

Paper One: *Paradigm Shifts*

In our books *Being Wrong* and *The Invisible Gorilla*, and in the various case studies presented in class, we have seen myriad real-world examples of entrenched paradigms that were wrong. For example in spite of contradictory evidence:

- mathematicians and scientists clung to the idea of the geocentric model of the universe;
- police departments continue to trust eye-witness testimony and photo lineups;
- prosecutors in Los Angeles pursued child-abuse allegations in the McMartin preschool scandal; and
- legions of people, from homeowners to hedge fund managers alike, believed the housing market could never fail and that complicated financial products (CDOs, CDSs) were sound investments.

These paradigms, or models of reality, were often slowly constructed and then vigorously reinforced through many of the error theories and concepts we have been investigating in class.

Your task is to present and analyze a false paradigm using these error theories and concepts to explain how people got it so wrong.

1. **Topic:** You may choose your example of a paradigm from real-life, literature, film, television or video games. Choose one that is obviously, *factually* wrong. (This is different from being morally wrong, a much more subjective and complicated subject!) Be sure to pick a paradigm which is *rich* with details to analyze.
2. **Analysis:** Present the example to the reader (do not assume she knows its details) and then analyze it carefully to show how it illustrates **at least four** of the Error Theories discussed by the authors and in class. Be sure to explain each theory carefully and then illustrate how the example you chose fits the theory. Further explain how the theory elucidates *what went wrong*.
3. **Lessons:** What lessons do you believe are important to be learned from this example? How could the error not have been made? Do you see any analogies to other examples in the real-world from the example you chose?

Your paper should be a **minimum of 6 pages long** and of the **highest quality honors-level college writing**. Be sure to **cite your sources** throughout the paper using either the MLA or APA guidelines. (A great website for help with this is <http://owl.english.purdue.edu> .)

Due Date: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1 at 9:30AM – No late papers!

Error Theories & Concepts

Sensory Illusions & Misperceptions

The Naïve View of Perception

Inattentional Blindness

The Illusion of Memory

false memories

recollection errors

Faulty memory theories

Confabulation

The 'Cuz It's True constraint

The Bias Blind Spot

The Paradox of Induction

Theoretic Instinct Theory

The Ignorance/Idiocy/Evil Assumption

Groupthink

The Disagreement Deficit

“social proof” as evidence

Change Blindness

Change Blindness Blindness

The Illusion of Knowledge

Naïve Realism

Theory of Mind

The Bias Blind Spot

Confirmation Bias