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### The WHOPPER® and Implicit Arguments

“A fire-grilled classic ... ¼ pound of beef, red ripe tomatoes, crisp lettuce, creamy mayonnaise, ketchup, crunchy pickles and onions all on a freshly baked bun” (©2003). Are you drooling yet? You may be wondering, “What is this wonderful burger called and where can I find it?” The answer is found in almost every town in America. It is the Original WHOPPER® Sandwich and it is sold at your local Burger King. Just the name of “WHOPPER”® as applied to a burger conjures up mouth-watering images of a grilled-to-perfection piece of beef, covered in all the toppings you can imagine, and placed between two very large buns. It sounds enormous. Advertisements like this one, often paired with a larger-than-life picture of the burger, can be found on billboards, tractor-trailers, and posters all around the world. It’s even spread onto the internet, where pop-up ads featuring it are liable to drive the half-starved internet surfer to the nearest Burger King where they can order it “Your way right away”®. It’s the work of pure genius. And no, I’m not referring to the burger. I’m talking about the use of language to persuade the reader to view something in a way that is favorable to the author. The way the phrases are organized, the choice of descriptive terms,

and its use of logos make this WHOPPER® advertisement a perfect example of an implicit argument.

When the viewers first sees the advertisement and read “fire-grilled classic,” certain images may pop into their head. The term “fire-grilled” certainly does not invoke pictures of frozen slabs of meat simply laid on the grill to thaw out. Instead, the word choice makes the beef sound fresh, warm, and juicy. And not only is it fire-grilled, but it’s a *quarter of a pound* of fire-grilled beef. When adding the weight into the beef’s description, the advertisers had two choices. First, they could have simply said “four ounces,” but putting it in ounces makes it sound puny and insignificant. The second option, the one they chose, was to put the weight into a fraction of a pound. Even though it is not a full pound of beef, the consumer sees the word “pound” and the picture formed in the back of their minds is larger than the one that would have popped up if “ounces” had been used.

Now everyone knows that a good burger is not just about the beef. You can have an amazing piece of meat but without the proper toppings and condiments it remains just that; a piece of meat. Burger King recognized this and to make their WHOPPER® seem even more attractive they added a mouth-watering account of all of the extras that come with the burger; “...red ripe tomatoes, crisp lettuce, creamy mayonnaise, ketchup, crunchy pickles and onions all on a freshly baked bun.” Instead of just listing the toppings, they added descriptive terms before each one. These details give

flavor and texture to what would otherwise be a bland list. Describing the tomatoes as “red” and “ripe” makes them seem as if they came straight from the farm, freshly picked, and are now sliced for the consumer’s enjoyment. “Crisp” lettuce does not sound like the browning leaves of a soggy vegetable. Rather the term depicts the lettuce as recently picked, brisk, and green. Describing mayonnaise as “creamy” is another example of their descriptive language use. Creamy makes the condiment sound smooth and inviting; no one would want to eat a burger described as having “chunky” mayonnaise. In the same fashion, pickles and onions found on the burger are given the adjective “crunchy.” The very term makes them sound refreshing; the readers can almost hear the “crunch” as they imagine biting into one.

Even with the “fire-grilled” beef and fresh toppings, a burger just wouldn’t be a burger without a bun. But the WHOPPER® is different from your average, fast-food burger. Its bun is *freshly baked*. This phrase leads the consumers to believe that it was not recently removed from a giant freezer in the back of the restaurant, placed in a microwave, and re-heated. Instead, the term lets the readers imagine a giant oven filled with warm, rising buns, just waiting to be placed on their burger.

All of these different textures combine to add to the attraction of the WHOPPER®. This is exactly what the advertisers want. Not only are they appealing to one’s appetite when they use these descriptive terms, but also

to one's rational side. If you wanted to eat a good burger, wouldn't this be your logical choice? They make it sound tastier, larger, and fresher than your average burger. An example of this can be found in the first phrase, "fire-grilled classic." Webster's 2003 dictionary defines classic as "of the highest class or style." The advertisers used this word in the hopes of appealing to the consumers' logos. If you are looking for a good meal, why not try a burger that is "of the highest class?" Surely you wouldn't settle for the second best.

I must admit that after writing this paper I, too, succumbed to the advertisers' wishes and headed down to the Russell House's Burger King. And, not surprisingly, the WHOPPER® was not as good as the commercials make it look. The lettuce was not as crisp as the advertisement's description, nor did the bun taste "freshly baked." But as far as the advertisers for Burger King were concerned, they had done their job. It's not their fault that the food was not as fresh as I might have liked, they weren't hired to cook it. Their job was simply to appeal to my senses and logos, through the use of language, and in doing so persuade me to buy the product they were advertising. In this they were successful. That is why this ad for Burger King's WHOPPER® is an excellent example of an implicit argument. Without actually *saying* that I should buy their burger, they use their choice of words to appeal to my sense of reason. Though not explicitly stated, their argument is very effective. After all, in July of 2002 Burger King

sold its 50 millionth WHOPPER®. With numbers like that, their advertising must have been persuasive.

Work Cited

"Original WHOPPER® Sandwich." BurgerKing.com. 10 Sep. 2003.

<http://www.burgerking.com/Food/products/whopper/index.html>.