

Rhetorical Analyses

In this chapter, you will learn how to—

- 9.1 invent the content of a rhetorical analysis.
- 9.2 organize and draft your rhetorical analysis.
- 9.3 create a specific style that is descriptive and easy to read.
- 9.4 develop a design with the use of visuals.

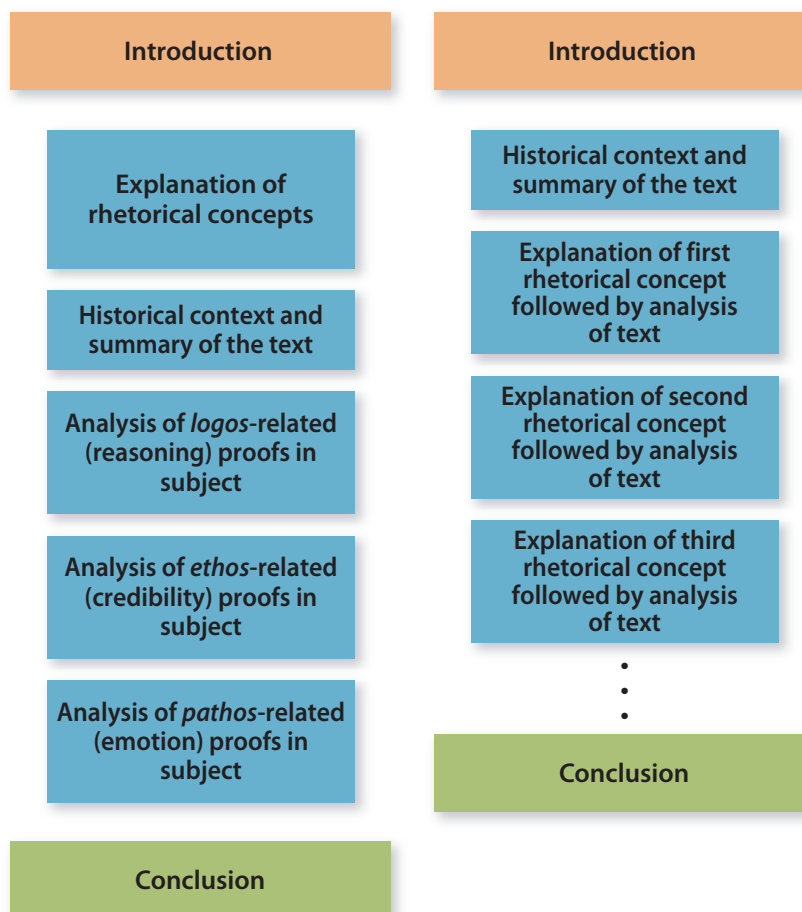
Rhetorical analysis is used to determine why some arguments are persuasive and why some are not. Advertisers, marketing analysts, and public relations agents use rhetorical analyses to understand how well their messages are influencing target audiences and the general public. Political scientists and consultants use rhetorical analyses to determine which ideas and strategies will be most persuasive to voters and consumers. Meanwhile, historians and rhetoricians use rhetorical analyses to study historic speeches and documents to discern why they were influential in their day and perhaps are still influential today.

Ultimately, the objective of a rhetorical analysis is to show why a specific argument was *effective* or *persuasive*. By studying arguments closely, you can learn how writers and speakers sway others and how you can be more persuasive yourself.

In your college courses, you may be asked to write rhetorical analyses that explore historical and present-day documents, advertisements, and speeches. These assignments are not always called “rhetorical analyses,” but any time you are asked to analyze a nonfiction text, you are probably going to write a rhetorical analysis. Also, depending on your career after college, your supervisors may ask you to closely analyze your organization’s documents, Web sites, marketing materials, and public messaging to determine their effectiveness. Your ability to do a rhetorical analysis will allow you to offer helpful insights and suggestions for improvement.

Rhetorical Analyses

Here are two possible organizations for a rhetorical analysis, but other arrangements of these sections will work, too. You should adjust these organizational patterns to fit your topic, angle, purpose, readers, and context.



Rhetorical analyses can be written a variety of ways. Nevertheless, they tend to have some common features:

- **An introduction** that identifies the subject of your analysis, states your purpose and main point (thesis statement), offers background information on the subject, and stresses its importance.
- **An explanation of the rhetorical concepts** that you will use to analyze the subject.
- **A description or summary of your subject** that sets it in a historical context.
- **An analysis of the subject** through the chosen rhetorical concepts.
- **A conclusion** that states or restates your main point (thesis statement) and looks to the future.

ONE STUDENT'S WORK

Rhetorical Analyses

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Rhetorical Analysis of Match.com

Clare Mengebier

The topic of the analysis and its importance are mentioned up front.

The thesis makes a claim that the remainder of the analysis will support or prove.

Examples and reasoning are used to support the analysis.

Topic sentences like this one make smaller claims that each paragraph will support.

Match.com is a dating website that helps thousands of single men and women find relationships with just a few clicks of the mouse. The concept of choosing people to date based off of a single online profile often makes people uneasy, yet 40 million people use these dating sites each year. So how do these websites persuade so many people that their service creates a relaxed environment for people to find promising relationships? While most companies such as eHarmony present a logical argument, claiming that there is a method used to match up couples based on scientific evidence, Match.com aims for the audience's heart. By creating a simple ad campaign that focuses on the unique personalities behind the profiles on the dating website as well as incorporating sensible advice from a familiar authority figure, Match.com creates a motto that persuades readers that even if they are not ready to put themselves out there, "It's okay to look."

Every advertisement in this campaign presents a simple picture for the audience. Each ad shows a certain person, a member of Match.com, engaging in various dialogues or activities in a blank black and white room. The setting appears to be an interview setting, possibly a profile on the website. The member's username is written in the corner and the slogan, "It's okay to look" is always present in the commercial or advertisement. Only one commercial differs from the rest because it replaces Dr. Phil as the character in the ad instead of a member. The main strategy of the campaign is the use of ethos and pathos to persuade customers to the website.

Although most of the people in this campaign show unfamiliar people, Dr. Phil is present in a few of the advertisements of the campaign, possibly as the informal "face" of Match.com. Dr. Phil has a high ethos because of his popular television show in which he gives advice to people about life and relationships. The creators of this commercial are assuming that the audience is familiar with Dr. Phil and assume that people rely on him to give the best advice to find love. By displaying his ethos, Dr. Phil is giving credibility to Match.com, unconsciously presenting the argument that if he is promoting the website as a reliable way to find love, then audiences will believe him.

Pathos seems to be the most important rhetorical strategy in a type of industry dominated by the main concepts of love and relationships. Match.com shows people that are vulnerable and are acting like themselves in order to kindle feelings of confidence to be themselves. Advertisers assume that people are nervous

or timid about entering this dating website, so confidence is considered as a vital aspect to persuade customers to go online. Match.com uses the phrase, "It's okay to look" to convince people that they can look at the possibilities without taking any risks and they do not necessarily have to dive into the process of searching for a long-term relationship just yet. Another tool that boosts the audience's confidence to become a member of Match.com is the process of showing people on the ads that are single members of the website, and they are all fun and attractive. This changes people's opinions about the type of single people one would usually expect to find on online dating websites. Match.com wants to convey the message that all types of people go onto the site looking for love and this concept is almost indistinguishable from the offline, dating world.

The perceived audience that the website is aiming at are single people of any age, gender, or culture. The large range of not only age and culture, but also personality types that Match.com is advertising to is evident in the sort of varying genders, races, ages, and personalities that the campaign includes. This tactic is used to reach out to all single members of society, one group at a time, and attract them to the type of personalities and faces that they would want to find on Match.com. However, advertisers must warrant that these types of people will actually be interested in finding members such as the ones shown in the advertisements, otherwise the entire function of the campaign is useless.

Match.com's main claim, "It's okay to look" uses a simple argument to persuade single people that taking the small risk of just browsing the website and trying something new could turn out to be a positive experience. This argument is backed up by the appearance of various fun, unique, and most importantly approachable characters included in the ad campaign. The underlying belief of the advertisers is that once the customers enter the site, they will find people they are interested in and proceed to join Match.com. The company recognizes that the biggest hurdle to attracting new members is simply getting people to browse their site in the first place. Once they are on the site and begin utilizing Match.com's matchmaking service, they are often hooked. The company's advertising campaign seeks to overcome fear potential customers have by demonstrating with a warm, well known television personality, Dr. Phil, and people with diverse backgrounds and warm personalities that Match.com is a comfortable place to seek companionship and a relationship. The campaign makes it easier for them to cross that invisible line separating those thinking about using an online dating service from those that actually do.

Work Cited

Glasgow, Amanda. "Match.com Dedicates 2007 to Celebrating Member Individuality." Goliath Business News. 27 December 2006. The Gale Group. Web. 4 October 2009. http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-6093234/It-s-Okay-To-Look.html

Words like "tactic" and "campaign" are metaphors that suggest finding a spouse is a battle.

The thesis is restated with more emphasis to bring closure to the argument.

Inventing Your Rhetorical Analysis's Content

9.1 invent the content of a rhetorical analysis.

When preparing to write a rhetorical analysis, the first thing you need to do is closely read the text you are analyzing. Read through it at least a couple of times, taking special note of any places where the author seems to make important points or perhaps misses an opportunity to do so.

Inquiring: Highlight Uses of Proofs

Now, do some analysis. When looking closely at the text, you will notice that authors tend to use three kinds of *proofs* to persuade you:

Reasoning (*logos*): appealing to readers' common sense, beliefs, or values

Credibility (*ethos*): using the reputation, experience, and values of the author or an expert to support claims

Emotion (*pathos*): using feelings, desires, or fears to influence readers

Rhetoricians often use the ancient Greek terms *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* to discuss these three kinds of proofs, so we have used them here. Let's look at these concepts more closely.

Logos: Highlighting Uses of Reasoning. The word *logos* in ancient Greek means "reasoning" in English. This word is the basis for the English word, *logic*, but *logos* involves more than using logic to prove a point. *Logos* also involves appealing to someone else's common sense and using examples to demonstrate a point. Here are some common ways people use reasoning to influence the beliefs and opinions of others:

If . . . then: "If you believe X, then you should believe Y also."

Either . . . or: "Either you believe X, or you believe Y."

Cause and effect: "X is the reason Y happens."

Costs and benefits: "The benefits of doing X are worth/not worth the cost of Y."

Better and worse: "X is better/worse than Y because . . ."

Examples: "For example, X and Y demonstrate that Z happens."

Facts and data: "These facts/data support my argument that X is true or Y is false."

Anecdotes: "X happened to these people, thus demonstrating Y."

As you analyze the text, highlight these uses of reasoning so you can figure out how the writer uses *logos* to influence people.

Ethos: Highlighting Uses of Credibility. The Greek word *ethos* means "credibility," "authority," or "character" in English. It's also the basis for the English word, *ethics*. *Ethos* could mean the author's credibility or the use of someone else's credibility to support an argument.

Highlight places in the text where the author is using his or her authority or credibility to prove a point:

Personal experience: “I have experienced X, so I know it’s true and Y is not.”

Personal credentials: “I have a degree in Z” or “I am the director of Y, so I know about the subject of X.”

Good moral character: “I have always done the right thing for the right reasons, so you should believe me when I say that X is the best path to follow.”

Appeal to experts: “According to Z, who is an expert on this topic, X is true and Y is not true.”

Identification with the readers: “You and I come from similar backgrounds and we have similar values; therefore, you would likely agree with me that X is true and Y is not.”

Admission of limitations: “I may not know much about Z, but I do know that X is true and Y is not.”

Expression of good will: “I want what is best for you, so I am recommending X as the best path to follow.”

Use of “insider” language: Using special terminology or referring to information that only insiders would understand.

When you are searching for *ethos*-related proofs, look carefully for places where the author is trying to use his or her character or experience to sway readers’ opinions.

Pathos: Highlighting Uses of Emotion. Finally, look for places where the author is trying to use *pathos*, or emotions, to influence readers. The psychologist Robert Plutchik suggests there are eight basic emotions: joy, acceptance, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation. As you analyze the text, highlight places where the author is using these basic emotions to persuade readers.

Promise of gain: “By agreeing with us, you will gain trust, time, money, love, advancement, reputation, comfort, popularity, health, beauty, or convenience.”

Promise of enjoyment: “If you do things our way, you will experience joy, anticipation, fun, surprises, enjoyment, pleasure, leisure, or freedom.”

Fear of loss: “If you don’t do things this way, you risk losing time, money, love, security, freedom, reputation, popularity, health, or beauty.”

Fear of pain: “If you don’t do things this way, you may feel pain, sadness, grief, frustration, humiliation, embarrassment, loneliness, regret, shame, vulnerability, or worry.”

Expressions of anger or disgust: “You should be angry or disgusted because X is unfair to you, me, or someone else.”

Some other common emotions that you might find are annoyance, awe, calmness, confidence, courage, delight, disappointment, embarrassment, envy, frustration, gladness, grief, happiness, hate, hope, horror, humility, impatience, inspiration, jealousy, joy,

FIGURE 9.1 Advertising and Emotions

Advertising relies heavily on pathos arguments, because there isn't much time available to persuade a customer to buy something.



loneliness, love, lust, nervousness, nostalgia, paranoia, peace, pity, pride, rage, regret, resentment, shame, shock, sorrow, suffering, thrill, vulnerability, worry, and yearning.

Frequently, writers will not state emotions directly. Instead, they will inject feelings by using emotional stories about others or by incorporating images that illustrate the feelings they are trying to invoke. Advertisements, for example, rely heavily on using emotions to sell products (Figure 9.1).

Researching: Finding Background Information

Once you have highlighted the proofs (i.e., *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*) in the text, it's time to do some background research on the author, the text, and the context in which the work was written and used.

Online Sources. Using Internet search engines and electronic databases, find out as much as you can about the person or company who created the text and any issues that he, she, or they were responding to. What historical events led up to the writing of the text? What happened after the text was released to the public? What have other people said about it?

Print Sources. Using your library's catalog and article databases, dig deeper to understand the historical context of the text you are studying. How did historical events or pressures influence the author and the text? Did the author need to adjust

the text in a special way to fit the audience? Was the author or organization that published the text trying to achieve particular goals or make a statement of some kind?

Empirical Sources. In person or through e-mail, you might interview an expert who knows something about the author or the context of the text you are analyzing. An expert can help you gain a deeper understanding of the issues and people involved in the text. You might also show the text to others and note their reactions to it. You can use surveys or informal focus groups to see how people respond to the text.

Organizing and Drafting Your Rhetorical Analysis

At this point, you should be ready to start drafting your rhetorical analysis. As mentioned earlier, rhetorical analyses can follow a variety of organizational patterns, but those shown on page 137 are good models to follow. You can modify these patterns where necessary as you draft your ideas.

9.2 organize and draft your rhetorical analysis.

Keep in mind that you don't actually need to use rhetorical terms, such as *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, in your rhetorical analysis, especially if your readers don't know what these terms mean. Instead, you can use words like "reasoning," "credibility," and "emotion," which will be more familiar to your readers.

The Introduction

Usually, the introduction to a rhetorical analysis is somewhat brief. In this part of your analysis, you want to make some or all of these moves:

Identify the Subject of Your Analysis and Offer Background Information. Clearly state what you are analyzing and provide some historical or other background information that will familiarize your readers with it.

State the Purpose of Your Analysis. Explain that the purpose of your analysis is to determine whether or not your subject was effective or persuasive.

State Your Main Point or Thesis Statement. Rhetorical analyses are usually used in academic settings, so they often include a clear main point or thesis statement in the introduction. Here are examples of a weak thesis statement and a stronger one:

Weak: The advertisements for Buffalo Wild Wings are effective because they are funny.

Stronger: Buffalo Wild Wings' "The Official Hangout of March Madness" campaign is successful because it humorously shows that B-Dubs is a place where funny, unexpected, and even magical things happen to the young people who are there.

Stress the Importance of the Text. Tell readers why your subject's rhetorical strategies are interesting or worth paying attention to.

Explanation of Rhetorical Concepts

After the introduction, you should define and explain the rhetorical concepts you are using to analyze the text. So if you are using *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, you need to

explain how these concepts are defined. For example, here is how a student defined *pathos* in her rhetorical analysis:

Pathos, which involves using emotion to influence someone else, is a commonly used rhetorical tactic in advertisements aimed at teenage girls. Emotional scenes and images are used to grab the teen's attention and often make her feel something negative, like less confident, insecure, undesirable, unattractive, anxious, or dependent (Holt et al. 84).

Of course, the product being pushed by the advertiser is then put forward as a solution to that supposed inadequacy in the teen's life. For example, as psychologist Tina Hanson points out, teenage girls don't really need a cabinet full of haircare products (73). The typical teenage girl's hair is already healthy, shiny, full, and rich in color. Yet, television and magazine advertisements from haircare companies, which make shampoo, conditioner, and dye, routinely show frustrated teens unsatisfied with their hair. Usually the message being sent to a teen is "You don't even know you need this product, but everyone else knows you do, especially guys." The images show a discouraged girl who risks losing friends or being embarrassed because her hair isn't perfect.

In your rhetorical analysis, you don't need to discuss all three of the rhetorical proofs mentioned in this chapter. Instead, you might decide to concentrate on just one of them, like *pathos*, so you can develop a fuller definition of that concept for your readers.

Also as mentioned earlier, keep in mind that other rhetorical concepts besides *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* are available. For instance, you could choose to study the metaphors used in a text, or perhaps its genre, style, or use of narrative. If you choose one of these other rhetorical concepts, you will need to define and explain that concept to your readers.

Provide Historical Context and Summary

To give your readers an overall understanding of the text you are analyzing, provide them with some historical background on it. Tell them who wrote it and where and when it appeared. Then summarize the text for them, following the organization of the text and highlighting its major points and features.

The aim of this historical context section is to give your readers enough background to understand the text you are analyzing. For example, here is the historical context and a summary of an advertisement for Red Bull:

Advertisements for energy drinks rely heavily on emotion to make sales to college students. These unique soft drinks, which usually contain high amounts of caffeine and calories, began to grow in popularity in the late 1990s.

Red Bull, one of the most popular brands, actually was invented in the 1970s in Thailand, and it was first exported to the United States in 1997 (FundingUniverse). From the beginning, Red Bull's advertising has been squarely aimed at college



Fig. 1. "Red Bull Gives You Wings."

students, telling them that they need to have extra energy to get through their hectic days. One of its recent advertising campaigns, which is called “Red Bull Gives You Wings,” began in 2005 with simple hand-drawn movies like the one shown in Fig. 1.

In this advertisement, a bird relieves himself on a man who looks a lot like a professor. The man then drinks a can of Red Bull and sprouts wings. He flies above the bird, pulls down his pants, and proceeds to return the favor (offscreen, thankfully). The viewer hears the bird screech in horror as an image of a can of Red Bull fills the screen, but we can all imagine what happened.

During the span of the 30-second advertisement, the man transforms from being a seemingly helpless victim to a superheroic figure who can take vengeance on the bird. Drinking Red Bull is shown to be the way he gains this new power.

The length of your summary depends on your readers. If they are already familiar with the text you are analyzing, your summary should be brief. You don’t want to bore your readers by telling them something they already know. If, however, they are not familiar with the text, your summary should be longer and more detailed.

Analysis of the Text

Now it is time to analyze the text for your readers. Essentially, you are going to interpret the text for them, using the rhetorical concepts you defined earlier in the rhetorical analysis.

There are two main ways to organize this section:

- You can follow the organization of the text you are analyzing, starting from the beginning and working to the end of the text. Apply the rhetorical concepts to each major section of the text.
- You can discuss the text through each rhetorical concept separately. For instance, if you are analyzing the uses of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* in a text, you would separately discuss the text’s use of each kind of proof.

For example, here is a discussion of *pathos* in the Red Bull advertisement:

Using Emotion to Sell Red Bull

Like much advertising aimed at young people, the Red Bull advertisement uses emotions to bring home its argument. In this advertisement, the use of humor is what gives the message its emotional punch.

Many young people feel like the professor in this advertisement, because they perceive that they are ultimately powerless in society. So when someone else treats them badly, young people usually assume they need to just take it. In this case, the Red Bull advertisement shows the bird relieving itself on the professor-like character. In most situations, the man would simply need to suffer that humiliation. But, he has a secret weapon, Red Bull. He drinks a can, sprouts wings, and humorously takes revenge on the bird.

The story itself is an emotional parable that reflects the life of most young people. The bird represents all the things in young peoples’ lives that humiliate and embarrass them but that they cannot fix. The professor-like man, though not young, is a figure that students can relate to, because he is still in the educational

system and seems powerless in his own way. So when he is able to actually use a product like Red Bull to take revenge, young people not only laugh but also feel an emotional release of their own frustration. The emotional message to young people is, “Drink Red Bull, and you can get back at all those people who crap on you.”

The humor, coupled with the revenge theme, makes the advertisement’s use of emotion very effective. According to Mark Jefferson, a professor at Penn State who studies advertisements, the use of revenge is very effective for reaching college students. “Students often feel powerless in a world that tells them they are adults but refuses to give them power. Advertisements that tap into that frustration in a humorous way are very powerful” (23).

In this discussion of emotion, the writer is applying her definition of *pathos* to the advertisement. This allows her to explain the use of emotion to sell Red Bull. She can now go on to discuss the use of *logos* and *ethos* in the ad. Or, if she has more to say about *pathos*, she might make her rhetorical analysis about the use of *pathos* alone.

The Conclusion

When you have finished your analysis, it’s time to wrap up your argument. Keep this part of your rhetorical analysis brief. A paragraph or two should be enough. You should answer one or more of the following questions:

- Ultimately, what does your rhetorical analysis reveal about the text you studied?
- What does your analysis tell your readers about the rhetorical concept(s) you used to analyze the text?
- Why is your explanation of the text or the rhetorical concept(s) important to your readers?
- What should your readers look for in the future with this kind of text or this persuasion strategy?

Minimally, the key to a good conclusion is to restate your main point (thesis statement) about the text you analyzed.

Choosing an Appropriate Style

9.3 create a specific style that is descriptive and easy to read.

The style of a rhetorical analysis depends on your readers and where your analysis might appear. If you are writing your analysis for an online magazine like *Slate* or *Salon*, readers would expect you to write something colorful and witty. If you are writing the argument for an academic journal, your tone would need to be more formal. Here are some ideas for using an appropriate style in your rhetorical analysis:

Use Lots of Detail to Describe the Text. In detail, explain the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* of the text you are analyzing. You want readers to experience the text, even if they haven’t seen or read it themselves.

Minimize the Jargon and Difficult Words. Specialized terminology and complex words will unnecessarily make your text harder to read.

Improve the Flow of Your Sentences. Rhetorical analyses are designed to explain a text as clearly as possible, so you want your writing to flow easily from one sentence to the next. The best way to create this kind of flow is to use the “given-new” strategies that are discussed in Chapter 20, “Developing Paragraphs and Sections.” Given-new involves making sure the beginning of each sentence uses something like a word, phrase, or idea from the previous sentence.

Pay Attention to Sentence Length. If you are writing a lively or witty analysis, you will want to use shorter sentences to make your argument feel more active and fast-paced. If you are writing for an academic audience, longer sentences will make your analysis sound more formal and proper. Keep in mind that your sentences should be “breathing length,” neither too long nor too short.

Designing Your Rhetorical Analysis

Computers make it possible to use visuals in a rhetorical analysis. Here are some things you might try:

Download Images from the Internet. If you are reviewing a book or a historical document, you can download an image of it to include in your rhetorical analysis. This way, readers can actually see what you are talking about.

Add a Screen Shot. If you are writing about an advertisement from the Internet, you can take a picture of your screen (i.e., a screen shot). Then you can include that screen shot in your analysis (Figure 9.2).

Include a Link to a Podcast. If you are analyzing a video or audio text (perhaps something you found on *YouTube*), you can put a link to that text in your analysis. Or you can include the Web address so readers can find the text themselves. If your analysis will appear online, you can use a link to insert the podcast right into your document.

Why not be creative? Look for ways to use technology to let your readers access the text you are analyzing.

9.4 develop a design with the use of visuals.

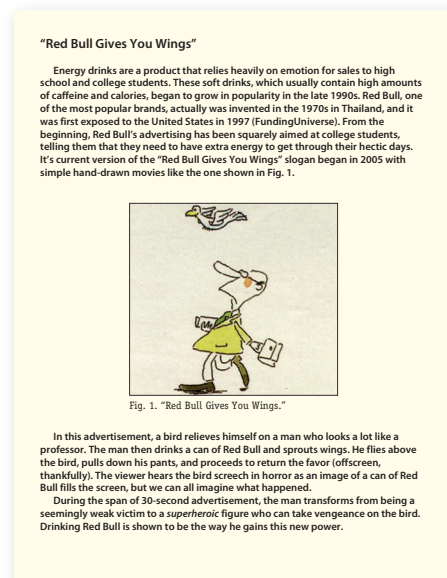


FIGURE 9.2 Adding a Screen Shot to Your Analysis

A screen shot is an easy way to put an image into your rhetorical analysis.

The Ad Critique

An ad critique evaluates an advertisement to show why it was or was not effective. If the ad is persuasive, show the readers why it works. An ad critique can also help you explain why you like or dislike a particular type of advertisement. You should aim your critique at people like you who are consumers of mass media and products.

Today, ad critiques are becoming common on the Internet, especially on blogs. They give people a way to express their reactions to the kinds of advertisements being thrown at them. Here are some strategies for writing an ad critique:

Summarize the ad. If the ad appeared on television or the Internet, describe it objectively in one paragraph. Tell your readers the *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when* of the ad. If the ad appeared in a magazine or other print medium, you can scan it or download the image from the sponsor's Web site and insert the image into your document.

Highlight the unique quality that makes the advertisement stand out. There must be something remarkable about the ad that caught your attention. What is it? What made it stand out from all the other ads that are similar to it?

Describe the typical features of ads like this one. Identify the three to five common features that are usually found in this type of advertisement. You can use examples of other ads to explain how a typical ad would look or sound.

Show how this ad is different from the others. Compare the features of the ad to those of similar advertisements. Demonstrate why this ad is better or worse than its competitors.

Include many details. Throughout your critique, use plenty of detail to help your readers visualize or hear the ad. You want to replicate the experience of seeing or hearing it.

WRITE your own ad critique. While watching television or reading a magazine, find an ad that seems different. Then write a two-page critique in which you explain why it was or was not effective. Don't forget to scan, download, or take a picture of the ad so you can include it in your critique.

The Axe Effect

Paloma Aleman

Axe Body Spray is known for its overly sexual ads that objectify women and insist that their products somehow build confidence in straight men. Now we are given their new campaign, which features five stereotypes of women that men supposedly have to deal with: Brainy Girl, High Maintenance Girl, Flirty Girl, Party Girl, and Sporty Girl. In the “flirty girl” ad, this stereotyped woman makes her boyfriend watch her flirt with people all night while he holds her things and is ignored. But it’s alright folks: Axe knows a real man can handle anything that comes at him as long as he has his handy-dandy Axe products.

The target audience for these ads, according to brand development director Mike Dwyer, is men ages 18 to 24. However, it appears that Axe is targeting a more specific group: *straight white men* between 18 and 24. We can see this because people of color are not featured or prominent in the ads, and the men only want women in these ads.

This ad uses pathos-based persuasion techniques. It uses humor by presenting a clearly outlandish situation. It also uses fear as the ad suggests to the male viewer he isn’t a “real man” if he’s not secure enough in his masculinity to keep his cool. Finally, it uses “promise of gain” too, implying that if you use Axe you will land gorgeous women and get lucky with the ladies.

In the resolution of this Axe story, the “real man” is rewarded for keeping his cool in a way that Axe believes that any straight white man aged 18 to 24 would want to be rewarded—by going home with not one but two ladies. There’s no danger in this adventure either, seeing as there is no possible way that two women could be attracted to each other or have the intention of being in a real relationship.

Through these advertisements, Axe is promoting the idea that they can help a straight white male aged 18 to 24 figure out his “lady problems” with stereotypes and body wash. However, their poor taste in humor is matched only by their poor judgment in marketing. Sure, men are their target audience for the product (and according to the commercial, getting rewarded for it), but let’s get real. Women in the household are sometimes also going to be shopping for these products if the need arises. So even though Axe is obviously shooting for humor, shouldn’t they consider that they might alienate a good part of their consumers?

This humor tells us two things about Axe’s way of thinking. First, Axe assumes that men make fun of women for their own amusement, and they believe that by doing the same they can connect better with their audience. Second, Axe sees women as mere objects rather than anything, or anyone for that matter, deserving of more attention than that which is sexual.

Provides context by describing typical features of ads like this one.

The ad is summarized and shows how this ad is different from the others.

Describes the persuasive strategies used.

Details help readers visualize the ad.

Offers an overall assessment of the ad’s effectiveness, why it fails.

Finishes strong with criticism of the ad’s approach.

Need to write a rhetorical analysis? Here are some steps to get you going.

FIND a Text You Want to Analyze

Pick something you find intriguing. The best texts are ones that seem curiously persuasive to you (or not persuasive at all). You might also look for texts that are historically important.

HIGHLIGHT the Uses of *Logos*, *Ethos*, and *Pathos*

Read through the text, marking places in the text where the author uses reasoning (*logos*), credibility (*ethos*), or emotion (*pathos*).

RESEARCH the Context

Use a variety of sources to do background research on the text you are analyzing. Find out as much as you can about the author and the historical context in which he or she created the text. Use interviews or surveys to measure how others react to the text you are studying. Interview experts who know about this kind of text.

DRAFT Your Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis typically has the following sections: Introduction (with a solid thesis statement), Definitions of Rhetorical Concepts, Historical Context and Summary, Analysis, and Conclusion. Draft each section separately.

CHOOSE an Appropriate Style

Your style depends on your readers, the place where your analysis will appear, and the text you are analyzing. Use ample details and good pacing to match your analysis's style with its potential place of publication.

DESIGN Your Rhetorical Analysis

Some graphics, especially screen shots, would make the text you are analyzing easier for readers to understand. If you want to do something more advanced, you might try creating a Web site or an audio or video podcast to an on-screen text.

REVISE and Edit

You have gone this far. Now finish the job. Do some revising and editing to make your rhetorical analysis shine. Look for any inconsistencies. Fill out places where more information might be helpful.

The Courage of Turtles

EDWARD HOAGLAND

On pages 156–158 below, you will find a rhetorical analysis of “The Courage of Turtles,” an essay written by nature writer Edward Hoagland. The rhetorical analysis was written by Adam Regn Arvidson. You should read this essay first. Then, read Arvidson’s analysis of it. As you are reading “The Courage of Turtles,” pay attention to Hoagland’s use of rhetorical strategies to persuade and move you. Then, when you read Arvidson’s analysis, see if you agree with his interpretation of this classic essay.

Turtles are a kind of bird with the governor turned low. With the same attitude of removal, they cock a glance at what is going on, as if they need only to fly away. Until recently they were also a case of virtue rewarded, at least in the town where I grew up, because, being humble creatures, there were plenty of them. Even when we still had a few bobcats in the woods the local snapping turtles, growing up to forty pounds, were the largest carnivores. You would see them through the amber water, as big as greeny wash basins at the bottom of the pond, until they faded into the inscrutable mud as if they hadn’t existed at all.

When I was ten I went to Dr. Green’s Pond, a two-acre pond across the road. When I was twelve I walked a mile or so to Taggart’s Pond, which was lush, had big water snakes and a waterfall; and shortly after that I was bicycling way up to the adventuresome vastness of Mud Pond, a lake sized body of water in the reservoir system of a Connecticut city, possessed of cat-backed little islands and empty shacks and a forest of pines and hardwoods along the shore. Otters, foxes, and mink left their prints on the bank; there were pike and perch. As I got older, the estates and forgotten back lots in town were parceled out and sold for nice prices, yet, though the woods had shrunk, it seemed that fewer people walked in the woods. The new residents didn’t know how to find them. Eventually,

exploring, they did find them, and it required some ingenuity and doubling around on my part to go for eight miles without meeting someone. I was grown by now, I lived in New York, and that’s what I wanted to do on the occasional weekends when I came out.

Since Mud Pond contained drinking water I had felt confident nothing untoward would happen there. For a long while the developers stayed away, until the drought of the mid-1960s. This event, squeezing the edges in, convinced the local water company that the pond really wasn’t a necessity as a catch basin, however; so they bulldozed a hole in the earthen dam, bulldozed the banks to fill in the bottom, and landscaped the flow of water that remained to wind like an English brook and provide a domestic view for the houses which were planned. Most of the painted turtles of Mud Pond, who had been inaccessible as they sunned on their rocks, wound up in boxes in boys’ closets within a matter of days. Their footsteps in the dry leaves gave them away as they wandered forlornly. The snappers and the little musk turtles, neither of whom leave the water except once a year to lay their eggs, dug into the drying mud for another siege of hot weather, which they were accustomed to doing whenever the pond got low. But this time it was low for good; the mud baked over them and slowly entombed them. As for the ducks,

I couldn't stroll in the woods and not feel guilty, because they were crouched beside every stagnant pothole, or were slinking between the bushes with their heads tucked into their shoulders so that I wouldn't see them. If they decided I had, they beat their way up through the screen of trees, striking their wings dangerously, and wheeled about with that headlong, magnificent velocity to locate another poor puddle.

I used to catch possums and black snakes as well as turtles, and I kept dogs and goats. Some summers I worked in a menagerie with the big personalities of the animal kingdom, like elephants and rhinoceroses. I was twenty before these enthusiasms began to wane, and it was then that I picked turtles as the particular animal I wanted to keep in touch with. I was allergic to fur, for one thing, and turtles need minimal care and not much in the way of quarters. They're personable beasts. They see the same colors we do and they seem to see just as well, as one discovers in trying to sneak up on them. In the laboratory they unravel the twists of a maze with the hot-blooded rapidity of a mammal. Though they can't run as fast as a rat, they improve on their errors just as quickly, pausing at each crossroads to look left and right. And they rock rhythmically in place, as we often do, although they are hatched from eggs, not the womb. (A common explanation psychologists give for our pleasure in rocking quietly is that it recapitulates our mother's heartbeat *in utero*.)

Snakes, by contrast, are dryly silent and priapic. They are smooth movers, legalistic,⁵ unblinking, and they afford the humor which the humorless do. But they make challenging captives; sometimes they don't eat for months on a point of order—if the light isn't right, for instance. Alligators are sticklers too. They're like war-horses, or German shepherds, and with their bar-shaped, vertical pupils adding emphasis, they have the *idée fixe* of eating, eating, even when they choose to refuse all food and stubbornly die. They

delight in tossing a salamander up towards the sky and grabbing him in their long mouths as he comes down. They're so eager that they get the jitters, and they're too much of a proposition for a casual aquarium like mine. Frogs are depressingly defenseless: that moist, extensive back, with the bones almost sticking through. Hold a frog and you're holding its skeleton. Frogs' tasty legs are the staff of life to many animals—herons, raccoons, ribbon snakes—though they themselves are hard to feed. It's not an enviable role to be the staff of life, and after frogs you descend down the evolutionary ladder a big step to fish.

Turtles cough, burp, whistle, grunt and hiss, and produce social judgments. They put their heads together amicably enough, but then one drives the other back with the suddenness of two dogs who have been conversing in tones too low for an onlooker to hear. They pee in fear when they're first caught, but exercise both pluck and optimism in trying to escape, walking for hundreds of yards within the confines of their pen, carrying the weight of that cumbersome box on legs which are cruelly positioned for walking. They don't feel that the contest is unfair; they keep plugging, rolling like sailorly souls—a bobbing, infirm gait, a brave, sea-legged momentum—stopping occasionally to study the lay of the land. For me, anyway, they manage to contain the rest of the animal world. They can stretch out their necks like a giraffe, or loom underwater like an apocryphal hippo. They browse on lettuce thrown on the water like a cow moose which is partly submerged. They have a penguin's alertness, combined with a build like a brontosaurus when they rise up on tiptoe. Then they hunch and ponderously lunge like a grizzly going forward.

Baby turtles in a turtle bowl are a puzzle in geometrics. They're as decorative as pansy petals, but they are also self-directed building blocks, propping themselves on one another in different arrangements, before up ending

the tower. The timid individuals turn fearless, or vice versa. If one gets a bit arrogant he will push the others off the rock and afterwards climb down into the water and cling to the back of one of those he has bullied, tickling him with his hind feet until he bucks like bronco. On the other hand, when this same milder-mannered fellow isn't exerting himself, he will stare right into the face of the sun for hours. What could be more lionlike? And he's at home in or out of the water and does lots of metaphysical tilting. He sinks and rises, with an infinity of levels to choose from; or, elongating himself, he climbs out on the land again to perambulate, sits boxed in his box, and finally slides back in the water, submerging into dreams.

I have five of these babies in a kidney-shaped bowl. The hatchling, who is a painted turtle, is not as large as the top joint of my thumb. He eats chicken gladly. Other foods he will attempt to eat but not with sufficient perseverance to succeed because he's so little. The yellow-bellied terrapin is probably a yearling, and he eats salad voraciously, but no meat, fish, or fowl. The Cumberland terrapin won't touch salad or chicken but eats fish and all of the meats except for bacon. The little snapper, with a black crenellated shell, feasts on any kind of meat, but rejects greens and fish. The fifth of the turtles is African. I acquired him only recently and don't know him well. A mottled brown, he unnerves the greener turtles, dragging their food off to his lairs. He doesn't seem to want to be green—he bites the algae off his shell, hanging meanwhile at daring, steep, head-first angles.

The snapper was a Ferdinand until I provided him with deeper water. Now he snaps at my pencil with his downturned and fearsome mouth, his swollen face like a napalm victim's. The Cumberland has an elliptical red mark on the side of his green-and-yellow head. He is benign by nature and ought to be as elegant as his scientific name (*Pseudemys scripta elegans*), except he has contracted a

disease of the air bladder which has permanently inflated it; he floats high in the water at an undignified slant and can't go under. There may have been internal bleeding, too, because his carapace is stained along its ridge. Unfortunately, like flowers, baby turtles often die. Their mouths fill up with a white fungus and their lungs with pneumonia. Their organs clog up from the rust in the water, or diet troubles, and, like a dying man's, their eyes and heads become too prominent. Toward the end, the edge of the shell becomes flabby as felt and folds around them like a shroud.

While they live they're like puppies.¹⁰ Although they're vivacious, they would be a bore to be with all the time, so I also have an adult wood turtle about six inches long. Her top shell is the equal of any seashell for sculpturing, even a Cellini shell; it's like an old, dusty, richly engraved medallion dug out of a hillside. Her legs are salmon-orange bordered with black and protected by canted, heroic scales. Her plastron—the bottom shell—is splotched like a margay cat's coat, with black ocelli on a yellow background. It is convex to make room for the female organs inside, whereas a male's would be concave to help him fit tightly on top of her. Altogether, she exhibits every camouflage color on her limbs and shells. She has a turtleneck neck, a tail like an elephant's, wise old pachydermous hind legs, and the face of a turkey—except that when I carry her she gazes at the passing ground with a hawk's eyes and mouth. Her feet fit to the fingers of my hand, one to each one, and she rides looking down. She can walk on the floor in perfect silence, but usually she lets her plastron knock portentously, like a footstep, so that she resembles some grand, concise, slow-moving id. But if an earthworm is presented, she jerks swiftly ahead, poises above it, and strikes like a mongoose, consuming it with wild vigor. Yet she will climb on my lap to eat bread or boiled eggs.

If put into a creek, she swims like a cutter, nosing forward to intercept a strange turtle and smell him. She drifts with the current to go downstream, maneuvering behind a rock when she wants to take stock, or sinking to the nether levels, while bubbles float up. Getting out, choosing her path, she will proceed a distance and dig into a pile of humus, thrusting herself to the coolest layer at the bottom. The hole closes over her until it's as small as a mouse's hole. She's not as aquatic as a musk turtle, not quite as terrestrial as the box turtles in the same woods, but because of her versatility she's marvelous, she's everywhere. And though she breathes the way we breathe, with scarcely perceptible movements of her chest, sometimes instead she pumps her throat ruminatively, like a pipe smoker sucking and puffing. She waits and blinks, pumping her throat, turning her head, then sets off like a loping tiger in slow motion, hurdling the jungly lumber, the pea vine and twigs. She estimates angles so well that when she rides over the rocks, sliding down a drop-off with her rugged front legs extended, she has the grace of a rodeo mare.

But she's well off to be with me rather than at Mud Pond. The other turtles have fled—those that aren't baked into the bottom. Creeping up the brooks to sad, constricted marshes, burdened as they are with that box on their backs, they're walking into a setup where all their enemies move thirty times faster than they. It's like the nightmare most of us have whimpered through, where we are weighted down disastrously while trying to flee; fleeing our home ground, we try to run.

I've seen turtles in still worse straits. On Broadway, in New York, there is a penny arcade which used to sell baby terrapins that were scrawled with bon mots in enamel paint, such as KISS ME BABY. The manager turned out to be a wholesaler as well, and once I asked him whether he had any larger turtles to sell. He took me upstairs to a loft

room devoted to the turtle business. There were desks for the paper work and a series of racks that held shallow tin bins atop one another, each with several hundred babies crawling around in it. He was a smudgy-complexioned, bespectacled, serious fellow and he did have a few adult terrapins, but I was going to school and wasn't actually planning to buy; I'd only wanted to see them. They were aquatic turtles, but here they went without water, presumably for weeks, lurching about in those dry bins like handicapped citizens, living on gumption. An easel where the artist worked stood in the middle of the floor. She had a palette and a clip attachment for fastening the babies in place. She wore a smock and a beret, and was homely, short, and eccentric-looking, with funny black hair, like some of the ladies who show their paintings in Washington Square in May. She had a cold, she was smoking, and her hand wasn't very steady, although she worked quickly enough. The smile that she produced for me would have looked giddy if she had been happier, or drunk. Of course the turtles' doom was sealed when she painted them, because their bodies inside would continue to grow but their shells would not. Gradually, invisibly, they would be crushed. Around us their bellies—two thousand belly shells—rubbed on the bins with a mournful, momentous hiss.

Somehow there were so many of them I didn't rescue one. Years later, however, I was walking on First Avenue when I noticed a basket of living turtles in front of a fish store. They were as dry as a heap of old bones in the sun; nevertheless, they were creeping over one another gimpily, doing their best to escape. I looked and was touched to discover that they appeared to be wood turtles, my favorites, so I bought one. In my apartment I looked closer and realized that in fact this was a diamondback terrapin, which was bad news. Diamondbacks are tidewater turtles from brackish estuaries, and I had no

seawater to keep him in. He spent his days thumping interminably against the baseboards, pushing for an opening through the wall. He drank thirstily but would not eat and had none of the hearty, accepting qualities of wood turtles. He was morose, paler in color, sleeker and more Oriental in the carved ridges and rings that formed his shell. Though I felt sorry for him, finally I found his unrelenting presence exasperating. I carried him, struggling in a paper bag, across town to the Morton Street Pier on the Hudson River. It was August but gray and windy. He was very surprised when I tossed him in; for the first time in our association, I

think, he was afraid. He looked afraid as he bobbed about on top of the water, looking up at me from ten feet below. Though we were both accustomed to his resistance and rigidity, seeing him still pitiful, I recognized that I must have done the wrong thing. At least the river was salty, but it was also bottomless; the waves were too rough for him, and the tide was coming in, bumping him against the pilings underneath the pier. Too late, I realized that he wouldn't be able to swim to a peaceful inlet in New Jersey, even if he could figure out which way to swim. But since, short of diving in after him, there was nothing I could do, I walked away.

A CLOSER LOOK AT

The Courage of Turtles

MyWritingLab

1. In this profile, Hoagland painstakingly describes not only his pet turtle but also many other aspects of nature around him. Choose one of the paragraphs in which visual description is a major feature. With your group, discuss how Hoagland's use of visual detail strengthens his own reputation (*ethos*) as an author.
2. Find three places where Hoagland uses tropes, like similes or metaphors, to express complex ideas.

With your group, discuss how these tropes work and how Hoagland uses them to help his readers better understand his experiences with turtles and nature.

3. The end of the profile is a bit haunting. With your group, discuss why Hoagland ends the essay on this note.

IDEAS FOR

Writing and Discussion

MyWritingLab

1. Write a description of a natural place on your college campus or in your neighborhood. In your first draft, pay most attention to what you can see with your eyes. Then, as you revise, use your other senses, such as sound, smell, taste, and touch, to fill out your description.
2. Write your own rhetorical analysis of "The Courage of Turtles" in which you explore Hoagland's style alone. Specifically, explain why Hoagland's style makes this essay both simple and powerful at the same time.

Nature Writing in America: Criticism Through Imagery

ADAM REGN ARVIDSON

In this rhetorical analysis, Adam Arvidson, a landscape architect and writer, explains the power of Edward Hoagland's classic essay, "The Courage of Turtles." Before reading this analysis, you should read Hoagland's essay, which starts on page 151. Then, as you read Arvidson's analysis, see if you agree with his interpretation of the essay and his explanation of why it is so powerful.

Edward Hoagland's well-known essay "The Courage of Turtles," which is contained in his 1968 collection of the same name, is a clever combination of humorous terrapin descriptions and withering criticism of how humans treat the natural world. That criticism, however, relies on carefully constructed phrases and images delivered at perfect moments, rather than on long-winded tirades. The essay is wrenching exactly because of this technique of criticism, which, at one point, Hoagland even directs at himself.

"The Courage of Turtles" is, of course, about turtles, and it is constructed as a rambling interweaving of stories, descriptions, and ruminations. There are three "critical stories." The Mud Pond Story introduces the essay and then returns in the third-to-last paragraph, interrupted by pages of general turtle information. The Penny Arcade Story constitutes the penultimate paragraph; while the Diamondback Story comprises the final one. The arrangement of these critical stories within the essay is itself notable. The vast majority of the piece (about 7 of the 10 pages, as typeset in my 1985 North Point Press issue) isn't critical at all. Instead the reader is

regaled with Hoagland's childhood searches for turtles at a variety of different ponds, the relative benefits of different kinds of reptilian pets, and the distinct personalities of his own turtles (namely five babies "in a kidney-shaped bowl" and an adult wood turtle which seems more Jack Russell terrier than terrapin). The introduction of the Mud Pond Story near the beginning hints that "The Courage of Turtles" is not merely about the joys of owning turtles, but Hoagland doesn't let the full message out of its shell (ugh!) until the end, once the reader is already enamored of turtles.

Mud Pond, an artificial water reservoir teeming with aquatic life, was drained in the 1960s to make room for housing. The painted turtles, former inhabitants of the pond, writes Hoagland, "wandered forlornly" looking for the water. Snapping turtles burrowed down into the mud to wait out the drought and "the mud baked over them and slowly entombed them." The latter is not at all a gratuitously gory phrase, but as it mulls in the mind it coalesces into the picture of a horrible fate. However, Hoagland never demonizes the developers nor the water company, who are,

one can glean, responsible for these turtle deaths. He instead references a drought that “squeezed the edges in” and “convinced the local water company that the pond really wasn’t a necessity as a catch basin.”

The essay returns to Mud Pond later, after the jovial description of the wood turtle, who is “well off to be with me rather than at Mud Pond.” Hoagland reminds the reader of the mud-baked turtles, then goes farther:

Creeping up the brooks to sad, constricted marshes, burdened as they are with that box on their backs, they’re walking into a setup where all their enemies move thirty times faster than they. It’s like the nightmare most of us have whimpered through, where we are weighted down disastrously while trying to flee. . . .

This passage is even more aching over the fate of the turtles, but again Hoagland never places blame. These are the facts of life, and it is up to the reader to connect the dots.

The Penny Arcade Story begins in the next paragraph, with the segue: “I’ve seen turtles in still worse straits.” Hoagland visits with the penny arcade’s proprietor, who was selling turtles whose shells had been painted with colorful sayings. He goes upstairs to the man’s office and sees hundreds of turtles in boxes, and also witnesses the little station where the artist would paint the reptiles. Hoagland describes the place and the people in distasteful terms. The proprietor is “smudgy-faced,” the artist is “homely, short, and eccentric-looking, with funny black hair,” and the room has “shallow tin bins on top of one another” in which the turtles crawl. There are of course many ways to describe this scene, but Hoagland chooses to use words like shallow, smudgy, and homely to, in essence, criticize the proprietor and other such business-people, though he never does so directly. There is not a single word about how they shouldn’t be doing this to

turtles, or how the turtles feel about this set-up, or how the reader should feel about this scene.

The scene set, Hoagland then matter-of-factly tells the reader the fate of the painted turtles:

Of course the turtles’ doom was sealed when she painted them, because their bodies would continue to grow but their shells would not. Gradually, invisibly, they would be crushed.

Interestingly, we never see the artist actually paint a turtle, so the indictment of this activity is, again, oblique. There is no denying the sadness of the situation, but Hoagland never calls out the artist nor the proprietor, never says that this practice should stop. To drive the point home, Hoagland goes back to the turtles, using description, not direct comment

Around us their bellies—two thousand shells

—rubbed on the bins with a mournful, momentous hiss.

In the last critical story, the Diamondback Story, Hoagland turns the lens on himself. The last paragraph of the essay begins, in effect, with an admission of guilt, then moves forward in time:

Somehow there were so many of them [at the penny arcade] I didn’t rescue one. Years later, however, I was walking on First Avenue when I noticed a basket of living turtles in front of a fish store. They were as dry as a heap of old bones in the sun. . . .

He buys one, which turns out to be a tidewater turtle called a Diamondback. The rest of the story traces that turtle’s short life of banging around the inside of Hoagland’s apartment. Hoagland never introduces the horrible store owner that would put turtles in

a bin on the sidewalk to desiccate. Instead, he himself begins to find that turtle's "unrelenting presence exasperating" and he throws it into the Hudson. Hoagland describes how he comes to realize this will be certain death for the Diamondback, but he admits that "since, short of diving in after him, there was nothing I could do, I walked away."

Importantly, before that concluding statement, Hoagland describes the turtle as seeming "surprised when I tossed him in" and "afraid as he bobbed about on top of the water, looking up at me from ten feet below." Because of the personification, Hoagland's departure seems cruel, though he describes it in the same matter-of-fact way he describes snappers entombed in mud and baby turtles crushed by their own shells.

In all of these stories, Hoagland complicates who the villain is. There are plenty of people to indict—the developers, the water

company, the artist, the arcade owner, the fish shop owner, himself—but Hoagland instead focuses on what happens to the turtles. By doing so, we readers are left to consider the rest, and to ask ourselves whether we care about what happens to turtles (and, by extension, other species), and to wonder how we might treat a turtle if and when we encounter one. The wrenching imagery is there (snapping turtles gradually suffocating in the mud, little painted babies stuck forever in baby-sized shells, a fully realized turtle individual abandoned under a pier in New York), but it is never accompanied by the implications of or reasons for those images. This is careful criticism of human actions, which leaves much up to the reader.

I love a good rant now and then. But the image of that little Diamondback looking pleadingly up at Mr. Hoagland as the man strides away—that sticks with me.

A CLOSER LOOK AT

MyWritingLab

Nature Writing in America: Criticism Through Imagery

1. Find the thesis statements in the introduction and conclusion of this rhetorical analysis. With your group, compare these two thesis statements and discuss whether they are effective. Do they establish a claim that the rhetorical analysis proves or supports? Does the concluding thesis statement express the analysis' main idea with more emphasis?
2. Arvidson believes that Hoagland's "The Courage of Turtles" is about turtles only on its surface. What does he think Hoagland's essay is really about?

With your group, find three places in the rhetorical analysis where Arvidson reveals what he believes is the underlying message in Hoagland's essay.

3. Arvidson uses stylistic techniques to establish his own tone, especially with words like "wrenching" and "suffocating." Underline the words that are related or synonyms to these words. With your group, discuss how Arvidson uses clusters of these words to create a consistent tone in this rhetorical analysis.

IDEAS FOR

Writing and Discussion

MyWritingLab

1. Write a rhetorical analysis of an argument of your choice. In your analysis, specifically pay attention to how the author is trying to influence your emotions (*pathos*). Explore at least three different emotions that play an important role in this argument.
2. Write a review of a book or movie that, as Arvidson says, "sticks with you." In your review explain why this particular text or film haunts you in some way.

1. With a group in your class, discuss the ways people try to persuade you. How do family members try to persuade you? How do your friends try to persuade you? In what ways do their persuasive strategies differ from the ways advertisers try to persuade people?
2. List some ways in which people try to use their credibility (*ethos*) or emotion (*pathos*) to persuade others. Supposedly, using reason (*logos*) is the most reliable way to persuade someone, and yet we use credibility and emotion all the time to get our points across. Why? When are arguments from credibility and emotion even more persuasive than arguments that rely on reason?
3. With a group, make a list of your favorite five commercials on television and a list of five commercials you cannot stand. Why do people in your group find some of these commercials interesting and worth watching? Why are some commercials so irritating that you want to turn the television off? As a group, create a list of ten do's and don'ts of advertising to college students.

Talk About This



1. Find an advertisement in a magazine that you think is persuasive (or not). Then write a one-page analysis of the advertisement in which you discuss why you think it is effective (or not). Look closely at its uses of reasoning, credibility, and emotion. What kinds of support does the advertiser rely on most? What do these rhetorical strategies say about the people the advertiser is targeting?
2. Imagine that a political candidate has hired you to explain how to persuade college students to vote for him or her. The candidate sees college students as very important, but is frustrated by some students' ability to see through the political spin. In a one- to two-page brief, explain what college students find persuasive these days and what kinds of message would get them to go to the polls.
3. Find a rhetorical analysis on the Internet that you can study. These documents are rarely called "rhetorical analyses." Instead, they tend to be critiques of advertisements, speeches, or documents. You can find good examples on Web sites like Slate.com or the *New York Times* Web site (nytimes.com). Write a one-page discussion in which you study the organization, style, and design of the rhetorical analysis. How does it work? What kinds of rhetorical elements does the reviewer pay attention to? Do you agree with the reviewer's analysis?

Try This Out



Hey. Go find your own microgenres. Choose a microgenre from the list below and find three examples in print or on the Internet. Use these examples to come up with your own guidelines for writing one of these microgenres, which are similar to a rhetorical analysis.

Ad Buster—demonstrates whether an ad's claims are true or false

Critique—brief discussion of a recent speech by a public figure

Song Analysis—exploration of the rhetorical meaning of a song

Ad Report Card—grading of advertisements with brief explanation of grade

Pundit's Response—partisan review of a speech by a candidate

Explore This



Write This



- 1. Analyze a text.** Choose a historical, nonfiction text you find interesting and write a rhetorical analysis of it. Your analysis should define the rhetorical concepts you will use to study the document. It should summarize the text and offer some historical background on it. Then offer a close analysis of the text, explaining why it is or is not effective.
- 2. Analyze something else as a rhetorical text.** Find something other than a written text for your rhetorical analysis. You could study the architecture of a building, the design of a sculpture, the way someone dresses, or perhaps how someone acts. Using the rhetorical concepts of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*, discuss how designs or people can be persuasive in nonverbal ways. Write a paper or create a web site in which you explain the ways in which reason, credibility, and emotion can be conveyed without using words.
- 3. Critique an advertisement or advertising campaign.** Choose an advertisement or a series of advertisements that you enjoy or detest. Then write a rhetorical analysis in which you explain why the ad or series is effective or ineffective. You should embed a visual, like a screen shot, scan, or video, somewhere in your analysis so your readers can see what you are analyzing.

Go to **MyWritingLab** to complete this chapter's exercises and test your understanding of its objectives.