

Reading Bulletins: Understanding the Rhetoric of Food in Social Reform Publications.

Objective

To help students read and analyze how food behaves rhetorically (both as literal object and metaphorical concept) in arguments. Students will be exposed to the genre of the settlement bulletin, a specific kind of periodical publication that seeks to establish the identity, activity, and mission of each settlement house. Students will read these bulletins to:

1. understand how the rhetorical triangle and Belasco's "culinary triangle" can be used to analyze a speaker's identity as it is presented rhetorically.
2. identify and analyze the rhetorical moves that the writers of these bulletins use to position themselves as speakers (to create a very specific, carefully constructed ethos).
3. recognize the way that one's relationship to food (both literal and figurative) can be integral to establishing ethos for specific rhetorical purposes.

Materials

- Prezi (<http://prezi.com/tscpr5jhubs/reading-bulletins-understanding-the-rhetoric-of-food-in-social-reform-publications-by-carrie-tippen/?kw=view-tscpr5jhubs&rc=ref-6107410>)
- *Hull-House Bulletin* 5.1 (1902) Available on GoogleBooks
- *Toynbee Journal and Student Union Chronicle* 1.4 (January 1886) Available on GoogleBooks
- Belasco, Warren. "Why Study Food?" *Food: The Key Concepts*. New York: Berg, 2008. p. 1-13.
- Additional issues of bulletins for comparison if desired.

Procedures

1. Instruct students to read the two bulletins and Belasco's introduction as homework before class. They will be aware of the course's twin focus on food and argument. Ask students to read critically, looking carefully for how the writers of these bulletins use food literally and figuratively. Encourage them to mark and count the references to food or food-related activity.
2. Begin class by reviewing the reading, collecting students' impressions of the bulletins. Where might these have been distributed? To whom? What would induce someone to read the bulletins? What kind of person is likely to read them? What would they be reading for?
3. Establish a context for the bulletins with a brief history of the transatlantic settlement movement, particularly how Toynbee Hall served as a model for Hull-House. Using the

rhetorical triangle (illustrated in prezi), discuss the students' impressions of the bulletin speakers, audiences, subjects, and purposes in this new context.

- From the content of the bulletin, what activities and attitudes do the settlements have in common? Where do they differ (as far as we can tell)?
 - From the construction of the bulletin, what features and moves do the publications have in common? How does TH bulletin serve as model? Where does HH alter or abandon the model?
 - How do the two publications construct the speaker and audience?
 - What is the purpose of each publication? What are the overarching goals of the two publications? Compare and Contrast.
- 4.** With these rhetorical goals and positions in mind, discuss how the appearance of food in each text contributes to (or perhaps contradicts) these goals and positions. Review Belasco's triangle.
- Identity: How does each settlement position itself in relationship to food? What kind of eater/feeder is the speaker? the audience? How important is food to each? What uses of food are ideal? acceptable? taboo? Who prepares food? Who eats?
 - Convenience: How easily accessible is food to the speaker/audience? What kinds of foods are available? How hard should they work to eat/prepare food?
 - Responsibility: What is the ethical relationship to food? What "food chains" are evident in the texts? What are the "consequences" of eating/feeding?
 - Summarize the two settlements' individual food philosophies as evident in the bulletins.
- 5.** Discuss how the transatlantic connection might account for the similarities and differences in these food attitudes. What does HH borrow from TH? What does HH alter?
- What might account for the similarities across time and space? What is it about the Euro-American attitude toward food that connects both?
 - What might account for the differences? What is it about "conditions of the ground" that might affect identity, convenience, responsibility? OR are the differences more connected to rhetorical positioning of the speaker/audience/purpose than the continent?
- 6.** In the time remaining, divide into groups and allow students to browse the current HH and TH websites for contemporary uses of food (HH: Unfinished Business: 21st Century Home Economics, Rethinking Soup, Heirloom Seed Library, etc) (TH: Lunch Club under "Older people's services"; much harder to find evidence of food.) Ask them to discuss and present how the current instances of food might be a continuation or rupture of the mission established in the bulletins. What evidence of transatlantic connections are still evident?
- 7.** End class by highlighting the two triangles again. These will be devices for analysis that will persist throughout the semester both as tools for reading arguments and for constructing them.