

SAMPLE FRAMING

Your Name: Steve Strang

RISH ROBERTS-MILLER, "UNDERSTANDING MISUNDERSTANDINGS"

Opening #1: So you want to know how to write a successful first paper in this class? Trish Roberts-Miller flat-out tells us how in her essay, "Understanding Misunderstanding."

Opening#2: What the heck have we gotten ourselves into? What do we know about analyzing a text rhetorically? Fortunately, Trish Roberts-Miller's "Understanding Misunderstandings" is a big first step toward helping us learn just how to do it.

CLOSE READING

1. **Who is her Intended (Target Audience)?**

- a. Students in her advanced rhetorical analysis class.
- b. Evidence is internal
 - i. Humorous phrasings—faster than a squirrel up a tree
 - ii. She says so: "I am writing this information for my students" (par 2, 2)
 1. Talking about actual & implied author, "This is confusing, I know, but will probably become clearer in class" par 2, 3)
 - iii. Type of advice she gives
 1. Avoid taking disagreement personally or attacking someone personally (par. 6, 1)
 2. Limit your analysis or it will be too long & complicated (par. 5,2)
 - iv. Says "many of you have probably had teachers (especially in high school) (par 3,3)
 - v. Says your reasons for writing a paper slamming Plato might be to create a writing sample for graduate school
 - vi. Most obvious: references to "this class" & "Whatever background research you do must be listed on the 'Works Consulted' page"—teacher to student or what! (par 6, p.10)
- c. Evidence is also external
 - i. I got this from her class site, not from a journal

2. **Who is intended audience?** In this case, also her students, so she did a good job

3. **What is her Major Purpose(s)**

- a. She is giving her students the broad scope of rhetorical analysis plus specific advice for writing in her class.

4. **What is her Research Question or Task ?**

- a. Not really applicable here, but it would be something like "What is rhetorical analysis and how do we do it?" Her task is to introduce concepts of rhetorical analysis and academic writing to her students

5. **What is her answer to her Research Question and what is her Major Claim?**

- a. They are the same: Rhetorical criticism is the analysis of numerous elements, and we write good academic prose to convey our analysis.
- 6. **Secondary claims**
 - a. Advice to students about academic writing, types of audiences, etc.
- 7. **What Types of Evidence does she use?**
 - a. examples from pre-Civil War rhetors, examples from her reading (the book that alienated every reader), examples from current history (9/11, Bush), hypothetical examples (Chester and Hubert)
 - b. I had to deduce that Chester was a dog. Once I got the joke, it was fine. Other evidence worked well for me
- 8. **What are the Key Terms, Concepts and Ideas?**
 - a. Usefulness of disagreements (pars. 2-4, p. 1)
 - b. 5 things to consider in communication triangle: author, audience, textual strategies, immediate context and larger context (background) (par. 1, p.2)
 - i. Rhetorical critics usually focus on relationships among two or more of these (par. 5, p 2)
 - c. **READ:** Two versions of AUTHOR-- bottom p. 2 ("Author/Intention)→par. 2, p. 3)
 - i. *Actual author* requires historical-biographical research & students should not focus on it; *implied author* (also called *textual author* in par. 3,p.3)is deduced from the text and is what critics focus on (par.7, p2. → par. 3, p.3)
 - d. **READ:** Types of audiences (1st par under "Audience,"
 - e. Authorial intention (par. 4, p.3)
 - f. Ethos & Intention (p. 2-p.7, but esp. par5,p.6-top of 7))
 - g. Advice to student writers
 - i. Do **not** talk about what an author *believes*; talk about what she says (par.2, p.4)
 - ii. Students have trouble arguing because they assume everyone shares their values (par 1,p.9)
 - iii. Student critics should focus on the implied audience
 - iv. To analyze textual intention, try to summarize main point (par.2,p.9)— intros usually end with statement of the problem, a thesis/research(SMS) question, most often a hypothesis
 - v. Find thesis in Conclusion(par 3, p.9)
 - h. Argument (changing someone's perception) & display rhetoric (looking good by agreeing with audience, par.7, p.4)
 - i. Stasis are propositions, questions, or assumptions that are at issue (par.8, p.4→top of p. 7)
 - j. Topos (topics, ways of making an argument, par 8, p. 9)
 - k. Deliberating (speak truth, listen to the other) vs. bargaining (trying to get my way) (par. 2-4.p.6)
 - l. Identification (par 7, p.6)
 - m. Audience (par 1, p.7→bottom p. 8)—actual, intended, implied (textual). Student critics should focus on the implied audience

- n. An inductive structure of an essay suggests rhetor sees audience as hostile (delays revealing thesis until after evidence is given) (par. 4,p.8)
 - o. Textual intention=try convince a particular audience to feel x toward your position
 - p. Metadiscourse, structure, recurrent topoi, style are best clues about textual intention (par. 5, p. 9)
 - q. Rhetors usually move from known to new (par. 6, p.9). Do you see any place where she herself does this?
 - r. Figures of speech (par. 5,p.10)
- 9. What is her Arrangement:**
- a. Intro strategy: Starts with paraphrase of I. A. Richards, then immediately into advantages of disagreements and the benefits of doing rhetorical analysis your proposition (par. 7,p.8→ par 5, p.11)
 - b. Uses headings
 - c. No lit review
 - d. No real conclusion—she simply stops after explaining “background”
- 10. What assumptions does she make?:**
- a. Stated: Rhetorical criticism/analysis is valuable
 - b. Implied:
 - i. students want to learn it,
 - ii. it can be taught,
 - iii. students need advice about what to look for and how to write
- 11. How would you describe her overall Style and tone:**
- a. Tone overall is relaxed, engaging, instructive. Uses occasional humorous examples (Faster than a squirrel up a tree (par 5, 1)
 - b. Starts paragraphs with provocative statement (# we need disagreements)
 - c. Uses Chester & Hubert to illustrate
- 12. Connection between this text & others?**
- a. We’ve only seen Strang’s brilliant “Rhetoric Tool Chest.” Roberts-Miller gives a lot of advice about actual writing (Strang doesn’t). They seem to agree on most things they cover in common. Strang gives more attention to Audience.

What are some MOVES WE ourselves CAN USE?

1. Using her own article to illustrate the communication triangle (Par.2, p. 2)
2. Her use of examples—par. 3, p 4
3. Uses Chester and Hubert **throughout for her examples**, thus creating a sense of coherence, a thread (e.g., Chester running for president& a key criterion for president is being obsessed with a red ball—par 7,p.8). So we can create a situation or characters to illustrate our several points throughout
4. We can use what we know for illustrations the same way she uses the rhetoric of American slavery/abolition period

LEADING THE DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe her ethos?

- a. **Sagacity:** her advice seems sound so she knows a lot about rhetorical analysis; she anticipates how most people would react & hence shows her knowledge of human nature (e.g., par.4, p.1, “It may seem strange”; “the more that a disagreement is ...personalized ...the more likely it is that people will attack without listening” par. 6, p. 1). It seems clear that she is a specialist in 19th century American rhetoric with the references to slavery rhetoric)
 - b. **Good moral character:** admits the actual author/implied author is a “confusing” and suggests there will be further discussion about it in class, par. 2, p.3)
 - c. **Good will toward her audience:** she gives useful, practical advice (e.g., how to avoid writers block, par.4, p.4; how to write a successful rhetorical analysis—e.g., par. 6-7, p.3); she is inclusive (par.5, p.1: “We’ve all been in this kind of conversation”); Engaging, makes the audience feel included and at ease with her use of humor (whether the squirrels are in league with small dogs [par. 2,p.5]), accessible (makes her advice clear and easy to understand),
2. How would you describe her use of Pathos?:
 - a. Humor, but not much other pathos.
 3. How would you describe her use of Logos?
 - a. not a lot of actual logos. She uses some examples to illustrate her claims, but not many points are developed.
 4. What is the most useful advice that she gave to you personally about writing and/or about rhetoric?

Provocative Quotations

1. Par. 3, p. 3: “Many of you have probably had teachers (especially in high school) who emphasized the actual author and therefore required historical-biographical research. But, for reasons we can talk about in class, if you want, I generally discourage historical-biographical research as time-consuming, complicated, and inefficient. Instead, stress the textual author and textual analysis.”
 - a. Is that true about your high school teachers? In my day, the author was the author—we didn’t have to do research—we just said stuff like “Thoreau believes...”
 - b. Why is the distinction between actual and textual author so important in rhetorical analysis, according to Roberts-Miller?
 - i. Because we are writing in pro field as academics and accuracy is key.
 - ii. Because confusing the textual author with the actual author can make us “vote for the man” and end getting a really bad policy or president, or buying something that is actually bad for us
 - c. What is the significance of the phrase “if you want”?
 - i. It builds her ethos—she wants to be transparent in her decisions & is willing to explain them but she personally doesn’t think this requires more info since what she has said is, she hopes, sufficient

2. Par. 2, p. 4: "...rather than talk about what an author 'believes,'" write about what she "says"
 - a. What difference does it make? Aren't these words synonyms?
 - i. Because many people (including politicians, advertisers, our friends even) don't believe what they say—they lie to us to get us to do what they want or to give what they want (and at times they even lie to themselves). All politicians since I've been aware have claimed to want to help the middle class, and yet the middle class has shrunk alarmingly in the last 20 years. We must never confuse what we see or hear with the truth about the person
3. Par. 5, p. 4: "So, **informing** an audience means telling them things they've never heard, and **persuading** means changing their understanding, and **convincing** means changing their behavior"
 - a. What are the implications of her separating persuading from convincing?
 - i. We need to be very clear what our own purpose is when we argue and, as critics, what the rhetor's actual purpose is.
 - ii. For any policy argument, we need to shoot for convincing
 - iii. Many people are persuaded of this or that, but if they don't act on it, what good is it?
4. Everyone turn to the last paragraph page 5. Everyone got it? I read it.
 - a. Can you think of situations where people dismiss facts, etc.? (SMS—rape and sexual harassment on campus, underage drinking, banks that act unethically, politicians who take bribes, Brian Williams "misremembered," Clinton did not have sex with Monica Lewinski (definition of sex), etc.)
 - i. Fact—disagree about whether students use each other's p-sets
 - ii. Definition—yes they do, but it's not cheating, it's collaboration
 - iii. Quality/Value/Evaluation—okay, it's cheating, but it is very rare or it is trivial
 - iv. Policy-okay, yeah it's cheating, it's widespread, but there's no way to stop it (or by calling attention to it, we cause more problems for school etc. than we solve
5. Everyone turn to p. 7, beginning of "Audience" section.
 - a. **Read:** 1st par.
 - b. **Ask:** What is the difference between *actual audience*, *intended audience*, and *implied (textual) audience*?
 - i. **Actual audience:** people who hear speech or read journal
 - ii. **Intended audience:** the one the rhetor thinks she is writing for
 - iii. **Implied/textual audience:** the one critics can deduce from evidence within the text itself
 - c. **READ:** last par. p. 7
 - d. **READ:** last 2 pars. of the section, p. 8
6. Let's look at the **last par. on the bottom of page 6**. Everyone got it?
 - a. I Read it.
 - b. "people generally see themselves as members of groups" read whole last par. bottom of page 6
 - c. What **in-groups** do you belong to?

- i. academics, liberals, progressives, feminists, the educated, Massachusettsians, New Englanders, readers, open-minded people, NYRB readers, temperate children of the 1960s, middle class with lower class origins, NY Giant fans, moderate football fans in general, animal lover
- d. What do consider **outgroups** in your world?
 - i. Bigots, racists, sexists, violent criminals, fanatics of any kind, close-minded people
- e. Has anyone ever used identification to persuade you?
 - i. As pet owner, as liberal, as Giants fan, as reader, as feminist

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