

STUDIES IN LITERARY TONE

To students in USFSM writing courses taught by Mr. Roberts:

Read the following two passages and compare the way each author uses vocabulary, pacing, sentence structure, and factual (or seemingly factual) content to convey his message. Characterize the "tone" of each passage in terms of its effect on you as a reader and the author's apparent intended effect, as inferred from the writing style.

Excerpt from Wikipedia article "Bears" (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bear>)

Bears are mammals of the family Ursidae. Bears are classified as caniforms, or doglike carnivorans, with the pinnipeds being their closest living relatives. Although only eight species of bears are extant, they are widespread, appearing in a wide variety of habitats throughout the Northern Hemisphere and partially in the Southern Hemisphere. Bears are found on the continents of North America, South America, Europe, and Asia.

Common characteristics of modern bears include large bodies with stocky legs, long snouts, shaggy hair, plantigrade paws with five nonretractile claws, and short tails. While the polar bear is mostly carnivorous and the giant panda feeds almost entirely on bamboo, the remaining six species are omnivorous, with varied diets.

With the exceptions of courting individuals and mothers with their young, bears are typically solitary animals. They are generally diurnal, but may be active during the night (nocturnal) or twilight (crepuscular), particularly around humans. Bears are aided by an excellent sense of smell, and despite their heavy build and awkward gait, they can run quickly and are adept climbers and swimmers. In autumn, some bear species forage large amounts of fermented fruits, which affects their behaviour.[1] Bears use shelters, such as caves and burrows, as their dens; most species occupy their dens during the winter for a long period (up to 100 days) of sleep similar to hibernation.[2]

Bears have been hunted since prehistoric times for their meat and fur. With their tremendous physical presence and charisma, they play a prominent role in the arts, mythology, and other cultural aspects of various human societies. In modern times, the bears' existence has been pressured through the encroachment on their habitats and the illegal trade of bears and bear parts, including the Asian bile bear market. The IUCN lists six bear species as vulnerable or endangered, and even least concern species, such as the brown bear, are at risk of extirpation in certain countries. The poaching and international trade of these most threatened populations are prohibited, but still ongoing.

From Scott Adams Blog

Bears: Worst Mammal Ever

July 30, 2013 (<http://dilbert.com/blog/entry/?EntryID=943>)

I hate bears. They're fat, oversleeping, furry assholes. And can they leave a frickin' picnic basket alone for one minute?

I don't think so. Bears have no emotional intelligence. None.

Try petting a bear. That's a no go. I mean, you can try, but that bear will claw your hands off like they were two blueberries in September. And they will not apologize for that. They'll just keep pawing through your trash like nothing even happened. Bears don't give a shit.

Speaking of shit, the forest is full of it. That bear you see is 10% bear skin and ninety percent intestines. When a bear eats your potato salad from the campsite, the salad barely has time to turn brown before it's getting pinched off on some innocent bush in the forest. And what did the bush do to deserve that? Nothing. You don't see humans do that sort of thing. No human ever says, "I think I'll drop a deuce on the cat." We humans respect nature. Bears don't. They pollute and they don't give a hoot.

And what does a bear do when it has an itchy ass? Does it buy some ointment and suffer silently like a proper mammal, or does it find some majestic redwood tree that is minding its own business and use it as an ass-scratcher? These questions answer themselves, folks.

Sometimes you hear of a trained bear in a Russian circus, riding a tiny bicycle, wearing an undersized hat, and you think how cute. But you only hear of those trained bears in Russia. Oh, there's a reason. It's because Russian men are not metrosexuals. That bear is actually a guy named Boris who hasn't trimmed his eyebrows or shaved his back in forty years. The circus doesn't even pay him. They just hand him a little hat, a little bicycle, and a pitcher of vodka. The rest just happens. So don't tell me how trainable bears are. While Boris is riding that tiny bike, bears are trying to break into your camper to eat your kids. Bears suck.

I'm afraid of anything that sleeps half the year without dying. Bears call it "hibernating" because it sounds better than lazy. That's nothing but good marketing. Those furry bastards even managed to become California's mascot, or state animal, or whatever-the-fuck. What kind of message does that send to our kids? If the state mammal can't get its furry ass out of its den for six months, how are we supposed to get the kids to school by 8 AM? I want my state animal to be a wise owl, or perhaps a porpoise that saves a surfer from a shark. I think I speak for all Californians when I say we don't want to be associated with bears. It makes the whole state look bad.

To make matters worse, after "hibernating," those lazy bastards spend the next six months, or whatever, eating shit that isn't even theirs. That's right: Bears are communists. They do not respect individual property rights. You think you own that ham sandwich on the picnic table? A bear doesn't think so.