MOO Appetizers
English 5362: Rhetorical Analysis
Week 1 (June 2)
Sean Zdenek

Check this list for your name. If your name isn’t listed, then you should be ready to
describe your rhetorical artifact when we meet in the MOO. More info on this below.

If you’ve been assigned a MOO Appetizer for this week, please prepare a response to
your appetizer in advance and be ready to post it in the MOO during class when it’s time
to talk about it. Time permitting, we may or may not get to your Appetizer.

To prepare your response, compose a 3-5 sentence answer. Please keep in mind that the
purpose of the Appetizers is to generate class discussion; each Appetizer has more than
one right answer. You should also be prepared, if needed, to justify/explain your
response. We’ll spend a little time on each question.

If you are not specifically assigned to one Appetizer this week, then please be ready
to describe and share your rhetorical artifact with us in the MOO. Describe = a few
sentences about it and why you chose it. Share = have an electronic copy ready to
share with us.

One more reminder: The student assigned to Appetizer #1 this week is responsible for
providing a transcript of our entire MOO session and posting it to WebCT after class
(under the discussion topic, “MOO transcripts”).

If you have any questions at all about any of this stuff, please drop me an email
(sean.zdenek@ttu.edu). Thanks, Sean Zdenek.

1. [Bill] What is the scope of rhetoric? By taking issue with Foss’s wide-ranging
definition, Kuypers (pp. 5-6) offers a narrowed definition that limits rhetoric to
the study of “more publicly impressive use of symbols with generally agreed upon
meanings.” In contrast, Selzer’s definition (in Bazerman p. 281) is much larger in
scope, and seems to encompass all types of human endeavor (not just spoken and
written communication). Where do you stand on the question of the scope of
rhetoric?

2. [Sara] Is rhetoric too big? See the Schiappa article for a discussion of Big
Rhetoric and Schiappa’s own answer to this question. Do you agree with
Schiappa?

3. [Pam] Edwin Black says that “the critic should just shut up about politics” (in
Kuypers p. 31). But he also says that “Only an idiot is without political
convictions” (p. 31). In your opinion, what role does “politcized criticism” (p.
30) play in the art of rhetorical criticism? Is it possible to be objective, as Kuypers defines it (p. 24)?

4. [Kendall] Edwin Black says that “Good criticism is always a surprise,” whereas bad criticism simply offers us conventional opinions or mechanical applications of methods of criticism (in Kuypers p. 30). In the readings for this week, what insight/claim/statement has surprised you the most? Why? (I realize that most of the readings this week are not examples of criticism, but the question still applies.)

5. [Barbara] As Selzer implies in his section on style (Bazerman pp. 289-290), rhetoric offers us a long list of names for rhetorical techniques. These are the tropes and figures of rhetoric. Go to http://rhetoric.byu.edu/, browse the “flowers” of rhetoric, and choose three that are not mentioned by Selzer and that you think we will find interesting or useful. Don’t choose metaphor, simile, irony, or hyperbole.

6. [Charlotte] Selzer divides rhetorical criticism into textual and contextual (see Bazerman Ch. 10). Both have their uses and often are used together, even if one approach is usually dominant. (Selzer asks us to resist the distinction between textual and contextual criticism, p. 302.) Which approach do you prefer in the context of your rhetorical artifact? Why?