

# How to Read a Book, Adler

## Part 2: The Third Level of Reading: Analytical Reading

### THE FIRST STAGE OF ANALYTICAL READING

## VI. Pigeonholing a Book

Rule 1: Classify the book:

- "You must know what kind of book you are reading, and you should know this as \_\_\_\_\_ in the process as possible, preferably before you begin to read."
- Inspectional reading helps with this (title, front matter, passages)

Main distinction in books: Practical vs Theoretical

- \_\_\_\_\_ books – teach you *that* something is the case (traditionally history, science, philosophy)
- \_\_\_\_\_ books – teach you *how to do* something you want to do or think you should do (Expositions of arts to be learned, manuals of practice in any field (engineering, medicine, cooking), treatises classified as moral ~economic, ethical, or political problems, orations (political speech or exhortation which tries to tell you what you should do or how to feel))

## VII. Chapter 7- X-Raying a Book

RULE 2. Re-state the point of the book in your own words ~discover its main \_\_\_\_\_ or main \_\_\_\_\_.

- "State the unity of the whole book in a single sentence, or at most a few sentences ~ a short paragraph." P76
- "Every book has a skeleton hidden between its covers. Your job as an analytical reader is to find it."
- While there is no right way to state the unity/point/ of the book, it should be stated briefly, accurately, and comprehensively. P 83

RULE 3. Outline the book

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- "Set forth the major \_\_\_\_\_ of the book, and show how these are \_\_\_\_\_ into a whole, by being ordered to one another and to the unity of the whole." ~ house analogy, p77
- The art of outlining a book: "A piece of writing should have unity, clarity, and coherence... we must find it."
- You can't really follow Rule 2 (state the unity of the book) w/o doing Rule 3 (state the parts that make the unity): "You might be right in your guess about a book's main theme or point, but you still need to go through the exercise of showing how and why you stated it as you did." P90

## RULE 4. Determine the [author's goal](#):

- "Find out what the author's \_\_\_\_\_ were." [What question is he trying to answer?]
- Example theoretical questions:
  - Does something exist? What kind of thing is it? What caused it to exist, or under what conditions can it exist, or why does it exist? What purpose does it serve? What are the consequences to its existence? What are its characteristic properties, its typical traits? What are its relations to other things of a similar sort, or of a different sort? How does it behave? p93/4
- Example practical questions:
  - What ends should be sought? What means should be chosen to a given end? What things must one do to gain a certain objective and in what order? p94