

Writing Portfolio



CYNTHIA GILES

Academic Writing

Technical Writing

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Books

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Academic Writing



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Academic Writing Portfolio

Academic Writing Overview



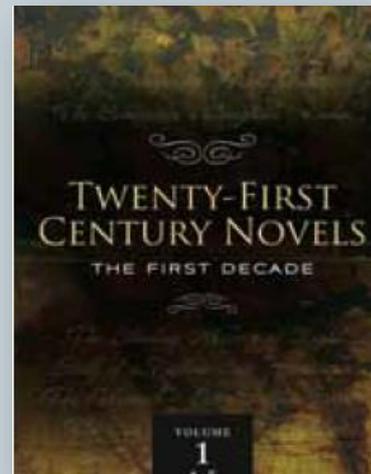
- I have written essays ranging from 1000 to 4000 words for each of these series or collections:
 - Literature Criticism Online (Gale series)
 - Literature Online (ProQuest series)
 - Literature of War
 - Literature of Protest
 - Literature of Autobiography
 - Twenty-first Century Novels: The First Decade
 - St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture
 - Worldmark Global Business and Economics Issues
 - Energy: In Context

Example 1: *Twenty-first Century Novels*



- **Summary:** This volume covers the first decade of the new century, with in-depth essays on 300 literary works. Designed for advanced secondary students, undergraduates, graduate students, and general researchers.
- I wrote 25 of the essays—8% of this unique reference work.
- Each 2000-word essay includes:

- Introduction
- Literary and historical context
- Themes
- Major characters
- About the author
- Style
- Critical reception



[Click here for more information on the collection.](#)

My Essays for *Twenty-first Century Novels*



	Title	Author last	Author first
1	All the Names	Samarago	Jose
2	Celestial Harmonies	Esterhazy	Peter
3	Gilgamesh	London	Joan
4	Homo Zapiens	Pelevin	Victor
5	In Search of Walid Masoud	Jabra	Jabra Ibrahim
6	Mansfield	Stead	C. K.
7	Middlesex	Eugenides	Jeffrey
8	My Name Is Red	Pamuk	Orhan
9	Nova Swing	Harrison	M. John
10	Omega Minor	Verhagen	Paul
11	Perdido Street Station	Mieville	China
12	Possession	Byatt	A. S.
13	Quicksilver	Stephenson	Neil
14	Rainbow's End	Vinge	Vernor
15	Seeker	McDevitt	Jack

16	Shadow of the Wind	Zafon	Carlos Ruiz
17	Skin of the Sky	Poniatowska	Elena
18	Suite Francaise	Nemirov	Irene
19	The Athenian Murders	Somoza	Jose Carlow
20	The Children's Book	Byatt	A. S.
21	The Curse of Chalion	Bujold	Lois M.
22	The English Patient	Ondaatje	Michael
23	The Quickening Maze	Foulds	Adam
24	The White Tiger	Adiga	Aravind
25	The Windup Girl	Bacigalupi	Paolo

One of my essays for *Twenty-first Century Novels*



The Athenian Murders

By José Carlos Somoza

Introduction

The Athenian Murders (2002) is the sixth novel by popular Spanish writer José Carlos Somoza and the first to be published in an English translation. The multilayered narrative intertwines two stories. One is told in the text of an ancient manuscript (itself called *The Athenian Murders*): A “discoverer of enigmas” investigates the murders of several young philosophy students from Plato’s Academy. The other story unfolds in the footnotes created by the Translator, an unnamed protagonist who is preparing the first modern translation of the manuscript. The footnotes reveal the Translator’s gradual realization that he is working with an esoteric text (one employing repeated words and phrases to create an image in the reader’s mind) that may contain a secret message. Parts of the message seem to be directed at the Translator. He finds himself drawn into a third plot layer involving another modern character, Montala, who is obsessed with discovering the ultimate meaning of the manuscript. All the layers revolve around philosophical speculation, and in the end they come together in a surprising twist. *The Athenian Murders* was well received by most critics and won the 2002 Maratón Gold Dagger awarded by the Crime Writers’ Association.

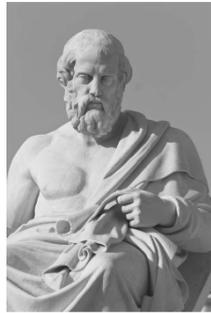
Literary and Historical Context

The events of the ancient narrative take place in Athens during the time when the famed philosopher Plato (~428–347 BCE) taught at the Academy, a school he founded around 387 BCE. The Academy operated until 86 BCE, when the grounds were destroyed (along with much of Athens) in the First Mithridatic War. While the school was under Plato’s direction, there was

no set curriculum. Most instruction was conducted through discussions of philosophical questions. Participants included both older scholars and young men, such as the *epheboi* (adolescents) who are killed in the plotline of the ancient *Athenian Murders*. In the course of that narrative, the characters explore other aspects of Athenian culture, including mystery cults (which taught certain doctrines to initiates by means of ritual experiences and ecstatic visions) and numerous philosophical factions. The story also alludes to the sexual mores of ancient Greek culture, such as the acceptance of sexual relationships between older men and young boys. The modern plotline occurs in an unspecified time and place.

Themes

The original Spanish title of Somoza’s novel, *La caverna de las ideas* (The cave of ideas), a reference to Plato, emphasizes the central thematic role of philosophical inquiry. Although the early Academy probably did not teach a specific doctrine, discussion undoubtedly reflected Plato’s own views. Plato recorded his beliefs in the form of dramatized dialogues between Socrates (his teacher) and various other philosophers. The most important of the dialogues, *The Republic*, contains a story now known as the Allegory of the Cave. In it, Plato suggests that the material world perceived by the senses is only a shadow of the real forms of things, which exist as ideas; therefore, reality can only be apprehended by the intellect. In *The Athenian Murders* the nature of reality (that is, the question of whether ideas have an independent existence, separate from the phenomenal world) is a continuing subject of inquiry, both in the ancient manuscript and in the story told by the Translator. As the Translator and Montala pursue philosophical answers, they focus on the role that language plays in either depicting an existing reality or creating an independent reality.



Greek philosopher Plato. In *The Athenian Murders*, a translator works on an ancient manuscript about the murders of several students from Plato’s Academy. Wikimedia.org/othototot.com

Style

Plato presented the precepts of his philosophy in the form of dialogue between characters with different ideas. In a similar way, Somoza creates a virtual discussion between Heracles Pontor, the protagonist of the ancient narrative, and the Translator, the main character of the modern narrative. The Translator comments on the original story in his footnotes, and as *The Athenian Murders* progresses, it begins to seem as if the original text is talking back to him. Another dialogue takes shape between the Translator and Montala. Both men believe that esoteric inquiry is incorporated into the style of the ancient manuscript. The esoteric message, which relates to the question of whether language creates reality, turns out to be a central element in the modern plotline. In this manner Somoza weaves the philosophical concepts explored in *The Athenian Murders* into the style and structure of the novel.

The Athenian Murders

MAJOR CHARACTERS

DIAGORAS is a tutor at Plato’s Academy who suspects that a young student was murdered and appeals to Pontor for help. He assists in the investigation and discusses philosophy with Pontor.

MONTALA, a character in the modern story, was the first to copy the ancient text from papyrus. He kidnaps the Translator in his quest to prove his theory about the manuscript.

PLATO is a historical character, a philosopher and teacher who appears only briefly in the ancient story. His Academy, students, and ideas are at the center of both the plot of the ancient text and the themes of the modern story.

HERACLES PONTOR is the main character of the story in the ancient manuscript. He is the “discoverer of enigmas” summoned to investigate the murders of the young students of Plato’s Academy.

THE TRANSLATOR is the unnamed protagonist of the modern story that unfolds in the footnotes to his translation. As he works on the ancient manuscript, he notices that a secret is concealed in the text, and eventually he becomes involved in a real-life mystery concerning the ancient manuscript and its meaning.

Critical Reception

The majority of critics have praised the conceptual inventiveness of *The Athenian Murders* and consider the novel strong overall. *Publishers Weekly* calls it “a highly original and literary approach to crime fiction.” Pedro Ponce, writing for the *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, observes that “the thrill of this novel comes from both its ingeniously structured mystery plot and the larger questions it raises about what constitutes knowledge and experience.” A review in the *London Times* declares that Somoza “weaves suspense, gore, a particular corner of Plato’s philosophy and layer upon layer of unending reflexivity with ease and obvious relish.”

Not all reviewers were convinced of the book’s merit, however. *Review Review* concludes that “the plot’s deliberate obscurities both intrigue and annoy,” though “the rich, elegant writing will please all corners.” The reviewer cautions, “Mystery fans should be warned that Somoza is more interested in metaphysical questions and literary subtleties than traditional storytelling.” At the negative end of the spectrum, Michael D. Langen writes in the *Buffalo News*, “It’s hard to know whether the book is a gaudy-but-serious episode or a serious work of philosophical discourse.”

The Athenian Murders

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

José Carlos Somoza was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1959, just a few months after Fidel Castro came to power. The following year Somoza’s family left everything behind and moved to Spain. He is now a Spanish citizen. Somoza has lived in Madrid and Córdoba, where he studied medicine and earned a degree in psychiatry in 1994. The same year, his first novel was accepted for publication, and he decided to become a writer. *The Athenian Murders* is his sixth novel and the first to appear in an English translation. Since then, two more of his novels have been translated into English: *The Artist Murders* (2004, Clarix in paperback, 2001) and *29 Zug* (2007, 29 Zug, 2006). Somoza’s novels have won several international awards, including (for his 2007 novel *La clave del Abismo*) the Premio de Novela Ciudad de Torrevieja.

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Additional Resources

Criticism and Reviews

- Gerling, David Ross. Rev. of *The Athenian Murders*, by José Carlos Somoza. *World Literature Today* 77.3/4 (2003): 148+. Print. Gerling notes the relationship of Somoza’s novel to several other Spanish works and points out influences from the author’s background as a psychiatrist.
- Miler, Laura. Rev. of *The Athenian Murders*, by José Carlos Somoza. *Slate* 20 June 2002. Web. 12 Sept. 2010. Miler’s appreciative review effectively represents the tone and style of the novel.
- Pye, Michael. “Crippling Like a Crowwood Puzzle, but Not Quite a Thriller.” *Saintmarie* (Edinburgh) 14 Jan. 2002: 15. Print. This review compares *The Athenian Murders* unfavorably to Umberto Eco’s historical murder-mystery *The Name of the Rose*.

Schifino, Martin. Rev. of *The Athenian Murders*, by José Carlos Somoza. *Times Literary Supplement* [London] 5 Apr. 2002: 28. Print. Schifino cites interesting aspects of the work but ultimately finds it unconvincing.

Thomas, Christine. “A Translator Solves Two Puzzles Shrouded in Mystery.” *San Francisco Chronicle* 16 June 2002: R30. Print. This enthusiastic review points out some of the conceptual aspects of the novel.

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“José Carlos Somoza.” *Contemporary Authors Online*. Detroit: Gale, 2007. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 13 Sept. 2010.

Open Web Source

The author’s official Web site is mainly in Spanish, but some material is translated into English. The site also provides photos of the author and a look at the colorful covers of his many Spanish publications. <http://www.josecarlosomoza.com/>

For further Reading

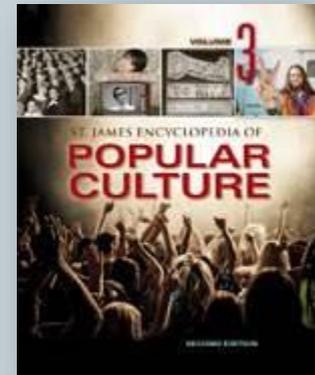
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- Marbach, Ina. *The Fire and the Sun: His Place Revisited*. Amherst, New York: Viking, 1990. Print. In this nonfiction study of Plato’s cave allegory, novelist and philosopher Ina Marbach explores some of the same questions and ideas that arise in *The Athenian Murders*.
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- Wechsler, Robert. *Performing within a Stage: The Art of Literary Translation*. North Haven: Cornell, 1998. Print. Wechsler’s book, which introduces the processes and problems associated with translating poetry of poetry and fiction, presents an intriguing context in which to understand the use of the Translator’s role in *The Athenian Murders*.

Cynthia Giles

Example 2: St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture



- **Summary:** The St. James Encyclopedia Of Popular Culture, 2nd ed., updates and augments the over ten-year-old first edition. It includes 3,036 signed essays (300 of them new), alphabetically arranged, and written or reviewed by subject experts and edited to form a consistent, readable, and straightforward reference. The entries cover topics and persons in major areas of popular culture: film; music; print culture; social life; sports; television and radio; and art and performance (which include theater, dance, stand-up comedy, and other live performance).
- The entries analyze each topic or person's significance in and relevance to American popular culture; in addition to basic factual information, readers will gain perspective on the cultural context in which the topic or person has importance.
- I wrote 40 of the 300 new essays—about 12%



[Click here for more information on the collection.](#)

My Entries for *SJEP*C



	Topic
1	Angelina Jolie
2	Being John Malkovich
3	Ben Stiller
4	Betheny Frankel
5	Body Piercing
6	Bourne Series
7	Celebrity Couples
8	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
9	Deadwood
10	Fake Memoirs
11	Fantasy Sports
12	Finding Nemo
13	Gourmet Grocery Stores
14	Grey's Anatomy
15	Hacky Sack
16	Jack Nicholson
17	Jerry Bruckheimer
18	Joel and Ethan Coen
19	Kate Winslet
20	Kill Bill

21	Lance Armstrong
22	Mama Mia!
23	Margaret Cho
24	Nicolas Cage
25	Raves
26	Reese Witherspoon
27	Ridley Scott
28	Sandra Bullock
29	Shrek
30	Snapple
31	Steven Soderburgh
32	Sushi
33	Tattoos
34	The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo
35	The Matrix
36	The Passion of the Christ
37	The View
38	Transformers
39	Will and Grace
40	Will Smith

One of my essays for *SJEP*C



Being John Malkovich

Like most cult films, *Being John Malkovich* (1999) is loved by some and hated by others. It can be described as a black comedy, a surreal fantasy, a social satire, an absurdist romance, a tragic vision of modern life—or just a very quirky movie starring John Cusack and Cameron Diaz. This film was the first collaborative project by writer Charlie Kaufman (best known for *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, 2004) and director Spike Jonze (who brought the children's classic *Where the Wild Things Are* to the screen in 2009). *Being John Malkovich*, which features Malkovich playing himself, earned an Oscar nomination for Best Director and grossed more than \$45 million worldwide in its theatrical run.

Even a brief summary conveys something of the film's genuine (and frequently hilarious) strangeness. Protagonist Craig Schwartz is a talented but disillusioned puppeteer, unhappily married to Lotte, an ardent animal lover. He takes a menial job in a strange building, where he becomes infatuated with his coworker Maxine and discovers a passageway that leads into the mind of actor John Malkovich. At first he is only an observer, seeing the world through Malkovich's eyes for fifteen minutes at a time. However, he eventually figures out how to control Malkovich's body for long periods. Lotte also develops a passion for Maxine, and at various times both Craig and Lotte inhabit Malkovich in order to be with Maxine. Craig manipulates Malkovich into becoming a renowned puppeteer and marrying Maxine, but she really loves Lotte and becomes pregnant while Lotte is inhabiting Malkovich. As it turns out, other people are plotting to use the Malkovich portal to prolong their lives, and after several complicated twists, Craig is trapped by his own obsession and ends up permanently imprisoned in the mind of Lotte and Maxine's daughter.

Amazingly, all this seems to make sense while the film is going on, in part because the characterizations are so richly believable. *Being John Malkovich* was chosen as the Best Picture of 1999 by the National Society of Film Critics, and since then it has become a staple in film courses, serving as a model of cinema that is entertaining, inventive, and intelligent at the same time. Kaufman and Jones use an absurd premise to explore real philosophical and psychological questions about identity, ego, celebrity, gender, and power—and the film continues to fascinate fans because it can be discussed in seemingly endless ways. Ultimately, however, all the themes can be related to just one question: What does it mean to "be" John Malkovich, or anyone else?

Cynthia Giles

SEE ALSO: *Cult Films*.

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Tech Writing and Corporate Communications



**See my complete
Business and IT Portfolio**

Combining Text and Visuals



The Greyhound Driver Phone

For questions or help call: (xxx)-xxx-xxxx

The Driver Phone is an iPhone that combines the functionality of a phone, a camera/scanner, and an email device. It is preloaded with the applications that drivers will need, including the Greyhound Driver App. **Note: Drivers must always charge the Driver Phone overnight.**

1. Getting Started

- Press and hold the button on top of the Driver Phone.
- On the screen, swipe 2 side to unlock to the right.
- Enter XXX for the initial passcode.
- Tap the Settings icon.
- Scroll down, then tap 10 and Passcode.
- Enter new passcode.

2. Charge and Carry the Driver Phone

- The Driver Phone must always be charged overnight.
- Attach the charging cable to the port on the bottom of the Driver Phone and plug the cable into a power source.
- When not in use during the day, the Driver Phone should always be placed in the stationary holder on the bus.
- Whenever the Driver Phone battery needs to be recharged, the screen icon will turn red.

3. Use the Phone and Voicemail

- The Phone app can make and receive phone calls, but only to and from numbers preloaded in the contacts list. To place a call, just tap a contact.
- To set up voicemail, tap the Phone icon and choose Set Up Now.
 - The voicemail password is 9999.
 - To access voice messages, tap the Voicemail icon in the bottom right corner of the Phone screen.

4. Use Email

- The number bubble on the Mail icon tells how many messages are unread in your inbox.
- Tap the icon to open the app and read your mail.
- To write mail, click on New Message icon at the bottom right of the Mail screen.

5. Use Camera and Photo Apps

- Tap the Camera icon.
- Point the Driver Phone at the object to be photographed.
- Click on the round button at the bottom of the screen.
- To see photos you have already taken, tap the Photo icon.
- Scroll through the photos and tap the one you want to expand.
- To email the photo, tap Share.

- To turn off the Driver Phone:
Press and hold the button

Greyhound Lines

Baylor Scott White

PepsiCo

Analysis and Explanation



Data Architecture and Reporting ¶

Assessment Phase¶

1.->What are we doing today?¶

To date, there has been no planned data architecture, so the current activities in this area are organized around information gathering. For the assessment phase, Data Architecture has focused on identifying and assessing those functions and processes that:¶

- > Directly impact revenue generation and/or cost savings AND ¶
- > Affect all business units or cross multiple business units ¶

These activities fall into many different categories, and most of them depend on data from different (and often disconnected) systems and data sources. ¶

As for reporting, at the present time a substantial amount of reporting is being delivered throughout the organization. Most scheduled reporting is operational in nature, with "analytical" reporting typically performed via Excel on an ad hoc basis, usually by only a handful of individuals who address the needs across the company. ¶

¶

2.->How effective are we?¶

a.->In meeting the key business needs¶

Because the current mix of systems does not have a planned data architecture, none of our key data-related business needs are being met consistently or reliably. Specific categories of key business needs that are not being met are listed below, along with an example of the business impact for each.¶

- > Data sharing across business units¶
 - > Revenue Management cannot directly access the IATA numbers that are available to Marketing. When information tracked by IATA numbers is needed, the information must be requested from Marketing, manually transferred to Revenue Management, and then put into other processes in order to be used in conjunction with additional types of information. Thus, it is extremely difficult and time-consuming for Revenue Management to analyze, for example, the mix of revenue sources for properties by combining rate codes information, company



history information, and IATA information. Analysis of this type would enable the properties to proactively identify which revenue sources are performing well and which are not, in order to find and resolve the causes of low performance.¶

- > Data consistency across multiple access points¶
 - > Sales cannot obtain the same types of data for all properties and all clients in order to track the performance of client companies against their agreements. For example, IBM agrees to purchase 1,000 nights at a specific rate over one year, currently there is no way to track how many of those nights actually are utilized, and where they are utilized. As a result, the sales person cannot proactively manage the account; they cannot follow up with IBM to let them know when, for example, they have a lot of nights left toward the end of the year. ¶
- > Capability of viewing data horizontally¹ ¶
 - > Revenue Management cannot efficiently get comparative views of performance across properties and property groups. Because it may take quite a while to get data together from all the properties and then analyze the data comparatively, the opportunity to be proactive is often lost. Faster and more complete access to horizontal data, along with analytical capabilities, would help Revenue Management in coaching and motivating property managers proactively. For example, if "out of order" ~~rooms~~ could be easily compared to sold-out nights across multiple properties, and those comparative figures could be provided to the RMs quickly, the RMs could work with individual properties to resolve problems and prevent continued loss of revenue. ¶
- > Timely access to data¶
 - > Marketing cannot identify problems affecting GDS bookings because they do not receive booking information in a timely manner. When problems arise—for example, an incorrect rate has been loaded into a GDS—the only way the problem can be seen is by a

¹A "horizontal view" of data looks at the same type of data (such as customer name) across different systems (such as LISA and Spirit) and/or different business units (such as individual properties).¶

User Guides



Welcome to the PELDM

A User Guide

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3. Role

Roles describe the relationship between associated entities. For example, the roles of one Party toward another would include Employs, Sells To, Buys From, etc. The possible roles for various associations are defined in domain entities.

4. Class

A Class is a set or collection containing members that have certain characteristics or traits in common. Typically, class entities in the PELDM are domain entities that contain the available classification values for other entities. For example, an Item may have more than one identifier, and different identifiers may belong to different classes. So the entity Item Identification Class contains values (such as SKU, or Item Number) that can categorize an Item Identification.

Class entities may also be used in the PELDM to contain external Item classifiers (such as Global Product Classification Codes) and internal Item classifiers (such as Procurement Class).

5. Type, Supertype, and Subtype

A Supertype is a generalized entity containing attributes that apply to all of its subtypes. A Subtype is an entity whose attributes describe a specific type of a more generalized Supertype. For example, the Supertype entity Party has three Subtype entities: Employment Position, Organization, and Individual. The possible Subtypes for a Supertype are always defined in a domain entity named for the Supertype and ending in the word Type. So the Subtypes for Party would be found in the entity Party Type.

The Subtypes share certain attributes inherited from the Supertype, but each Subtype entity also has attributes that are unique among all the other Subtypes of a particular Supertype. Subtypes can themselves be subtyped, but the PELDM uses no more than two levels of subtyping below a Supertype.

Typically, identifiers are passed from Supertype to Subtype, and are appropriately role-named at each type level. For example—at the Order level, the Transaction Identifier number is utilized as the Order Identifier, and at the Finished Good level, the Item Identifier is utilized as the Finished Good Identifier.

B. Model Structures

Internal structures make the model easier to understand and navigate. From the modeling perspective, the PELDM contains many levels of information, organized into "supertypes" and "subtypes." But from the user perspective, there are just three levels to consider: Submodels, Constructs, and Construct Groupings.

To utilize the PELDM correctly, constructs should always be understood in the context of a submodel, and submodels should always be understood in the context of the complete model.

Business Blogging



**See my complete
Content Development Portfolio**

27
JAN

A Nice Place to Work ...



Last week Katherine Ratkiewicz, a Senior Research Analyst at the Human Capital Institute, published a [thought-provoking post](#) on one of the HCI blogs. Ratkiewicz recaps recent events in the U.S. that have prompted a national discussion about civility, and suggests the discussion should extend to workplaces as well as political institutions.

Office politics can be just as intense as any election campaign, and there's no doubt that once toxic talk gets started in an

05
OCT

The (In)Famous Candidate Experience



HR provocateur Gerry Crispin asked some good questions recently in [The Candidate Experience: Is it just Smoke and Mirrors?](#) The point of his post: seems like people (on both sides of the process) would take the quality of the candidate experience more seriously if it were really important. There followed an interesting exchange of opinions from commenters!

Summing up for the *majority* was recruiter Jerry Albright who puts it this way: "Know what experience a ... [Read the rest](#)"



For more than a year, I served as the Careers columnist for the blog published by Corporate Eye, an international business consultancy. I wrote an average of two substantive posts per week.

[See more.](#)

TIBCO Spotfire's Trends and Outliers Blog



☰ Predictive Analytics and Sales Forecasting: The Latest Power Couple

"To maintain a competitive position in the market, companies are turning to sales analytics solutions that provide an enterprise-wide data flow into the forecasting process," concludes a new research report from the Aberdeen Group. The report finds that well-executed sales analytics can assist the business by "creating more refined snapshot... [Read More](#) →

25 August 2010 by Spotfire Blogging Team in Business Intelligence, Predictive Analytics / No Comments



☰ What Ever Happened to Artificial Intelligence?

According to predictions from the mid-twentieth century . . . we should all have household robots by now, and they should be able to perform very sophisticated tasks with little guidance (Roomba doesn't count). In fact, if we look at influential science fiction flicks of the 1980s, like Blade Runner... [Read More](#) →

13 August 2010 by Spotfire Blogging Team in Unconventional Uses / No Comments



☰ A Sunday's Worth of Numbers: Data Analytics on the Airwaves

Three intriguing data analytics-related stories turned up recently on two radio shows, on one Sunday. Honestly—what are the odds? First, NPR's The Future According To 'Minority Report' May Be Now noted some emerging uses of predictive analytics in everyday life. The story includes an update on Blue CRUSH, a program... [Read More](#) →

11 August 2010 by Spotfire Blogging Team in Business Analytics / No Comments



Over a period of ten months, I wrote twenty long posts for *Trends and Outliers*, a blog focusing on business intelligence. I also revised or rewrote several guest posts.

[See more.](#)

TB The Power of Three: Using PowerPoint with Word and Excel

March 6, 2009 by Cynthia Giles · Leave a Comment



PowerPoint is pretty robust on its own — but it also plays well with others! And the ability to integrate PPT with other programs can provide a lot of added value. Here are some simple ways to turbo-charge productivity and jazz up presentations by “mixing and matching” three MS Office workhorses — Word, Excel and PowerPoint. [learn more](#) [Read More](#) →

Three Surprising Ways to Use PowerPoint

February 24, 2009 by Cynthia Giles · 2 Comments

TB 4 Tips for Great Presentation

March 3, 2009 by Cynthia Giles · 4 Comment



When it comes to PowerPoint, some basic tips can make a big difference. [Learn more](#)



Back in the cradle days of personal computing, the only program most people had was Lotus 1-2-3. So they used it for everything—from writing letters to drawing pictures. (Yes, you can draw things using just cell borders!)

Now there are specialized apps for just about every task, but most of us have a favorite “Swiss Army Knife” tool. And once you start expanding the use of PowerPoint beyond making presentations, there are a surprising number of handy ways to use it every day.

Here are three ideas for using PowerPoint

beyond your everyday presentation:

TB How to Animate a PowerPoint

February 26, 2009 by Cynthia Giles · 1 Comment



We all want our presentations to look impressive. Here are some tips for making your PowerPoint presentations more dynamic.



Send screenshots to PowerPoint for on-the-fly scrapbooks and galleries. Snagit (another great all-purpose tool) combines neatly with PowerPoint. Grab anything from the screen as you work or surf and send it straight to a PowerPoint presentation from Snagit, with one click. Very useful for keeping a record of versions as you’re working on an illustration, for example—you can just flip through the PPT without opening past versions.

I also use it to scrapbook project emails, create a quick gallery when I want to collect examples without downloading every item I see, etc. It even

makes a great daily diary!

Over a period of six months, I wrote more than twenty long posts for *Tutorial Blog*, a website delivering insights and information on marketing and design topics. Most included original instructional graphics.

Non-fiction Trade Books

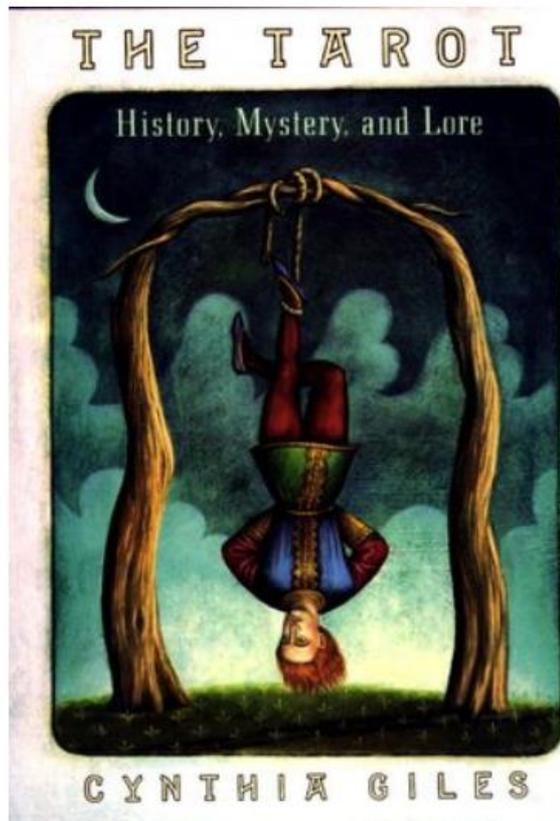


[Visit my Amazon Author Page](#)

Books about Tarot



* The Tarot: History, Mystery, and Lore



Published in hard cover by Paragon House in 1992, *History, Mystery* garnered positive mainstream reviews--and enthusiastic response from Tarot experts.

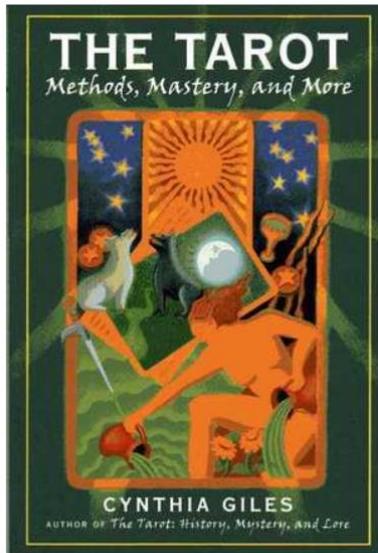
"One of the ten Tarot books I wouldn't do without . . ." says Mary K. Greer, noted teacher, and author of the enormously popular *Tarot for Your Self*

"A work that genuinely illuminates the Tarot," according to Stuart Kaplan, noted historian and collector, and author of *The Encyclopedia of the Tarot*

Simon & Schuster introduced a soft-cover edition of *History, Mystery*, and it continues to be regarded as an indispensable text for newcomers and serious Tarot students alike.

Books about Tarot

* The Tarot: Methods, Mastery, and More



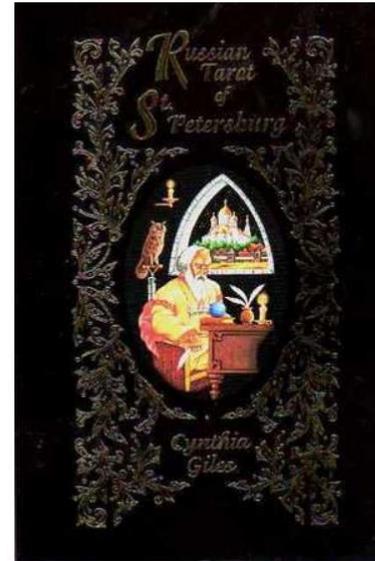
A selection of the **One Spirit Book Club**, *Methods, Mastery* broke new ground by considering Tarot in the broad context of personal and planetary explorations.

"I could probably read this book a few more times and still come up with pearls of knowledge I missed previously," comments online reviewer Lisa Parsons. "Great reading if you are looking for fresh ideas and not just traditional lore about the Tarot."

Christine Jette, author of *Tarot Shadow Work*, explains: "In *Methods, Mastery and More*, Giles has a wonderful chapter called 'Wellness: Rejoining Body and Mind.' Her work was most important to me in looking at the tarot for use in healing."

And--says one Amazon reader... "As a counselor, I especially appreciated the way Ms. Giles associated Jungian psychology with Tarot."

* The Russian Tarot of St. Petersburg



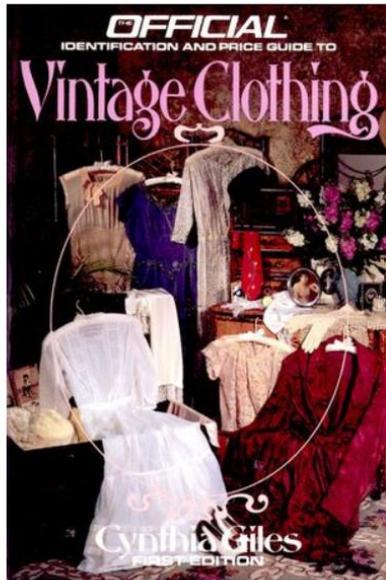
When Stuart Kaplan (the world's foremost patron of Tarot art) commissioned an extraordinary new deck from a famed Russian miniaturist, he asked Cynthia Giles to create a book that would do it justice. The result?

"An indispensable guide to the background, interpretation, and use of Yury Shakov's beautiful deck," according to one online review. "Cynthia Giles connects the richness and spirituality of Russian history, art, and culture with the symbology of the Tarot, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of the intricate images found in the Russian Tarot of St. Petersburg."

Other Titles



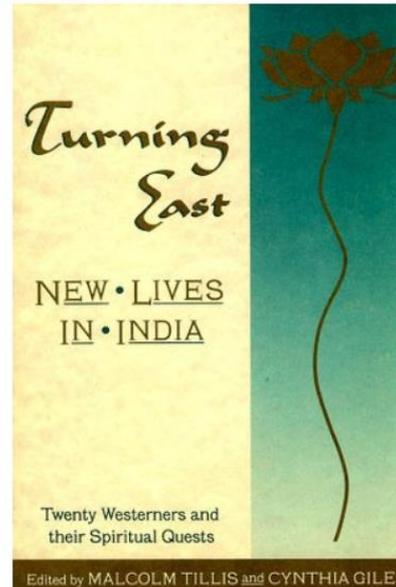
* A Collector's Guide to Vintage Fashion



A fascinating, practical, and comprehensive exploration for anyone drawn to the timeless art of the couturier. This unique one-volume handbook sold out within a few months of publication—and is now itself a "collector's item."



* Turning East: New Lives in India



Extraordinary interviews with more than two dozen men and women who overturned conventional life and overcame enormous obstacles to seek spiritual transformation . . .

In these pages, you will meet legendary pioneers of the East-West dialogue (such as Theosophist Russell Balfour-Clarke and Benedictine monk Father Bede Griffiths), along with unforgettable explorers like Tenzin Palmo, who describes her daily life in the solitude of a remote mountain cave.

My Social Media



Visit my Professional Website

The Writer's Office Blog



The screenshot shows the homepage of 'The Writer's Office' blog. At the top, the title 'The Writer's Office' is written in a cursive font. Below it is a navigation menu with links for 'Now', 'Working', 'Space', 'Knowing', 'How', and 'More...'. A 'Subscribe in a reader' button is visible. The main content area is titled 'Welcome to the Writer's Office...' and includes sections for 'WORKING/SPACE', 'KNOWING/HOW', and 'MORE...'. There are also social media links for 'The Writer's Office on Pinterest' and 'The Writer's Office on Facebook'. The bottom of the page features a 'THE OFFICE REFERENCE SHELF' section.

Why Writers Should Walk

I'm very lucky to live within walking distance (i.e., about two to three miles round trip) of a Starbucks, a natural foods grocery store, a Staples, a Super Target, a Half Price Books store, a post office and a Home Depot.

That means I can get to almost everything a writer needs, on foot. And most of the time, I choose to be primarily pedestrian.

Not everyone has the luxury (or the desire!) to live a mostly-walking life, but if you have even a little opportunity--it's worth taking advantage of. Besides the fact that walking is healthy for everyone, there are four good reasons why writers, especially, should walk as often as possible:

- 1. Walking a lot makes you alert to your surroundings.** If you spend much time crossing streets or parking lots, you learn to be aware of sounds and movements that might announce an oncoming car or unfriendly dog. If you walk through grassy fields, you soon realize that the ground is not necessarily as flat as it looks! I think this is what soldiers call "situational awareness," and it turns out to have high value for writers too . . .
- 2. Walking give you time to think.** Your mind begins to settle down after a few minutes on foot, and ideas can form with a little less interference. My suggestion: Take a cell phone for emergency use, but walk away from communication connections for a while.
- 3. Walking gives you time *not* to think.** If you need to recharge rather than reflect, listen to music, or an audio book. One possibility: Natalie Goldberg's *Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life*, available from Audible.com.
- 4. Walking makes you strong.** A friend of mine once heard the novelist Caroline Gordon complain that writing ruins your body. And it can, if you're not careful. The physical part of being a writer requires flexibility, strength and stamina--all benefits of walking. Good ideas: Stretch after walking, and keep your upper body involved while you walk. (Carry some groceries home, take a book in your backpack, or just poke things with a walking stick!)

Pinterest



Tarot



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Edit

Gallery



15



Edit

The Writer's Office

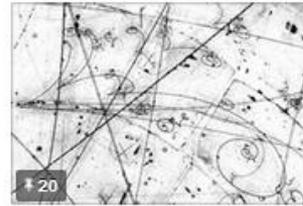


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Edit

Explorations



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Essentials



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The Artist's Studio



12



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Tarot Boutique



11



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Dimensions



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Indoor Ideas

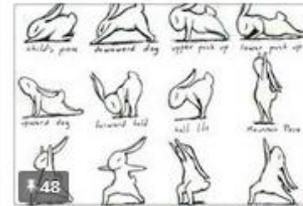


6



Edit

Notes to Self



48



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