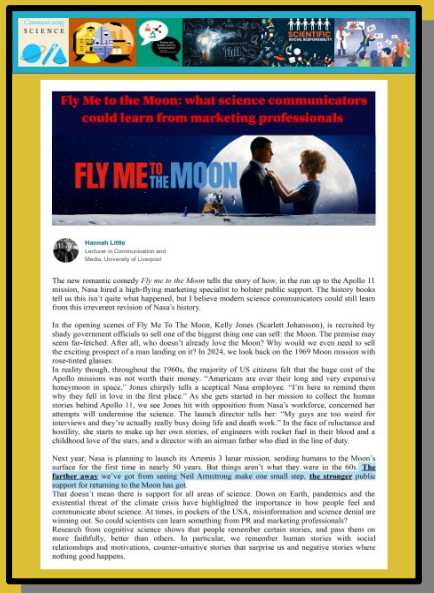
Scientific research should not be confined to the ivory tower of academia, something 19th century scientists who turned science into a show fully understood. Yet, the notion that entertainment could be a vehicle for science faded away during the 20th century. Fortunately, 21st century comedians and scientists have revived this idea of popularizing science on TV and in theatres. The media, the Internet revolution and high-profile events have also helped give center stage to a field of intellectual inquiry that has been making our lives so much easier.

88 words

Story-telling in Sociable Science







Fly Me to the Moon: what science communicators could learn from marketing professionals

Hannah Little
Lecturer in Communication and Media, University of Liverpool

The new romantic comedy *Fly me to the Moon* tells the story of how, in the run up to the Apollo 11 mission, Nasa hired a high-flying marketing specialist to bolster public support. The history books tell us this isn't quite what happened, but I believe modern science communicators could still learn from this irreverent revision of Nasa's history.

In the opening scenes of Fly Me To The Moon, Kelly Jones (Scarlett Johansson), is recruited by shady government officials to sell one of the biggest thing one can sell: the Moon. The premise may seem far-fetched. After all, who doesn't already love the Moon? Why would we even need to sell the exciting prospect of a man landing on it? In 2024, we look back on the 1969 Moon mission with rose-tinted glasses.

In reality though, throughout the 1960s, the majority of US citizens felt that the huge cost of the Apollo missions was not worth their money. "Americans are over their long and very expensive honeymoon in space," Jones chirpily tells a sceptical Nasa employee. "I'm here to remind them why they fell in love in the first place." As she gets started in her mission to collect the human stories behind Apollo 11, we see Jones hit with opposition from Nasa's workforce, concerned her attempts will undermine the science. The launch director tells her: "My guys are too weird for interviews and they're actually really busy doing life and death work." In the face of reluctance and hostility, she starts to make up her own stories, of engineers with rocket fuel in their blood and a childhood love of the stars, and a director with an airman father who died in the line of duty.

Next year, Nasa is planning to launch its Artemis 3 lunar mission, sending humans to the Moon's surface for the first time in nearly 50 years. But things aren't what they were in the 60s. The further away we've got from seeing Neil Armstrong make one small step, the stronger public support for returning to the Moon has got.

That doesn't mean there is support for all areas of science. Down on Earth, pandemics and the existential threat of the climate crisis have highlighted the importance in how people feel and communicate about science. At times, in pockets of the USA, misinformation and science denial are winning out. So could scientists can learn something from PR and marketing professionals?

Research from cognitive science shows that people remember certain stories, and pass them on more faithfully, better than others. In particular, we remember human stories with social relationships and motivations, counter-intuitive stories that surprise us and negative stories where nothing good happens.

Story-telling in Sociable Science





1. Do you think scientists should get inspiration from PR and marketing professionals? Why or why not?

2. If you had to communicate more (or even shoot a movie) about one current or past scientific issue, which would it be and why?

3. Which of these tricks from cognitive science would you use to have a scientific issue popularized: social relations and motivations? counter-intuitive stories that surprise us? or negative stories where nothing good happens?

Justify: what would the pros or cons be?

⚠ **To answer, use double comparatives as underlined in the article.**

Story-telling in Sociable Science



Professional reluctance?

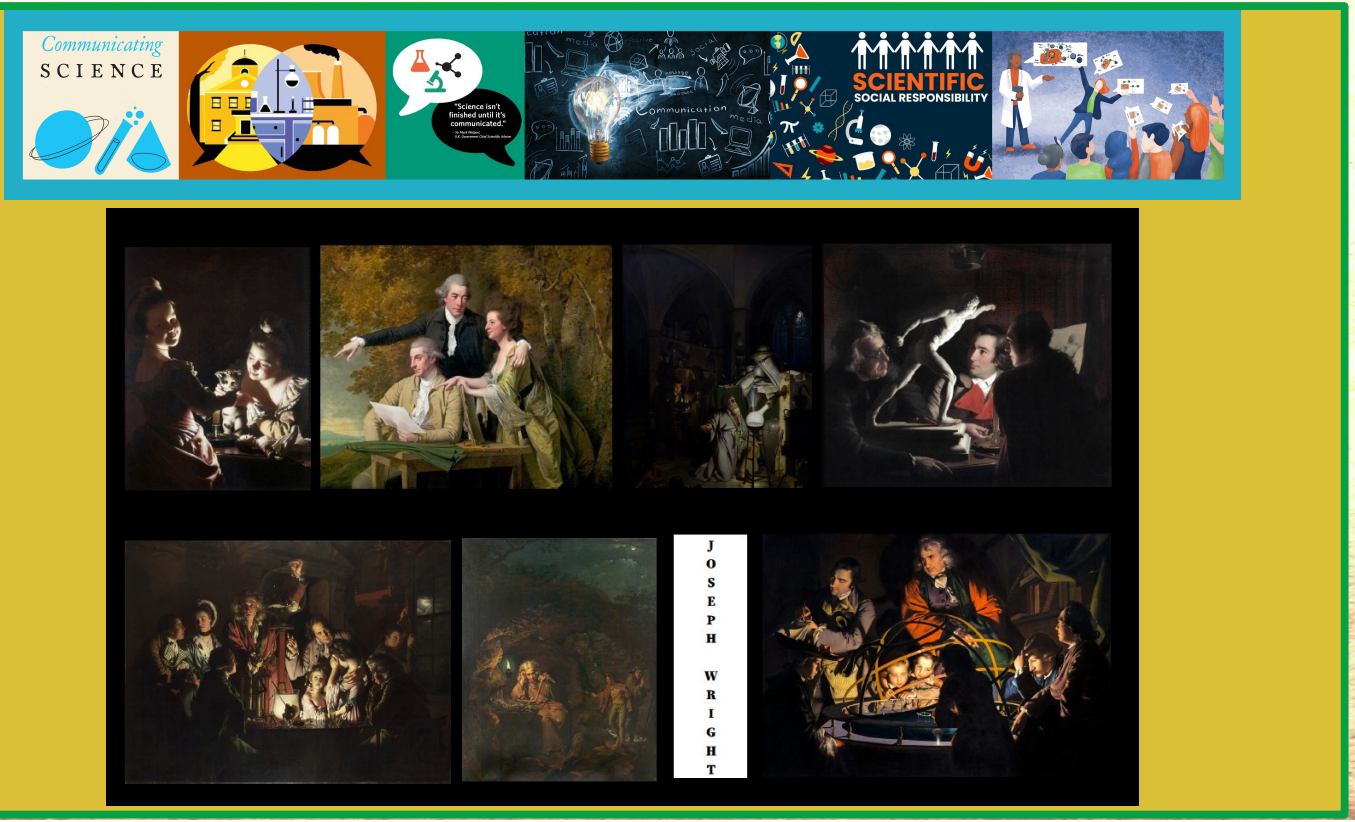
How do science communicators feel about using such tricks?



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- science communicators worry, at times, that introducing counter-intuitive narratives or human characters to their communication might detract from the science.
- science communicators may worry that making their stories too negative could leave people disheartened, too anxious to act on things like the climate, or turn them off science altogether. However, negative emotions can actually be an important step in the emotional journey towards activism.
- science is often a collective endeavour involving huge teams. Arguably, it is the scientific method, rather than individual researchers, that makes science successful. Science communicators often refrain from overemphasising individual responsibility or opinion.
- having too many characters or counter-intuitive elements could make science communication too complex, contradicting the objective to make something highly complex easily understood.

Story-telling in Sociable Science



Story-telling in Sociable Science



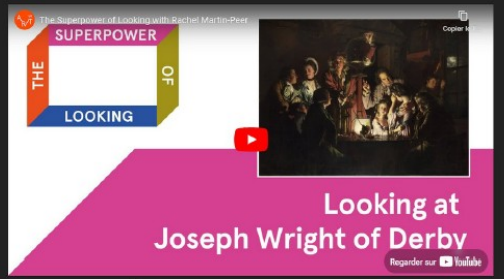


Story-telling in Sociable Science



Look at the video and learn more about Joseph Wright's painting.

The Superpower of Looking with Rachel Martin Peer



01:30 – 04:40

Pay attention to phonetics.
How would you stress those words?

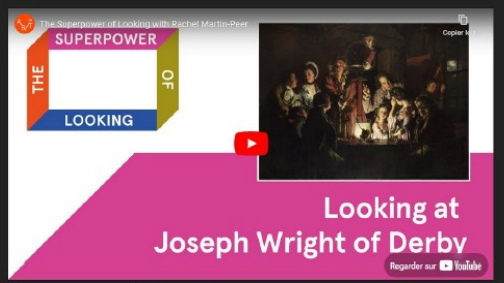
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Story-telling in Sociable Science



An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump (1768)

Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–1797)

The 'Derby' in **Joseph Wright of Derby** was probably a sign of the artist's pride in his hometown. Derby was famous for scientific advancement in the service of industry – a bit like Silicon Valley is now for technology.
The eighteenth century was an age of discovery in Britain – entrepreneurs emerged and like-minded people formed societies. One of these was The Lunar Society of Birmingham, a group of inspirational men (and it was just men) who debated science, philosophy, the arts and commerce before travelling back home by moonlit carriages. This artwork is Wright's way of sharing scientific ideas with everyone, not just a select few, and showing the reactions of ordinary people.
Wright of Derby specialised in candlelit pictures, and this is the largest that he painted. The bird is placed in a glass container and the air is then pumped out. Drama is created both through dramatic use of light and shade and through the facial expressions and poses of the figures.

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