

Over the Text-Based Wall

For my remediation, I decided to use my rhetorical analysis on *Over the Garden Wall*. Created by Patrick McHale, *Over the Garden Wall* is a fall-themed animated miniseries that premiered in November of 2014. It is about two brothers trying to find their way home when they wander through a place called The Unknown. My analysis focused on elements from the episode "Hard Times at the Huskin' Bee." For this Inquiry, I changed it from a text-based essay into a typographic image. Typography involves figuratively and literally creating pictures out of text. Key words and phrases that would be used to describe an object are also used to create it, pushing the idea that each individual phrase is a different aspect of the person or thing being presented and allowing for a way to convey different concepts. **The properties of visual art such as color, form, and even texture, can be combined with the explanatory power of language.** However, like all still images, it can only convey one moment at a time and is strictly visual. **Planning and organization for a piece like this can also be tricky. Since words and images are being combined, they have to be able to work together.** Long words and phrases can become difficult to work effectively into certain shapes, and complex images might have to lose detail to be able to remain legible. There are affordances from the combination of text and images, though, too. **The shape, color, and positioning of words in the image can be manipulated to convey their importance or relatedness to each other.** Typographic art is an interesting medium that lends itself well to the idea of rhetorical analysis. **Evidence and conclusions can be compiled together in a way that allows the reader to quickly relate them to each other and the whole concept being presented.**

The visual nature of this medium meant that I had to focus on rhetorical evidence and conclusions that could easily be described in the medium such as static visuals, short descriptions of characters, and quotes. I decided to use the scene where the main characters meet the residents of Pottsville, who are having their Harvest festival in a dimly-lit barn. It was the best fit, as most of the things discussed in that scene's analysis fit into the categories that I could use. I broke down these ideas, especially the conclusions and analyses, into simple words and phrases that could be worked into an image and still remain legible. For example, Beatrice the bluebird's suggestion that something is wrong and that the main characters should leave throughout the scene, which pushes the audience to agree, is shortened to 'Acts as the Voice of Reason.' This helps the phrase fit into what was an especially small area of the image, but still convey the same idea that the full analysis did. I put 'main ideas' like that one into the character's heads and hats so that they are more likely to be read first when looking at the piece. This order is important because these phrases give the ones below them a meaning to build up to. **A reader can see that the idea is important from its positioning and content, then keep it in mind as they scan down the rest of the shape.** Or, if they start from somewhere else, they can still find the phrase at the top and realize that it sums up the other evidence they just read. I ended up using extra quotes from the scene as well. Much like the main ideas, they show evidence in a shorter, more direct way than the long descriptions of a strictly-text based rhetorical analysis could. I gave each character one quote that related to their purpose in the scene, positioned on and around their torso. This puts it in the middle of each shape, surrounded by the other phrases if there are any. **While not on top like the main idea, a central location still places emphasis on these phrases.** The words around the quote lead into and out of it, explaining the context it is in and supporting the conclusions one might draw from it. **If the phrases were in no particular order, they might end up being**

confusing or overwhelming to someone viewing the piece. It is also somewhat necessary to keep the organization consistent between figures so that a viewer knows what to look for.

With this new medium I found that though I was limited in some areas, I had much more freedom in others. Positioning, as shown, is one, as shown above. There is also color, which I used to link certain phrases together when they did not fit together on one area. This works against some of the words and phrases that had to be spread across multiple colors, however.

Out of all of the different affordances, though, the greatest one is being able to add a new dimension to the original analysis by actually depicting the scene being talked

about. While I still added words related to visual evidence into the image, I illustrated them in the character's poses as well. Wirt, the boy in the red hat, is leaning away from the townspeople with his hands out as if he is startled. Beatrice is in a similar pose, with her wings spread as if to fly away. This helps convey the fear they express, especially later in the scene.

In contrast, Greg, the younger brother, is standing upright and waving to the townspeople, illustrating how he is unaware of the building tension and potential danger throughout much of the episode. The townspeople, wearing their creepy pumpkin costume, is standing stiffly and staring at the travelers. This doesn't give away much emotion, but implies a possible hostility. I drew a simple, hollow-eyed face on this figure despite leaving details like this off the others.

While facial features were more difficult to work into the type of picture I was creating, it was important to include them on the representation of the people of Pottsville because of how much their unsettling appearances impact the audience throughout the episode.

It also brings some of that same emotion to this scene, as even someone who has not been exposed to the original text would probably find the jack-o-lantern face at least somewhat creepy. I used colors similar to that of the original scene for this same reason as well. The less

vibrant, muted tones used in the original scene help convey a darker mood, which needed to be preserved in my rendition of it.

Overall the medium of typographic art fits extremely well with rhetorical analysis, especially when it is an analysis of a visual text such as this one. **The combination of visuals and text allows for ideas and certain kinds of rhetorical evidence to be expressed in two ways at once. While combining the mediums does come with added constraints, there are also interesting affordances to work with such as positioning, form, and color.** The visual organization of words into each aspect of a scene also gives the remediation an interesting effect by allowing parts of the text to be visually built from the ideas that can be used to describe them and their roles.

said something about this every Inquiry, but writing this way makes everything so much quicker and easier for me. Revising was mostly just adding more explanation about the choices I ended up making in my piece after I had already written the first draft. I hope the title did not turn out too confusing. I think it might be, but I couldn't come up with a better one. It was supposed to be a play on *Over the Garden Wall* and the fact that I was going from a solely text-based medium to an image-based one which is kind of different for an English class. I figured that trying something a bit odd would be a little better than no title/naming the piece something obvious and boring, though. Things mostly went smoothly on the essay part of this project, so there's not a lot more to say. I left out a lot of the process-related notes and complaints about my piece in favor of analyzing things as they were for essay. The notes about my art I tend to build up are less formal, so I didn't think they'd fit. Plus, I knew I'd be able to put some things here in my Writer's letter.

I spent more time on the remediation itself than the essay by far. Most of it was word-drawing, with planning dispersed throughout. I didn't really decide where every word in the image should go at once, or what I was going to say. I did have a pool of words to draw from and knew what ideas I wanted to show with what I put into the piece, though. Some things didn't fit quite like I wanted to, and ended up being a little hard to read due to awkward positions or separations of certain words. This probably could have been prevented by more drafting and planning up front (like a lot of art mistakes can be) but I've never done this type of piece before so I'll admit that I had no idea what I was supposed to do until I was already doing it. I kind of wish I would have been able to fit more phrases into the piece by packing them more densely, but I didn't really have time to do that. I might have been able to fit more if I had used typed text and an image editing program instead of drawing everything by hand, but I'm

not really sure how well that would have turned out since I wouldn't have had as much freedom over the shapes of the letters and curves of the words. Overall, though, I think it turned out pretty well. I drew the shapes and outlined the colors first, but worked in monochrome while drawing the words. The best moment was when I finished drawing and was able to change all of the words to the right color so that I could see them alone against the background.