Rhetorical Elements and Their Application (Narrative & Ethos)

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What is Rhetoric?

“The term rhetoric refers to a set of principles that explain and predict how people make meaning and interact… [and also to] the artful use of those ever-present rhetorical principles.” (Downs 460)

What is rhetoric in practice?

- An “operating system” for human interaction (Downs 460)
- Distinguishes what is considered “knowledge” and its transmission
- A way of identification (Downs 475)
- A way to make actions from words or expression

Introduction to example document

- Context: Minecraft Modpack
- Audience: People looking for a new pack to spend their time on

- Story:
    1. 1800s Petrochemical Company uses unethical/unregulated methods to replace workers, extract resources without regulation, and ultimately failing.
    2. Audience plays a part in reviving the company's practices, leading to a desolate world.

Introduction to narrative as a rhetorical element

- Form of identification
- Telling a story
- Informal expression
- Giving “presence” to a work (Downs 469)

> “One powerful possibility of narratives — recognized by rhetorical theorists from Aristotle
> to Chaim Perelman in the mid-twentieth century — is the ability of stories to make abstract concepts present, to “bring them before the eyes” of rhetors encountering the
> narrative.” (Downs 469)

How did the document use narrative? And how does it benefit?

- Expresses ideas or themes through a story
- Informal and no limitation of expression
- Presence through medium

Introducing ethos as a rhetorical element

- Appeal to the rhetor's credibility
  - What is credibility?
  - "[Aristotle] suggested that rhetors get a sense of each other's ethos in three ways: by assessing their expertise, their moral character, and their goodwill toward other rhetor" (Downs 475)

- "How does who you are influence what you're saying and how others [should] respond?" (Downs 475)

"Most decision-making is ultimately based on values, deeply held (sometimes entirely unconscious) beliefs about what is desirable, necessary, important, pleasurable, and valuable, as well as what is dangerous, destructive, contrary to self-interest, painful, or unpleasant." (Downs 469)

How did ethos work in the document? How did the document benefit?

- Appeals to audience's sense of morality
- Common ideal of sustainable business
- Personal association

How does the use of rhetoric tie in with the “goal” of the document?

- Identification
- Different methods to express the same idea
- Sharing or making knowledge

How would understanding rhetoric make a better writer?

- **Different modes of expression allow for flexibility**
- **Knowing of how people derive their knowledge, or accept knowledge**
- Appealing to a certain “context” or “time” for the audience to associate with
- Helps to understand what values an audience has, and how to proceed appropriately
- **Provides methods on how to write with a goal in mind**

Works Cited

Downs, Doug. "Rhetoric: Making Sense of Human Interaction and Meaning-Making." Writing about writing: A College Reader, edited by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017, pp. 458-481.