

13.3 Rhetorical Analysis

Writing about Images

Images are visual texts. They speak through visual signs and are representations of the human world in which we live. As you begin to explore how a specific image communicates, you might want to think about where the dominance is located in the text and how it speaks. What is the relationship of the dominance to the other objects in the image? Think about the elements in the text and identify how the narrative is displayed. Is it a narrative of phenomenon (a monumental occurrence) or is it a narrative of pathos? Is the narrative told through the setting, the action, or a relationship? Maybe it is a combination of all the above.

Once you establish the organizational scheme of the text, then you want to begin to employ your critical thinking to explain what and how the image communicates. You might begin with two simple questions:

1. What do I see?
2. What do I wonder?

As you begin to wonder about the image, ask yourself what leads you to this questioning:

1. Where is your eye drawn?
2. What stands out for you?
3. What details seem interesting and why?
4. How does the image make you feel?
5. What is in the foreground and the background?
6. How do the elements of the image compliment or critique each other?
7. To what issue does the image seem to speak?
8. What does the image say, and how does the image say it?

For more information about writing about images, see Chapter 4.1.

Rhetorical Analysis Exercise 13C

Select one of the following images and write a well-organized paragraph discussing what idea is presented in the image and how this idea is presented. As you make your conclusions, please ask yourself the following: Why did I say that? How can I qualify that? As you do so, you will begin to clarify your thoughts and present them with concrete reasoning. Be sure to begin with a clear topic sentence, followed by specific details to explain that introductory sentence.







