

## 5. An Essay of Critical Rhetorical Analysis

Due: 15th class, 4/6 (T)—bring 4 copies to class

Mandatory Revision Due: 16th class, 4/11 (R)-- EMAIL me a copy before class

Optional Revision Last Possible Date: 5/16 (R)

Length: 1500-2500 words, ~6-12 double-spaced pages each).

Directions: Systematically examine the theme and 2-4 units of analysis in a text in order to determine if that text succeeds in its stated (or implied) purpose(s) and to explain how rhetoric works.

- o A Unit of Analysis is one significant rhetorical element (see “Rhetoric Tool Chest”)

Procedure:

- Select 1 of the 4 essays below to analyze:
- Dillard’s “Living Like Weasels” (245-251)
- Hazlitt’s “On the Pleasures of Hating” (365-376)
- Porter’s “The Necessary Enemy” (603-608)
- Singer’s “Animal Liberation” (handout)
- Develop a Research Question about rhetoric. Your Research Question should not mention the particular text by name—e.g., for King’s “Letter,” one Research Question might be: “How does a rhetor use metaphors to develop an appeal to pathos and to reinforce his/here text’s theme?”
- You have unique analytical and ethical insights to offer, but you have to do the exploration and thinking required to develop those insights into a convincing and compelling way.
- Read the text carefully, noting various units of analysis and deciding on the theme(s).
- Select 2-4 units (no more), and go through the text again, looking for and listing all examples of each unit. (e.g., you would make a list of all the metaphors in the text).
- Then categorize them (e.g., metaphors of light, of modern vs. old-fashion, of salvation).
- The list and categories, however, are merely raw data. You need to answer, “So what?” Decide/ discover the impact that unit has on the meaning and effect of the whole text .

Structure:

Your essay should have the following 6 sections (use the headings). Remember that each section has its own purpose, so don’t evaluate in the analysis section, etc. Here are the sections:

- Intro –an Intro does the following:
  - o Names the author and the document and its original source.
  - o Establishes kairos—why should we particular readers care about this particular text at this particular time? Your Research Question should be a big help with this task.
  - o Explain the rhetorical situation (audience, context, occasion, where the document was first published or delivered as a speech, etc.). The Credits (ESSAYS, 829 ff) will give you most of that information. Don’t assume that an older text no longer applies to our modern world.
  - o Use internal evidence within the text to describe the implied (ideal) audience.
  - o This audience analysis should include a forecast of the next 2 sections of your essay (“Author X’s theme, his/her use of units q and y indicate that the implied audience for

this text would be people who ... (e.g., already agree with him/her; people who are skeptical about his/her thesis; people who do not initially see the relevance of the thesis to themselves; people who are curious; people who share characteristics K and V with the author, etc.”)

- Summary of the rhetor’s purpose, thesis, theme, and major points (1-2 paragraphs).
- Analysis—1-4 paragraphs dedicated to analyzing each unit of analysis (use a subheading for each unit of analysis). The paragraph(s) should explain that unit’s effect/effects (intended by author and felt by you). Explain not only what the effects are but why the unit of analysis causes those effects.
- Insight: 1-4 paragraphs that explain what this text reveals about rhetoric and, if applicable, ethics.
- Evaluation: 1-4 paragraphs that explain what you thought of the author’s argument and presentation and why.
- Reflection: 1-4 paragraphs that answer such questions as: What is the text’s relevance to my work and my intellectual life? Whose interests are being served by the composition and preservation of this text?

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