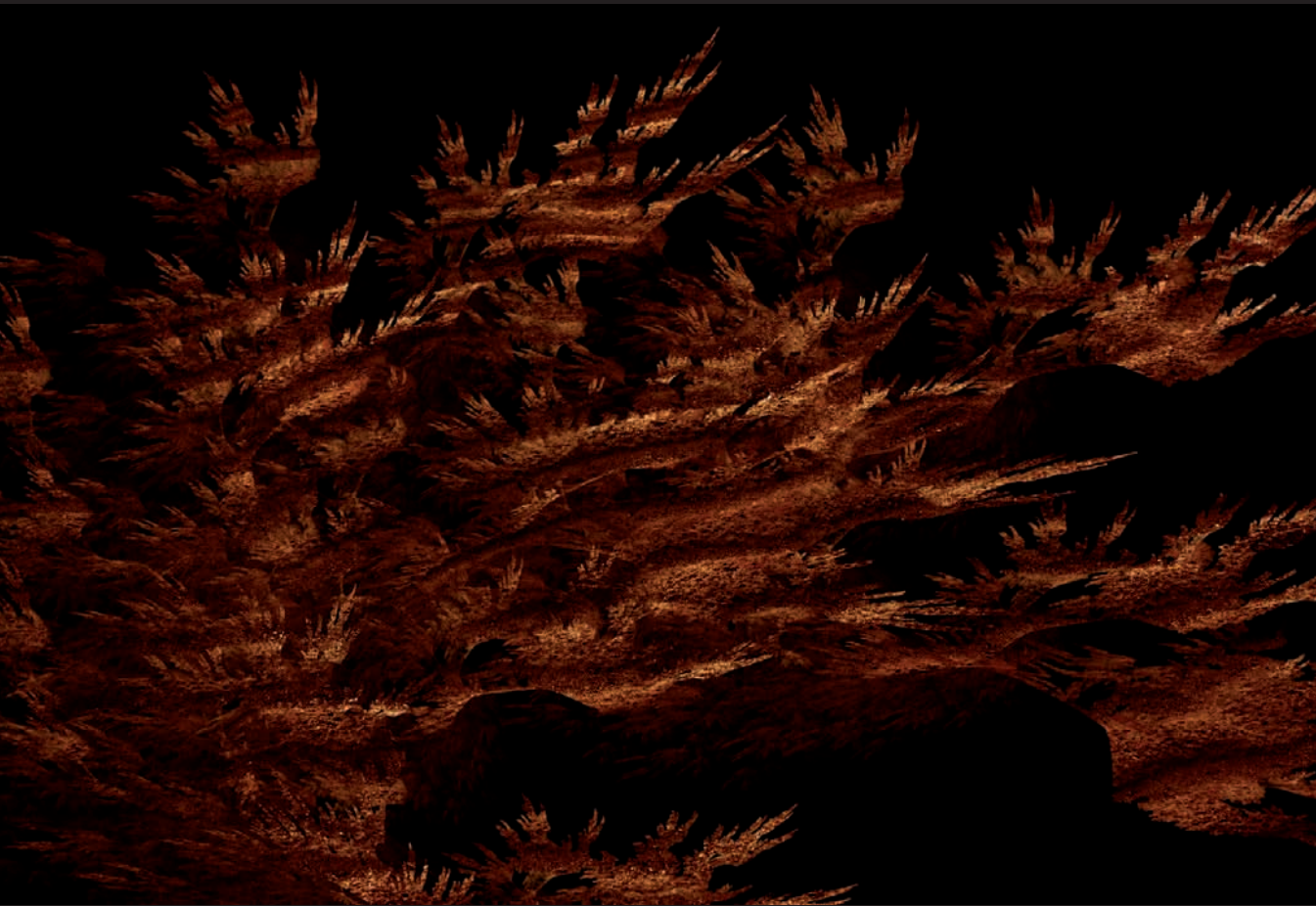


REASON TO WRITE



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into one's thoughts, and shows that person around, in an organized manner. This means that the house has an entry, which is your reader's introduction to you. Make a good first impression.

The shape of the house will depend on your organizing principle, but one thing will always be consistent: at the center of the house is a question. Each time you lead your guest into a particular room, and collect an item of value, you return your guest to this main room in order to show how all of it fits together.

Your organizing principle should give you the first step after the opening. You have broken the issue down; pick the first door that you will open. If your organizing principle is chronological, the rooms will be taken in a particular order determined by that order: earliest to latest, or latest to earliest, etc. If your organizing principle has types and subtypes, you may show your guest to a room, and then several smaller rooms connected to it, before returning to the main room.

Go slowly; take one room at a time, and be a gracious host. Do not rush through a particular room, and make sure to explain any items with which the reader might be unfamiliar. Explore all of its contents. If the room changes shape, let it—the nice thing about extended analogies is that, unlike a real house, one is free to reorganize it to accommodate that change without having to do any demolition.

Keep track of any details regarding source material, as you find them, and make sure to note all essential information for that source, so you do not have to find them later, which is time-consuming.

STEP 6: THE DRAFT GUIDE

Taking into account all of the functions of the essay, as well as the elements you already have in preparation to write the draft, format your paper and begin after the opening. Deal with the first issue called for by your organizing principle. As you progress, it can sometimes help if you put in subheadings; you can always suck them out, later.

Remember that your reader has not thought about this in the way that you have, and needs to be introduced to your ideas in a way that is steady and logical. Your tone should be objective, reasonable, and you should define any terms that are ambiguous. Do so in a casual way, and not: "X is defined as..." Take into account paragraph breaks (2-3 per page), and avoid emotional language.

There are certain places in which students commonly get stuck when learning how to write the essay, and they correspond, interestingly enough, with the number of pages a student has written, and the length of the final paper. A five-page paper often gets blocked shortly after page three; a seven-page paper often gets blocked after page five, and so on. Inevitably, a part of learning to write is to learn how to get around this blockage while avoiding two traps: 1) going off on a tangent; 2) repeating oneself.

These blocks usually have to do with two issues:

1. Field too broad

If a question is too broad, because a writer is trying to cover his or her bases in terms of meeting a length requirement, it will actually have the opposite effect, and make a paper too short. Specific insight into details, not generalities, is what generates things to say. Start out too broad, and you can only skim the surface of an issue.

2. Depth of analysis.

This issue relates to the first: without depth analysis into details, and the patterns that they offer, one quickly runs out of material. In other words, one can only say so much, if one only has only so much to say. This means one must return to the analysis, refine it, and go into more depth in regard to those specifics.

If one is dealing with a critical question, and has refined it, defined one's terms, and performed a competent analysis, length should not be an issue. If it is, it would probably be helpful to return to the previous guides—including the critical question guide—and make sure that one's question has not caused one to fall into a writing trap that would limit meaningful content.

Most of all, relax a bit, and treat the writing as exploratory; that's what drafts are for.

SECTION III

RHETORIC
REVISION
PUBLICATION



CHAPTER 8

COMMUNICATION AND RHETORIC

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ETHOS

PATHOS

LOGOS

1 “THAT’S JUST RHETORIC”

“Nobody outside of a baby carriage or a judge’s chambers believes in an unprejudiced point of view.”

—Lillian Hellman

Writing occurs in all sorts of places, for all sorts of reasons. The writing that occurs in the academy is involved in the study of rhetoric. Rhetoric is a part of the way in which Western discourse has figured out how to analyze and describe the way in which people reason and communicate across all kinds of contexts, inside and outside of the academy.

The word “rhetoric” has recently gotten a bad rap. It is often used to refer to empty jargon, or double-talk. This is ironic, if only because, if one has a background in rhetoric, one is actively trained to recognize exactly when, and by what means, one is being deceived through such things as language or images. It is those who are not trained in rhetoric who usually end up being persuaded by the manipulation that can occur within communication, because such people often simply don’t recognize that the manipulation is occurring.

To address this routine misuse of the term rhetoric, William Safire draws from *The Dictionary of Slang, Jargon, and Cant* for a word that distinguishes between “rhetoric,” and the misuse of the word in popular discourse. He calls empty, evasive talk designed to obscure meaning *bloviation*. He says: “If [by rhetoric] you mean ‘bloviating,’ get off ‘rhetoric’s’ back: we need ‘rhetoric’ to do a job that no other word does well” (3).

Rhetoric is both its own discipline, and also fundamentally interdisciplinary in nature. As an analytical and practical tool, rhetoric is applicable to the hard and soft sciences, and to the humanities. Yet it does not stop there. Rhetoric is just as at home in the “rhetoric of popular culture” as it is in the “rhetoric of business communication” as it is in “the rhetoric of science.”

Rhetoric and logic are both the basis of, and also open up new ways to understand, information in all academic disciplines. At one time, the teaching of logic (now reduced to the teaching of forms of mathematics), and the teaching of rhetoric (now reduced to the teaching of debate, formulaic writing, and grammar) would have been as fundamental to education as learning to read, as Michael Holzmann comments:

By good writing, then, we meant...rhetoric. In antiquity, rhetoric *was* education, the leading out of the child from the private world of the

family...to the social and political worlds. Learning to write well...was the necessary preparation for what was seen as the only truly human existence: that of a participant in the social life of the community and the political life of the state.

Because rhetoric is, in part, the study of logic expressed within language, which is what we used to mean by “argumentation,” rhetoric is a part of the study of human communication.

Communication occurs all of the time. Music can communicate emotion. Facial expressions can communicate states of mind. Striking someone can communicate anger. Speaking and writing can communicate ideas. In other words, writing is often communication, but not all communication is written down. It helps to get a sense of what qualifies as communication.

Communication:

In rhetoric, *communication* is defined as an act that must involve a *speaker*, *audience*, *vehicle*, *message*, and *intention*. If the communication is designed to persuade, it can also involve what are called *appeals*.

speaker	The source of the message, whether that source is immediately present, or not. For example, the <i>sender</i> of an advertisement could be a corporation.
audience	The receiver of the message. For example, people in a car who read a bumper sticker, or the reader of a book, or someone who listens to a speech.
vehicle	The means by which the message is transmitted. For example: speech; writing; gesture; body language; singing; a visual image.
message	The content of that which is relayed from speaker to audience. For example: a child crying may contain a message of distress.
intention	The purpose of the speaker in conveying a message. For example, a person may sing a song of love-gone-wrong in the shower, and other people might hear that performance, but if the speaker does not <i>intend</i> to convey a message, it is not a communicative act.
appeal	The manner in which a speaker seeks to produce belief or action in an audience through suasion—dissuasion or

persuasion. Not all communication is persuasive in nature. For example, communication may be intended to educate, to entertain, or to comment.

Think about the last thing that you heard, or read, or viewed, that really blew you away: a speech, a lecture, a reading, or even the lyrics to a song. Most of us have, at one point or another in our lives, stumbled across language or images that have made us stop in our tracks and really think.

EVER WONDERED?

The words *affect* and *effect* are often confused. *Affect* is the verb, as in “He *affected* her.” *Effect* is the noun, as in: “The *effect* was that she blushed.”

If the **effect** is profound, there is a kind of intimacy that is generated between yourself and the message; you may feel as if it perfectly expresses an idea that you hold, or it moves you emotionally, or it helps you to form your value system.

One does not walk away from such an experience with the feeling of having engaged in a remote intellectual exercise. Rather, it affects you in other ways: it might reaffirm beliefs that you already held, create a sense of belonging, or make you look at something in a new light.

DEFINITION

suasion: a communicative act intended to compel belief or action in the audience, whether persuasion or dissuasion

When that happens, it’s pleasurable. Good critical writing is rhetorically effective. It makes you think. Great critical prose can alter the worldview of an audience that responds to it. That is what rhetoric intends by its use of the term **suasion**.

Rhetoric is, in part, the study of communication, and is especially adept at providing tools for analysis of communication that is specifically designed to compel another person or persons to act or believe in a certain way. All communication is rhetorical, and rhetoric is especially helpful for studying communication that attempts to compel belief or action. In this way, writing is often rhetorical, but not all rhetoric is written down.

The contexts in which persuasion or dissuasion occur are pretty broad. It doesn’t just cover a lawyer in a courtroom who is arguing a case to a jury in order to persuade that jury to return a verdict of “guilty,” but also a child whining to a parent for an ice cream cone in order to persuade the parent to purchase it for him or her.

It includes an essay that tries to persuade a reader that a given question has a given answer, but it also includes a police officer waving a driver around an accident in order to dissuade the driver from blocking traffic.

It includes a political speech designed to persuade people to vote for a certain candidate, but it also includes an advertisement in a popular magazine that is designed to persuade people to buy a certain product.

It includes a scientific treatise published in a scientific journal that proposes experimentation in stem cell research, and it also includes a conversation at a dinner table between two friends about whether or not stem cell research is ethically sound.

Strange as it may seem, you don't need language to have rhetoric. It is not that every act of communication is persuasive, but rather that persuasive acts of communication can occur in a lot of different ways. One of the first steps to understanding rhetoric is being able to identify which messages are designed to persuade, and which serve another purpose. Let's take some examples:

Images

- An image of a child on a fundraising pamphlet can be designed to persuade people to donate money.
- A painting of a landscape may not be designed to persuade, but merely to give pleasure.

Gestures

- A gesture that involves someone pointing to a door may be designed to persuade a person to get out of the room.
- A rude gesture on the freeway, to another driver, may not be designed to persuade anyone, but merely to comment.

Road signs

- A road sign can be designed to persuade drivers to obey a traffic law, such as stopping at a stop sign.
- A sign on the road giving directions to a party may not be designed to persuade, but merely to give information.