

8-2022

Visual Rhetoric and The English Careers Website

Ifeoma C. Oforah

Cal State San Bernardino

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VISUAL RHETORIC AND THE ENGLISH CAREERS WEBSITE

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English and Writing Studies:
Public and Professional Writing

by
Ifeoma Oforah
August 2022

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Approved by:

Dr. Sunny Hyon, Committee Chair , English

Dr. Thomas Girshin, Committee Member

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ABSTRACT

We live in a fast-paced, visually-saturated 21st-century world where people want to access the latest information as quickly and conveniently as possible. Images play a role in efficient communication because they can convey concepts that words alone cannot. The pairing of visual content with written text is ubiquitous in everyday communication. Visual content functions to supplement and complement the written word, further engaging the audience and creating a thorough understanding. The persuasiveness of visual content cannot be ignored. This thesis analyzes the pictorial elections I made as an intern for the English Department using the concepts I gleaned from researching visual rhetoric and multimodal composing.

Keywords: resonance, epideictic rhetoric, visual metonymy, modal affordances, visual topoi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Sunny Hyon for guiding, supporting, and assisting throughout the thesis writing process. The patience and conscientious feedback she generously provided during this journey are invaluable.

Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Girshin for the resource and the commentary he provided to guide my revision.

Lastly, I am thankful for the CSUSB reference librarians who were vital to my success because of their help during the research process.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER ONE:LITERATURE REVIEW	1
Introduction	1
Visual Rhetoric and The Power of the Visual.....	3
Visual Rhetoric in Advertising	6
Multimodality and Visual Rhetoric.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: VISUAL RHETORIC CONCEPTS AND INTERNSHIP REFLECTIONS AND ANALYSIS	18
The Objective of My Internship	18
The Objective of My Thesis	18
Image Analysis	20
Copy Editor	20
Advertising Copywriter	23
Event Planner.....	26
Cyber Threat Intelligence Analyst	29
Video Game Writer.....	32
Conclusion	33
REFERENCES	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Office Plant near Desk Sign.	20
Figure 2. Vehicles on Roadway near Buildings.	23
Figure 3. White Ceramic Dinner Set.	26
Figure 4. Black Laptop Computer with White Paper.	29
Figure 5. Woman Playing Video Game	32

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Fall 2021, I completed an internship related to my major's public and professional writing emphasis. The primary responsibility of my internship on the English Department's career webpage was to renovate its appearance by making it more multimodal and user-friendly. The objective was to capture the interest and maintain the attention of current and prospective English majors. Ideally, the webpage would leave a remarkable first impression on students and illustrate the appeal of the endless career possibilities if they choose to earn an English degree. The days of perusing booklets, brochures, and pamphlets for information on a major are ending. The English Department, therefore, needs to be cognizant of the 21st-century value of accessing information digitally as quickly and conveniently as possible through whatever device is most familiar. Miller and McVee (2012) stated, "the millennial generation...immersed in popular and online cultures, thinks of messages and meanings multimodally, rarely in terms of printed words alone" (p. 2). The decision to revamp the department's career webpage with more visual content has been an intelligent response to today's accessible mobile culture.

During this internship, I had three areas of responsibility: selecting images and videos for each of the 40 career pathways, writing a job description, and interviewing a CSUSB alumnus. Regarding my first responsibility, the idea was to

select images and videos to complement the career pathway job descriptions, which can be seen under the various tiles here. Visual content provides information that written text cannot, and it appeals to another bracket of possible prospective students. The visual content was shared and organized in a Google drive between my internship coordinator and me. Reading the job descriptions gave me ideas on what visual content to select. My internship coordinator advised me on ways to avoid redundancy and clichés in my visual selections. The visual content was not required to be literal, but it had to be stimulating and complementary to the textual information. The internship coordinator and I worked as a team to evaluate which videos and images I had selected best fit the content of the career pathway pages. These experiences selecting visual material for the CSUSB English Careers webpages propelled me to my thesis project: contextualizing the choices I made in terms of theories relevant to the M.A. in English & Writing Studies program. Specifically, my thesis aims to reflect on my internship work in the context of the scholarship of visual rhetoric and multimodal composing. To this end, my thesis will first provide definitions for visual rhetoric and multimodal composing and demonstrate their power in argument and relevance to 21st-century visual culture. Visual culture denotes the variety of practices of creating and disseminating various images and ideas that "underlie visual perception, practices of looking and visual representations" (Homrigh & Isekenmeier, 2016, pp. 1-2). I will then analyze my experience

selecting visual material as an intern using concepts in visual rhetoric and multimodal composing.

Visual Rhetoric and The Power of the Visual

The basic principle of rhetoric is “finding ways to form or alter the communicated idea as to be suitable in different situations” (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, as cited in Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 630). According to Blair (2004), the primary purpose of rhetoric is to persuade a person to change their attitude, conduct, and mind on a given topic. Historically, arguments and rhetoric have been associated with verbal and written language (Blair, 2004). Visual rhetoric, however, is the use of images as an argument. Some have doubted visual communication's ability to act as a "legitimate tool of rational persuasion" because the visual cannot clearly present a proposition and is often equivocal (Blair, 2004, p. 46). Blair (2004), however, believes the visual can "express propositions" (p.49). Although images may be dismissed as devoid of verbal information, they are, in fact, complex figurative arguments because visual messages can entice, exhort, and explain (Scott, 1994). Visual arguments provide reasons for people to change their attitudes, beliefs, and conduct.

Ancient rhetoricians have acknowledged the visual's "extraordinary effect on emotions and memory" and its "special powers" (Kjeldsen, 2021, p.1). In modern times, photojournalism and televised news also illustrate the power of visual content. The rhetorical power of images lies in their ability to let viewers live vicariously (Kjeldsen, 2021). It is one thing to hear or read about an atrocity

or tragedy, but it is another to see images of the victims, the chaos, and the resulting damage. Photography is believed to be "showing the truth of things" and "how things really looked" (Rose, 2013, p.87). Blair (2004) also points out that the visual has the power to evoke "powerful involuntary responses in the normal viewer" (p. 54). It can "prime and trigger an already existing cognitive and affective dimension" (Domke et al., 2002, as cited in Kjeldsen, 2021).

The rhetorical power of visuals lies in their demonstrative or epideictic nature (Kjeldsen, 2021). Epideictic means to "display or point" (Kjeldsen, 2021, p. 9). *Epideictic rhetoric* is among the three rhetorical discourses identified by Aristotle (Richardson, 2018). The purpose of *epideictic rhetoric* (also known as ceremonial rhetoric) is to prove that someone or something is "worthy of admiration or disapproval" (Richardson, 2018, p.173). *Epideictic rhetoric* primarily "praises or blames a subject and relates this topic to the present time" (Lauer, 2015, p. 5 as cited in Richardson, 2018, p.173). *Epideictic rhetoric* may not explicitly call for change, but it provides support and fidelity to "existing view-points, attitudes and values" (Kjeldsen, 2021, p.1). In this way, it is grounded in a culture's mainstream values (Blakely, 2011). Verbal or visual *epideictic rhetoric* solidify a common identity and meaning within a community, and they function by "display[ing] and reinforc[ing] the values and view-points that a group already share[s]" (Kjeldsen, 2021, p.9). Specifically, people, ideas, and objects that adhere to the culture's mainstream values are praised, and those perceived as countercultural are blamed or criticized (Blakely, 2011).

Richardson (2011) completed a critical discourse analysis of the British National Holocaust Memorial Day, arguing that events such as national ceremonies are an example of *epideictic rhetoric*. The objective of the British Holocaust Memorial Day was "to move from the past to the present, from the particular to the universal" (Cesarani, 2000, p. 63 as cited in Richardson, 2018, p. 172). The goal was to personalize the catastrophe of the Holocaust and present it as a universally human event. To present the Holocaust as a human tragedy rather than a solely Jewish tragedy is an example of the use of *epideictic rhetoric* to appeal to common humanity. Although Holocaust remembrance ceremonies are presented as educational events on Memorial Day, the educational atmosphere implicitly persuades the audience to glean messages from the facts of the genocide. Holocaust memorials have a didactic purpose of teaching morals.

Epideictic discourse is the strongest when presented multimodally. In the case of the Holocaust commemoration, a complex multimodal speech that featured color, music, and movement expressed a particular sentiment and set a solemn mood for the audience (Sauer, 2012 as cited in Richardson, 2011, p. 175). Specifically, Richardson mentions that the Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration achieved epideictic persuasion through visual means such as "iconic photographs" and "archival films," which served as "visual reminders of the people being commemorated and the historic events in which they were involved" (p.175). A montage of images solidified the horrors of the Holocaust

through “black-and-white iconography of the Holocaust: camps, corpses, barbed wire, emaciated bodies, striped ‘pyjama-style’ suits and soldiers” (Richardson, 2018, p.178),

As a rhetorical device, *epideictic rhetoric* functions to implicitly evoke "a collective recognition of shared social responsibility to uphold [cultural] values" (Kampf & Katriel, 2016, as cited in Richardson, 2011, pp.173-174). *Epideictic rhetoric* facilitates social awareness (Hyde, 2005, p. 11 as cited in Richardson, 2011, p. 174). It strengthens shared cultural values and helps to foster new belief systems for the future. Memorials are an example of *epideictic rhetoric's* attempt to relate the past to the present. The rhetoric of the Holocaust memorial celebrated universal values such as tolerance, acceptance, and unity. It disapproved of the ugly traits of human nature, such as hate, racial injustices, and division.

Visual Rhetoric in Advertising

In this section, I discuss research on visual rhetoric in advertising, as concepts in this work have relevance for my analysis of images collected during my internship. Rhetorical devices employed in advertising influence the public's attitude about and judgment of a product or service (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 629). According to Scott (1994), advertising images are a rhetorical device. An advertisement's use of images is intentional. Pictures function as "symbolic artifacts that [are] constructed from the conventions of a particular culture" (Scott, 1994, p. 252). Scott (1994) proposes that "visual elements must

be capable of representing concepts, abstractions, actions, metaphors, and modifiers, such that they can be used in the invention of a complex argument” (p. 253). The images are used for a purpose, and the target audience possesses the shared cultural knowledge to interpret the intent of the visual. Cognitive engagement is involved when interpreting images, and they are not "unproblematically absorbed into the consumer's mind" (Scott, 1994, p. 253).

When designing advertisements, the creator must know the pictorial conventions and visual experiences they share with the target audience (Scott, 1994). Advertisements are "complex cultural artifacts" (Scott, 1994, p. 269). From the advertisement, viewers see what ideas, people, and things are celebrated in society. Visual arguments often rely on pop culture icons to present a palatable form of information to the average consumer (Homrich, & Isekenmeier, 2016). Visual arguments should use "motifs, atmospheres, and style" which trigger feelings of familiarity within the audience (Homrich, & Isekenmeier, 2016, p.2). For advertisements to be persuasive, their content must seem familiar and culturally relevant. The purpose of pairing culturally relevant images with written text is to connect to the everyday lives of the advertisement's consumers and to relate to an already existing schema (Homrich, & Isekenmeier, 2016).

Advertisers are aware of certain cultural conventions referenced through visuals that will generate positive responses. Advertisements featuring a sunset or a fluffy kitten will most likely generate a positive response because of the

positive associations attributed to both (Scott, 1994). Blair (2004) explains the power of evoking involuntary responses from the average viewer. He provided an example of how a Pepsi commercial featured a set of twin boys around age three along with a set of puppies “frolicking together across a slightly sloping lawn” where “the puppies were jumping to lick the boy’s faces” and “the little boys were giggling with delight” (p. 54). Together the young animals and children tumbled and ran down the slightly sloped lawn. Although the image of puppies and young children playing is not explicitly tied to Pepsi, the cuteness factor reeled in viewers and generated positive responses.

The Pepsi advertisement conveys concepts through the use of *visual metonymy*. Metonymy is the substitution of "some attributive or suggestive word for what is actually meant, as a means of showing associations between the word and its referent" (Willerton, 2005, p. 11). *Visual metonymy* is when a visual image is used to represent a concept. For example, in the Pepsi advertisement, the toddlers and the puppies illustrated the ideas of youth and innocence. These traits are universally cherished. The Pepsi advertisement uses *visual metonymy* to "influence [consumers] via psychological associations" because viewers transfer the good feelings generated by the ad to the Pepsi brand (Blair, 2004, p. 58). The questionable relevance of the images to the product is overlooked because the emotional response evoked—warmth and empathy—in the audience is strong.

Visual metonymy is employed when advertisers feature a well-liked celebrity in a commercial or advertisement. Consumers purchase the product because they desire the qualities associated with the celebrity, such as "fitness, wealth, glamor" (Rose, 2013, p. 76). Celebrities are often symbols of success and sources of inspiration. In contrast, everyday people's testimonials are persuasive because viewers can identify with them, so they are more likely to trust their opinions. Real people are believed to be simply sharing their honest experiences. Celebrity endorsement appeals to the coolness factor. Advertisements that feature celebrities are selling an image, not so much the product.

In advertisements, the visual and verbal "make meaning together, but they don't necessarily accomplish that by one form simply supplementing the other" (Fallon, 2019, p.42). Image and text coalesce to communicate to the audience. This process can be understood in terms of the concept of *resonance*. Stathakopoulos et al. (2008) defined *resonance* as a rhetorical device "grounded on the strict interaction between the visual and the verbal component of an ad" (p.631). Furthermore, *resonance* is based on the multiple meanings created by "the combination of the pictorial and the verbal element" of an advertisement (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p.638).

In visual communication, *resonance* is responsible for "enhanc[ing] a reader's experience and engagement" (Kelly, 2014, p. 211). *Resonance* challenges the reader. *Resonance* occurs when a connection is made with the

reader that "reach[es] beyond the barriers" or "hit[s] the right spot" (Kelly, 2014, p.212). The reader interacts and negotiates with the text to find meaning (Kelly, 2014). *Resonance* can also be characterized as an action-reaction or back-and-forth communication. It reinforces and reverberates. *Resonance* operates between" two...entities [that are]matched in some essential way" through "(repetition or interaction...) that reinforce each other to amplify the meaning of the text" (Kelly, 2014, p.216). *Resonance* can challenge one's opinions and draw one's memories, emotions, and prior experiences (Kelly, 2014). *Resonance* is how communication reaches the individual and what connection is established.

A characteristic of *resonance* is "an echoing or 'doubleness' of meaning" with an advertisement's structure (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 631). When the cooperation of the image and text "create an ambiance of ambiguity and incongruity," the advertisement is resonant (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p.631). The verbal should echo the meaning of the ad, and the image and text should be complementary. The verbal "interacts with [the pictorial information]" to amplify its meaning (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638). In visual texts, *resonance* enriches a reader's experience by "amplifying intended meaning and urging interpretive effort" (Kelly, 2014, p. 211). *Resonance* can be seen as a form of figurative language because within advertising, and it is "an implied comparison between two things that differ in nature but have something in common" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638)

Peter Stuyvesant's *Point of Touch* cigarette ad illustrates *resonance* at work. It features an image of three friends riding bikes "embedded in an enlarged cigarette packet" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638). By illustrating friendship and fun in the ad, the implication is that "the essence of social life are included in the specific cigarette brand" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638). The headline of this advertisement features wordplay, which gives the ad multiple meanings. The point of touch "refers to the company of friends or between them [company of friends] and the cigarette brand" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638). The interrelationship between the advertisement's visual and textual elements amplifies the ad's overtone that feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction, which are associated with fun times with friends, are associated with this particular cigarette brand. (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p.638).

A 1990s Max Factor ad illustrated the interplay between words and pictorial information in *resonance*. The Max Factor advertisement featured a divided photograph of the product and the product in use. On the left was a close-range image of an arrangement of lipstick tubes in tiered rows (Scott, 1994). The closeup on the lipsticks "subordinates the verbal material" (Scott, 1994, p. 254). Furthermore, the two tubes of lipstick toward the upper left center are the focal point, while the rest are indistinct (Scott, 1994). The right side photo of the product in use is a cropped photo centered on a model's "lips and chins at close range" (Scott, 1996, p. 255). The lips appear large, and there is a highly theatrical contrast between precisely applied bright red lipstick and the light beige

skin of the model. Beneath the lips are the taglines "hi density color" and "high definition lips" with an arrow connecting the two phrases (Scott, 1994, p. 255). The sharpness and focus of the photograph of the two lipstick echoes the claim of "high density" or "high definition" (Scott, 1994, p. 255). The placement and focus on the two tubes of lips towards the upper left of the spread and tagline in the lower was developed to follow a "conventional pattern of reading in Western culture" (Scott, 1994, p. 255). The reader's eyes would travel from left to right, from the arrangement of lipstick to the high contrasting lips, then settle on the tagline. The procession of the images echoes the tagline because it can be read that "high density color leads to...high definition lips" (Scott, 1994, p. 255).

Using *resonance* in advertising tends to generate favorable reactions and positive responses from consumers because of the incongruity created by the interaction and tension between an advertisement's visual and verbal components (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008). The incongruity can be a source of amusement and surprise. Sometimes incongruity can occur without the use of words. An image alone can carry the message. In a Clinique ad, an open tube of lipstick along with Clinique brand cheek base is submerged in a tall chilled glass of soda water garnished with a slice of lime. The incongruity between the makeup products and the chilled drink challenges the consumer. The ad appears nonsensical, and it is a stretch to claim Clinique is implying their makeup products can withstand icy submersion. The figurative language behind the ad is that "Clinique's new summer line of makeup is as refreshing as a tall glass of

soda water with a twist" (Scott, 1994, p.254). The Clinique advertisement presents information that is incongruent with "their existing schemata" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p.645). Learned pictorial schemata are necessary to interpret the visual (Scott, 1994, p.257).

The use of *resonance* in advertisement invites the audience to process information more intensely (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p.652). An ad needs to be stimulating. Relevancy and expectancy are types of incongruity related to an advertisement's theme (Stathakopoulos et al., 1994, p.646). Relevancy can be defined as the "material in the ad that relates directly to the theme," and expectancy is "the degree to which an object or information in the ad matches some predicted pattern" (Heckler & Childers, 1992 as cited in Stathakopoulos, 1994, p.646). Relevant information and unexpected elements are easier to remember from advertisements. The unexpected breaks through the boredom and engages the audience. Consumers want to be able to solve a puzzle or find the connection between concepts. The use of unexpected elements in advertisement allows for a cliché message to be communicated refreshingly.

Similar to *resonance*, *visual topoi* deals with the relationship between ideas. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *topos*, the singular of *topoi*, as "a traditional motif or theme (in a literary composition); a rhetorical commonplace, a literary convention or formula." Welhausen (2018) explains that within the lens of rhetoric, *topoi* deals with "tradition, precept, generally accepted wisdom" (Crowley, 1998, p. 209 as cited in Welhausen, 2018, p. 144). *Visual topoi* are

about how metaphoric associations invoke common cultural knowledge (Welhausen, 2018). Shared cultural knowledge is responsible for how people interpret color and typography. The meanings of colors are shaped by culture. Some color symbolism is cross-cultural. The use of a red heart on Valentine's Day greeting cards differs from the use of a red heart in a defibrillator sign; although both symbols are the same in color and shape, the context determines the meaning (Welhausen, 2018). Color choices have a rhetorical effect and how they are used invokes a particular tone or feeling. It is clearer to understand how typeface associations are cultural because typography is a modern invention. In today's digital world, various styles of typeface carry different connotations. Specific typefaces are associated with formality, playfulness, and sophistication. Over time, typefaces have developed metaphoric associations based on their style (e.g. round vs. narrow and bold vs. light). The abstract ideas invoked by the visual elements are determined by how and when they were used in the past (Welhausen, 2018). The use of color and typography play a role in how images are used as an argument: visual rhetoric.

Multimodality and Visual Rhetoric

Visual rhetoric has also been an important point of conversation in higher education due to new literacies relevant to younger generations that have emerged from the cyber world. Online culture has transformed the idea of literacy. Communication for millennials and Gen-Z rarely rely solely on written text to share a message. In higher education, multimodal composing is seen as

important literacy for students in the twenty-first century. Multimodal composing is "an opportunity to expand the way writers think about language and connecting to audiences" (Sabatino, 2019, p.3). Multimodal literacy is the "reading and writing [of] multiple forms of non-print 'texts' such as images, webpages, and movies" (Miller & McVee, 2012, p.1). The ability to design multimodal texts that combine visuals, audio, and writing to communicate knowledge in a digitally accessible means has become a requirement in "civic, personal, workplace lives" (Sabatino, 2019, p.3). Visual rhetoric overlaps with multimodality in that "view-point, focus, graphics, and layout are related in a specific way to the message" (Scott, 1994, p. 255)

Digital technology has led to the creation of fuller multimodal representation and "reminded us of the richness of all texts and of the many ways we create meaning" ("Multimodality," 2014, p. 506). The dominance of mixed-print representations is part of the daily life of internet users. A Wikipedia article on a topic such as dance will provide written information, paired with photographs and a video or videos. A reader can read a description, look at an image, and see how dance is performed. The reader will gain a fuller understanding of dance from the multiple modes available to learn. Print texts use multimodality in terms of the diction, layout, font size, and style ("Multimodality," 2014, p. 506). The multimodal composition provides a "non-linear...interactive reading pattern that supports the genres and media of real-world audiences and lends itself more to public writing"(Alexander, Powell &

Green, n.d., para. 2). Within multimodal communication, the visual will have a stronger influence than other forms of expression because the visual conveys vivid, concrete information with immediacy (Kjeldsen, 2021).

The power of multimodal text relies on its ability to persuade by "utilizing multiple layers of visuals, words, sound, and other modes to communicate claims" (Alexander, Powell & Green, n.d., para. 5). Each mode of communication (written, visual, audio, etc.) has *modal affordances*. *Modal affordances* are a mode of communication's unique potential and limitations (Sabatino, 2019, p. 4). Sabatino (2019) further clarifies that "affordance is 'a complex concept connected to both the material and cultural, social and historical use of a mode. *Modal affordance* is shaped by how a mode has been used, what it has been repeatedly used to mean and do, and the social conventions that inform its use in context" (p.4). Multimodal composition explores the "unique representational attributes of a mode" (Alexander, Powell, & Green, n.d., para. 2). *Modal affordances* affect the effectiveness of the rhetorical modes of persuasion (ethos, logos, pathos) on the readers (Alexander, Powell & Green, n.d.). For example, videos interact with readers and engage readers in ways print alone cannot. Videos can provide a more precise understanding than print alone cannot.

The success of images as a mode of persuasion is their ability to evoke emotions in the reader. Emotion could be considered an affordance of multimodal texts (Alexander, Powell & Green, n.d.). Images are also "space-based" (Miller & McVee, 2012, p.2). The use of images is related to affective

appeals. Images' persuasiveness, similar to video's persuasiveness, relies on its rhetorical strategy of showing. For example, written text can describe a flower, but an image shows us a realistic representation of what it is in nature. A person can identify one in real life by an image of a flower. More people think in terms of images rather than words. Images are "manifestations of vividness" (Homrich, & Isekenmeier, 2016, p. 2). An image, like a video, serves to further enhance and further a point.

CHAPTER TWO

VISUAL RHETORIC CONCEPTS AND INTERNSHIP REFLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The Objective of My Internship

The objective of my internship was to spruce up the careers section of the university's English Department webpage along with my internship coordinator. Visual elements such as pictures, photographs, and YouTube videos were supposed to appeal to a younger demographic of prospective students living in a visually-saturated culture. The new inclusion of the content creator job description demonstrated that the English Department is cognizant of the digital world's new jobs and the influence of social media on marketing. Interviewing a recent alumnus proved the broad spectrum of job possibilities and opportunities for English majors, some of which are provided and available at the university.

The Objective of My Thesis

From my thesis research, I have better understood the complementary nature of the visual and verbal in advertisements. The visual is the implicit (connotation), whereas the verbal is explicit (denotation). The right combination of both implicit and explicit information creates an attractive advertisement. The visual enhances the intended meaning and reinforces the shared cultural values. The primary power of the visual is its appeal to pathos, and the power of the written word relies on its appeal to logos and ethos. In terms of multimodality, the

interaction between the visual and the verbal text expands the way people interpret and understand writing.

As I researched for my thesis, a few terms from the various articles on visual rhetoric and multimodal composing caught my attention. The first term is *resonance*, which is "a form of a verbal-visual pun" (McQuarrie & Mick, 1992 as cited in Phillips & McQuarrie, 2004, p. 130). Another term that emerged from my research is *epideictic rhetoric* which is "the rhetoric of 'praise and blame' [that] grounded itself in a culture's mainstream values" (Blakely, 2011, p.684). A few other terms I encountered include: *visual metonymy*, *modal affordances*, and *visual topoi*. *Visual metonymy* is the use of a symbol to be an overall concept or idea. *Modal affordance* is the idea that a particular medium can more or less efficiently convey a concept based on its limitations and potential. Within the genre of visual rhetoric, *visual topoi* is a "tool to facilitate invention in terms of color and typography choices also reinforces that such choices are grounded not in subjective personal preferences but in cultural knowledge" (Welhausen, 2018, p.145). Together I will use these terms to reflect on my internship work in the context of the scholarship of multimodal composing and visual rhetoric.

Image Analysis

Copy Editor

Figure 1

Office Plant near Desk Sign



Note. Hannah Grace, 2019 (<https://unsplash.com/photos/j9JoYpaJH3A>). Free to use under the Unsplash License.

For the career pathway for *copy editor*(Figure 1), I selected a simple image of a potted prickly aloe vera plant beside a thick standing square desk sign to complement the job description. Engraved on the block in black, bold, old typewriter font in all caps is the familiar phrase "write without fear/edit without mercy." This standing square desk sign exemplifies *epideictic rhetoric*. As a rhetorical device, *epideictic rhetoric* highlights and celebrates the commonly shared values within a community. Specifically, the words on the block encourage the boldness and ruthlessness needed to weed out errors and superfluosness to maintain a sense of clarity in the author's writing while simultaneously staying true to the author's original intent.

The old typewriter font used for the engraved text creates feelings of nostalgia and conveys the seriousness of the copy editing profession. The vintage typewriter font illustrates *visual topoi*, which "draws on cultural knowledge about...typeface meaning" (Welhausen, 2018, p. 145). Nothing inherently nostalgic about the font style, but abstract ideas associated with when and how this font was used set the tone (Welhausen, 2018). Typewriters are a romanticized item from the past that is associated with studiousness and meticulousness. Meticulousness is an important quality for a copy editor to possess. The use of black, bold, and all caps in communication has its association. It is understood in cell phone and online communication that all caps can carry an aggressive undertone and be interpreted as yelling. The phrase "write without fear/edit without mercy" is a command rather than a cliché inspiring

desk decor quote. Stylistically, bolded texts are used to emphasize the importance. Altogether, the use of bolding, all caps, old typewriter font, and even black font coloring work together to convey the seriousness of copy editing.

The soothing nature of the succulent desk plant and the demand engraved on the standing desk sign illustrates juxtaposition and incongruity of tone. Incongruity is a characteristic of the *resonance*. Incongruity is created by the interaction and tension between the visual and verbal components. *Resonance* can be understood as a form of figurative language because within advertising, there is "an implied comparison between two things that differ in nature but have something in common" (Stathakopoulos et al., 2008, p. 638). There is disharmony between the office desk decor. The office plant creates a comfortable atmosphere within the cubicle. The desk sign reminds the copy editor of their responsibility. Altogether as an image, the standing desk sign and succulent plant convey the message to take your responsibilities seriously and remain calm while doing so.

Using a visual affords to show meaning to an audience (Kress as cited in Alexander, Powell & Green, n.d.). There is efficiency and immediacy associated with pictorials. The pressure of the copy editing profession can be extracted from the pairing of the office plant and the desk sign. A copy editor must be blunt yet tactful in their approach to writing. It can be assumed that copy editors often work as desks or offices based on the image selected. This image captures the work environment's vibe and a copy editor's philosophy.

Advertising Copywriter

Figure 2

Vehicles on Roadway near Buildings.



Note. Dennis Maliepaard, 2019 (<https://unsplash.com/photos/7b7wSvGn2W4>).

Free to use under the Unsplash License.

The visual selected to complement the advertising copywriter's textual information features a bustling city block, presumably New York City (Figure 2). There is a scattered crowd of unidentifiable people on the busy street. At the center of the block is a collage of billboard advertisements for clothing brands, theater performances, food, and other items. The billboard provides a splash of color and a focal point to this image of the lively street of pedestrians and yellow

taxi cabs. Altogether the inclusion of this image communicates the relevance, pervasiveness, and importance of advertising in our daily lives.

The collage of ads illustrates the power of *epideictic rhetoric* by celebrating the U.S. values of youth culture, entertainment, and healthy eating. The coolness factor is one reason for this visual selection. The American Eagle Outfitters ad features a young woman donning a boho-chic style bent over a wheatfield on a sunny day. Advertising strongly relies on the coolness factor to be persuasive to younger audiences. American Eagle Outfitters is selling an image more than apparel. The billboard advertisements' various available plays, musicals, and other forms of entertainment celebrate the culture's idea of enjoying life without limits. The presentation of a soy beverage ad on the billboard platform resonates with how health-conscious our society has become and the contemporary lifestyle of plant-based eating.

Regarding relevant *visual topoi*, the disorganized assortment of billboards features a wide array of colors and phrases in all caps, which is a way of commanding attention. Greens, blues, pinks, and reds stick out among the billboards. Green is associated with newness, freshness, and spring (Sabatino, 2019). In Western society, pink is a traditionally feminine color. Using it to highlight a woman's name reinforces gendered thinking. One particular billboard conveys nostalgia for old Hollywood glamor by featuring a black-and-white photo of a woman with Veronica Lake style hair. The brand name *aerie* is written in all lowercase cursive. From a *visual topoi* lens, the shared cultural knowledge of the

formality of cursive is a way the *aerie* name brand adds a touch of sophistication and elegance. *Aerie* is also distinguished by being written in green and all lowercase. All lowercase letters are associated with a relaxed casualness that youth culture celebrates. The majority of the other billboards capture attention through the use of color, bold, all caps, or a combination of the three. These ads compete with each other for attention, which is evident through the use of various colors, fonts, and images that juxtapose each other.

From a *resonance* perspective, this image is complementary to the textual information because of the memorable phrases and questions featured, such as "are you ready to taste nirvana" and "here today/here tomorrow/here to stay.". The quick phrases illustrate the essential skill of having a solid command and efficient use of language, a concept reinforced by the image of the billboard, which represents quick communication, amid the busyness of modern life. The billboard ads are a medley of organized chaos. The billboard platform echoes the business and liveliness of the street below. The incongruity among the ads amplifies the variety of advertising copywriting opportunities. There is a fashion advertisement beside an advertisement for Broadway shows, and then an advertisement for soy beverages. The liveliness of the billboard platform also echoes the juggling of multiple projects that advertising copywriters do simultaneously.

The inclusion of this pictorial illustrates how visually-saturated Western society is and how relevant, pervasive, and necessary a career in advertising is.

The billboard collage demonstrates the strong command of language an advertising copywriter uses to create short, catchy ad phrases. This image also illustrates how integrated advertising copywriters are with pop culture. The *aerie* advertisement shows how ad copywriters need to know how to sell an image rather than a product. Billboard platform illustrates the creativity needed in this profession and the huge potential for success in this field. It seems like every company needs advertising.

Event Planner

Figure 3.

White Ceramic Dinnerware Set.



Note. CHUTTERSAP, 2017 (https://unsplash.com/photos/aEnH4hJ_Mrs). Free to use under the Unsplash License.

The visual selection for the event planner is that of a formal dinner (Figure 3). The dinner seems to be taking place indoors during the daylight hours. Various colorful flowers are gathered together into a table centerpiece. Plates, napkins, wine glasses, and silverware are organized and set in front of each chair. This image represents the creativity, organization, and attention to detail needed by an event planner. The pictorial presents the ubiquitous nature of this profession and its necessity in today's busy world of weddings, conventions, charity events, and other special occasions.

Analyzing this image from a visual epideictic rhetorical perspective, this particular image is celebrating sociability and the pleasures of life - foods, friends, and fun. Wealth is another value this image is celebrating as this formal occasion appears to be a costly formal occasion. The image celebrates the satisfying and rewarding aspects of a career in event planning. The beauty created is the ultimate reward. A successful formal occasion is the final product of this highly stressful service profession that deals with demanding clients, tight inflexible deadlines, ever-changing plans, and strict budgets.

The event planner of this event selected the right colors to create an aura of grandeur. From a *visual topoi* analysis perspective, the inclusion of gold upholstered chairs with white embroidery in this formal dinner invokes thoughts

of prestige. Gold is a color associated with prosperity, luxury, and glamor. The event planner's selection of yellow roses demonstrates the Western cultural association of yellow with sunshine and radiance. Several studies (Welhausen, 2018; Brumberger, 2003a, 2002b; Mackiewicz & Moller, 2004) have found that bright, saturated, warm colors often metaphorically signify vibrancy and excitement.

Roses are highly regarded flowers, so it is expected to add these flowers to an elegant occasion. Roses are a metonym for romance and fleeting beauty. Roses are probably a standard purchase for an event planner. They must be appropriately cared for since they are perishable, so they are probably among the last items to be purchased and delivered to the event. Flowers can be costly, and they need to be well-preserved.

The event planner image presents the fruit of labor and how expansive this profession is. Although the occasion was unspecified, an event planner was responsible for overseeing and coordinating the event. The dinner decor and flower and seating arrangement convey the creativity, precision, careful planning, and organization required in this field. The complementary colors in the bouquet centerpiece highlight the attention to detail of an event planner. An image of a beautiful event highlights the rewarding aspect of this profession despite the stressful demands and tight deadlines.

Cyber Threat Intelligence Analyst

Figure 4

Black Laptop Computer with White Paper.



Note: FLY:D, 2017 (<https://unsplash.com/photos/P3-YKLS2VKA>). Free to use under the Unsplash License.

Another visual I found during my internship was an image for the cyber threat intelligence analyst (Figure 4). In this image, a brass safety padlock is placed atop the keyboard of an open laptop. One of the letters of the typewriter keys is wrapped around the padlock's shackle. The brass padlock is the focal point of the image. A dark background surrounds the laptop, and red and green lights reflect on the keyboard. These are most likely laser security system lights'

reflections. The keyboard consumes most of the space, so only a tiny sliver of the laptop's black screen appears in the photo. The keyboard featured in the image is bilingual with both English and Japanese characters.

From a visual *epideictic rhetoric* lens, this image, in a very straightforward manner, reinforces the importance of digital safety and cybersecurity, which is so much in our cultural discourse. Cybercrime is a serious issue in today's modern society. Companies and everyday people want to know and feel assured that their sensitive information is safe and secure. The cropped and blackened laptop screen and the centered and isolated keyboard make the keyboard the focal point of the picture. The keyboard illustrates the current cultural value of fast and efficient communication. Connectedness is a highly regarded value in today's culture, and I see that this image celebrates this by featuring a bilingual keyboard. This keyboard in and of itself is a visual representation of 21st-century globalization. Unfortunately, online connectedness makes us vulnerable to cybercrime.

The use of color or lack thereof of color diversity aids is a stand-out feature in analyzing it from the lens of *visual topoi*. The dark background surrounding the laptop clearly illustrates the shadiness of the situation. The location is unclear, but a laptop alone in a dark room with red and green laser security system lights illustrates that this image must contain valuable information.

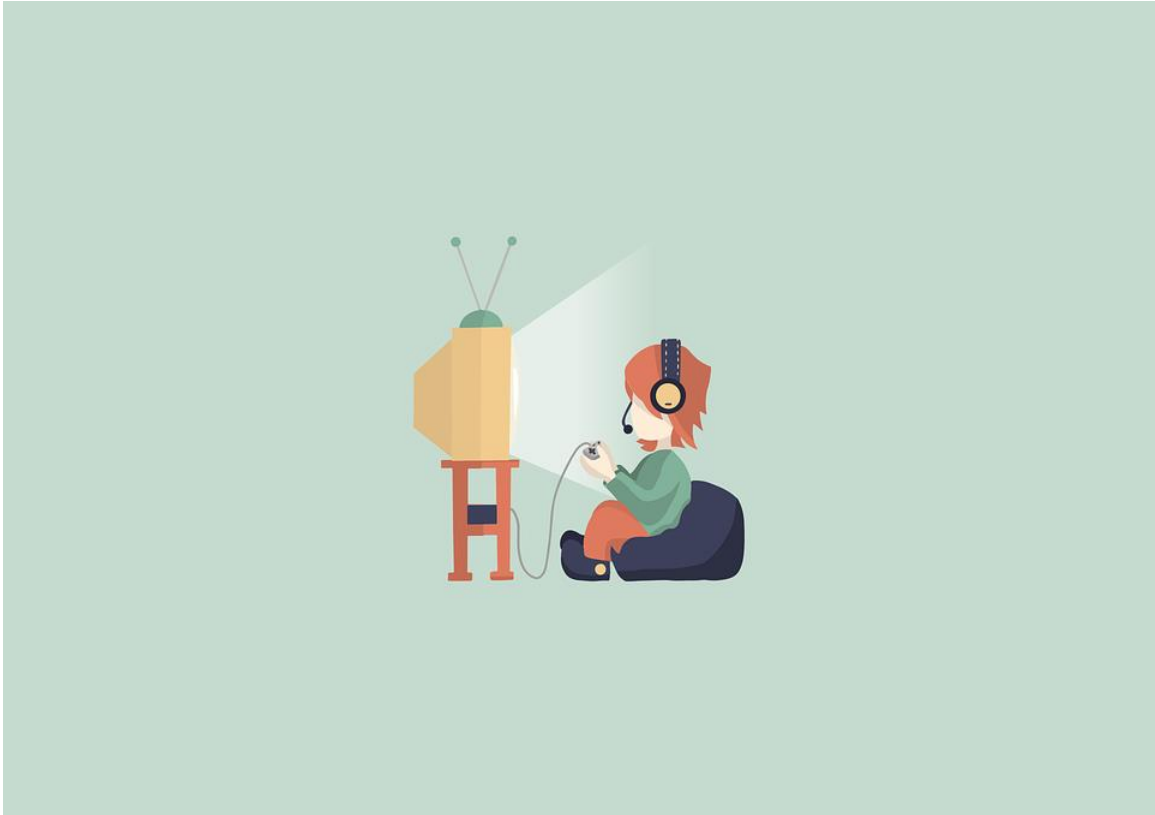
Locks in this image are a visual metonym for safety and security. One of the ironies of the image is that the padlock atop the keyboard is unlocked, but one of the keys wraps itself around the shackle. There is no padlock key in sight. I wonder how vulnerable this laptop is to cybercrime since the padlock is open. Extra security beyond the laser security system is needed to protect this laptop if the padlock is unlocked.

Together, the two different means of security in this image– the laser security system light and the brass padlock– as different means of security amplifies the importance of digital security. I did not select an image with the typical malware symbol, but I selected an image with *resonance* incongruity. There is a contrast between the modern technology used to promote security and the basic standard of ensuring security. A padlock is a basic and even archaic method of preventing theft. A laser security system protects areas from intrusion and unauthorized access. Therefore, using two security methods echoes the prevalence of cyber theft; even if paired together, they appear as an exaggeration. In the example, *resonance* is an "echo that reinforced or heightens the intended meaning of [the] visual" (Kelly, 2014, p.215). Although the image does not explain the job description, it does provide evidence for the overall importance of a cyber threat intelligence analyst. This cyber security image reinforces the shared values of privacy and security for computer and Internet users. The visual text demonstrates the value of this profession.

Video Game Writer

Figure 5

Woman Playing Video Game



Note. Cromaconceptvisual, 2021(<https://pixabay.com/vectors/gamer-video-game-console-joystick-6022003/>). Free for commercial use Pixabay License

For the video game writer career pathway, I found a simple image of a faceless and fair-skinned cartoonish young redhead female video gamer seated directly in front of the TV set on a black bean bag chair (Figure 5). A headset is over her ears, and a game controller wired to a console is in her hands. She must be very invested because of the short TV viewing distance, as indicated by

the light shining directly on her face. Despite being a modern hobby, the image feels nostalgic because the TV set has a pair of antenna rabbit ears.

Video gaming is considered a solitary hobby and a young person's hobby. It is a way to explore the digital world and connect with others. From a visual *epideictic rhetoric* lens, the image of a video gamer celebrating the coolness associated with youth. The video gaming culture has shifted to a more mainstream rather than niche hobby. Video game writing is a new form of storytelling with a coolness factor that other writing genres may not. Video game writing contradicts the stuffiness and snobbery associated with traditional storytelling like literature.

From a *visual topoi* lens, the use of soft colors evokes feelings of relaxation. Similarly, the activity of gaming is associated with pleasure and relaxation. The prominent color featured in this image is a softer shade of green. Green walls are associated with stress relief and calmness because they produce a soothing effect. Using the complementary color of greens and reds creates a soothing experience for the reader.

Conclusion

Writing this thesis was a challenging process, but it was a worthwhile educational journey. I was introduced to terms like visual topoi, resonance, modal affordances, and others I had never encountered before. I would have never guessed some terms could be used to analyze the images selected during my

internship. I began the thesis unaware of the terms I could use to analyze the images and how they work to supplement the written information.

I developed my visual literacy skills by analyzing the visual selection in terms of visual rhetoric concepts. I moved beyond seeing images for their aesthetic value, but I began to see them as statements and arguments. I became cognizant of the reciprocal relationship between the ad creator and the audience. The efficacy of an ad is dependent on how well it resonates with the audience, which can be done by reinforcing cultural values.

Although I did not create any of the images selected for the career webpage, I still had to know how images impact, attract or persuade people. Analyzing how color, font, and arrangement could influence how a reader views a text was an exercise in critical thinking skills. This experience was an opportunity for perspective-taking. Furthermore, seeing the implicit messages in images was eye-opening. Images give the text an emotional depth and immediacy that the written word can lack. Visual communication that resonates has a lasting residual effect.

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