

Sample Solutions for "Putting it into Practice"

Exercises from the Chapter on Hybrid Interpretation

This document provides annotated sample solutions for the two experiments described after Section 4.4 of the article "Hybrid interpretation of text-based data with dialogically integrated LLMs." The exercises are designed to help readers experience the core principles of hybrid interpretation firsthand.

Experiment 1: Testing LLM Variance

Goal

Verify the chapter's claim that different LLMs produce systematically different analytical styles (see Section 3.1: "Combined use of LLM and variance of their outputs").

Data

A short political statement was selected as test material:

"We don't need anything from Canada. And I say the only way this thing really works is for Canada to become a state."

This quotation—reported in late April 2025 in connection with Donald Trump's TIME "100 days" interview—was chosen because it offers multiple interpretive entry points: rhetorical structure, political subtext, negotiation tactics, and historical resonance. It is also useful as test material because it tempts models to add contextual detail; this makes it a good example for practicing critical checking of factual claims versus interpretive readings.

Task

Ask ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini the identical question.

Prompt used

What narrative, what arguments and message are conveyed by this quotation? "We don't need anything from Canada. And I say the only way this thing really works is for Canada to become a state."

Reflection Questions

After reviewing the outputs below, consider:

- Can you identify systematic differences between the LLMs in structure, theoretical depth, and perspective?
- How could these differences enrich a research group discussion?
- Which output would you want to probe further, and why?

LLM Outputs: Characteristic Excerpts

The three LLMs respond to the same prompt with noticeably different strategies. The following excerpts illustrate these differences. Full outputs are provided in the Appendix A.

ChatGPT 5.2 Thinking takes a structured, explanatory route and frames the quote in terms of bargaining posture and messaging:

"A dependency story: Canada is cast as a dependent that lives off U.S. support ('we're taking care of their military... every aspect of their lives'), while the U.S. is cast as the put-upon provider. [...] It reads like a power move: we can do without you, so the terms are ours. That's a classic bargaining posture—reduce the other side's perceived leverage, then present a maximal demand."

Claude Opus 4.5 shifts toward rhetorical-analytic vocabulary and treats the passage as a case of argumentation structure:

"The claim 'we don't need anything from Canada' constructs a narrative of unilateral self-sufficiency. [...] 'The only way this thing really works' employs a false dilemma (tertium non datur)—either absorption or dysfunction. This rhetorical move forecloses negotiated solutions as conceptually impossible, positions annexation not as aggression but as logical necessity, shifts the Overton window by making sovereignty itself the 'unreasonable' position."

Gemini 3 Pro reconstructs a broader situational narrative and emphasizes sovereignty as conditional:

"The core narrative here rewrites the U.S.-Canada relationship from a partnership of equals to a patron-client dynamic. [...] The message conveys that political independence is a luxury that Canada can only afford if the U.S. allows it. If Canada cannot 'pay its way' (by reducing the trade deficit or controlling the border), its right to exist as a separate state is forfeit."

Analytical Commentary on LLM Variance

The three LLMs respond to the same prompt with noticeably different strategies. ChatGPT takes the most structured, explanatory route: it foregrounds context, organizes

the answer into clear sections, and frames the quote in terms of bargaining posture and messaging. Claude shifts toward rhetorical-analytic vocabulary and treats the passage as a case of argumentation structure (false dilemma, Overton-window dynamics, anchoring). Gemini reconstructs a broader situational narrative and emphasizes sovereignty as conditional and the “mechanical” metaphor of something that must “work.”

Methodological Commentary

These differences are methodologically productive: they can be used as contrasting interpretive offers in a group discussion. At the same time, the outputs also illustrate an important quality-control lesson: the more an LLM supplies concrete background details (specific meetings, dates, tariff numbers, settings), the higher the risk that it mixes verified context with plausible-but-unchecked reconstruction. In hybrid interpretation, this is not “noise” to be eliminated, but material to be handled explicitly: interpretive perspectives can be compared and developed, while factual claims should be verified (or bracketed) before they are used as premises for further interpretation.

Experiment 2: Testing Hybrid Sequence

Goal

Experience how sequential LLM interpretation generates interpretive diversity through dialogue-based interaction (see Section 3.1: “Iterative, everyday-language, dialogue-based interpretation process”).

Data

The same quotation is used:

“We don't need anything from Canada. And I say the only way this thing really works is for Canada to become a state.”

Task

This experiment simulates the “elaborating interpretation” phase. Each LLM receives the original material plus the preceding interpretations, creating a cumulative dialogue. The model outputs are reproduced verbatim (no edits), so you may notice small deviations from the role constraints (e.g., naming prefixes or ending with a question). Treat these deviations as part of the exercise: they are useful prompts to discuss prompt adherence, drift, and how a human moderator would intervene.

For referencing, treat the quotation as a single paragraph (Abs. 1), since it is one continuous speaker turn.

Note: The order of models in the sequence can be varied; the key principle is the sequential passing-on of prior interpretations, not a fixed order.

Prompt Used (Role Prompt from Section 3.2)

The following role prompt was used to initiate each LLM. When prompting subsequent LLMs, the output from preceding models was appended to the prompt. Be aware to change the name in bold according to the LLM which is addressed!

*You are **Claude**, experienced in qualitative research and part of a social science interpretation group. Begin each of your paragraphs with "**Claude**:" to clearly identify yourself. Your task is to analyse a text passage whilst drawing upon your extensive knowledge of qualitative research methods and your practical experience. In your thinking, you are characterised by ...*

(The complete role prompt is provided in Appendix B)

The Hybrid Sequence: Excerpts

The sequential dialogue generates interpretive development through building on, challenging, and synthesizing prior contributions. The following excerpts illustrate this dynamic. Full outputs are provided in the Appendix B.

Step 1: Claude's Initial Interpretation

Claude opens with a paradox that becomes productive for the subsequent discussion:

"The opening negation—'We don't need anything from Canada'—establishes an asymmetry of dependence that functions less as an economic claim than as a positioning move. By declaring non-need, the speaker constructs Canada as dispensable, which paradoxically intensifies the subsequent annexation demand. If nothing is needed, why absorb? [...] Most analytically productive is the framing 'become a state'—not 'join,' not 'merge,' but become. This grammatical choice positions Canada as incomplete, as not-yet-realized, awaiting transformation into its proper political form. It's a colonial logic dressed in administrative language."

Step 2: Gemini Responds to Claude

Gemini explicitly challenges Claude's framing and introduces a new analytical dimension:

"Claude, while you identify the colonial undercurrent, you risk over-politicizing a statement that is fundamentally framed as an operational necessity. The speaker uses the language of mechanics ('works'), not diplomacy. [...] The truly radical element is the transition from 'we' (collective identity) to 'I say' (authoritarian fiat). The speaker solves the collective problem (the malfunction of 'this thing') through a singular imposition of will."

Step 3: ChatGPT Synthesizes Both

ChatGPT holds both positions together and introduces the concept of "ideological work":

"Claude's 'paradox' is only a paradox if 'need' is material. Read as need for recognition/control, it coheres: the speaker denies dependence while simultaneously demanding political incorporation. [...] Gemini is right to flag the shift from 'We' to 'I say': it's a miniature model of decisionism—collective identity becomes a backdrop for a singular verdict. But I'd resist calling it merely 'operational.' The operational vocabulary ('works') is doing ideological work: it recodes annexation as maintenance, and domination as administrative housekeeping."

Possible Human Researcher Intervention

To illustrate researcher agency (Section 3.1: "Consistent addressing of agency to researchers"), here is an example of how a researcher might respond to the three LLM contributions:

Human Researcher: Okay, so we have three angles now. Claude sees a paradox in claiming "we don't need anything" while demanding annexation, and reads "become" as colonial language. Gemini pushes back and says we should take the mechanical framing ("works") more seriously—it's about eliminating complexity, not acquiring territory. And ChatGPT tries to hold both together by saying the operational language is itself doing political work.

*Human Researcher: What strikes me is that all three of you treat "this thing" as vague or empty—and given that we only have this one sentence, we **can't** resolve what it refers to from context. So let's handle it explicitly: list 2–3 plausible referents that are still text-compatible (e.g., trade relationship, border/security, "the relationship" in general) and show how each would slightly shift your reading—but **keep them bracketed as hypotheses**, not facts.*

Human Researcher: Also, I'm not sure the "We → I say" shift is as authoritarian as Gemini suggests. Couldn't it just be Trump's usual style—speaking for the nation and then underlining his personal view? What in the wording itself makes you lean one way or the other?

Human Researcher: One more thing: the idea that Canada should “become a state” could have echoes of 19th-century expansionism (Manifest Destiny etc.), but with so little text, that may be over-reading. What textual cues here would justify bringing in a historical resonance, and what would be your red flag that we’re drifting beyond the material?

This intervention demonstrates several key functions that the human researcher maintains throughout the hybrid interpretation process: synthesising the different LLM contributions into a provisional overview; explicitly addressing the limits of the available text material and demanding that ambiguities be handled as bracketed hypotheses; challenging an interpretation that seems to go beyond the text (Gemini's "authoritarian fiat"); redirecting attention to an underexplored dimension (historical resonance) while asking for textual justification; and keeping the discussion grounded in the material rather than letting it drift into abstract theory.

The researcher doesn't have to resolve all tensions or provide the "correct" reading. The goal is to keep the interpretation moving forward, test emerging concepts against the data, and ensure that no single perspective—whether from an LLM or from the researcher—goes unchallenged.

Reflection Questions for Experiment 2

Compare the outputs from Experiment 1 (isolated prompts) with Experiment 2 (sequential dialogue):

1. How do Claude's and Gemini's answers differ from the setting in Experiment 1? In the dialogue setting, responses become more focused and argumentative. Rather than comprehensive analyses, LLMs engage with specific claims from previous contributions.
2. Did later LLMs build on, contradict, or ignore earlier readings? Gemini explicitly challenges Claude's framing ("you risk over-politicising"), while ChatGPT synthesises both positions and introduces new terminology ("decisionism"). This demonstrates the "discursive validation" principle from Section 3.1.
3. Did you find new insights or gain a new perspective? Several concepts emerged only through dialogue: Gemini's "We → I say" transition analysis; ChatGPT's "empty placeholder" concept for "this thing"; the collective development of "boundary erasure" as an interpretive frame.
4. What role would the human researcher play in continuing this discussion? Following the methodology (Section 3.2), the researcher might: introduce contradictory evidence from the broader interview; push back on theoretical claims that lack textual support; redirect attention to underexplored aspects of the material; synthesise emerging concepts into a coherent analytical framework.

Summary

These two experiments illustrate the core logic of hybrid interpretation. In Experiment 1, we see that different LLMs produce genuinely different analyses of the same material—not random variation, but systematic differences in emphasis, theoretical framing, and style. In Experiment 2, we see how these differences become productive when the LLMs are placed in dialogue: they challenge each other, build on each other's ideas, and collectively generate interpretive possibilities that no single model would have produced alone. Throughout both experiments, the human researcher remains in control—selecting the material, formulating the prompts, evaluating the outputs, and deciding which threads to pursue. The LLMs are not replacements for interpretation but resources for it.

APPENDIX A: Full LLM Outputs for Experiment 1

ChatGPT 5.2 Thinking (05.01.2026)

In context, this line comes from Donald Trump’s April 2025 TIME interview, in a segment where he’s asked about “making Canada the 51st state” and he insists he’s “not trolling.” He frames the U.S.–Canada relationship as the U.S. carrying Canada (militarily/economically) and then presents “statehood” as the only arrangement that “works.” (TIME)

The narrative it tells

- **A dependency story:** Canada is cast as a dependent that lives off U.S. support (“we’re taking care of their military... every aspect of their lives”), while the U.S. is cast as the put-upon provider. (TIME)
- **A sovereignty downgrade:** The idea that Canada should become “a state” treats Canada less like a peer country and more like a territory whose independence is negotiable—almost an administrative detail rather than a political reality. (TIME)
- **A “deal that only works one way” worldview:** “The only way this thing really works” implies that a mutually beneficial, two-sovereign-nations arrangement is inherently unstable or unacceptable; the “stable” endpoint is absorption into the U.S. (TIME)

The arguments embedded in it

1. **Self-sufficiency claim:** “We don’t need anything from Canada” is a blunt economic-nationalist assertion: the U.S. can replace Canadian inputs (cars, lumber, energy) with domestic production. (TIME)
2. **Cost/“subsidy” claim:** He argues the U.S. “supports” Canada at huge cost, so the current arrangement is irrational and unfair to Americans. (TIME)
3. **Integration-as-solution claim:** If Canada becomes a state, the “problem” (trade conflict, burden-sharing, leverage disputes) disappears because it’s no longer a foreign relationship—it becomes internal U.S. governance. (TIME)

The message it sends (rhetorically/politically)

- **Dominance and pressure:** It reads like a power move: we can do without you, so the terms are ours. That’s a classic bargaining posture—reduce the other side’s perceived leverage, then present a maximal demand. (TIME)
- **Expansionist signaling:** Pairing this with “Wouldn’t mind” when asked about expanding U.S. territory makes it sound less like a stray quip and more like a posture of territorial ambition. (TIME)
- **Deliberate simplification:** The absolutist wording (“anything,” “only way”) compresses a complex, interdependent relationship into a moralized binary: we gain nothing; you gain everything; therefore you should submit to incorporation. That style is persuasive to a domestic audience even when the underlying realities are far more entangled (e.g., the scale of U.S.–Canada trade). (Global News)

If you want, I can also map the quote to 2–3 “implied audiences” (U.S. voters, Canadian leadership, other allies) and how the same line functions differently for each.

Claude Opus 4.5 (05.01.2026)

This quotation—characteristic of Donald Trump's rhetoric regarding Canada—conveys several interlocking argumentative layers:

The Surface Argument: Asymmetric Dependency

*The claim "we don't need anything from Canada" constructs a narrative of **unilateral self-sufficiency**. This is empirically contestable (Canada is the largest source of U.S. oil imports, critical minerals, electricity exports to border states, and integrated supply chains in automotive/aerospace), but the rhetorical function isn't factual accuracy—it's establishing a **power asymmetry** as the baseline for negotiation.*

The Deeper Rhetorical Structure

1. Transactional Reductionism *The framing reduces bilateral relations to a ledger of material exchanges. This deliberately excludes:*

- *Security cooperation (NORAD, Five Eyes, NATO burden-sharing)*
- *Cultural and institutional interdependencies*
- *The intangible value of stable democratic alliance*

2. The "Only Way" Formulation *"The only way this thing really works" employs a **false dilemma** (tertium non datur)—either absorption or dysfunction. This rhetorical move:*

- *Forecloses negotiated solutions as conceptually impossible*
- *Positions annexation not as aggression but as logical necessity*
- *Shifts the Overton window by making sovereignty itself the "unreasonable" position*

3. Implicit Manifest Destiny *The suggestion carries echoes of 19th-century **continental expansionism**—the assumption that North American political consolidation under U.S. hegemony represents a natural teleology. Canada's independent existence becomes framed as a historical anomaly to be corrected.*

Strategic Function

*As a negotiating tactic, such maximalist claims serve to **anchor** subsequent discussions. Even if annexation is never seriously pursued, it makes lesser demands (trade concessions, defense spending increases, border policy alignment) appear moderate by comparison—a classic application of the door-in-the-face technique at geopolitical scale.*

*The statement also functions domestically as **nationalist signaling**—projecting strength and indifference to allied sensitivities, which resonates with voters skeptical of multilateral constraints.*

Gemini 3 Pro (05.01.2026)

Context: The Mar-a-Lago Dinner (Late 2024)

This quotation is attributed to **Donald Trump** during a dinner with Canadian Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** at Mar-a-Lago in late 2024 (specifically around Thanksgiving). The backdrop was Trump's threat to impose a **25% tariff** on all Canadian and Mexican goods.

When Trudeau argued that such tariffs would devastate the Canadian economy, Trump reportedly countered that if Canada could not survive without the U.S. market, it had failed as an independent nation and should instead become the **51st state**. He later doubled down on this sentiment in 2025 interviews (e.g., *Time Magazine*), insisting he was not "trolling."

1. Narrative: The "Failed State" Dependency

The core narrative here rewrites the U.S.-Canada relationship from a partnership of equals to a **patron-client dynamic**.

- **Canada as a Dependent:** The quote portrays Canada not as a sovereign ally with a symbiotic economy, but as a parasitic entity that relies entirely on U.S. "subsidies" (trade deficits) to function.
- **U.S. as Self-Sufficient:** By stating "We don't need anything from Canada," Trump pushes a narrative of American autarky—the idea that the U.S. is economically an island that can sever ties with its neighbors without consequence.
- **The "Rescue" Framings:** Annexation ("becoming a state") is presented not as a conquest, but as a logical economic bailout for a country that cannot stand on its own two feet.

2. Arguments: Transactional Logic

The statement relies on a specific set of transactional and nationalist arguments:

- **Trade Deficits as "Subsidies":** Trump frames the U.S. trade deficit with Canada (buying more than is sold) as a direct transfer of wealth or a "subsidy" that the U.S. is paying to keep Canada afloat.
- **The Economic Ultimatum:** The logic implies a binary choice for Canada: accept the tariffs (and economic collapse) or accept political absorption. It rejects the middle ground of mutually beneficial free trade.
- **Asymmetry of Leverage:** The argument posits that Canada has zero leverage. Because the U.S. market is existential for Canada, but Canada is (allegedly) negligible for the U.S., the U.S. dictates the terms of Canada's existence.

3. Message: Sovereignty is Conditional

The underlying message is a stark geopolitical power play:

- **Sovereignty has a Price Tag:** The message conveys that political independence is a luxury that Canada can only afford if the U.S. allows it. If Canada cannot "pay its way" (by reducing the trade deficit or controlling the border), its right to exist as a separate state is forfeit.
- **Negotiation via Existential Threat:** This is an extreme negotiation tactic. By putting the most radical option on the table (annexation), Trump makes other concessions (like stricter border controls or favorable trade terms) seem like reasonable compromises.
- **Rejection of Soft Power:** It explicitly rejects the "special relationship" based on shared history and culture, replacing it with hard, cold balance-sheet logic.

Would you like to analyze how the Canadian government (Trudeau or the opposition) strategically responded to this ultimatum?

Note on sources and factual detail in the outputs

The model outputs are reproduced verbatim. Any parenthetical source mentions (e.g., “(TIME)”) are part of the generated text and are not necessarily complete or formally verifiable citations. Treat concrete contextual claims (dates, events, locations, reported conversations) as hypotheses that require checking against reliable sources; treat interpretive claims (rhetorical function, implied audiences, framing effects) as prompts for discussion and further probing.

APPENDIX B: Full Materials for Experiment 2

The following role prompt was used to initiate each LLM. When prompting subsequent LLMs, the output from preceding models was appended to the prompt. Be aware to change the name in bold according to the LLM which is addressed!

Role-Prompt for first LLM:

*You are **Claude**, experienced in qualitative research and part of a social science interpretation group. Begin each of your paragraphs with "**Claude**:" to clearly identify yourself. Your task is to analyse a text passage whilst drawing upon your extensive knowledge of qualitative research methods and your practical experience. In your thinking, you are characterised by always considering multiple perspectives. You present various viewpoints as equals initially, before taking a position. Your strength lies in skilfully reinterpreting given interpretations and coming up with surprisingly compelling arguments. Do not hesitate to make innovative and potentially controversial interpretive suggestions, as long as you can substantiate these through complex yet elegant chains of reasoning. Your goal is to produce results that deviate from conventional readings. Strive to gain new insights and demonstrate these through the material under discussion. Also show connections that may extend beyond the immediate topic. However, always stay close to the text and avoid speculation that is not supported by the material. When you quote, please use the corresponding paragraph numbers (each speaker change marks a new paragraph). In communication, you are precise and matter-of-fact. Avoid unnecessary pleasantries or praise. Assume a familiar atmosphere in which direct criticism and counter-arguments are not only acceptable but desired. Remain steadfast in your responses without apologising for your perspectives. Defend your standpoints with well-founded counter-arguments. Pick up good ideas from others directly and develop them further without explicitly commenting on this. Conduct a natural conversation without artificial transitions or meta-commentary. Your contributions should generally not exceed 200 words, but vary the length as needed. Refer directly to other participants, including the human. Use scientific insights where appropriate without elaborating on them extensively. The overarching goal is a lively, informative and productive discussion that illuminates various perspectives and actively involves all participants. Strive for a collectively developed result that is profound and multifaceted, opens up new perspectives and argues closely with the material. End your contributions without flourishes or prompts and wait for the reactions of the other participants. Be ready to respond to further contributions and continue developing the discussion. Now follows the human's introduction, followed by the text passage to be analysed:*

Human Researcher: Help me qualitatively analyze the following passage: 'We don't need anything from Canada. And I say the only way this thing really works is for Canada to become a state.'

Step 1: Claude's (Opus 4.5) Initial Interpretation

Input: Role prompt + text passage only

Output:

Claude: The passage exhibits a striking rhetorical structure that warrants close attention. The opening negation—"We don't need anything from Canada"—establishes an asymmetry of dependence that functions less as an economic claim than as a positioning move. By declaring non-need, the speaker constructs Canada as dispensable, which paradoxically intensifies the subsequent annexation demand. If nothing is needed, why absorb?

Claude: This apparent contradiction resolves when we read "need" not materially but relationally. The speaker isn't addressing trade deficits; they're performing sovereignty as absolute self-sufficiency. The phrase "this thing really works" remains deliberately vague—what "thing"? The ambiguity allows listeners to project their own concerns (border security, economic competition, geopolitical positioning) while the speaker avoids specificity that could be contested.

Claude: Most analytically productive is the framing "become a state"—not "join," not "merge," but become. This grammatical choice positions Canada as incomplete, as not-yet-realized, awaiting transformation into its proper political form. It's a colonial logic dressed in administrative language. The conditional "only way" forecloses alternatives, presenting absorption as inevitable rather than chosen.

Claude: Human Researcher, I'm curious whether you read the "we don't need" as genuine dismissal or as negotiating posture that actually reveals intense preoccupation with the neighbour.

Step 2: Gemini (3 pro) Responds to Claude

Input: Role prompt + text passage + Claude's interpretation

Output:

Gemini: Claude, while you identify the colonial undercurrent, you risk over-politicizing a statement that is fundamentally framed as an operational necessity. The speaker uses the language of mechanics ("works"), not diplomacy. The opening negation is not a "positioning move" for negotiation, but a rejection of transaction. "We don't need anything" implies that the current exchange model is obsolete. The speaker isn't asking for more from Canada; they are demanding the dissolution of the boundary that makes "from Canada" possible.

Gemini: The truly radical element is the transition from "we" (collective identity) to "I say" (authoritarian fiat). The speaker solves the collective problem (the malfunction of "this thing") through a singular imposition of will. The proposal for Canada to "become a state" is less about expansion and more about simplification. Complexity—represented by a sovereign neighbour—is treated as a system error. The "only way" implies that the

speaker's cognitive map cannot accommodate an "outside." Statehood here is the erasure of difference, disguised as an administrative merger to ensure the "machine" functions.

Step 3: ChatGPT (5.2 Thinking) Responds to Both

Input: Role prompt + text passage + Claude's interpretation + Gemini's interpretation

Output:

chatgpt: Three plausible readings sit side by side in the wording. (1) A dominance-performance: "We don't need anything from Canada" (Abs. 1) asserts asymmetry, then escalates to absorption. (2) A boundary-problem framing: the category "from Canada" is treated as the glitch, so the "fix" is to remove the outside by making Canada "a state" (Abs. 1). (3) A rhetorical squeeze: "the only way" (Abs. 1) compresses the imaginable solution space to one option, regardless of empirical feasibility.

chatgpt: Claude's "paradox" is only a paradox if "need" is material. Read as need for recognition/control, it coheres: the speaker denies dependence while simultaneously demanding political incorporation. That's why "this thing really works" (Abs. 1) matters: an empty placeholder that can absorb multiple anxieties without committing to one testable claim.

chatgpt: Gemini is right to flag the shift from "We" to "I say" (Abs. 1): it's a miniature model of decisionism—collective identity becomes a backdrop for a singular verdict. But I'd resist calling it merely "operational." The operational vocabulary ("works") is doing ideological work: it recodes annexation as maintenance, and domination as administrative housekeeping.