

Evaluation Argument

Chapter 10

An Evaluation Argument is an argument we make every day. From what to wear, eat or drink on a daily basis to which music to listen to in the car on the way to school to which friendships you keep after high school to the college you choose to attend after high school to whom you will marry, evaluation arguments drive our directions in life. Some evaluations are relatively simple: "Today I will drink more water." Some are more complex and cannot be decided in single thought or setting: "I am offering you a job, but you have to relocate to Alaska."

Typical evaluation arguments are game shows, award shows, pageants, MVP, The Oscars, Senior Superlatives, elections (big and small), movie reviews, obituaries, eulogies, etc. (See page 211 in chapter 10.)

Types of Evaluation Arguments

Evaluation arguments are all or one of the following:

1. Judgment about quality.
2. Challenge a judgment.
3. Construct a ranking or comparison.
4. Explore criteria used to make judgments.

Judgment about Quality

A judgment about quality involves an item deemed the utmost best or not in a category. An example of this would be movie reviews deeming a movie "the best comedy of the year" or "the raunchiest humor of a modern film" or "the worst movie ever." Typical movie reviews/book reviews/TV show reviews are judgments about quality. We necessarily do not have to agree with the critics, but we do read their words as guidance whether to see a movie or not.

Shawshank is a perfect example of this type of judgment since the movie did not do well in

theaters but has endured due to its quality.



THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION MOVIE REVIEW (1...

It is a strange comment to make about a film set inside a prison, but "The Shawshank Redemption"

<http://www.rogerebert.com>



Recipes on Pinterest boasting "THE BEST CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES" are judgments about quality as they are based not only on someone's opinions but the ingredients used.

Cheap chocolate-flavored chocolate chips made almost entirely of wax and cost \$1 a bag are not going to bode well compared to using Ghirardelli milk chocolate chips made of silky mountains of smooth, famous Ghirardelli chocolate and cost almost \$4 a bag. When cooks see such claims on recipes, their first reaction is to look at the list of ingredients, perhaps make the cookies, and then judge for themselves. (See Padlet for a recipe.)

Challenge a Judgement

Challenging a judgment occurs when people have differing opinions. Some people may not agree with my chocolate chip cookie recipe being THE BEST cookies or that *Shawshank* is one of THE BEST movies made. So, such people are going to challenge my opinions, offering personal opinions as well as logos to support their claim their recipe is THE BEST or the movie they like is THE BEST.

Sports fanatics/critics/organizations do this when they feel their athlete is better than the one chosen or named. Best Quarterback in the NFL is highly disputed according to beliefs and numbers. Brady vs. Manning is still a battle to this day. Be careful to use specific evidence and not "Well, I like Brady, so he is the better quarterback" statements. Statements such as these are not the basis for an argument and can be shot down by someone who is armed with stats.

Construct a Ranking or Comparison

Many sites offer their "Top 25 Best Movies" or "Top 25 Places to Visit" lists. These lists are based on a comparison or a ranking system. Cult films lists decide which films fit the definition and which one is the epitome of a cult film. This requires a ranking and then comparing films to other films. Ranker website is based on this type of evaluation.



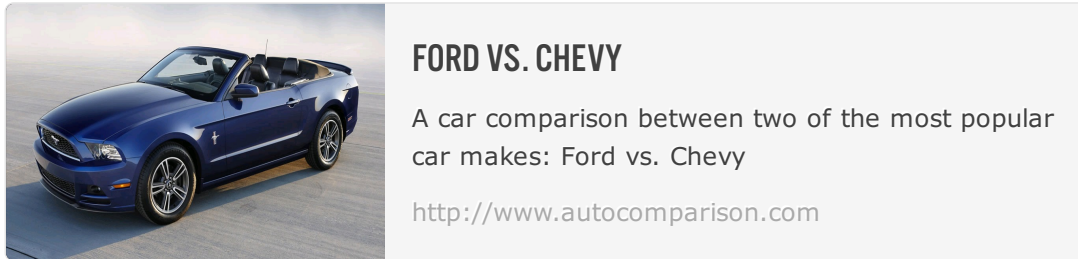
LISTS: RANKINGS ABOUT EVERYTHING, VOTED ON BY EVERYONE

Ranker goes far beyond Top 10 lists with deep rankings about everything, voted on by everyone. Make lists, add your votes, and

<http://www.ranker.com>

Pinterest is infamous for this as cooks try to decide which are the best ingredients for a cake for certain desired results. (See cake infographics on Pinterest.)

Car owners are infamous for this as the epic battle between Ford and Chevy wages on with no resolution in sight....



Explore Criteria to Make Judgments

People may question the criteria used to make rankings. Who made the criteria judging whether a Ford is better than a Chevy or vice-versa? What numbers were used and who was asked? For *MST3K*, who decides these movies are BAD and worthy of being lambasted? What are the criteria for movies to be labeled good or bad? And what about chocolate? Who makes the criteria about good and bad chocolate? Godiva vs. Palmer chocolate? Why is a tiny house better (or not) than a regular house? These are made using criteria and judgments are made from there...

Quantitative Evidence

Evaluations need evidence. Two types of evidence are needed for an evaluation argument: quantitative and qualitative.

Quantitative evidence is your inartistic logos: facts, statistics, testimonies, the "smoking gun." (see chapter 4, Logos). This evidence "can be measured, counted, or demonstrated" in some way (Lunsford 215). World records are based on quantitative evidence. The fastest car, the shortest person, the smartest person, the valedictorian and salutatorian of a class, quietest car ride, etc. are all quantitative evidence since they can be measured with numbers. Movie popularity is ranked by box office numbers; recipes are ranked by how many pins on Pinterest; and cars are ranked by sales.

Be careful of the evidence used to serve a purpose for someone. See the Logos chapter for

warnings about numbers. Remember, "Figures lie, and liars figure."

Qualitative Evidence

Qualitative evidence is the artistic side of logos: opinions, common sense, appeals to reason.

Qualitative also has an ethos side when the person offers evidence with the assumption to "Trust me." This evidence cannot be measured or counted. Movie reviews are based not on quantitative evidence, but on rhetorical qualitative evidence. Keep in mind qualitative evidence is STILL evidence, just of a different sort. Movie popularity is based on the appeal to the audience; recipe quality is based on the ingredients; and a car's quality is based on consumer desires as well as the luxuries it provides the driver and rider.

Be Careful....

People who present their arguments with statements "Because I said so" are not to be taken seriously. Pretty flimsy. You do not tell a friend to go see a movie because you believe it is a good movie and you said so. You would have to support your claim with qualitative evidence.

Quantitative evidence would also help, but you would have to research beforehand to provide such information. If you are an avid fan of Harry Potter books, you would have to provide more evidence than just your initial response to support your claim.

Also be careful wording your thesis. "I think this movie is stupid" is not enough for a viable thesis. Writing a paper based on a thesis like this will result in a short argument or no argument at all. "Why is this movie stupid?" Response: "It just is." The audience will be waiting for the evidence and, if no evidence is produced, then the argument will go nowhere.



BATTLEFIELD EARTH (2000)

Directed by Roger Christian. With John Travolta, Forest Whitaker, Barry Pepper, Kim Coates. After enslavement and near extermination by an

<http://www.imdb.com>

My Evaluation Argument

As the new movie adaptation of *IT* makes its debut on September 8, 2017, many people are flocking to read this book. Many consider this book one of King's best books: I beg to differ.

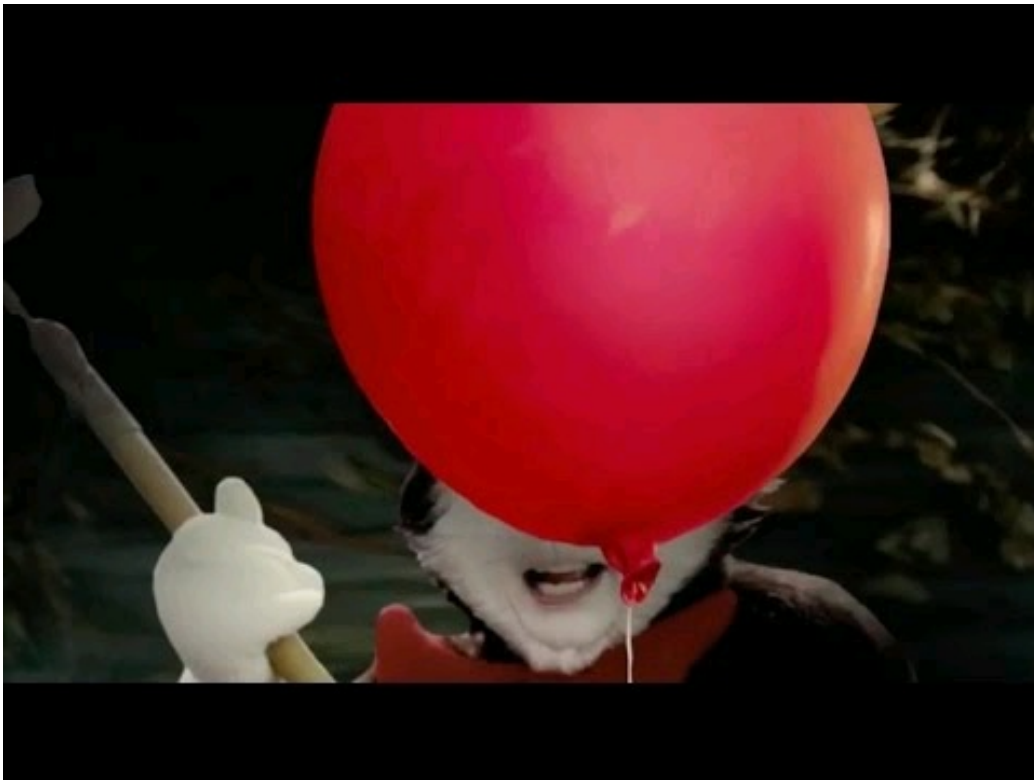
This is the second King book I would NOT want to re-read (*The Stand* is the other book). However, this book has regained momentum with the new movie emerging from the Derry sewer, terrifying a new generation with its evil clown countenance. Used hardback copies of the original 1986 printing begin at \$60 for poor condition, upward of \$200 for excellent used condition. New copies (how did they find new copies?) are \$1500 and up. A book my mother bought me when it was first published in 1986 is worth over \$150. And I did not even LIKE the book. How could this author who is still alive and writing and is not accepted in high schools as a good writer, have books worth more than classic authors...authors I have to teach?

Now my evaluation argument is forming....

My thesis is still a work in progress: Stephen King IS an excellent writer who produces classic literature.

I realized the **IS** part would be difficult to provide evidence, so I will have to come back to that after I plan my essay.





Introduction Exordium/Narratio

Here are some ideas I jotted down for the intro:

-Some people are appalled by his ideas and think all he writes is "horror." Ethos example: Summer Reading objections.

-This is far from the truth: many of his books are very tame. The books labeled "horror" are not that "horror-filled" and are no more gruesome than what some people do in real life. At least the events in his books are FICTION; real life can be more terrifying. Use my personal experience with his writings and how I am not inclined to commit such acts.

-His ideas are the basis for many movies the public likes...maybe even those who believe he is a grotesque writer.

Thesis Partitio

A work in progress, my thesis cannot contain general information that cannot be argued. Statements such as "SK is an excellent writer" or "SK is the best writer ever" will not hold

ground. I need to be more specific. My thesis is pretty heavy, spanning two sentences.

THESIS: Stephen King writes instant classics that many past and present highly-esteemed authors could not achieve in their lifetime. One of the most prolific writers of the twentieth century, Stephen King has produced more classics in his lifetime than many of the authors the canon labels "classic."

Definition Confirmatio

In my argument, I am going to use a definition. I will define what good literature and classics are.

-I will use past authors from my college days: authors who are considered "classic" by the canon. Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Fitzgerald. I only will use authors I am familiar.

-These so-called "classic" writers were not considered phenomenal writers back in the day: Poe was only popular after he published "The Raven" and then vanished into obscurity; Hawthorne's works other than the *SL* were not very good, hence why he acquired fame with *SL*; Melville's horrible *Moby Dick* (GAG) is atrocious literature (does it fit into my definition of a "classic"?); Fitzgerald drank himself into oblivion and died a pauper, his books barely read or sold. Only through the passing of time--and in most cases, the author's death--have these works reached the "classic" level. The same goes for King...but he is still alive.

Quantitative Evidence

Look at the numbers:

-Stephen King is worth \$400 million. The only American author who surpasses King is James Patterson (\$700 million worth).

-How many works has SK published? He has published over 160 works since his first book *Carrie* in 1974 (he threw the manuscript in the garbage and his wife dug it out and told him to publish it, incidentally).

-His books have sold over 350 million copies.

-Over 120 movies and short films have been made from his novels and short stories--the

bombs and the blockbusters.

-List the myriad of awards he received.

-This quantitative evidence shows his novels and movies are heavily read and highly watched, anticipated, and accepted.

Qualitative Evidence

I realized I have more qualitative evidence than quantitative evidence since I have been reading SK since I was 12. This is my ethos since I am very familiar with his works and have experienced a love for his books.

-I would have to write some type of rhetorical analysis: remember SK is an English major and was an English teacher when he wrote *Carrie*. I would explore the various rhetorical devices present in his works, citing instances of good writing. I mean, who would not find the last five lines of *Shawshank* nothing short of memorable (not to mention chock full of tropes and schemes):

"I hope Andy is down there.

I hope I can make it across the border.

I hope to see my friend and shake his hand.

I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams.

I hope."

-SK also likes to break the boundaries of regular writing: *Different Seasons* (four novellas); *Green Mile* (originally published in one-month increments, spanning six months); *The Dark Tower Series*, etc.

-His works are not forgotten and are insightful into the human mind as well as themes in life. These appeal to the common person as well as all walks of life.

-Any book with his name on it is sure to sell.

-King understands people's fears and uses them to draw people in (i.e. *IT*).

-According to the definition of a hit film, movies have quotable lines: his books have this as

well as his movies (See *Shawshank*).

-COMPARATIVE- Use my previous authors as comparisons to SK. Poe was not really accepted/embraced until "The Raven" and then he was out almost as soon as he was in. Hawthorne wrote some God awful novels before *SL*; only then was he accepted. Melville was wildly popular with *Typee*, an adventure novel; he then sunk into a void after publishing *Moby Dick* (GAG). SK's literature is way above par compared to *MD*. Fitzgerald was a washed-up author until decades after his death due to alcoholism and his inability to work with others. (SK lived through his alcoholism and proved he can still produce good literature and stay on top. From SK's alcoholism, we have the masterpiece *The Shining*.)



11 ESSENTIAL STEPHEN KING BOOKS

Stephen King is one of the most prolific authors in the world, with more than 50 books in print, and

<https://www.buzzfeed.com>

Other Side (Refutatio)

-Yes, not everybody likes SK's topics. Some people have had nightmares reading his books (*Pet Sematary* and *Salem's Lot* freaked me out when I first read them...and still kind of freak me out to this day.)

-Each book received the same attention, albeit some are not as favored as others. (I would give several books as examples.)

-Yes, rhetorically, SK is long winded and includes too many details (perhaps). This makes his writing a little tedious to some types who want to jump to the chase.

Conclusion Peroratio

In my conclusion, I will reiterate my thesis and include personal experience from adolescence to college to now. To end this evaluation, I will include my overall feelings about his writing and his instant classics. I will include a highly recognizable quote from SK or one of his works to end the essay or something of my own, as in

"I hope people are open to my argument.

I hope more people will read his books.

I hope SK will keep writing.

I hope his next novel is as good as his others have been in the past.

I hope."

Word to the Wise

Evaluation arguments are also based on the time and trends. Right now formulaic and sequel movies are the trend, hence why we are seeing so many of them. Why do you think we see so many Marvel movies and Fast and Furious sequels? The trends in everything will change with the time and the audience's moods and desires. Take into consideration that your audience and the trends.