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Metaphors and Emotions in Advertising: A Rhetorical Analysis of Audi's Online Video
Commercials

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Media and Communication
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts in Brand and Media Strategy

by
Richard Opoku Amoako
May 2020

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ABSTRACT

Metaphors and Emotions in Advertising: A Rhetorical Analysis of Audi's Online Video

Commercials

by

Richard Opoku Amoako

Advertising often employs metaphor because of its rhetorical utility. By drawing on analogous imagery and language, metaphor has the potential to elicit emotional responses. As the digital age is increasingly saturated with commercial messaging, advertising experts leverage the persuasive power of metaphor and emotion to produce creative, compelling, and memorable commercials. German automobile company Audi employs metaphorical language and imagery in their video advertisements to arouse consumer emotions. In this study, I conduct rhetorical analyses of Audi's online video commercials in order to: identify instances in their ads that employ metaphorical language and imagery; investigate how those metaphors function rhetorically; and discuss the complex rhetorical interplay between metaphor and emotion. My findings suggest that Audi leverages the power of metaphor to build audiences' emotional investment in the brand, and therefore, be more likely to purchase Audi vehicles.

DEDICATION

Regardless of the challenging moments that arose unexpectedly during work on this project, I had a support system of family, friends, mentors, and loved ones who held me close, encouraged me, and cheered me on. You are the reason I did not cave in; you are the reason I did not break; you are the reason I kept sailing to dock this ship of insights to the shore. I am thankful for people like you in my life. I dedicate this sweat of achievement to you all. Also, to all who do not have an educational background in media and communication but are strongly interested in making an impact in the industry with your skills, passion, and self-acquired knowledge, I dedicate this to you – keep moving forward.

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I developed an interest in this research area after a class with Department Chair Dr. Stephen Marshall. I am thankful to him for lighting a match that will sustain my work for years to come. Above all, glory be to God.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
DEDICATION.....	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
LIST OF TABLES.....	7
LIST OF FIGURES.....	8
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	10
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	13
Metaphor: Uses and Effects.....	13
Emotional Appeals in Advertising.....	17
The Theory of Persuasion.....	21
Chapter 3. Methodology.....	25
Rhetoric: A Brief History.....	25
The Three Rhetorical Appeals.....	25
Ethos.....	26
Pathos.....	27
Logos.....	27
Rhetorical Analysis.....	28
Sampling Method.....	29
Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis.....	31
An Avant Story: Audi RS6 2019 Commercial.....	31
Contextual description.....	31
Content Description.....	33
Analysis.....	36
Pathos.....	38
Ethos.....	50
Logos.....	53
Secretariat: Audi S5 2018 Commercial.....	54

Contextual description	54
Content description	56
Analysis.....	60
Pathos.....	62
Ethos	64
Logos.....	65
Commander: Audi R8 Super Bowl 2016 Commercial	66
Content description	67
Analysis.....	71
Pathos.....	71
Ethos	73
Logos.....	74
Chapter 5. Discussion	76
Rhetorical Elements in Video Advertising: Audio, Imagery, Text	80
Chapter 6. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research.....	85
References.....	91
VITA.....	97

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. List of Audi's Video Commercials on YouTube.....	30
Table 2. List of Major Visual Metaphors, Their Purpose, and Emotions Evoked in the Commercial.....	78
Table 3. Different Kinds of Audio in Audi's Commercials and Their Purpose.....	81
Table 4. List of Texts and Phrases as Rhetorical Device in Audi's Commercials.....	84

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Aristotle’s Rhetorical Triangle	26
Figure 2. Rhetorical analysis of Audi’s Avant Story commercial	37
Figure 3. Baby smiling in Audi’s Avant Story commercial	39
Figure 4. 1970 Audi Foxy in frame to arouse nostalgia	39
Figure 5. The young protagonist bonding with dad in an Audi	40
Figure 6. The boy looking forlorn watching the RS2 commercial in the film.....	41
Figure 7. The boy admiring an Audi.....	42
Figure 8. The boy’s imaginary fun-ride with his friends in an Audi RS Avant	42
Figure 9. Older version of the male protagonist driving in his parents’ old car	43
Figure 10. The man seeing a beautiful lady in an Audi	44
Figure 11. The man admiring the woman and her Audi while driving.....	44
Figure 12. The man enjoying his thrilling experience in an Audi RS2	45
Figure 13. The man celebrating his engagement with the woman with an Audi parked in view.	46
Figure 14. Couple smiling in their RS4 Avant on their wedding day.....	47
Figure 15. Couple driving off in their Audi RS4 Avant on their wedding day	48
Figure 16. The man with his wife giving birth	49
Figure 17. The man celebrating his fortieth birthday with his family	50
Figure 18. The child touching Audi’s symbol in frame.....	52
Figure 19. Audi Sport logotype, text, and promo t-shirt in frame	53
Figure 20. Audi’s RS Avant’s dashboard	54
Figure 21. Secretariat celebrating her win after a race	56
Figure 22. Secretariat and Audi S5 Sportback in frame	57

Figure 23. Dashboard display of Audi S5 Sportback	58
Figure 24. Veterinarians looking at Secretariat’s heart after an X-ray analysis	59
Figure 25. Secretariat on Time Magazine, Newsweek, and Sports Illustrated covers.....	61
Figure 26. Rhetorical Analysis of Audi’s Secretariat video commercial	62
Figure 27. Secretariat from flashback footage	63
Figure 28. S5 Sportback footage in frame to show Audi’s logo.....	65
Figure 29. Descriptive text as a logical appeal in Audi's Secretariat commercial	66
Figure 30. The commander in a solemn reflection in his home office	68
Figure 31. Comparison of the man walking to the Audi, and boarding the spaceship	69
Figure 32. The spaceship and Audi in intermittent cuts	70
Figure 33. Rhetorical analysis of Audi’s Commander video commercial.....	71
Figure 34. Screenshot of the commander and his son’s facial expression.....	72
Figure 35. Screenshot of the man in anticipation to take off in the Audi	73
Figure 36. Audi’s logos at different camera angles	74
Figure 37. Audi’s dashboard with infographics about its performance.....	75
Figure 38. Recurring rhetorical devices in Audi’s video commercials	82
Figure 39. Repetition of certain visuals in Audi’s video commercials.....	83
Figure 40. Recurring emotional themes in Audi’s video commercials	86

Chapter 1. Introduction

With an increasing number of brands offering similar products and services across industry landscapes, advertising has become important for influencing customers to choose specific products over others in a competitive market space (Terkan, 2014). Several companies and brands, especially automobiles, have developed keen interests in advertising to increase sales and maximize revenue while creating attention and building recognition in the hearts and minds of prospective and existing customers (More & Lee, 2013). From its inception, the concept of advertising has represented an opportunity for brands and companies to maximize sales while creating recognition on several media platforms (Murray, 2018).

Advertising plays a crucial role in every brand's success; it is an essential element in every company's marketing and sales plans. Whether introducing a new product to the market, creating significant awareness of a new idea, promoting an existing product, or communicating a unique message, advertising stands as an effective communication tool. It presents unique value propositions to an audience while persuading target markets to yield to diverse call-to-actions (Akrani, 2013). Among the many goals of advertising, the most important is influencing consumer behavior.

In the evolution of advertising, from print to radio, radio to television, and on to all the new media born from the internet, visual metaphor and emotions have been much employed in advertising communication strategies (Kadry, 2015). Consequently, in recent decades, researchers have sought to study the effects of such devices. The internet as a technological innovation has introduced new and creative approaches for advertising and has subsequently changed the nature of communication. With increasing opportunities to promote products and services, advertisers employ innovative and strategic approaches to outsell competitors. Among these creative, strategic ways is the deliberate use of metaphorical language and imagery as a

mediating factor to arouse emotions and create lasting effects on consumers when creating advertising commercials (Roozen, 2013).

Practitioners have adopted the use of metaphor in arousing emotions for strategic communication, especially in advertising and marketing campaigns. Young (2017) states that advertising should employ creative strategies that appeal to prospective audiences in the digital revolution. The adoption of metaphor in creative content development is one strategy that communication experts in the digital age use to connect with audiences, highlight product attributes, and project unique value propositions. Kovecses (2002) refers to metaphor's "major manifestation" (p. 59) on consumers. In an attempt to create outstanding and memorable messages for maximum attention, advertisers employ metaphor to arouse emotions and create compelling brands.

Frequently, advertisers employ metaphorical language and imagery to dramatize a message, as well as make it more personal to the target audience (Joseph, 2018). This has been evident in advertising and marketing campaigns for most profit and nonprofit brands and has been successful at arousing emotions and persuading a target audience to take the desired action – either purchase a product or change behavior.

Advertising has become increasingly ubiquitous in media ecosystems; consumers are exposed to nearly 5,000 advertisements each day (Simpson, 2017). Advertising messages, therefore, need to have unique creative features that inspire and evoke emotions to aid cognition and influence behavior (Roozen, 2013). Metaphor has been noted in recent research (see Tuan, 2010; Kadry, 2015; Toncar & Munch, 2001) as a strategic tool employed by advertisers to enhance recall and affect consumer behavior. Although there have been studies on the use of

metaphor in advertising, there is a lack of attention on how the use of metaphor in advertising can be understood in terms of visual rhetoric and rhetorical analysis.

In this study, I investigate the rhetorical utility of metaphor in advertising by employing rhetorical analysis to explore how metaphorical language and imagery are used in advertising. Specifically, I will focus on the online video advertisements of a major company in the automobile industry by:

- a. identifying instances of metaphorical language/imagery in automobile advertisements.
- b. employing rhetorical analysis to analyze the use of metaphor to appeal to consumer emotions.
- c. and suggesting how and why metaphor can be an effective rhetorical device in the context of video advertising.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Metaphor: Uses and Effects

Professionals and scholars have long expressed interest in the use of metaphor as a rhetorical device for strategic communication. Historically, metaphor has been employed across a wide range of literary genres, including poetry, narrative fiction, and even in technical documents (Yu, 2009). In recent times, metaphor has been co-opted by fields such as advertising because of its rhetorical utility. Metaphor is not only effective in the arts and literature; it is also, it turns out, a strategic tool for advertising and communication for professionals.

McQuarrie and Nick (1996) define metaphor as a linguistic or visual device that communicates a concept, message, or relationship by drawing on different language and imagery; it is frequently used in advertising because it fosters audience recall. Yu (2009) explains that metaphor is a type of language expression used to breathe life into seemingly abstract concepts to make them concrete. Metaphor is also employed to “accelerate understanding” (Dehay & Landwehr, p.1) and cognition of such information, which an audience can easily relate to. Advertising therefore integrates metaphor in various instances when creating ad commercials.

Undwerwood (2017) explains metaphor as a rhetorical device that describes an object or action in a way “that is not literally true but helps explain an idea or makes a comparison” (p.3). Thus, a metaphor explains an attribute of one thing in terms of another and attempts to correlate them in a manner that creates symbolism. Lakeoff and Johnson (2003) add that metaphor is often an analogy of two distinct objects, and is a powerful tool for persuasion, capable of creating thrilling experiences of thing by highlighting the perceived attributes of another “not only in language, but in thought and action: (Svaziene, p. 111).

Metaphor, according to Toncar and Minch (2009), is exaggerating and false in appearance. It represents “indirect reflections of reality” (Dehay & Landwehr, p. 2), yet provides a rich source of enlightenment and aids cognition of messages in a target audience. While there may be no direct relationship between the message and visuals (and/or language) in the metaphor, Tuan (2010) explains metaphors’ ability to create experiences and imaginations that arise from “processing various interpretations” (p.75) by the target audience.

Advertising professionals strategically use visual imagery to indirectly describe important product attributes and leave the target audience to formulate their own interpretation. Barthes (1986) posits that the more an audience is able to imagine and interpret their own understanding from a visual metaphor, the more likely they are to remember the message. This, according to (Kadry, 2015), enhances cognition of the message and eventually facilitates brand and product recognition. In effect, the use of metaphor in strategic communication and advertising has a direct influence on the effectiveness of the message on the target audience.

Kadry (2015) again highlights three mediating roles of metaphor: ignite a feeling, persuade an audience, and trigger an action. In this, we find the inherent power of metaphors to arouse interest and drive action via strategic communication and marketing campaigns. He explains that the strategic use of metaphorical language and imagery in advertising in the digital age has an enormous potential to affect attitudes and trigger change.

In the same vein, Dehay and Landwehr (2019) explain that metaphor is employed in advertising to achieve important and specific objectives in a marketing campaign and are used to emphasize some key benefits of a product or brand. They conclude that advertising and other strategic communication draw on the rhetorical utility of metaphor to creatively communicate specific product attributes that have the potential to evoke interest and trigger conversions. This

indirect approach to persuasive communication has been effective in recent decades, and has been employed by several brands in the automobile industry (Audi, Mercedes, Volvo, Tesla, etc.) in their communication and marketing tactics. While direct communication highlights obvious and specific product attributes, indirect communication tells a story and leaves the audience to make their own judgment after a careful analysis.

Kim et al. (2012) and Philipps (2005) agree that metaphor often involves the combined use of expressions or two seemingly incompatible images that convey a different meaning other than its literal definition, and is used in the description of objects, activities, or ideas to create symbolic meaning. These may be in the form of images or text (or a combination of both). Tuan (2010) intimates that metaphor is used predominantly in ad copy to stimulate interest and motivate the target audience to read and process the content of the ad. Gray and Synder (1989) observed that target audiences spend more time viewing ads with visual metaphors than those without. Kadry (2015) has suggested that this enhances brand recognition.

The literature above illustrates that scholars, practitioners, and experts have adopted metaphors in strategic communication, and especially in advertising and marketing campaigns. Advertising in the automobile industry, in particular, frequently employs metaphorical language and imagery to leverage the aforementioned effects.

In a media-saturated society in which information overload is a real problem, metaphor has proven to be an effective rhetorical device for crafting ads that propel brand stories and messages to rise beyond the noise and get noticed. MacInnis et al. (1991) argue compellingly that the use of metaphor in advertising arouses curiosity about the brand and stimulates interest for the product or service. Accordingly, Morgan and Reinchert (1991) cast more light onto the inherent potential of metaphors in advertising. They explain that “metaphors and analogies are

the ants of advertising. Just as tiny insects can support many times their own weight, a single metaphor can be worth a hundred words of copy” (p. 1).

In an attempt to create effective and memorable messages, advertisers often employ metaphors to create excitement about product attributes that are seemingly mundane. In so doing, the goal is to create more engaging and compelling audiovisuals that position their brand or products in such a way to drive their target audience to take the desired action (Nijs, 2017).

Frequently, advertising messages use metaphor to highlight the anticipated utility, characteristics, and sometimes product value to a target audience; this involves the combination of verbal cues and visual imagery to dramatize an effect (Joseph, 2018). Morgan and Stenchert (1999) emphasize that metaphors are important in advertising because they help explain brand meaning, create a connection between the brand and the audience, and stimulate the processing of brand information.

Consequently, the use and importance of metaphors have been evident in advertising and marketing communications for many for-profit and nonprofit brands. When embedded in advertising messages, “metaphors can trigger attention” (Dehay & Landwehr, 2019, p. 1) to the unique value propositions and stimulate emotional arousal in the target audience.

Emphasizing that advertising does not only inform an audience with new messages and important information, but also attempts to persuade and change behavior, it is not surprising to see that advertisers in modern culture employ metaphorical language and imagery in order to evoke emotions to condition the mind and heart of an audience to embrace the message in an ad. It is imperative to note that because digital media landscapes are constantly inundated with multiple ads, content producers and ad-copy writers must seek a more effective and persuasive approach when creating marketing and advertising materials. Advertising in the digital age has,

therefore, embraced a strategic approach by leveraging the power of metaphors to arouse emotions, for the specific purpose of arousing emotions that trigger purchasing habits.

Emotional Appeals in Advertising

As the digital age continues to expand with several media platforms, advertising and other forms of communication creatively employ psychological factors to stimulate interest and persuade consumers. One such factor is the appeal to emotions as a strategic means to influence cognition, stimulate interest, and direct consumer attention in advertising.

Emotions are powerful elements of human nature that can influence our daily decisions. They are part of everyday experiences, are complex in nature, and have been noted by Stewart et al. (p. 120) as “physiological responses to external stimuli.” Sternberg (1998) also believes that emotion is a resulting effect of physical and behavioral reactions to changes in one’s environment, and it influences decisions, choices, and actions. While an individual’s daily choice of products may result from a cognitive analysis of existing or available alternatives, Murray (2013) posits that in reality, emotions have a greater power to influence decision making.

Roizen (2013) suggests that the need to garner attention and create engagement for brand messaging, change behavior and influence decisions in a competitive media landscape is the reason why advertisers are employing strategic ways to arouse emotions with their ads. This has prompted several researchers to investigate and analyze how emotions are used as a persuasive element in advertising.

In the digital age, audiences are constantly bombarded by seemingly endless streams of commercial messaging, especially on social media (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc). A target audience is likely to remember only a fraction of these commercials. While several factors account for the likelihood of a commercial to be remembered by an audience, Kensinger (2004)

notes that “events with emotional relevance are more likely to be remembered than events of emotional devoid” (p. 241). Emotions, therefore, can be said to possess a “memory-enhancing” (Kensinger, p. 242) potential, and advertisers, in effect, employ them when creating ad-copy and media content for commercials.

Emotions play significant roles in an individual’s daily media experience and have become a powerful tool in advertising. Zaltman and MacCaba (2007) note that the effectiveness of advertising rests on the shoulders of “enduring emotional impact” (p. 3). Ads that have the power to stimulate emotional experiences are predictive of effective results than those that are not. Mehta and Purvis (2006) contend that emotional appeals in well-crafted commercials are more likely to create an impact; that is, to persuade and trigger change. To this extent, emotions are increasingly utilized in advertising and communication strategies for both for-profit and non-profit brands.

Stewart and Grover (2017) suggest that advertising has long appealed to emotions; this trend has only increased since the digital revolution. They argue that the proper and strategic use of emotions in advertising is the potential to facilitate acceptance and remembrance of a message in an ad. Similarly, Mizerski and White (1986) make the case that commercials (especially videos) that employ emotions in advertising often gain more attention and engagement and are frequently adopted for persuasive effects in product marketing. The use of emotions in advertising has the potential to elicit some form of affect-based attitudes that make the audience feel some form of joy, trust and security about the brand or product.

Research by Murray (2017) reveals two kinds of emotional appeals: positive and negative. Positive emotions are those that make the audience feel happy, excited, hopeful, and optimistic about the brand. Negative emotions include sadness, fear, anger, among others.

Emotional appeals often utilize fear, sadness, and humor to strategically present the selling points of a product, service, or brand in video commercials. Hollis (2010) supports the notion that advertising commercials often engender ears or smiles from the target audience. It has been evident from research by Stewart, Morris and Grover (2007) that the kind and dimension of emotional experience by an audience is predicated on the level of arousal that is triggered by the cues in the commercial.

Creative content producers strategically use emotional-evoking elements (eg: imagery, symbols, historic events, scenes, sound) to create specific moods and arouse certain feelings such as fear, confidence, happiness, sadness, etc. According to Mizerski and White (1986), the target audience usually associates the brand or product being advertised with their emotional experience. For instance, Coca-Cola's ads mostly feature happy friends and family enjoying the product at lively settings. Gradually, Coca-Cola's target audience have associated the product with happy moments.

One notable industry leveraging the power of emotions in advertising for strategic effect is the automobile industry, among which Mercedes, BMW and Audi are three outstanding brands. These three automobile brands are constantly associating their products with positive emotions such as joy, happiness, hopeful, content, optimistic, pleased, encouraged (Zaltman & MacCaba, 2007) to strategically communicate the unique features of their cars in a storytelling approach via diverse media platforms. Rather than using the rational approach to present unique value propositions of their products, advertisers in the automobile industry have embraced a rather intriguing and strategic approach which creatively embeds emotions from "appraisal of events" (Bagozzi & Gopinath, 1999, p. 45) to arouse interest.

Sometimes, advertisers in this industry utilize negative emotions such as fear to highlight the safety features of a car in commercials. This is because, according to Tanner Hunt and Eppright (1991), behavior change is heavily dependent on fear; and people will seek possible ways to avoid such perceived threats (Sternthal & Craig, 1974). Advertisers therefore capitalize on this phenomenon and employ emotional elements of fear, when crafting their commercials as seen in Volvo's 2017 'Moments' commercial for the new Volvo XC60, which is heavy laden with a mix of emotions in moments of despair and hope; fear and confidence; sadness and happiness. These emotions are intended to highlight the anti-collision safety features in the new Volvo XC60, which appears to be the recommended practice as a solution to the dangers of hitting an innocent schoolgirl crossing the road, as seen in the commercial.

A critical observation of recent advertising commercials in the automobile industry reveals that emotional appeals to sadness are often employed to trigger behavioral change (Ambekar, 2009). Mitchell et al. (2001) suggest that sad appeals in advertising commercials evoke sympathy, as they "provide loss-related information" (Li and Rodriguez, 2005, p. 42). Advertisers use this kind of emotional appeal to create relatable stories that feature events and instances that create nostalgic feelings. These nostalgic feelings have been noted by content production experts as an effective way to go beyond reaching an audience to moving them emotionally.

Contrary to negative emotional appeals, the use of positive emotions such as happiness in automobile advertising represents another powerful tool for strategic communication in the digital age. Alden et al. (1993) argue that the use of positive emotions to elicit excitement about products and services in advertising commercials stimulate positive brand positioning and recognition but does not always facilitate recall. Li and Rodriguez (2015) assert that happy or

exciting, emotional appeals help trigger positive feelings about a product or brand; and target audiences often associate brands with these kinds of emotions. Audi, Mercedes and BMW recognize this strategy and frequently utilize positive emotional appeals in their commercials.

Two major reasons why advertisers often integrate emotional-arousing elements in their commercials are cognition and experience. Lang et al. (1995) argue that commercials with highly emotional messages are often remembered more than rational messages. This is because the individual gradually absorbs the message and can relate to it in an everyday real-world experience. Young (2017) states that audiences in the digital age are saturated by millennials, who are influenced by experiential messages. He argues that adverts have the power to move an audience, give them a thrilling experience, and eventually create favorable cognitive responses can be summed up in one word: emotional.

Shachter and Singer (1962) posit that the presence of verbal and non-verbal stimuli (cues) in a message are vital to achieving emotional experience in an audience. Content production experts in the digital age realize this, and significantly integrate elements that have the potential to arouse certain kinds of emotions in their audience. They craft their advertising messages with emotional storylines, sound, and even sometimes colors to send gentle cues to the audience. These emotion-evoking elements may result in different forms of arousal levels, such as joy, sadness, surprise, love and fear. This helps to gently persuade the target audience to yield to diverse calls-to-action in the message/commercial.

The Theory of Persuasion

From the above literature, it is evident that on various media channels today – especially that of digital, we mostly see advertisers urging an audience to purchase a product and subtly appealing to individuals to yield to diverse call-to-actions. On social media platforms, television

and websites, we realize how the unbeatable power of persuasion is used as a mediating factor to influence decisions or create change in society. Realizing that persuasion is an outstanding reason why advertising in the digital age employs the use of emotions and metaphors, it is imperative to understand persuasion from a theoretical perspective.

Petty and Brinol (2008) affirm that persuasion is important in mass media communications, and that understanding the concept of persuasion is essential to achieving desired effects in strategic media communications, such as advertising. Cherry (2018) agrees and adds that the enormous power of persuasion and its effect on human interactions will continually be relevant in media and communications. Hence, it is important to understand the theoretical framework of persuasion, and its application in advertising in modern culture.

Persuasion is an essential tool for effective communication on mass media platforms in the digital revolution. Simons (1976) defines persuasion as the process of purposely crafting a message to change another person's thoughts, way of life, beliefs or behavior. By doing so, persuasion becomes an art of influence, and it does not only change beliefs or behavior – it also alters values, or perhaps, attempts to. Also, Petty and Brinol (2008) define persuasion as any communication message that is created with the intent or inherent potential of convincing another person to change an attitude or his mind about something.

A common element running through the different definitions of persuasion by different scholars is that the ultimate purpose of persuasion is influence, and its target end-result is change. An underlying factor is that persuasion should have a message from a source to a receiver through a channel.

While there has not been an exact attribute to the theory of persuasion, according to Simons (1976), the art of influencing others became a subject of interest after Dale Carnegie

published his book on “How to Win Friends and Influence People” in the early 1930’s. Also, the theory of persuasion can be attributed to the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle during the 4th Century when he emphasized in his work “Rhetoric” that for a politician to be crowned successful, he has to be an expert in the art of persuasion (Gass & Seiter, 2010). Aristotle argued and hypothesized that for a message to be considered persuasive, it must be credible, give the target audience a logical reason to consider the propositions of the message, and also appeal to the emotions of the receiver. That is, persuasive messages are either cognitive or affective (or both).

Aristotle argued that three factors (and their interplay) determine the effectiveness of a persuasive message: “the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness – especially his moral character (*ethos*); a logical and well-reasoned argument (*logos*); and the feelings of the audience (*pathos*)” (Micelli et al., 2006). These appeals function together to gently persuade the audience to willingly yield to the call-to-action in the message.

A major standpoint of the theory of persuasion, according to Baker and Petty (1994) is that a persuasive message must not exhibit any trait of coercion or threat. It should rather present the message to an audience in a way that will give the receiver the free will to take a desired decision or action. Dainton (2005) believes that in order to effectively persuade another person to think the same way one thinks or take a desired action, when presenting the message, “an outside source simply has to provide enough ammunition to change another’s attitudes or beliefs”. (p. 114). These ammunitions may either be a cognitive or affective appeal – and may be subtle or radical. He argues that affective appeals are more effective than the radicals – the reason for which strategic communication and advertising in the digital age has witnessed a paradigm shift from cognitive reasoning to ‘emotional thinking’.

Over the years, scholars have distinguished between two major modes of persuasion (O’Keefe, 2002). According to Miceli et al. (2006), persuasion may either be cognitive (rational) or affective (irrational) and is characterized by how the message appeals to an individual. They go on to explain that a persuasive message that appeals to the emotions of an individual is considered affective, and it may achieve its intent by arousing the individual’s emotions or appealing to expected emotions. A persuasive message that presents logical reasoning to the receiver, described by Aristotle as ‘*logos*’ may be considered cognitive. In advertising, the process of persuasion remains an important approach to ultimately increase conversions.

Day in day out, humans are bombarded with numerous options for products and services on several media. The choices we make may result from either a cognitive or affective analysis of the options available to us. The underlying factor (trigger) in either of these analyses to make a choice is persuasion. As long as humans will be required to make a choice from different available options on media platforms, the concept of persuasion will continually be relevant in advertising and marketing, as the digital revolution continues to march forward.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Rhetoric: A Brief History

Rhetoric is a strategic tool employed in communication to influence a target audience. As a method of persuasion, rhetoric draws on devices such as imagery, sound/audio, metaphor, symbols, etc., to appeal to an audience for a specific purpose. The history of rhetoric dates to the fourth century BC, when Plato defined, introduced it in his ‘Gorgias’ dialogue (c. 380 BC). Kiholm and Gardemeyr (2017) explain that Plato considered rhetoric “a form of flattery based on emotions, and probabilities, and not a true knowledge grounded in nature” (p. 17). Consequently, they conclude that the use of rhetoric became a point of interest in literature, politics, and law after Plato’s student Aristotle (384-322 BC) built on his teacher’s ideas, outlined the elements of the rhetorical triangle (*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*), and advocated for its continued use for the public good (Sproule, 1997). Doan (2017) agrees that the use of rhetoric goes beyond creative writing and propaganda. He establishes that rhetoric has been employed in business communication (advertising) to “influence consumers’ decisions” (p. 31) with the three rhetorical appeals: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*.

The Three Rhetorical Appeals

Aristotle theorized that the effectiveness of an argument is predicated on three appeals: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. He argued that each of the three appeals represents a unique way for the communicator to reach an audience and convince them to agree on a specific issue. He further explained that a balanced combination of the three appeals by a rhetor is vital in the art of persuasion. Taken together, these three appeals comprise the rhetorical triangle. Holt and Macpherson (2010), among other researchers, emphasize that the rhetorical appeals incorporate

the authority and credibility of the speaker (*ethos*); the emotional and sensual response of the audience (*pathos*); and the logical reasoning of the argument (*logos*).

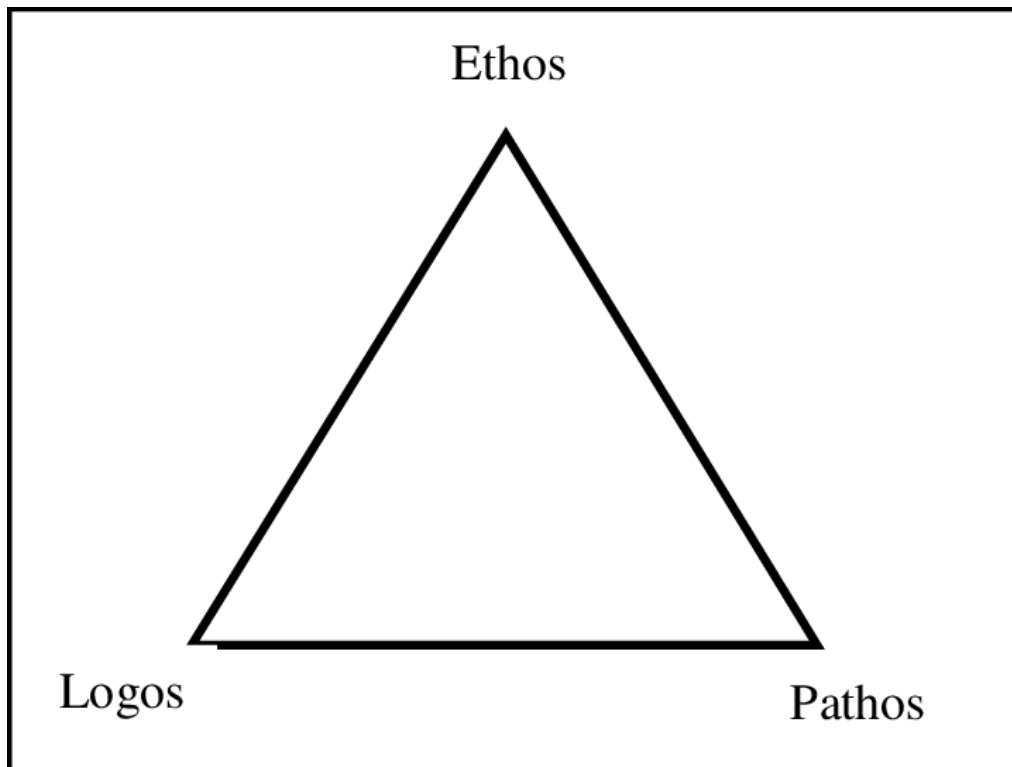


Figure 1. *Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle*

Ethos. An appeal to *ethos* is primarily associated with the credibility of the speaker. Aristotle posited that the credibility of the speaker is vital and presented reasons why an audience should believe the message from the speaker. Other researchers (Crowley & Hawhee, 2004; Edinger, 2013) state that a speaker must have a good reputation, authority, character, and integrity in order to demonstrate a strong *ethos*. The speaker is generally considered as an expert or thought leader in the subject of the message. This, according to Kiholm and Gårdemyr, (2017) presents the speaker as credible and ethical, and as such the audience is more likely to side with his or her argument. In order to establish a strong *ethos*, the speaker must build trust.

Doan (2017) mentions that advertising establishes *ethos* by building trust mainly by using celebrities and people of interest in society to introduce or share testimonials about a product or service. Contrary to Aristotle's notion of credibility in relation to the character of the author, he explains that featuring such personalities in ads "implies that the information in the advertisements is from reputable sources, reliable, and of high quality" (Doan, p. 31). This is a relatively new phenomenon, as celebrities were not what Aristotle motioned as a source of *ethos*.

Pathos. *Pathos* appeals to the emotions of an audience. It represents how the receiver feels about the message. Kiholm and Gårdemyr (2017) explain that pathos represents "the temporary appeal to the emotions of the audience" (p. 18) and contributes to the ways in which an audience receives a message. (Doan, 2017). This rhetorical appeal has the potential of enhancing cognition and increasing engagement in modern advertising messages.

Pathos appeals to emotional states such as happiness, anger, sadness, guilt, etc., and in digital multimedia take the form of music, imagery, voiceover narrative, etc. Doan (2017) explains that soothing music puts the target audience in a specific mood; and actions and imagery arouse certain emotions. Understanding the emotional states and beliefs of an audience is essential to appealing to their emotions.

Logos. *Logos* is a rhetorical appeal that attempts to persuade an audience with logical reasoning. Aristotle argued that the rhetor must present a robust body of factual evidence when appealing to *logos*. Doan (2017) explains that the evidence may be in the form of statistical data, figures, and accepted maxims. Garver (2004) states that an appeal to *logos* has the potential to strengthen the credibility of the rhetor. According to Doan, when the speaker appeals to an audience with logical reasoning and solid references (evidence), this establishes *ethos* because the audience perceives the rhetor to be knowledgeable.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis is a methodological approach to studying texts. It is a discursive tool by which researchers collect and analyze qualitative data relating to implicit and explicit arguments. Scholars employ rhetorical analysis to explore and critique how a rhetor (speaker, writer, media producer) presents information for persuasive ends. To do so, the investigator explores textual content in terms of five elements proposed by Shea (2016): written texts, spoken words, sound (including music), visuals/imagery, and motion graphics. Rhetorical analysis involves making reasonable observations based on evident data in an available text. Below, I apply rhetorical analysis in order to:

- identify video advertisements that employ a specific kind of rhetorical device (metaphor);
- describe the context and content of the advertisements in detail.
- and analyze how instances of metaphorical language and/or imagery in the ads appeal to *logos* (rationality), *ethos* (character), and emotions (*pathos*),

Specifically, I focus on how the car company Audi rhetorically employs metaphor to appeal to *pathos* in its online video advertisements. By applying rhetorical analysis, I am able to describe Audi's rhetorical moves, including devices and appeals; discuss how those moves function strategically; and suggest how metaphorical language and imagery can be an effective means to market and sell consumer products.

Philips and McQuirre (2004) indicate that it is essential to draw on rhetorical theory when attempting to persuade a target audience. Also, rhetorical analysis allows the researcher to employ the rhetorical appeals (*ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*) to conduct an in-depth exploration of

how the various elements of rhetoric (such as sound, visuals, text, etc.) interact and appeal to an audience in a video commercial. This, according to Shea (2017), makes rhetorical analysis an effective and comprehensive method for analyzing video advertisements.

However, according to Kihom and Gardemyr (2017), few studies have employed rhetorical analysis to evaluate how contents in an advertising piece persuade consumers. Therefore, the use of rhetorical analysis in this study to establish how Audi's advertising strategy employs the three rhetorical appeals for persuasion is worth pursuing.

The study identifies and uses three Audi video ads that tell an emotional story with metaphors (language and/or images). The metaphors in these ads are evident in their contents and/or general contexts. These ads were published on YouTube within the past five years, and include spots for recent Superbowl commercials, as well as ads that advertise Audi's new cars and services. Some of these ads have more than one million views on YouTube.

Sampling Method

Purposeful sampling was employed to select three video ads based on the presence of metaphorical language and imagery, as well as apparent emotional appeals. This method involves selecting units or artifacts which are subjective to the judgment of the researcher. A critical look at the three video ads clearly reveals the prevalence of metaphors and emotional appeals, from the authors' point of view. This informs the choice of purposeful sampling as a method in this research.

Again, employing purposive sampling is convenient, since the number of samples (video ads) under investigation is relatively small. Purposeful sampling is appropriate for this particular study, too, because I will not be extrapolating from my findings to make blanket statements about metaphor's effectiveness as a rhetorical device. Instead, my conclusions only suggest that

metaphorical language and imagery is purposefully and strategically employed by a major company; that the implications from those findings are interesting in various ways; and that my research can lead to further and fruitful inquiries into the subject. The method allows me to effectively highlight specific attributes of interest and address the research questions. The table below lists the three select video commercials by Audi for this study.

Table 1.

List of Audi's video commercials on YouTube

TITLE	YEAR	SOURCE
An Avant Story	2019	Avant Story, YouTube
Secretariat: Audi S5 2018 Sportback Campaign	2017	Secretariat, YouTube
Commander - 2016 Audi R8 Super Bowl Commercial	2016	Commander, YouTube

Chapter 4. Findings and Analysis

Audi is an authority brand in the automobile industry. The brand's advertising is innovative in its creative storytelling, use of imagery, and depth of emotional appeal. The German automobile company's advertising strategy harnesses the power of creative visual storytelling with language, imagery, and audio with text in their commercials to promote their advanced and progressive technology for their luxurious cars. Audi usually uses short video advertisements to communicate their message and to emotionally connect with their target audience. Often, their commercials highlight the anticipated experience and thrill of owning/driving an Audi.

AdAge (2017) describes Audi's commercials as epic, emotional, heartwarming, practical and creative. I therefore deem it fit to select video ads by Audi to explore how the brand's video ads draw on the rhetorical utility of metaphors in content and context to arouse consumer's emotions. In the subsequent sections, I provide a brief description of each video ad based on context and content. I further conduct rhetorical analyses of the ads to discuss various rhetorical elements/devices that function to arouse audiences' emotions.

An Avant Story: Audi RS6 2019 Commercial

Contextual description. Audi uses a video spot to announce the arrival of its RS6 Avant in America and Canada in 2020. The short film, "An Avant Story," was released on Audi's YouTube channel on August 20, 2019. The comedic and heartfelt film, produced by Tilt Creative + Production in the United States, takes viewers on an emotional journey of a young boy's love for Audi throughout the various stages in his life. The video includes scenes of his life events, accompanied by the upbeat tempo and soothing soundtrack, *Run Boy, Run*, by Woodkid.

The video spot is six minutes, forty seconds long. It tells the story of the boy's journey from childhood to his teens, through adulthood, to fatherhood, "through the perspective of his love and dream for the Avant" (Ramirez, 2019, para 1). Audi uses the story to remind viewers that "everything begins with a dream, what happens next is up to you" (para 1). The commercial uses imagery/narrative to suggest that Audi can be—and is often—an integral part of people's lives (their loves, hopes, dreams, etc.).

The video also exhibits the thrill and joy of driving an Audi. Audi of America's Vice President of Marketing, Loren Angelo explains: "not only does the Audi RS 6 Avant represent the next chapter in the highly successful history of Audi Sport, it also stands for 25 years of unbridled passion, patience and dedication of Audi fans here in the U.S." Ramirez (2019, para 2). Audi relates the boy's transition and growth in his various stages of life with the company's milestones in the development of their RS model across twenty-five years. The metaphor in this video commercial is the representation of the model's milestones with the emotional story of the boy in his different stages of life. While witnessing the boy's life story from childhood to adulthood and fatherhood, the viewer also sees the gradual progress of Audi's 1970s-era Fox Avant to the release of the new RS6 model, anticipated to arrive in America in 2020.

The campaign celebrates Audi's landmark of "fervent devotion" (Audi, 2019, para 1) to excellence and advanced technology. In a press release following the release of the commercial in August 2019, the Vice President of Marketing notes that the campaign is an opportunity to connect with their audience at a personal level, and honor their dedication to the RS Avant wagon for over twenty-five years, stating, "this campaign was an opportunity to honor that dedication in an emotional and nostalgic way while also speaking directly to the personality of today's Audi driver – someone with an insatiable desire to blaze his or her own path and stand

out from the pack, and nothing stands out more than the Audi RS 6 Avant” (Audi, 2019, para 2). The climax of the story welcomes the birth of a new baby, connoting the release of the new Avant RS6, and also indicating the new generation of Audi drivers.

Content Description. The video opens with the male protagonist as an infant, in a flashback with soft music in the background and his voice-over narrative: “Everyone has their own story, how they got to this moment. Mine began, before I can even remember. My father, my mother, and me.” The flashback depicts his love, desire, and dream of owning an Audi. It begins with him as a baby securely sitting at the back of an Audi with his parents in the front seat as they drive.

The next scene shows the infant playfully running around an Audi parked in the house. His mother follows and plays with him as his soft narrative continues to play: “...In his love, in his strength, my passion was instilled.” He laughs while the narrative continues. His father plays with him behind the steering wheel, as though he was teaching him how to drive. The little boy is then seen outside, gently touching and playing with the rings (logo) of the car’s grill.

When the boy grows a little older in the next scene, he plays with Audi car toys. He sometimes watches Audi car races on television with his father. On his fourth birthday, he cuts a birthday cake shaped like an Audi car with a “happy birthday” inscription on the cake. The narrative continues simultaneously: “...Many other times, and many other places that wouldn’t be true. But here, always it was. For me that lit a match inside I never wanted to go out. So I didn’t let it.” He then blows out his birthday candles to end that phase of his life.

The scene cuts and transitions to show the protagonist as a dispirited teenager watching the 1992 Audi RS2 Avant commercial on TV – he is not happy with the inscription, “Not Available in U.S.A” and disappointed that he won’t get to drive the Audi because of where he

lives. He affirms the passion and love his father instilled in him for an Audi with his narrative: “Now that match is a torch, guiding my life towards its fuel. Even to things they tell me I can’t have, yet anyway... Until then, the fire I imagined is stoked here.”

He ignites his passion for driving an Audi by racing in go-carts with his friends; imagining the go-cart as the Audi Avant, as the soundtrack, *Run Boy Run*, plays. The video cuts intermittently to show the Avant RS2 driving on top-speed as the boy races with his friends with the go-cart. His narrative continues alongside: “From the beginning, I dreamt of the beginning. But time and age steal our unicorns away if we let them.”

The scene transitions from the boy’s imagination to real-life with him admiring an Audi in front of a showroom from afar. He dreams of having a fun-drive in the Audi with his friends. He narrates: “A dream can only get you but so far. Eventually, you will want, you will need, something real... Something you can see... Something you can feel... Something that makes the visions of what could be, more vivid than before.” Again, he gently runs his hands on the rings on the car’s grill.

Wishing, dreaming and hoping he drove his own Audi, he finally steps out of his imagination to the real-world, and settles with driving his parents’ car. He waves at his parents and drives off in an Audi with a license plate reading “Foxy”. A montage shows him transform into an older version of himself, while driving the same family car at different places. He sees other people who drive Audi, as well.

The storyline in the film rises and gets more interesting when the adult protagonist sees a new model of an Audi. As he drives by one day, he sees a woman driving the new red Audi model. “We don’t get to choose when our next chapter starts. It is the moments we least expect that change everything. Yep, that was one for me right there. Little did I know how many more

moments like this I was in for”, the adult protagonist intones, as the music slows down. After watching the beautiful woman driving the red Audi pass, he quickly turns his car and follows her.

As he speeds to follow her, the frame reveals the RS 4 Avant from behind. The woman takes him for a drive on a track in her RS4 and uses the opportunity to get to know each other on a personal level. The revving sound of the car, coupled with the soundtrack creates a thematic background music, with the next frame showing the front view of the RS6 Avant in a fast cut. The story progresses with intermittent cuts of the Audi RS6 Avant speeding on a closed course, as the life story of the man continues. He eventually proposes to the woman, with an Audi parked behind them in a late-night scene. They eventually get married and drive off in the red RS4 Avant with the personalized plate “VIVA AVNT.”

The film progresses with the life story of the man with some important events in his life, including the death of his father in the hospital. It again introduces intermittent cuts of the Audi RS6 Avant. He is later seen crying in his Audi, firmly holding onto the steering wheel during a rainy night. The film suddenly transitions into a new scene as the engine of the Audi revs louder. As the Avant accelerates, his life moves forward. He drives his pregnant wife in the Audi to deliver their new baby at the hospital. As we witness the delivery of the new baby in the hospital, we see flashes of different colors of the new RS 6 Avant.

Their new baby (daughter) quickly grows and develops a love and passion for Audi. The old protagonist narrates: “It’s funny how priorities change. Now it is my turn to help her find that fire, wherever that takes her. Well, I might have nudged her, just a little bit” He is seen watching an Audi car race on TV alongside his daughter. She gets excited after seeing her mother on TV living her dream with Audi. She plays with the Audi ring on the grill in the next scene, as his

father did when he was young. He playfully teaches her to drive the car, as she playfully turns the steering wheel. She plays with Audi car toys, and even draws one on a canvas. The film continues with various scenes showing the daughter's love and interest in Audi. On the protagonist's fortieth birthday, he blows out a candle on a cake shaped like an Audi car.

The film ends with a rollback montage of the man from fatherhood, through to teens, and back to his infancy. His narrative plays alongside: "Everything happens with a dream, what happens next is up to me. Because now, the dream is real." The final scene takes him back to his current life, and steps into the new RS6 Avant. The closure shows the beautiful exterior and luxurious interior of the Avant. The text "25 years in the making..." appears on a black background as he steps into the Audi. It reveals "Finally the RS Avant is coming..." text on a black background as we see a close-up shot of the RS6 Avant tag on the back of the Audi. He runs his hand on the rings on the grill, steps in the car and drives off. The film ends with the text "The RS6 Avant. Coming to America and Canada in 2020" as he speeds off.

Analysis. The argument Audi makes in this commercial is that the RS 6 Avant is a dependable, luxurious, and durable car that will be present in all life stages and experiences – through the good and bad times. The commercial establishes this point strongly by using the film to portray Audi's continuous presence in the life story of the male protagonist, and to connect with their audience emotionally to imagine and experience the thrill one gets by driving an Audi.

The short film employs various rhetorical devices, such as imagery, music, repetition, narration, and especially metaphor, to appeal to the audience's sense of *pathos*, *ethos*, and *logos*. *Pathos* is the predominant type of appeal in the video and is used to elicit the emotional response of nostalgia in the viewer. Figure 2 below illustrates a rhetorical analysis of Audi's Avant Story video commercial. The analysis reveals an interplay of various rhetorical devices that make the

audience feel excited and confident about the brand and will therefore be interested in making a purchase.

AN AVANT STORY

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

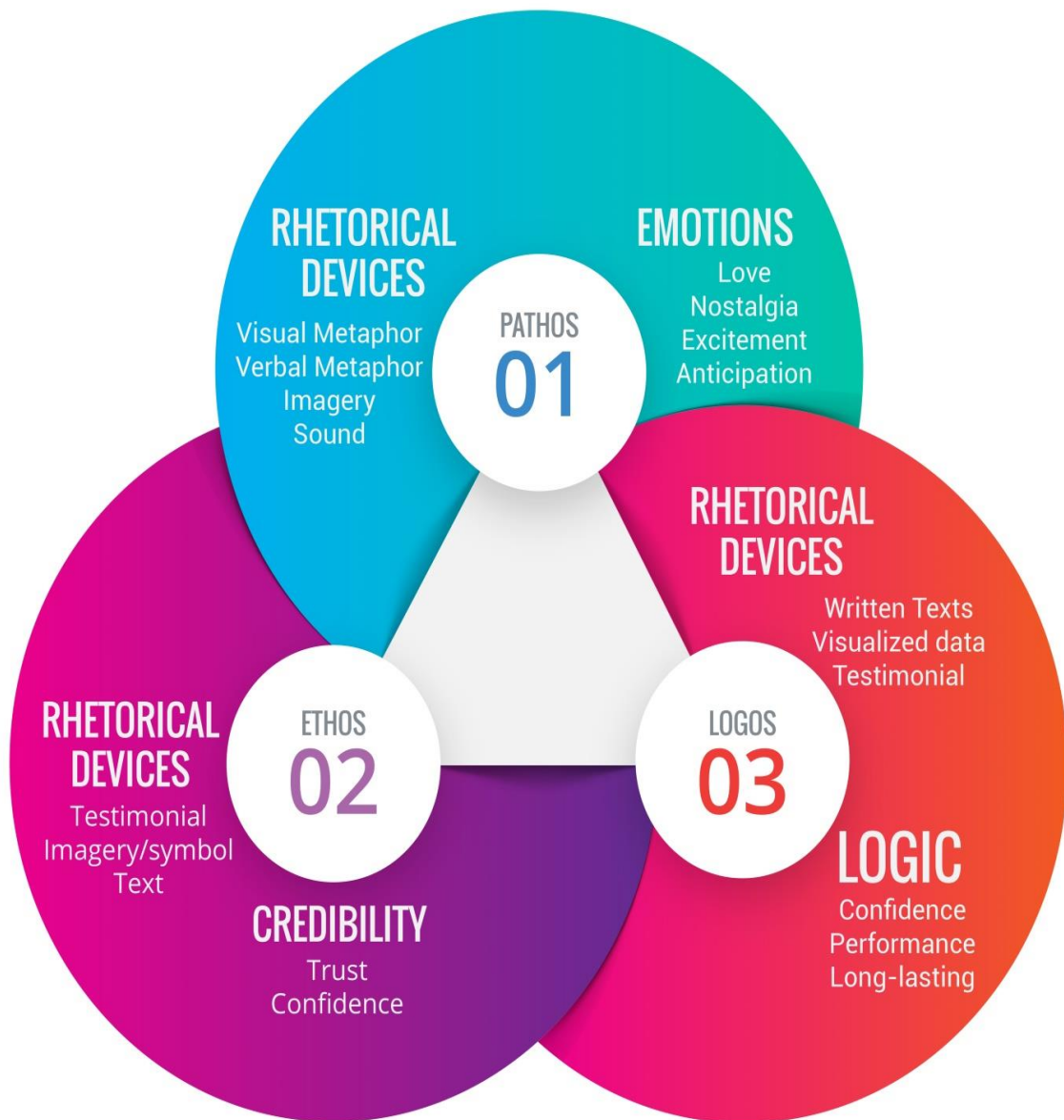


Figure 2. Rhetorical analysis of Audi's Avant Story commercial

Pathos. Audi employs metaphor as a rhetorical device to arouse their target audience's emotions in this commercial. As stated earlier, the brand uses the storyline of the male protagonist from childhood to fatherhood as a metaphor to represent the transformation and development of their RS Avant wagons in twenty-five years, and to highlight the anticipated thrill of driving the car. The story demonstrates his love, passion and obsession with Audi's 1970's-era Fox, through different Avant wagons to the 2020 RS6 model.

Musical themes, audio, imagery, actions, movements, and language (narrative) in the story arouse nostalgic feelings, anticipation, love, passion, obsession, happiness, and even sadness. The short film uses real-life experiences and themes such as family, marriage, death, and childbirth to emotionally connect with the target audience, and arouse interest. Other forms of emotional appeals are strongly present to suggest to customers that the RS6 Avant is a durable and dependable car that will continually be present throughout different situations and times of the consumer, for several decades.

In the opening scene, the young toddler smiles widely. He securely relaxes in a restraint system attached to the seat in the Audi as his father drives. His mother turns to look at him with a big smile. She is happy that her son is enjoying the ride safely. This suggests that driving in an Audi is safe for infants, and the whole family can be happy together in the car. The soft soothing

background track sets a gentle mood for his calm intone narrative.



Figure 3. *Baby smiling in Audi's Avant Story commercial*

Audi uses family bonding and love as an emotional appeal to connect with consumers who enjoy driving together as a family. The commercial establishes this emotional appeal with a happy scene (imagery) of the family together in the car and highlights it with the narrative: "...our family, together." The introduction of the front view of the 1970s Audi Foxy Avant in which the family was driving arouses nostalgic feelings in target customers who have had an experience with the car in the '70s.



Figure 4. *1970 Audi Foxy in frame to arouse nostalgia*

In the home, the young toddler spends intimate quality time with his mom around the Audi, and with his dad in the car. The actions and imagery, coupled with the soundtrack evoke an emotion of love, happiness and joy. Audi makes a generalization with this appeal that the presence of the car in the family will make the entire family happy; and will present a space to play in, just as the video shows with the father playing with the baby behind the steering in Figure 5 below.



Figure 5. *The young protagonist bonding with dad in an Audi*

As he bonds with his parents, he creates a deep connection with the Audi brand – he gently touches the rings of the Audi on the grill. The voice-over narrative “in his love, in his strength, my passion was instilled” supports this claim and suggests how his desire and affection for the Audi was instilled from his infancy. On his fourth birthday, he gets a birthday cake in an Audi car shape to establish the presence of the brand in his new milestone. Generally, people get cakes on their birthdays as part of their presents. By shaping the birthday cake like an Audi car, Audi capitalizes on this norm in families to communicate that their car is (or perhaps, could be) a perfect birthday present.

After arousing positive emotions (joy, happiness) with the first few scenes of the film, Audi sympathizes with their customers who are not able to get (officially) to drive the RS2 Avant wagons in the United States. In the next scene after the infant's fourth birthday celebration, the boy in his teenage years watches the RS2 Avant commercial, which was released twenty-five years ago on TV. The commercial indicates that the car is not available in the USA. He looks forlorn and disappointed. Audi throws in this negative emotion of sadness and disappointment to share in their customers' sentiments. The commercial also arouses nostalgic feelings. It reminds customers of how they felt when the RS2 was not available in the USA.

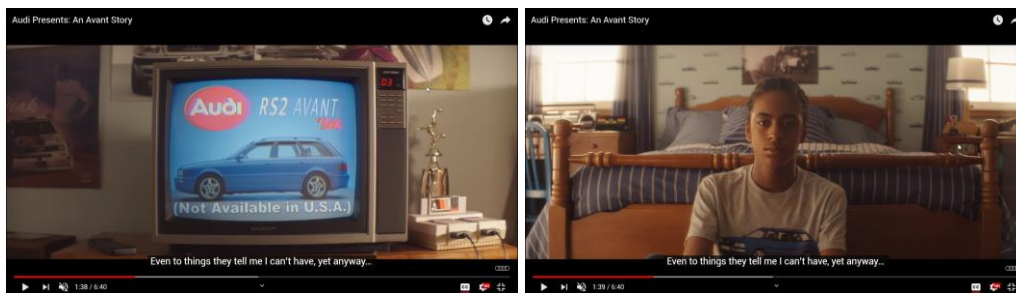


Figure 6. *The boy looking forlorn watching the RS2 commercial in the film*

The film progresses to build anticipation with the introduction of the music theme *Run Boy, Run*. The upbeat tempo complements the narrative to establish the boy's passion to keep moving forward until he eventually makes his dream a reality to own and drive an Audi. The boy's passion, zeal, and determination to win the race with his peers in the go-kart sparks inspiration. Not only does Audi urge its target market to own the car, it also inspires them to work towards their dream to be the best among their competitors.



Figure 7. *The boy admiring an Audi*

In his imaginary fun-drive with his friends, they happily enjoy themselves and listen to music as they drive. Audi establishes that their car has enough room for friends, and they can all be happy together in it. In the scene, one of his friends inserts a cassette into the car's audio system. Audi reminds viewers of their 'humble beginnings' and arouses nostalgic feelings in their customers who used to drive the RS2 Avant in the late nineties.



Figure 8. *The boy's imaginary fun-ride with his friends in an Audi RS Avant*

The boy realizes that dreaming of driving in the Avant is not enough and is almost impossible to own one in real life. He eventually settles for driving his parents' old Audi model, inferring that one can always start from a point by making use of what is in hand, and gradually working to achieve the ultimate. He explains in his narrative: "A dream can only get you but so far. Eventually you'll want, you'll need, something real..." As he grows old in his parent's old

car, he sees newer models of the car. His love and admiration for Audi is evident when he pops out his head to gaze at them with a smile, expressing his desire to own one.

The commercial strategically positions the new models of the RS Avant in a happy scene of young adults to entice their audience to own one. The smile on his face is an indication of love, happiness and content with the Audi brand. The argument with this rhetorical appeal is that the target customer will be happy to own and drive the car.

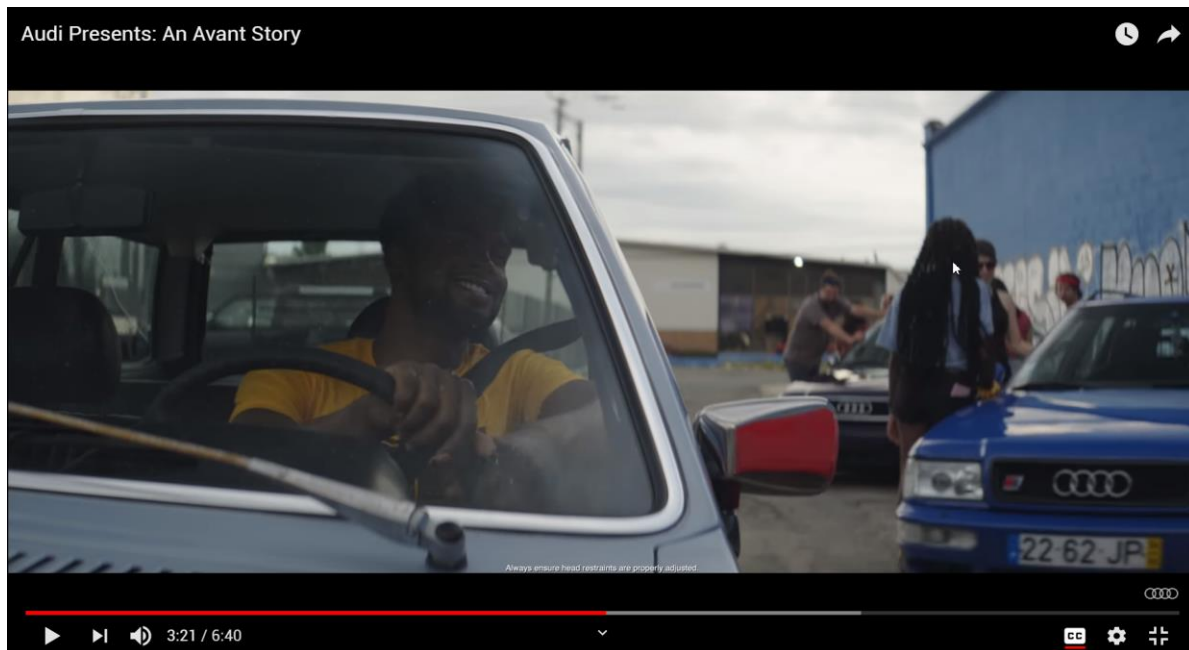


Figure 9. *Older version of the male protagonist driving in his parents' old car*

In order to establish the gradual development of the Audi RS Avant wagon from the '70s era, the commercial uses aesthetics to highlight the differences between the two models of the car: the RS2 and Avant Fox.

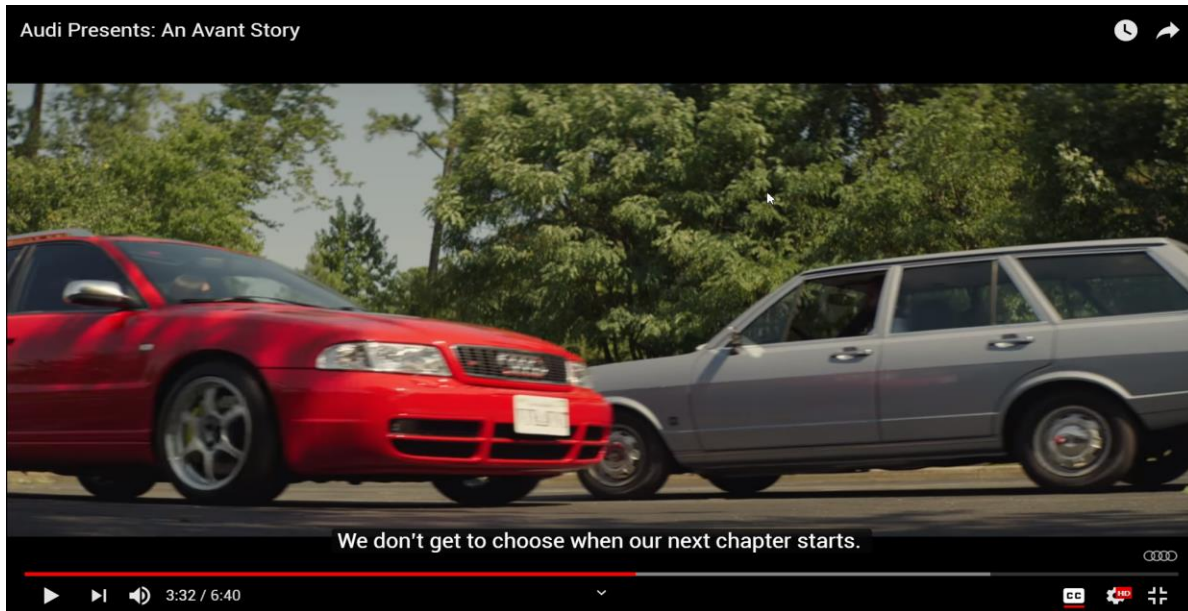


Figure 10. *The man seeing a beautiful lady in an Audi*

The two cars in a single frame illustrate a comparison between them. Building up to the protagonist's (now a man) adult life, the frame introduces the beginning of his love story. The two different car models from the same brand, a representation of two different people (black and white) positions and establishes Audi as a brand that respects diversity and cares about society. The scene uses this imagery as a rhetorical device to argue that love is possible amongst two people of different races if they both drive in an Audi. Audi capitalizes on this to present the notion that their cars are made for both the black and white, man and woman.



Figure 11. *The man admiring the woman and her Audi while driving*

The expression on the man's face when his eyes locked with the woman while driving reveals his amusement, admiration and interest, not only for the woman, but also for that model of Audi which he once dreamt of driving. Audi employs "beauty" as an appeal to argue to middle-aged women that when a beautiful woman drives in Audi, she will attract a man to admire her beauty, and eventually fall in love with her.

The slow-motion effect in the video footage, coupled with the man's narrative ("It's the moments we least suspect that change everything. Yep, that was one for me right there") and the background music evokes suspense. It also builds up anticipation for the audience to expect to witness the next moment in the man's life; the moment he had been waiting all his life: meeting the "love" of his life – Audi.

As their two different worlds finally collide, the woman takes him on a drive in her car. The man finally experiences his first thrill of driving in the Audi RS2 Avant. His facial expression as he sits in the front passenger seat, while the woman drives him informs the target audience of the thrilling experience that awaits in an Audi.



Figure 12. *The man enjoying his thrilling experience in an Audi RS2*

As the film rises with the progress of the man's life story, the car's engine growls louder and blends with the background music to create a dramatic effect that builds anticipation and interest. This sets the mood to introduce the new models of the RS Avant in intermittent fast cuts.



Figure 13. *The man celebrating his engagement with the woman with an Audi parked in view*

The next scene (Figure 13) shows the presence of the Audi brand in an important moment in the man's life. He proposes and engages the woman at a night scene in front of the Audi. The scene argues that Audi is a perfect car for a night date to witness this cherished and joyous moment.

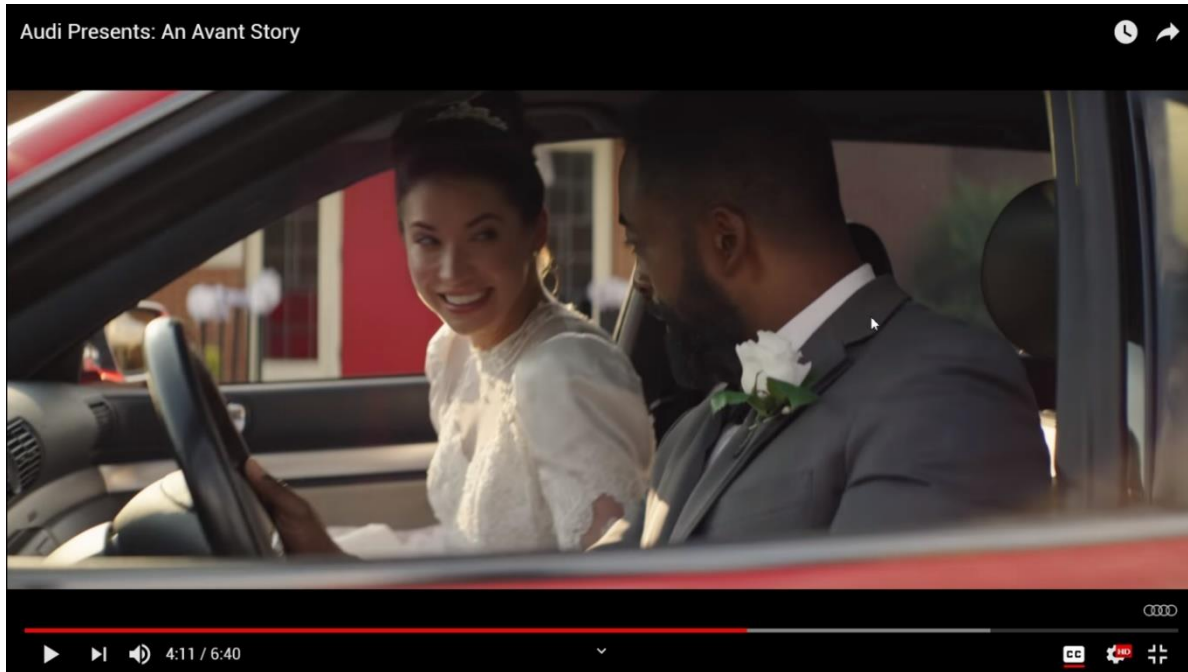


Figure 14. *Couple smiling in their RS4 Avant on their wedding day*

The commercial employs the theme of marriage as a real-life situation to connect with consumers and trigger emotional engagement, which in turn creates cognition (memorability). The continuing scene in the short film shows the couple driving off in their RS4 Avant on their wedding day. Weddings represent an affectionate event in the life of most middle-aged men and women in America. The commercial integrates the car to be a part of this memorable and intimate experience in the life of most adults, connoting that the RS Avant is a dependable car that will always be there to celebrate important and special moments. The couple is seen smiling in the car, which evokes emotions of joy and satisfaction, and establishes that the car can make couples happy on their wedding day. The novelty license plate, “VIVA AVNT” also features the text “drive safely.” This depicts the brand’s commitment and interest in the safety of their customers. It further shows that Audi cares about their customers and establishes a positive emotional connection.



Figure 15. *Couple driving off in their Audi RS4 Avant on their wedding day*

The story progresses to a sad moment in the man's life. His father passes away at the hospital. He is then seen crying in the front seat of his car (an Audi) on a dark rainy night. This suggests and depicts the brand's progressive presence in his life – both the good and bad. In the scene, he firmly grips the steering and keeps sobbing while raining, showing that Audi is a dependable car for adverse weather conditions. The scene also suggests that Audi is not just a car, but also a friend who will be there for its user, through good and bad times.

The scene transitions to the man speeding in an Audi with his wife in labor. This explains that the RS Avant is dependable for emergency situations. The theme of pregnancy represents the fully developed and latest RS Avant, that is yet to be released and welcomed in America. As the scene builds to the delivery of the new baby, it also inspires expectation of the new car.

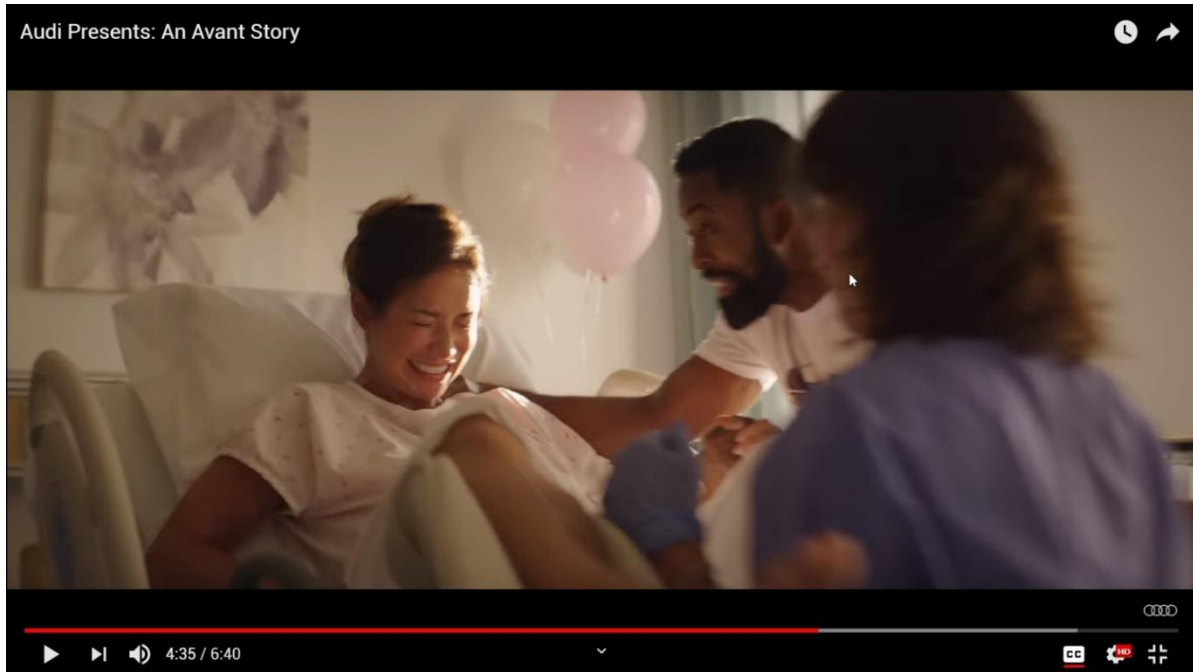


Figure 16. *The man with his wife giving birth*

The climax of the story welcomes the birth of a new baby – significant of the new RS6 model that has finally been released to Audi’s family of Avant wagons. The fall shows the man and his wife driving in their RS4 Avant with their daughter smiling in the backseat – a repetition of how the man began loving Audi. He smiles as his wife relaxes and enjoys the drive – connoting that the entire family will be happy in an Audi. When the daughter grows a little older, he spends some quality time with her, just as his father did with him when he was her age. The man’s family celebrates his fortieth birthday with a cake shaped like an Audi. The birthday theme indicates their joy for the man’s new age; and also celebrates Audi’s twenty-five years of making the RS Avant model.



Figure 17. *The man celebrating his fortieth birthday with his family*

The closing scene shows a beautiful static footage of the Avant RS6. The slow-motion effect gently reveals the exterior and interior beauty of the car to attract attention. The fancy-looking image of the car appeals arouses interest and appeals to customers who desire to drive the Audi. The man finally steps into the car and drives off with a sense of satisfaction, accomplishment and joy.

The themes of family, marriage, childbirth, death and birthdays as metaphors used in the film aroused various emotions such as love, excitement, joy, sadness, and contentment. Various rhetorical elements such as music, imagery, and actions aroused anticipation, expectation, suspense, and interest. Past events used in the film aroused nostalgic feelings.

Ethos. Since 1909, Audi has established its brand as one that produces excellent, luxurious and top-notch quality cars for their customers. Audi is one of Germany's oldest automobile manufacturing brands. This has made Audi credible and an authority brand in the automobile industry. Audi capitalizes on their authority in the automobile industry to appeal to

their audience through the lens of *ethos*. The overriding argument in this commercial is that Audi has been producing the RS Avant wagons for twenty-five years; and the 2020 RS6 Avant from Audi will be a masterpiece.

In order to support that Audi is the brand making the argument, the commercial introduces the brand's logo at various times in the film. The brand's symbol – four ceiling rings which denote “a symbol of progressive engineering” (Audi USA, para 1) represents Audi as one of the oldest automobile manufacturing brands in Germany. The four rings are representative of the amalgamation of the four previously independent companies: Audi, DKW, Horche and Wanderer (AudiUSA, para 1). Audi represents their historic story of progressive engineering with the company's logo, typically seen in front of the grill of all the cars they produced.

Most of the scenes in the film show Audi's logo to support the claim that Audi is the brand making the argument. The little boy is seen running his hands on the symbol on the grill. Most of the scenes that showed the Audi cars presented them with the logo in frame to highlight that the cars are manufactured by a top competitor in the automobile industry.

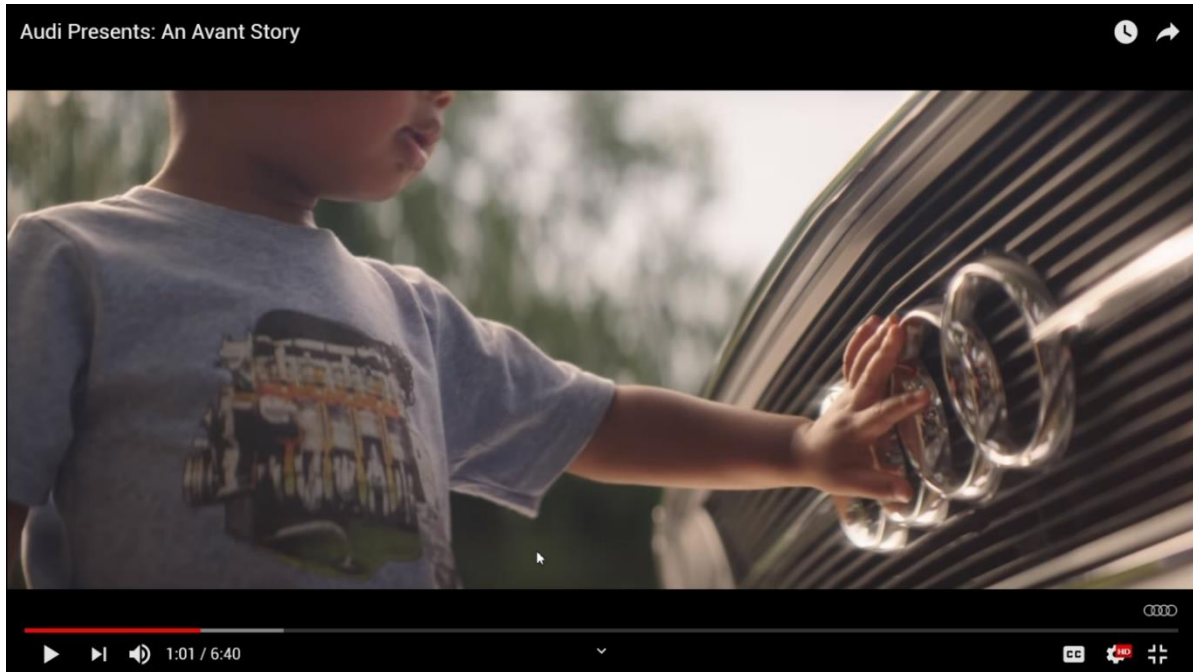


Figure 18. *The child touching Audi's symbol in frame*

Also, the film uses text to highlight Audi's *ethos*. It argues that for over twenty-five years, Audi has been manufacturing the RS Avant wagons. This suggests the brand's commitment and dedication to quality and progress. It affirms this argument with the text "25 years in the making," and, "25 years of RS," on a promotional t-shirt the man wears in the closing scenes of the film, and also on a black screen, just before the end of the video.

The commercial ends with 'Audi Sport' logotype to add more credibility to the entire argument in the film. For several decades, Audi Sport cars have been noted as a triumph in technology, a legend in sophistication and a leader in the race. The association of the argument in the commercial with the logotype indicates the car is coming from a credible manufacturer – Audi.



Figure 19. Audi Sport logotype, text, and promo t-shirt in frame

Another appeal to *ethos* in the commercial is the protagonist's voice-over narrative employed as a testimonial. The voice-over narrates the protagonist's love, passion and desire for Audi since infancy. The narrative does not only highlight the character's desire for the Audi, but also, his satisfaction with the Audi brand since infancy. Rather than making the male protagonist share his experience in the form of a regular testimonial, Audi presents the testimonial in a form of a story – in a way that makes the audience experience the durability of the car, and indirectly communicates that testament with the storyline.

As an infant, the boy's parents drove him in an Audi. He grew up to his teenage driving the same car his parents had been driving for years. He continues to drive the same car from his teens, through adulthood until fatherhood, and strongly establishes *ethos* in this context by arguing that if the Audi lasted for decades in the life of the male protagonist, it is durable and of high quality, and will last for several years if one gets to use it. The lifespan within which the protagonist witnessed the presence of the car in his life adds more credibility to the argument. It argues and concludes that the RS Avant, made by Audi will last for several years; and can even be passed on to younger generations. This can also be considered as a logical appeal.

Logos. The film presents few instances as elements of logical appeal. The film highlights the life story of the man, his obsession and patronage of the Audi RS Avant for twenty-five years to logically infer that the car is durable and can last for a lifetime. Throughout the twenty-five

years in the making of the RS Avant, each model has been engineered with a beautiful exterior and interior design, progressive state-of-the-art technology and top-notch performance, powered by quality and sophistication.



Figure 20. *Audi's RS Avant's dashboard*

The film affirms this argument with the interior display of the car. The sophisticated dashboard shown in the scene displays information about the modern technology and advanced features that make the car outstanding in terms of its speed and luxury. In the closing scenes of the film, the promotional t-shirt with the text “25 years of RS” explains how long the RS Avant has been in existence. It is logical to conclude that a product that has been progressively designed in the past twenty-five years will have all the technological sophistication and modern engineering for elite performance on the road.

Secretariat: Audi S5 2018 Commercial

Contextual description. Audi uses a racehorse to represent the enduring power, speed and durability of the 2018 S5 Sportback. Audi’s campaign for its 2018 S5 Sportback, created by Venables Bell & Partners, and produced by Tool of North America, was released in 2017. The key message of the commercial is “progress is powered from within” (Audi, 2017). The ad uses a short dramatic montage to craft a visual metaphor that associates the unique value propositions

of the car with the explosive power of the famous racehorse, Secretariat – winner of the 1973 Triple Crown. It uses real-life events and imagery to create a sixty-second video ad (AdAge, 2017) that highlights the sophistication, power, and speed of the S5 Sportback. The spot was directed by the German-born filmmaker, Marc Foster.

The metaphor in this ad is the relationship between the racehorse and the car. Audi uses the horse to represent and explain that the “4-door, 354-horsepower 2018 Audi S5 Sportback has a kindred spirit in one of the greatest racehorses of all time.” The sequence of images is orchestrated in a perspective and mood that influences the viewer to visualize the power, speed and durability of the Audi 2018 S5 Sportback in terms of the racehorse. The commercial employs Secretariat as a rhetorical appeal to arouse nostalgic feelings, that in turn, makes the viewer feel confident about driving the car and/or to make a purchase.

Audi’s “Secretariat: commercial is a sixty-second video ad that promotes the 2018 model of Audi S5 Sportback. The ad employs a legendary racehorse as a visual metaphor to communicate the unique selling points of the S5 Sportback. According to Audi, the S5 Sportback is equipped with an oversized engine and modern technology for an up-lifting performance. Unique value propositions for the car include its speed, power, and performance. Audi strategically explains these features of the car with the abilities of the legendary racehorse. A major highlight of the commercial is the relationship between the horse’s heart and the car’s engine. Audi presents the idea that the speed, power, and performance of the car is powered by its engine – just like the horse’s heart. The ad was produced by Venables Bell & Partners in 2017. and premiered on network television on June 1, during the NBA finals. AdAge describes the ad as epic, creative, and inspiring.

Content description. The sixty-second commercial combines an archival footage of historic event with Secretariat, who had won a race, and a present day of the horse and jockey making their way onto a racetrack. A voice-over narrative describes Secretariat as the greatest racehorse that ever lived. The accompanying sound background combines a rhythmic heartbeat and gallops, coupled with a continuous neigh of the horse, and the revving sound of the Audi's engine as it speeds off. These sounds in the commercial create a dramatic effect and suspense. The scenes in the video employ intermittent cuts and fast transitions between the racehorse and the car. The climax introduces two researchers gazing at an X-ray vision of the horse's heart. The video ends with the text "progress is powered from within."

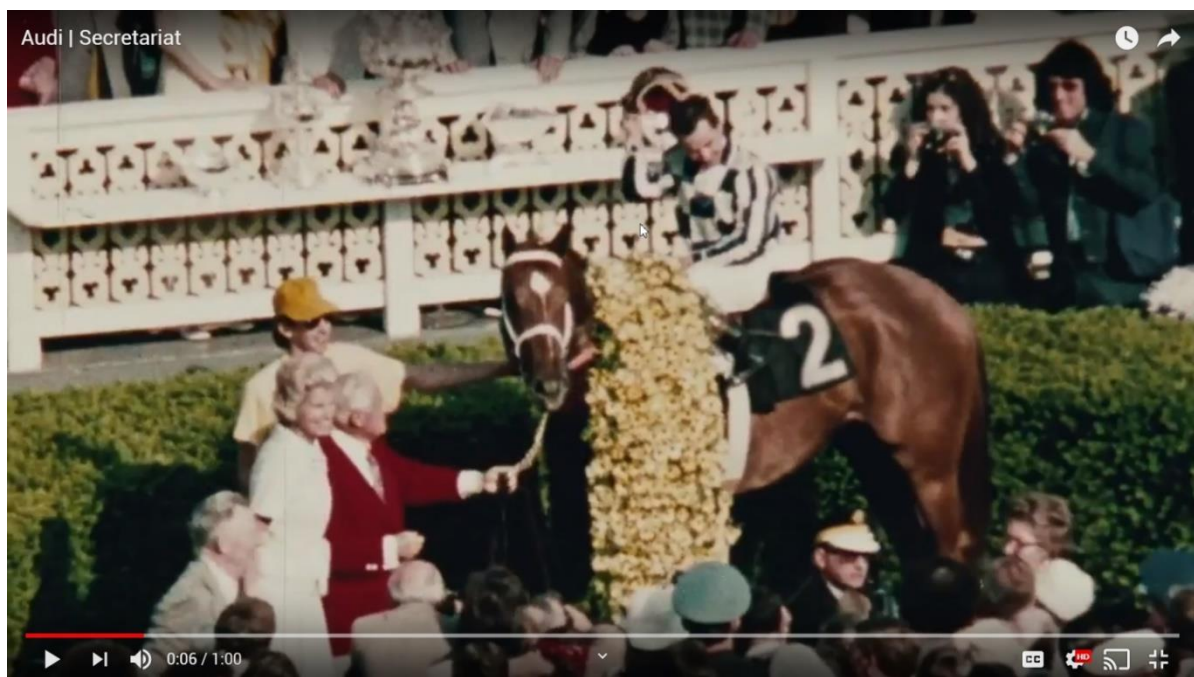


Figure 21. *Secretariat celebrating her win after a race*

The opening scene of the commercial shows a flashback (real-life event) of the historic race in which Secretariat emerged as an outstanding horse with a record-setting win. The archival footage shows a quick montage of the horse and its jockey in celebration after the race.

A gentle heartbeat, coupled with a live commentary, mixed with stirring music and indistinct chatter from the crowd during the race play in the background.

The scene transitions to the present day, which opens with the horse and jockey preparing to head onto a racetrack through the starting gate. The rhythmic sound of a soft pounding heartbeat continues to play to set a subtle mood for the deep voiceover narrative, asking the rhetorical question, “What made Secretariat the greatest racehorse who ever lived?” The archival footage transitions to a modern depiction of Secretariat with a blinder, and his eyes focused on the track through the gates. Secretariat blinks gently and whines, indicating he is ready to ‘break loose.’

A fast cut reveals the car gearing onto the road with Secretariat breaking onto the racetrack intermittently. The narrative continues: “Of course he was strong... Intelligent... Explosive.” The narrator carefully frames the three attributes of the horse that made him legendary, and indirectly relates it to the car as it speeds on the road. The growling sound of the Audi, mixed with the rhythmic heartbeat, and the horse’s gallops and whines create a dramatic sound background that builds anticipation, suspense and excitement.

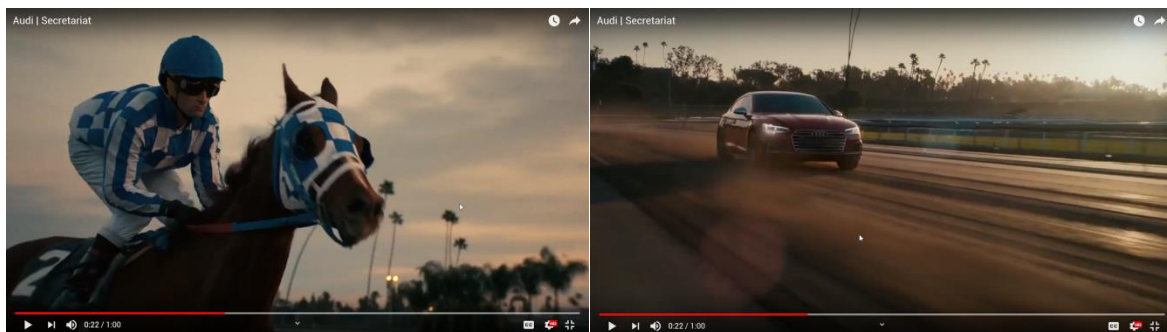


Figure 22. *Secretariat and Audi S5 Sportback in frame*

Cutting back and forth between the horse and the car, the narrator makes sure he voices the attributes when the car is in frame, though he appears to be talking about the horse. On the

attribute of strength, the visuals reveal an outer look of the car with its wheels, suggesting to the audience that indeed, the car is made of good quality body parts on strong wheels, capable of riding in any adverse condition.

The perspective transitions into a montage of the interior of the car, focusing on its dashboard of sophisticated modern technology, and suggesting that the car is equipped with modern technology that allows intelligent display of information for the driver. When the intelligent display of the S5 Sportback is in frame, the narrator calls out “intelligent” in his narrative to describe Secretariat’s intelligence as a racehorse.



Figure 23. *Dashboard display of Audi S5 Sportback*

The narrator describes the last attribute, “explosive” with a shot from the car’s back view, as it speeds away with intermittent cuts between the horse and the car. The back and forth cuts and voice-over narrative suggest that the car is strong, intelligent and explosive, but does not say that plainly or directly. He leaves the viewer to conclude – after telling a story that influences his (the viewer) perception about the all-new Sportback from Audi. As the scene builds up to the

climax, the horse's galloping sound and heartbeat increase in tempo with the growling sound of the car.

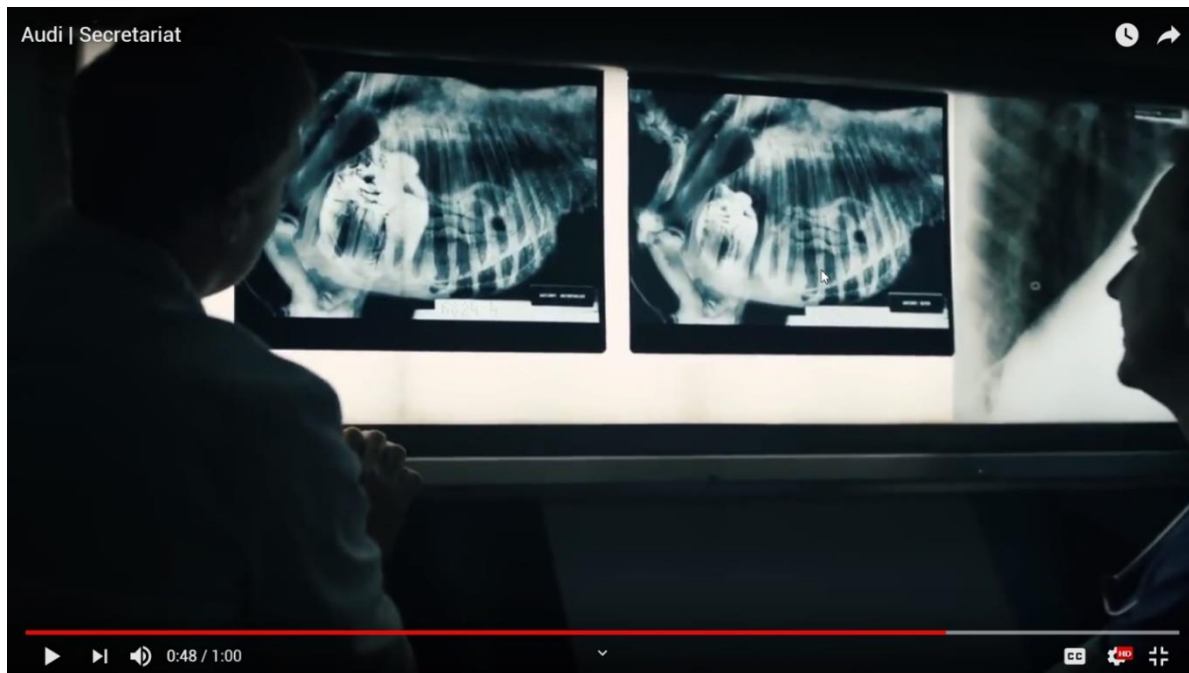


Figure 24. *Veterinarians looking at Secretariat's heart after an X-ray analysis*

The fall shows a transition into another scene of two veterinarians analyzing an X-ray vision of a horse's heart. The analysis shows two hearts from two different horses. They realize the huge difference in size between the huge hearts. The voice narrative plays, "The true secret in his perfection was a heart twice the size of an average horse," suggesting to the viewer with the hyperbole that the Audi S5 Sportback is the greatest car ever made. The commercial ends with Audi's logo on a black background, after the tagline "progress is powered from within."

The narrator does not directly explain to the viewer the intended meaning of the hyperbole and metaphor, but rather, the editor of the montage introduces an evoking visual of text on a black frame which reads, "The all-new, 354 hp Audi S5 Sportback is here," followed by, "Progress is powered from within," to emphasize that the progressive speed, durability and intelligent design for maximum performance is fueled by the 354 horsepower engine of the

car, metaphorical to the heart of Secretariat that made him a victorious living legend in American history of racehorses.

Analysis. The S5 Sportback which Audi describes as ‘horsepower’ has a strong body make, and explosive power with intelligent technology fueled by its powerful oversized engine. Audi compares the car with Secretariat to create imagery that arouses emotions. The imagery is a metaphor, one that compares the oversized, valiant ‘heart’ of the legendary racehorse to the power, endurance and resilience of the Audi S5 Sportback. The metaphor suggests to the audience that the Audi S5 Sportback is more than an everyday car that travels an average speed and distance; it makes the consumer feel confident, happy and excited to make a purchase.

Secretariat is a legendary racehorse in American sport history who lived from 1973 to 1989. The horse, deemed by most Americans as an icon of power, brilliant speed, and resilient stamina is a “Thoroughbred’s Racing 1973 Triple Crown Champion and America’s Superhorse” (Secretariat.com, para 1). In 1973, Secretariat demonstrated an incredible performance in the Belmont Stakes, and won the Triple Crown with an outstanding record of twelve lengths. Secretariat was a wonderful-looking horse, dominant, and flashy. He was focused, intelligent, and strong in all the major races he competed. A documentary on YouTube published by TIME4SOMETHINGEXTRA affirms Time Magazine’s description of Secretariat as a “Super Horse " with the heart of a champion.

In most of his races, he was the last to break loose, yet, won the race with an outstanding performance. Secretariat’s big wins and performances were celebrated on the covers of TIME, Sports Illustrated and Newsweek, among other media outlets across America. Time Magazine named Secretariat as a top-ten athlete in the twentieth century. This made Secretariat’s reign famous, affectionate and trending.

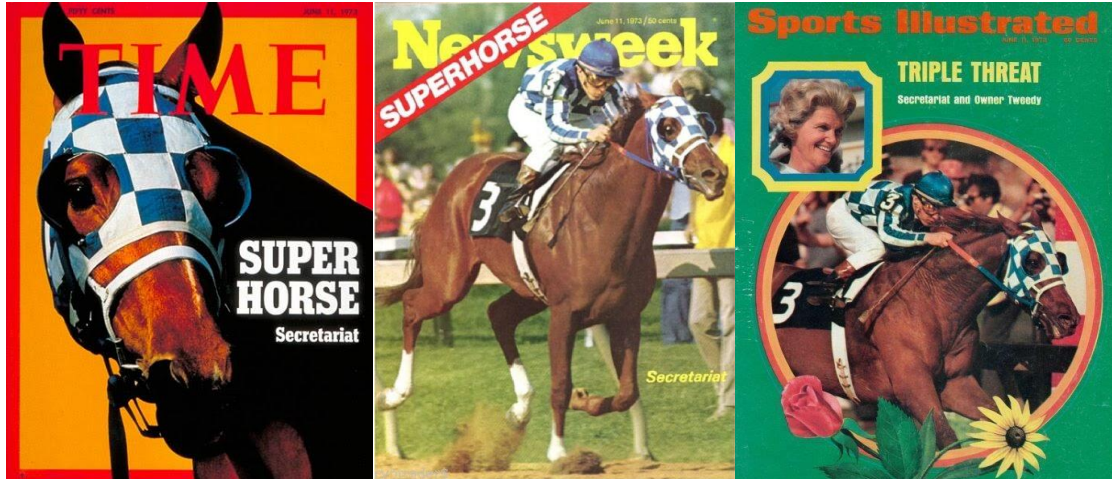


Figure 25. *Secretariat on Time Magazine, Newsweek, and Sports Illustrated covers*

Since his death in 1989, he continues to live in the hearts and memories of many Americans as an affectionate, powerful racehorse with incredible stamina, speed and power. Secretariat's heart was incredibly huge. After his death, veterinarians found that Secretariat's heart was twice the size of an average horse's. They highlighted that his heart was the biggest, immense, and most perfect they had ever seen in a horse.

Audi draws on Secretariat's unique character and historic victory to create an epic and dramatic commercial to promote the 2018 S5 Sportback. The commercial revives the glorious victory and phenomenal power of the horse that made him a living legend and a record-setting champion. The commercial leverages the horse's characteristics and historical wins as rhetorical elements to appeal to consumer's senses of *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos*, illustrated in the figure below:

SECRETARIAT

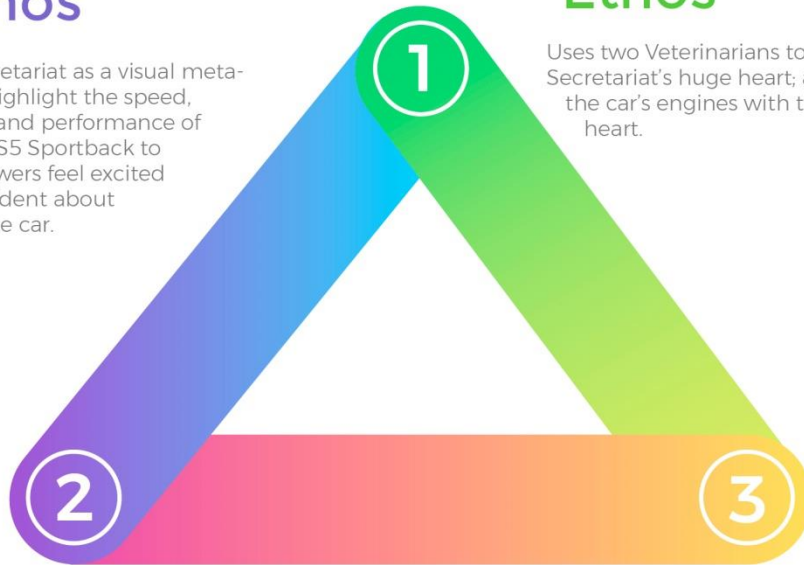
RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Pathos

Uses Secretariat as a visual metaphor to highlight the speed, strength and performance of the Audi S5 Sportback to make viewers feel excited and confident about driving the car.

Ethos

Uses two Veterinarians to approve of Secretariat's huge heart; and relates the car's engines with the horse's heart.



Logos

Highlights the strength, speed and power of the S5 Sportback with numbers and short descriptive words about the car's performance.

Figure 26. *Rhetorical Analysis of Audi's Secretariat video commercial*

Pathos. A major appeal to *pathos* in the S5 Sportback commercial is the adoption of Secretariat as a metaphor to represent the car's power, design and speed. Secretariat is an American household name that brings back memories of the most powerful racehorse in American history. Audi uses a recreated image of Secretariat as a metaphor to arouse nostalgic feelings, confidence, and trust.

The commercial opens with a flashback footage of a real-life event that conjure memories of the horse during its glorious days. Footage from the Triple Crown sporting event in 1973 was used by Audi to trigger nostalgic feelings. The event represents one of Secretariat's big wins during his era. The flashback scene reminds viewers of Secretariat, and the excitement he brought to fans during the game.

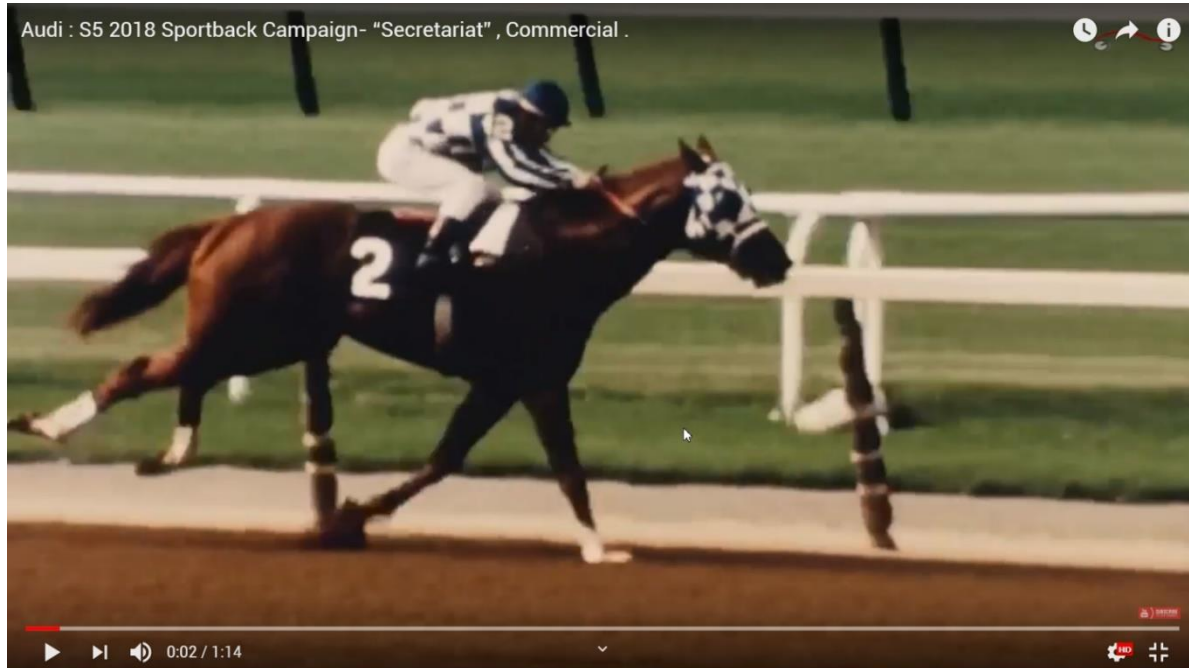


Figure 27. *Secretariat from flashback footage*

The film transitions to a present-day scene with a fictional image of Secretariat getting prepared by his jockey before a race. The scene arouses feelings of suspense, anticipation and heightened awareness. The deep intone narrative uses a rhetorical question to affirm that the horse in frame is Secretariat. The pounding heartbeat coupled with the sustained piano sound sets the mood for the narrative and creates anticipation for the next scene. As the film progresses with the voice-over narrative, the sound in the background intensifies as the horse whines, while the car's engine growls louder. The answers to the rhetorical question "What made Secretariat the greatest horse ever lived?" builds confidence, trust and interest in the car. As viewers relive the

excitement and love for the legendary racehorse, they develop confidence, trust, and excitement for the S5 Sportback.

Ethos. Audi appeals to their audience's sense of *ethos* with imagery and testimonial. The commercial associates an image of the lead character in the film, Secretariat with the brand to establish a sense of credibility for the S5 Sportback. Secretariat is a famous racehorse in American sports history. His strength, stamina and power surpassed his competitors. By associating Audi's S5 Sportback with the image of the phenomenal racehorse, the audience perceives the car in terms of the abilities of the horse. Also, the real-life event footage employed in the film testifies that the lead character in the film is indeed, Secretariat.

In the closing scene of the film, two veterinarians testify with their X-ray report that Secretariat's heart is twice the size of an average horse's. The delightful and surprised look on the faces of the researchers in the laboratory setting testifies that indeed, Secretariat's success in his racing career was powered by his incredibly huge heart. The commercial features the two scientists to support the credibility of Secretariat's huge heart, which made him the greatest horse ever lived.

Audi supports the credibility of the message in the commercial by incorporating their logo in the film. In most of the scenes, the footage with the car is framed in an angle that makes Audi's logo visible to the viewer. Target customers who are familiar with Audi's logo can easily identify that the S5 Sportback is coming from Audi, who is noted for quality cars.

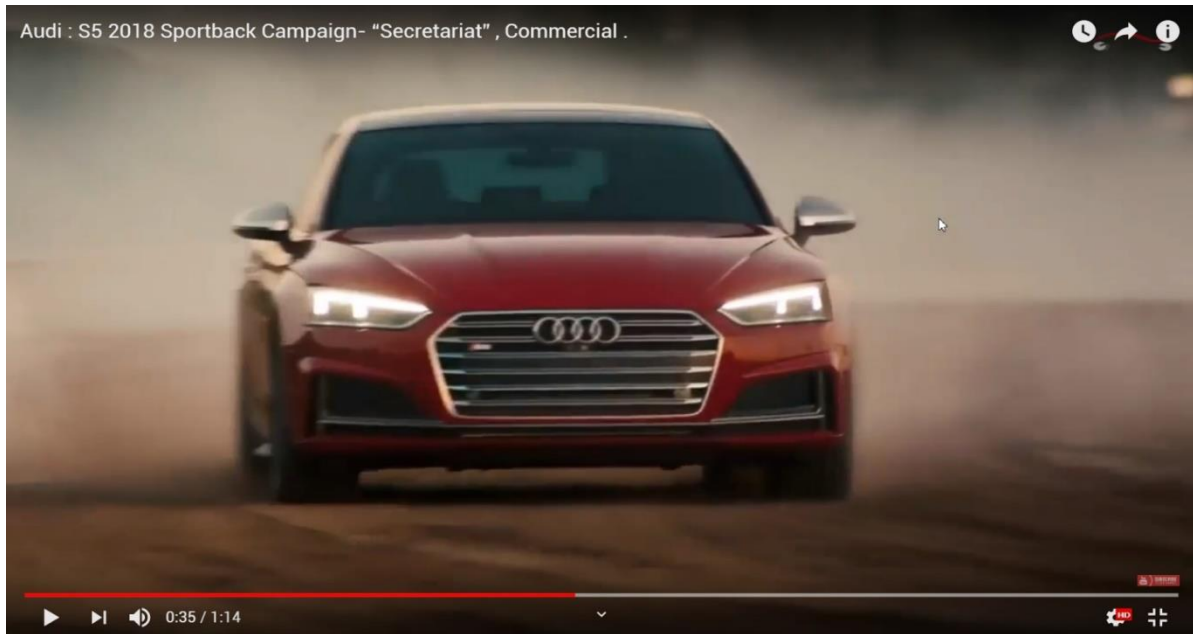


Figure 28. *S5 Sportback footage in frame to show Audi's logo*

Logos. Logical appeals were not predominant in Audi's Secretariat commercial. A logical appeal in the commercial is the introduction of the text, "The all-new 354 hp Audi S5 is here" on a plain black background at the end of the film. Including the mention of "354 hp," which indicates that the S5 Sportback is powered by a 354-horsepower engine, is a strategic way for Audi to briefly highlight the unique feature of the car, and to explain that the S5 Sportback is powered by an oversized engine, just like Secretariat's heart.

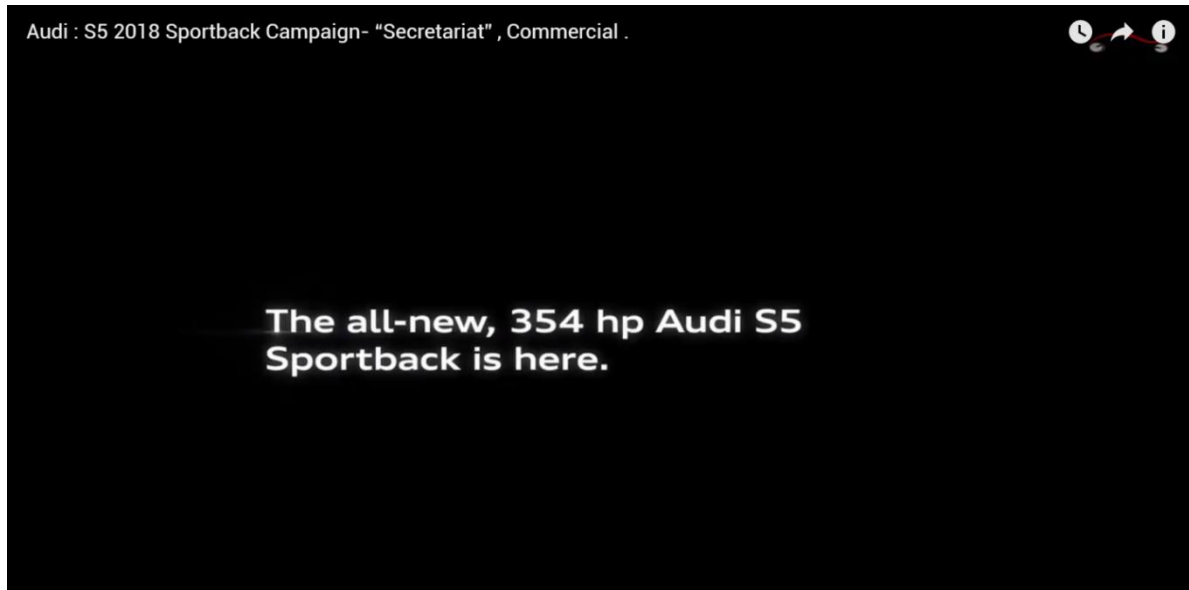


Figure 29. *Descriptive text as a logical appeal in Audi's Secretariat commercial*

Commander: Audi R8 Super Bowl 2016 Commercial

Contextual description. Audi's 'Commander' video commercial is a sixty-second video spot by Audi to announce the all-new Audi R8, which was set to be available in American showrooms from Spring 2016. Audi describes the R8 as the 'fastest and most powerful Audi of all time.' The ad was produced by Venables Bell and Partners to air in the second quarter of the 2016 Super Bowl.

The ad portrays a former Commander of a spaceship who has lost interest and desire for fun activities in his life. The Commander has not found the same happiness he did when he went to the moon. Most of the time, the retired astronaut spends his gloomy days in a dark room reflecting on his golden memories of the moon framed on a wall – he doesn't eat or talk.

His son finally comes in and takes him on a ride with the Audi R8 V10 plus, making him re-experience the thrill of going to the moon on a rocket ship. As the astronaut reignites his passion for life by driving the Audi, David Bowie's music, *Starman*, plays in the background to elicit emotions. As the Audi speeds off, a spaceship with the Commander in his past life is seen

rocketing to the moon. The tagline in the ad is “the 205 mph R8 is here,” with an accompanying statement ‘choosing the moon brings out the best in us.’

The metaphor in this commercial is the relationship between the thrill of driving an Audi with the experience of being on a rocket ship, depicted by the Commander’s memory. Audi uses their all new R8 2017 model to communicate the “thrill of a rocket-like ride under the stars” (AudiUSA, 2016, para 1). The underlying message in this commercial is to remind viewers that “amazing things can happen when one chooses exploration, technology and the moon” (AudiUSA, 2016), made possible by driving the new model. The commercial argues that driving the Audi R8 2017 can help people relive their past glories.

The commercial uses *pathos* to create nostalgia, excitement and empathy to evoke an emotional connection between audience and the car - thus making the car more desirable. It highlights the advanced technological features of the car with *logos* by stating that the car can reach a speed of 205 mph. Again, ethical appeals in the ad is backed by Audi’s authority and established credibility of manufacturing performance-oriented and luxurious cars in the automobile industry.

Content description. The opening scene of the short film shows a man in a deep solemn reflection in a home setting. The man, who is a retired astronaut and a former commander of a spaceship, sits in silence and stares at pictures and artifacts from his interplanetary explorations during his youthful days. The pictures from his early years show his happiness, excitement and contentment in life. His current life proves otherwise - he looks sad, morose and unsatisfied. Audi uses this character to represent people whose vibrant and youthful days are displaced by their current mundane life.

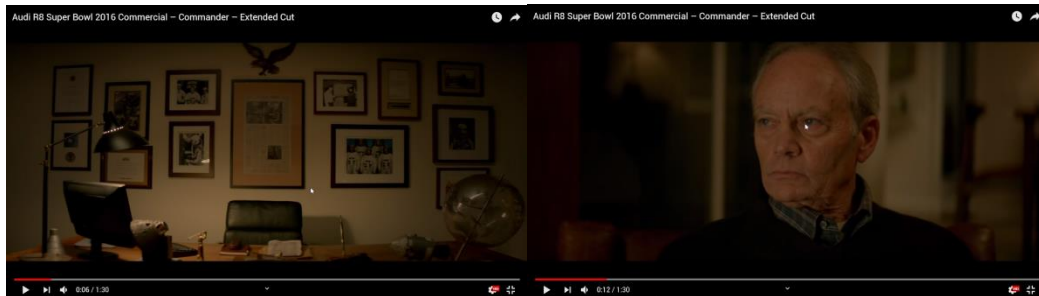


Figure 30. *The commander in a solemn reflection in his home office*

His son returns from work and sees his father in his current state. He walks up to him, and says “okay, Commander, come with me”. The man walks out of the room with his son. The man sees the all-new Audi R8. He is surprised and keeps gazing at it. His son hands him the keys to the car. A close-up shot of the man reveals his eyes focusing on the car. As he slowly walks to the car with his son, a montage from his youthful days as an astronaut entering a spaceship flashes the scene. David Bowie’s song, *Starman* begins to play in the background.

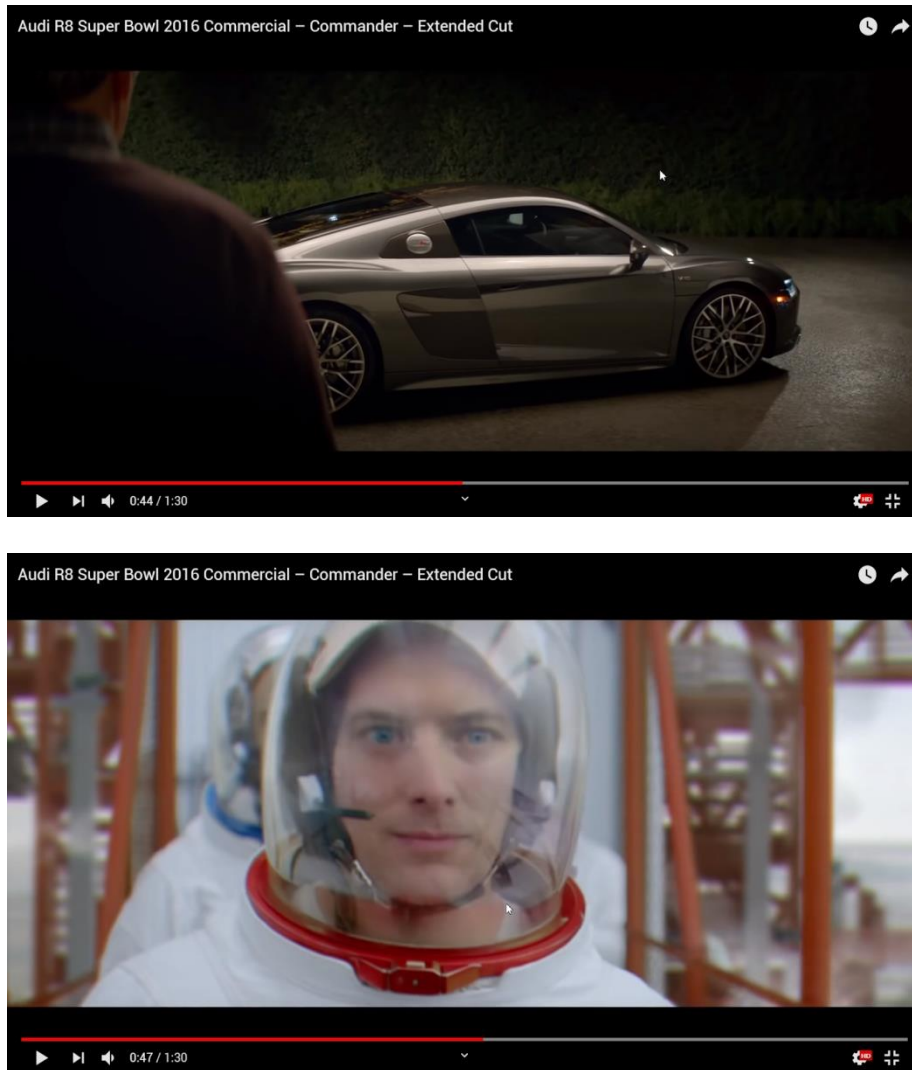


Figure 31. *Comparison of the man walking to the Audi, and boarding the spaceship*

As the commander wraps his hand on the steering and prepares to push the ignition button, he turns to look at his son on the front passenger's seat. The scene introduces flashback footage of the commander preparing to launch a spaceship during his early days as an astronaut. As the commander counts down in the spaceship, he mimics the countdown with his lips in the Audi. When he pushes the ignition button of the Audi, the spaceship blasts off with the Audi taking off simultaneously.

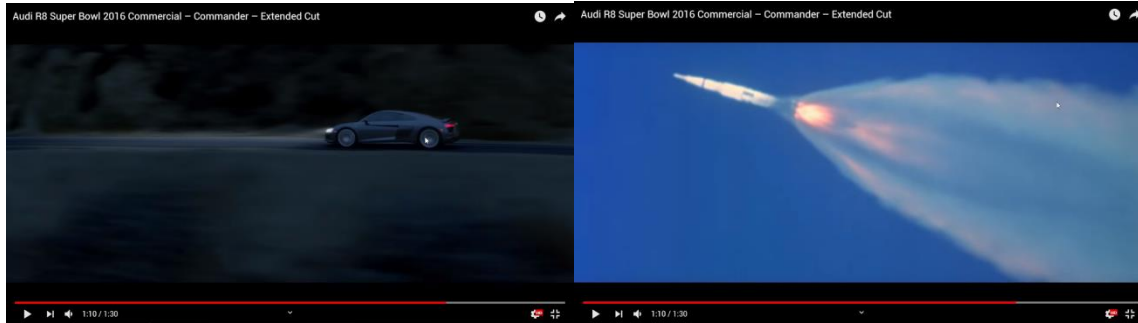


Figure 32. *The spaceship and Audi in intermittent cuts*

The scene builds up and introduces intermittent cuts of the Audi and spaceship's launch. The Audi's engine roars louder as the spaceship grows. As the spaceship steadies in its orbit with a bright fire at its tail end, the scene shows the Audi speeding off with its bright front light. This presents the notion that the brightness of the Audi's lights is comparative to the brightness of the fire at the spaceship's tail end. The text, "choosing the moon brings out the best in us," on a dark background, pops up.

The Audi speeds off simultaneously with the spaceship to connote that the performance of the R8 is relational to a spaceship in terms of its speed, power and thrill. The commander makes the latter evident by showing off a beaming smile, just as he did when he was on the spaceship during his juvenile years. The commercial ends with the text "the 205-MPH Audi R8 is here," with a footage of the spaceship tail blasting from the earth and dissolving into Audi's logo.

Analysis. The rhetorical approach Audi employs in this commercial seems to suggest that one of its primary audiences is middle-aged-to-older men; those who desire to reignite a spark in their personal or professional lives.

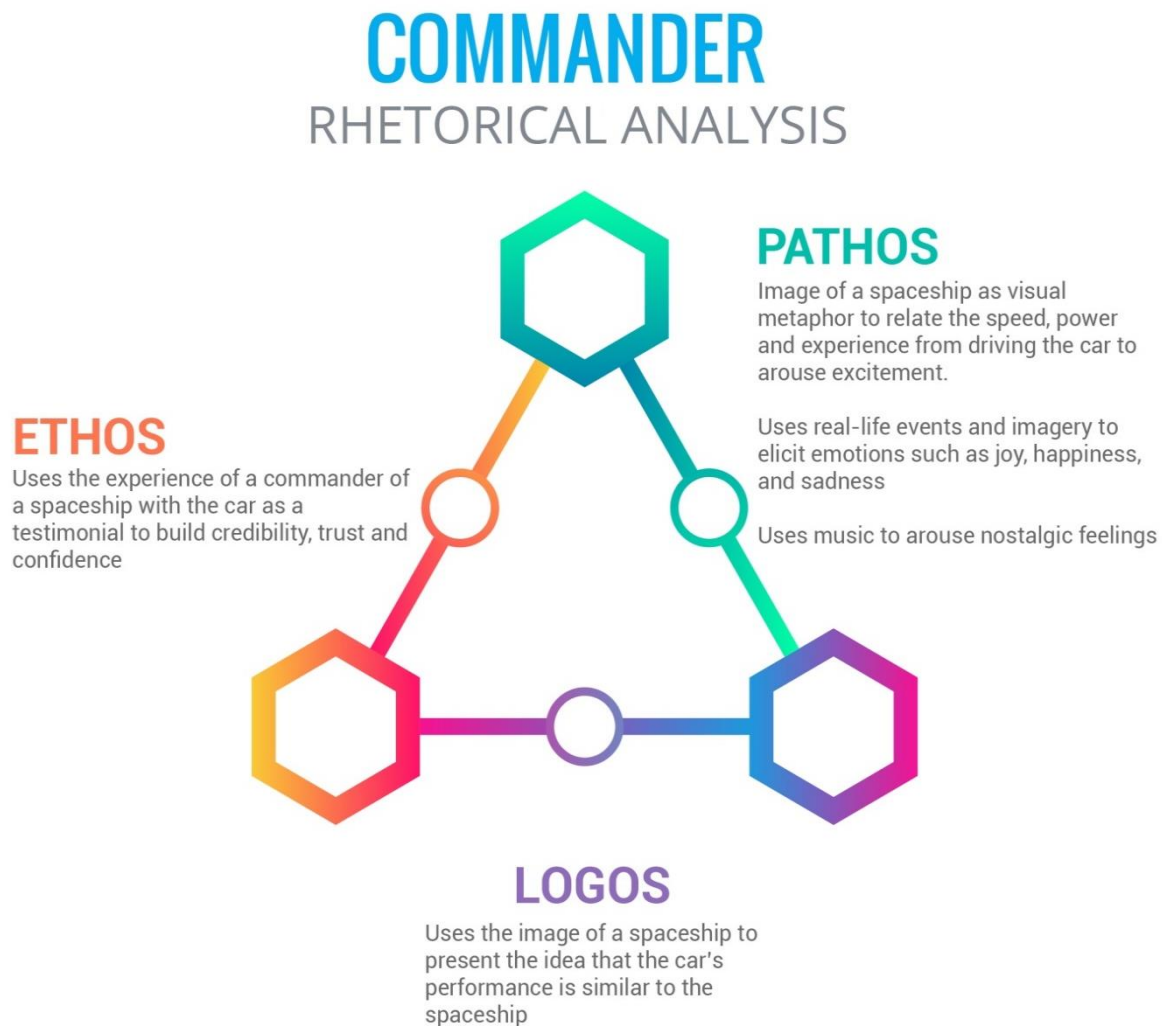


Figure 33. *Rhetorical analysis of Audi's Commander video commercial*

Pathos. Audi employs imagery, memorabilia, and music in this commercial to arouse emotions such as sadness, excitement, suspense, and nostalgia. The commercial begins with a melancholy mood and ends with an exciting, and happy scene. The transition between these emotional states occurs when the Commander got to drive the Audi. This attests that indeed, the

R8 can make their target audience happy. The figure below illustrates a rhetorical analysis of Audi's 'Commander' commercial.

In the opening scene of the commercial, the commander appears to be in assisted living; or perhaps, depending on his family. The look on the Commander's face as he gazes on the wall is sad, hopeless, and mundane. The man's memorabilia from his landing on the moon introduced in the scene arouses nostalgia. Audi employs this imagery to strategically connect with their audience in similar emotional states. It reminds men in this crisis of how moody life could be if they do not drive the Audi R8. The look on his son's face when he sees his father suggests that he cares about him. This suggests that sons who care about their fathers should buy an Audi for them in order to rejuvenate and give them a spark.



Figure 34. *Screenshot of the commander and his son's facial expression*

The first few scenes in the commercial mostly elicit melancholy and gloom. Audi continues to appeal to their consumers' sense of *pathos* by employing a musical theme. As the commander walks to the Audi, David Bowie's song, *Starman* begins to play in the background with a voice-over countdown from the commander's previous journey to the moon. Few months before the commercial was produced in 2016, David Bowie had passed away from liver cancer. Audi strategically uses the song by David Bowie to create nostalgia in order to make the target audience remember him. This intensifies the emotion of sadness in the commercial. Perhaps,

audiences who love David will love Audi for keeping his music alive. The countdown and montage from the man's past take-off in the spaceship to the moon arouse nostalgia, build suspense and create anticipation to transition into a scene of positive emotions.



Figure 35. *Screenshot of the man in anticipation to take off in the Audi*

In the closing scene of the commercial, when the commander finally takes off in the R8, he gets excited, content and is seen smiling in a close-up shot. The thrilling experience of driving the Audi becomes evident in his facial expression to captivate the audience. The transition from the man's gloomy look to his exciting appearance in the Audi conveys to viewers that driving the Audi R8 will give them a thrilling experience that will make them re-imagine the event in their past glorious days to make them happy once again.

Ethos. For more than a century, the German automaker has demonstrated class, performance and sophistication in their cars. This builds up Audi's *ethos* in the commercial, and is established by its authority, credibility and trust in the automobile industry. To attest that Audi

is the brand communicating the message with the story, the commercial shows Audi's logo on the car at various camera angles, and at the end of the commercial. This makes the viewer feel confident since the R8 model is coming from an automobile expert.

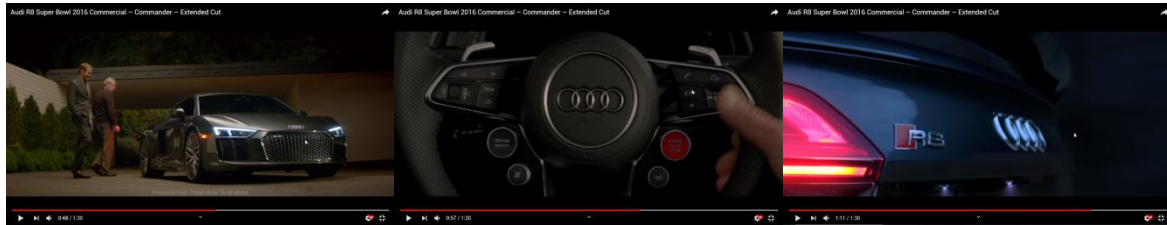


Figure 36. *Audi's logos at different camera angles*

Most commercials employ celebrities and people of interest to share testimonials and highlight specific attributes of a product to establish *ethos*. Audi's approach in this commercial is different. The brand employs Commander as a fictitious character, rather than as a person in real-life. Audi employs the situation in the commercial as a testimonial to establish *ethos*. The Commander gets happy and content when he drives the Audi and associates the satisfaction from driving the car with the thrill of piloting the spaceship. This connotes his sense of approval for the R8 and indirectly communicates that the car will make other people happy. The tagline, "choosing the moon brings the best in us" demonstrates Audi's character as one that cares about their audience. The tagline encourages viewers to aim for bigger things in life in order to enjoy thrilling and fun experiences.

Logos. The message in this commercial is not logo heavy. Audi employs little to no rhetorical elements to back their logical reasoning in this commercial, although some ethical appeals may overlap as *logos*. However, the close-up shot of the Audi's dashboard with sophisticated technology and information about the car's performance presents a logical reasoning that the R8 is a modern sports car and will exceed the consumer's expectations of its performance.



Figure 37. Audi's dashboard with infographics about its performance

Chapter 5. Discussion

Over the years, the media industry has evolved from traditional channels (radio, television, magazines) to digital media such as websites and social media. The digital revolution has changed how users consume media. This shift has affected how industries advertise their products and services on digital platforms. One example that illustrates digital media's effects on advertising is how automobile brands, like Audi, have adopted online video ads to promote their vehicles.

Several brands use digital video as an effective communication tool for product marketing and brand storytelling. Throughout this research, it has been evident that the automobile industry, especially Audi, has been innovative, creative, and strategic with their video advertisements. The brand uses video ads to creatively introduce new car models to the market, and strategically present unique value propositions to the target consumer. Audi employs sundry rhetorical devices - including metaphorical language and imagery – to appeal to audiences' emotions. This strategy arouses interest and ultimately builds brand loyalty.

The company often produces 1-6 minutes video spots on their YouTube channel and other social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). Typically, the video ads are interesting and captivates the audience to watch several times. They are intended to tell a story, communicate a message, arouse interest, and evoke emotions with visual and verbal metaphors.

Visual and Verbal Metaphors in Automobile Advertising

The purpose of this study is to explore the use of metaphor as a rhetorical device to arouse consumers' emotions in automobile advertising. Above, I identify and analyze the three rhetorical appeals employed by Audi in three of its online video advertisements, and, specifically, how some rhetorical devices in these videos appeal to target audiences' emotions.

Findings from the study reveal two major kinds of metaphors that Audi employs in their video advertisements to evoke emotions: visual and verbal metaphor.

My analysis of the metaphorical language and imagery in the commercials suggests that metaphor is an effective rhetorical device because it provides for the viewer conceptual frameworks to engage stories and characters in unique ways. The analysis and findings support that video advertising in the automobile industry heavily employs visual metaphors. Audi strategically produced the three video advertisements with visual metaphors as a rhetorical element to create positive feelings, and make their consumers visualize the performance, durability, and aesthetic design of their cars. This aligns with work by McQuarrie and Phillips (1996) that show that visual metaphors have the tendency to create positive feelings about a product when they are used in advertisements.

Audi typically uses real-life images and historic events to create visuals that evoke specific kinds of emotions that make consumers feel excited about driving their cars. These visual metaphors have the tendency to elicit some emotional responses when viewers process and try to understand their meanings in video ads. As seen in Audi's video commercials, the visual metaphors aroused feelings of nostalgia, excitement, confidence, and love. This finding affirms the conclusion by Kadry (2015) that metaphors are used in advertising commercials to evoke emotional responses in the target audience.

For instance, in the Secretariat ad, Audi recreated a modern-day fictional image of the legendary horse, Secretariat, to create a visual metaphor that relates to the strength, power and stamina of the horse to the overall performance of the S5 model. The image of the legendary horse employed in the ad as a visual metaphor aroused nostalgic feelings and confidence. The

table below illustrates visual metaphors, their purpose, and the emotions they evoked in Audi’s video commercials.

Table 2.

List of major visual metaphors, their purpose, and emotions evoked in the commercial

Commercial	Visual Metaphor	Purpose	Emotions evoked
Avant Story	Stages in life	Emphasize the durability of the RS series – that it will be present in all life stages	Love Excitement Nostalgia
Secretariat	Horse	Highlight the power, speed, and durability of the car	Confidence Excitement Anticipation
Commander	Spaceship	Explain that the performance and experience from the R8 is like piloting a rocket ship	Excitement Nostalgia

Visual metaphors in the ads make them interesting, exciting, and compelling to watch.

The target audience is more likely to view the commercials multiple times to create engagement with the brand. This will eventually enhance the memorability of the message in the ad, attesting to Dehay and Landwehr’s (2019), as well as Yu’s (2009) claim that metaphors have the inherent potential to foster audience recall.

In the Commander ad, Audi relates the unique value propositions (speed and thrill) of their car to a spaceship, and uses the spaceship’s attributes of speed, durability and power to create a visual imagery that explains the idea that the R8 model will give consumers a thrilling experience. This supports Underwood’s (2017) assertion that metaphors help explain an idea by comparing one object to another and creating a visual relationship between the two.

Furthermore, visual metaphors may not necessarily function as stand-alone images in video advertisements. Sometimes, they are employed as themes or concepts upon which the

storyline of the ad is composed. In this instance, viewers may not be able to identify the metaphors easily, and the intent or meaning could be distorted. The viewer may need to watch the video multiple times in order to identify the metaphor in the story, and to understand and interpret the meaning. The interpretation and meaning of the metaphor are in some cases subjective; thus, the viewer formulates their own understanding, and makes his own conclusion after watching the ad. The interpretation may however be different from the original meaning or message the author intended to create; and may even differ from viewer to viewer.

This supports three arguments by Petridis and Chilton (2019): a) interpreting the meaning of a visual metaphor is still an open problem; b) visual metaphors convey messages indirectly; c) understanding the message in the ad is subjective to the viewer. These infer that visual metaphors are difficult to interpret because there may not be a direct relationship between the image and the product, and the viewer may have to make their own inference. A case in point: Audi's Avant Story video ad employs the various stages in one man's life (from childhood to fatherhood) as a visual metaphor to celebrate twenty-five years of producing the RS series. A different viewer may also identify that the visual metaphor(s) in this case is intended to establish that the Audi RS6 Avant is a dependable car that will last throughout different life stages of the driver, and will be present during important moments of the owner. Another viewer may also interpret the metaphor to mean that Audi is often an integral part of people's lives. This suggests that interpretation of visual metaphors in video advertisements is predicated on the viewer's inferences and personal understanding.

In general, the commercials in this research employ pictures and images as visual metaphors to highlight specific product attributes; to create a visual relationship between the product and the image; and to explain the anticipated value of the product in terms of the image

or visuals. These, in effect, have the potential to create engagement, enhance cognition, and ignite excitement about the product.

Verbal metaphors, on the other hand, exist as written texts, declarative words, and phrases that establish a relationship between the product and an object, image or written words. The analyses of the three video ads suggest that verbal metaphors are used in combination with visual metaphors in video advertisements. In my analyses, I found that verbal metaphors were identified mainly in the form of spoken words as a rhetorical element to engage the viewer and elicit some kind of emotions. Unlike visual metaphors that are ambiguous, verbal metaphors are clear, simple, and easy to interpret by the viewer. Verbal metaphors accompany visual metaphors in video advertisements to explain the concept in the visuals.

Rhetorical Elements in Video Advertising: Audio, Imagery, Text

The data also suggest that audio, visuals, and written text are used as rhetorical elements to appeal to *pathos*, *logos*, and *ethos*. Audio has a tremendous effect on the success of video advertising. It has the power to engage and connect the viewer to the visual contents of the ad. Specific types of audio, such as soothing music or a jolting sound effect function as an effective rhetorical device to elicit emotional responses in the target audience. Regardless of the visual content in video advertisements, the background audio or music plays an important role in capturing the audience's attention and setting a specific mood to communicate the message. Audi's commercials utilize different kinds of background music and audio to attract attention and evoke certain emotional responses. This supports the conclusion by Doan (2017) that sound and music in video advertising is important for creating specific ambience and mood.

Audio in Audi's commercials include spoken words, music, and sound effects. These different kinds of audio create the right ambience and set the mood for the visuals in the ads. For

instance, the beginning of the Avant Story video ad has a piano soundtrack that plays with the visuals. This sets a calm, uplifting, and soothing atmosphere for the narrator to share his story that evokes positive emotions. Also, in the Commander ad, Audi strategically uses music by David Bowie to arouse nostalgic feelings and foster audience recall. The target audience are familiar with the popular *Starman* track by David Bowie. This helps the audience remember the ad each time they hear the music. The table below shows the different kinds of audio Audi employs in their video advertisements. The subsequent figure summarizes how Audi uses various rhetorical devices in the three video commercials.

Table 3.

Different Kinds of audio in Audi's commercials and their purpose

SOUND	TYPE	IMPACT/PURPOSE
<i>Starman</i> by David Bowie	Music	Nostalgia
Car cranking	Sound effect	Anticipation
Car engine revving	Sound effect	Intense/Excitement
Human voice	Spoken word/voiceover narration	Suspense/Excitement
Horse whine	Sound effect	Anticipation
Piano	Sound effect	Love
<i>Run Boy Run</i> by Woodkid	Music	Excitement/Anticipation

RHETORICAL DEVICES	AN AVANT STORY	SECRETARIAT	COMMANDER
Visual Metaphor Describing the performance of the car in terms of another image/visuals	✓	✓	✓
Verbal Metaphor Written texts or audible statements to describe the qualities of the car	✓	✓	✓
Text Phrases or quotes to describe the experience from driving the car	✓	✓	✓
Music Soundtracks, instrumentals or popular music that create certain moods	✓	✓	✓
Voice-over narrative Human voices that tell a story or describe attributes of the car in the commercial	✓	✓	✗
Repetition Repeating certain images, sound, or text for a strategic effect in the commercial	✓	✓	✓

Figure 38. *Recurring rhetorical devices in Audi’s video commercials*

In addition to audio such as narrative voice-over, music, and sound effects, Audi’s video ads in the research use fictional and real-life images/visuals to engage the target audience. The different images combine to tell a story to which the audience can relate to. One of Audi’s hallmarks seems to be the use of historic and/or real-life images to arouse nostalgic feelings; and fictional imagery to build anticipation, excitement, and arouse emotions such as joy, love, and sadness. For instance, the Secretariat commercial uses a historic event in which the legendary horse had won a race. The video uses the historic footage to arouse nostalgic feelings and connect with audiences who may have an interest in horse racing at a personal level.

The images in Audi’s commercials also employ various visual effects for rhetorical purposes. The slow-motion effects in the ads – like at the beginning of the Avant Story –

commercial grab the viewers' attention and elicit a calm, soothing atmosphere for the narrative. Audi also uses fast-moving images in the form of a montage to build anticipation and suspense. This suggests that employing varying kinds of motions in the visuals/imagery in video advertisements create a dramatic effect that engages the audience.

In addition, Audi employs repetition as a rhetorical move to appeal to viewers' emotions, as well as foster audience recall. For instance, in the Avant Story ad, the little boy's fingers gently touch Audi's logo on the car's grill. When he grows older in his teens, he touches the rings in the same way. In the closing scene of the video, the adult protagonist does the same. This repeated imagery strategically engrains Audi's brand logo in the mind of the viewer.

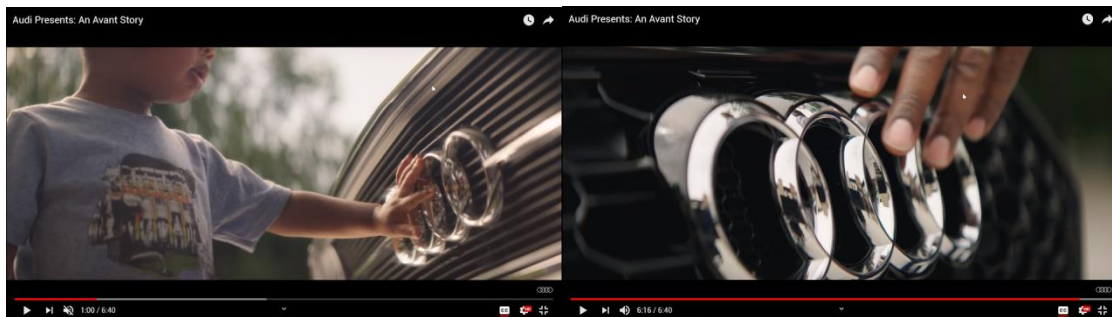


Figure 39. *Repetition of certain visuals in Audi's video commercials*

The use of text – that is, the written word on screen – is not featured predominantly in Audi's video advertisements. In some cases, though, taglines are used in concluding scenes to appeal to *pathos* and *ethos*. Audi uses phrases and words such as, "All new, Finally, ...is here," among others to arouse interest and evoke emotions. These rhetorical elements ultimately build interest, facilitate cognition, and foster recall. For instance, "25 years in the making," in Audi's Avant Story ad, suggests to the viewer that Audi has been producing the RS series for a long time. This establishes *ethos* and makes the viewer feel confident about the car.

Also, in the Commander commercial, Audi introduced the text, ‘Choosing the moon brings out the best in us’ as a rhetorical device (metaphor) to the target audience to work towards their goals. The metaphor, which explains that the higher we aim in terms of personal goals, the more we can achieve in life: as the commander was an astronaut, he aimed to reach the moon; in the same way, if we set our goals high enough, we can also reach a level of satisfaction. The implicit connection here is that our dreams might/should include buying an Audi, which can bring out the best in us. The table below summarizes words and phrases Audi used as rhetorical moves to arouse emotions in the three video commercials.

Table 4.

List of texts and phrases as rhetorical devices in Audi’s video commercials

COMMERCIAL	WORDS/PHRASES	EMOTIONS
Avant Story	“25 years in the making” “Finally the RS Avant is coming” “The RS6 Avant coming to America and Canada in 2020”	Confidence Excitement Excitement, Anticipation
Commander	“Finally” “The 205-MPH Audi R8 is here” “Choosing the moon brings out the best in us”	Excitement Confidence Uplifting
Secretariat	“The all new 354 hp Audi S5 Sportback is here” “Progress is powered from within”	Excitement Confidence

These phrases and word choices are strategic in functioning together with other rhetorical moves such as audio and imagery to appeal to emotions, and sometimes, establish *ethos* and *logos*. Audi’s strategic messaging with video advertisements in general, uses different rhetorical devices, especially visual and verbal metaphors to connect with their audience, evoke emotions, and persuade the audience to make a purchase.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

This research sought to investigate the use of metaphor as a rhetorical device, and, specifically, how different types of metaphors arouse audience emotions in online video advertisements. Prior research advocated for the use of metaphor in advertising, because as a rhetorical tool, it can engage an audience, aid cognition, and foster memorability of messaging (Kadry, 2015). My analyses of select Audi's video commercials suggest a complex interplay between metaphors and emotions. That is, metaphor, when deployed strategically, has the potential to arouse various kinds of emotions in video advertising, which functions to persuade target audiences to diverse call-to-actions.

Arousing emotions in advertising is an effective strategy for commercial messaging. Roozen (2013) points out that emotions aid cognition and influence consumer behavior. As viewers interact with multiple messages in a day, it is imperative for advertisers to employ creative and compelling strategies that will make their content stand out. Therefore, automobile companies like Audi integrate emotional elements in their video advertisements that make their messaging stand out. Audi's video advertisements often employ metaphorical language and imagery to arouse consumer emotions that make the target audience feel confident, excited, and inspired about the brand, and will therefore be interested in making a purchase.

Mizerski and White (1986) point out that video advertisements with emotional elements help increase audience reach and eventually create a bond between the target audience and the brand. In light of this, Audi creates video ads with emotional appeals to engage their audience, foster favorable attitudes towards the brand, and persuade them to call-to-actions in the commercial. Some key emotional themes that are predominant in Audi's video ads are excitement, happiness, joy, anticipation, confidence, and nostalgia. Mizerski and White (1986) assert that positive emotions have the potential to create positive attitudes towards a product or

brand. With this in mind, Audi develops creative video commercials that elicit positive emotions in their audience to make them feel positive (confident) about driving their cars. Although the commercials elicited some form of negative emotions (sadness), prevailing positive emotions were strategic in arousing the audience's interest and creating a positive perception about Audi and its cars. This supports an argument by Alden et al. (1993) that the use of positive emotions to elicit excitement in advertising commercials stimulate positive brand positioning. Figure 40 below shows recurring emotional themes in Audi’s video commercials.

EMOTIONAL STATES	AN AVANT STORY	SECRETARIAT	COMMANDER
Excitement	✓	✓	✗
Anticipation	✓	✓	✓
Suspense	✓	✗	✓
Joy/Happiness	✓	✗	✓
Sadness	✓	✗	✓
Love	✓	✓	✓
Nostalgia	✓	✓	✓

Figure 40. *Recurring emotional themes in Audi’s video commercials*

Kensinger (2004) advocates for the use of emotions as a memory enhancing element in advertising, stating that, “events with emotional relevance are more likely to be remembered than

events of emotional devoid” (p. 241). Audi therefore employs rhetorical devices as a strategy to arouse consumer emotions, in order to make their ads memorable.

My findings support Young’s (2017) assertion that advertising in the digital revolution should integrate creative strategies to create content that appeals to the audience’s logical reasoning and emotional states. Typically, Audi’s video advertisements do not only appeal to consumers’ emotions; they also integrate data to reinforce the quality, reliability, and durability of their vehicles. Such mixed appeals – of *pathos* and *logos* – engender genuine and lasting favorable responses from audiences. The creative blend of emotional arousal and logical reasoning elements suggest that Audi’s commercials are effective and compelling.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) in his ‘Rhetoric’ work postulated that affective messaging must have elements of persuasion that intertwine to appeal to emotions, employ sound logic, and establish credibility. The rhetorical analyses of the three video ads reveal that Audi’s commercials use a blend of various rhetorical devices that function together to make an appeal to *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, with a special attention to the latter. In some instances, an appeal to *pathos* also functions to appeal to audiences’ logic, while establishing credibility. Roozen (2013) states that advertising messages often employ mediating factors such as metaphor to evoke emotional responses in the audience. My analyses reveal that Audi mostly uses visual and verbal metaphor, different kinds of audio, and text as rhetorical devices to arouse consumer’s emotions. The strategic pairing of visual and/or verbal metaphors are effective in arousing emotions.

Visual metaphor is an important rhetorical device that Audi employs to highlight specific product attributes and unique value propositions of their cars, at least, in the advertisements I analyzed in the present study. Mainly, the company uses visual metaphor to help the target audience visualize some specifications and selling points of the car in terms of another imagery.

The visual metaphors were predominantly visuals of historic events and images of objects or symbols. The association of the product attributes with visuals or imagery illustrates the anticipated satisfaction from driving the car – and ultimately influences the target audience to make a purchase.

Visual metaphor in Audi's video ads paired two distinct images and created an analogy between them. This relationship helps explain the anticipated thrill, experience, power, and durability of Audi's cars to the audience in a way that they can easily understand. This finding supports Dehay and Landwerh's (2019) assertion that metaphor is an important rhetorical device that advertising employs to "accelerate understanding" (p.1) of messages. Visual metaphor has the power to facilitate understanding and memorability of messages in video advertising, in that their attractiveness and relatability make the viewer spend more time engaging with the ad. Also, from the literature in this paper, Barthes (1986) observed and posits that the more an audience is able to imagine and interpret their own understanding from a visual metaphor, the more likely they are to remember the message. This, according to (Kadry, 2015), enhances cognition of the message in the ad. Therefore, the use of visual metaphors in Audi's video commercials is strategic in enhancing cognition of the message in the ad.

In addition to message cognition, memorability and ad engagement, my exploration revealed three major functions of visual metaphor in Audi's video advertisements: 1) highlight the performance of their cars; 2) help the target audience understand the message; and 3) connect with the audience at an emotional level. Visuals of a man's stages in life, an image of a legendary racehorse, and visuals of a spaceship in motion were the visual metaphors Audi used to explain the durability, performance, power, thrill, and experience from driving their cars. However, my findings suggest that visual metaphors can be complex and misleading since the audience may misinterpret the intended meaning in video advertisements. Because of the indirect

correlation between the product and the image, visual metaphors are often difficult to understand; and different audiences formulate different meanings according to their own understanding, experiences, and familiarity with the concept.

Verbal metaphors on the other hand, are direct and easy to understand. Though they are not predominant in video advertisements, they are effective in reinforcing trust, and can sometimes, elicit emotional responses in the audience. My findings indicate that verbal metaphors are mostly used as taglines in video ads. In addition, they are used together with visual elements/imagery, and/or audio, mainly to evoke emotions.

While my focus here is on video advertisements, specifically, in the course of my research I discovered that metaphor is oft employed in print media, as well. Other automobile companies like Volvo use visual metaphors to develop concepts that associate their brand with safety. For instance, in a print ad by Volvo, the company used a “safety pin bent into the shape of a car” (Rossiter & Bellman, 2005, p. 135) to communicate the brand’s commitment and promise of safety.

In print advertising, verbal metaphors are mostly used as captions, taglines or slogans for the product. Although the present study does not focus on print advertising, I discovered that automobile advertising employs verbal metaphors, particularly for headlines and descriptions. Because of metaphor’s persuasive capacity, there is ground for much fruitful research as it has been applied in the print media. Future studies could assess the impact and effectiveness of visual and verbal metaphors in this context. This research also presents grounds for future research into the application of visual metaphor in sundry other industries and sectors, including education, healthcare, manufacturing, and more.

Rhetorical analysis is an effective methodology in this kind of research because of its focus on context and audience. Though it is not the only means by which to investigate questions concerning metaphor in advertising, it provides the flexibility and interdisciplinarity to address lines of inquiry across various media channels and genres. The method was also useful as it explored how various rhetorical devices were effective in appealing to viewers' sense of *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos*, with a focus on the former. However, the method does not allow the researcher to assess the impact of metaphor on decision-making, behavior change, and other forms of conversions. Thus, it does not provide data to measure the success of the ads with respect to engagement, cognition, and conversions. Instead, the method only makes suggestions with no proven data. In the future, other methods can be used together with rhetorical analysis to explore how metaphors are employed in advertising, and to test their effectiveness with respect to how they appeal to audiences to make a purchase.

In conclusion, rhetorical analyses of select Audi video commercials suggest that metaphor is an effective rhetorical device in video advertising; and that leveraging the power of metaphor is strategic in building audiences' emotional investment in a brand, and therefore, be more likely to purchase. In particular, visual metaphors have the inherent potential to ignite a feeling, enhance cognition, and foster audience recall of messages in video advertising.

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