

Introduction the  
public is obviously  
aware of



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## **Introduction**

Prior to writing “ Grub”, Scott Sander was probably inspired by the American lifestyle and especially people from his home state – Indiana. He was disturbed by his community’s inclination towards the unhealthy and wanted to understand why such patterns were quite prevalent. Through the article, the author demystifies a very dangerous trait in his society and may perhaps cause members to question their choices.

## **The rhetorical situation in Grub**

Whenever a situation possesses a series of events, relationships, subjects and objects that cause a disturbance or exigence and if these elements can be altered or fixed through utterance that changes human response then that situation is rhetorical. A rhetorical situation is composed of three major traits which include exigence, audience and constraints. Exigence is understood as an imperfection that is urgent in nature.

In the Grub, the unhealthy eating lifestyle of the author’s community is the exigence. It is a problem that has reached epic proportions because the public is obviously aware of the danger inherent in their food but still chooses to indulge in it. In fact, the author describes the food as “ this dull, this dangerous, this terrible grub?” (Sander, 62). This situation could cause economic losses because society could become lazy, sick and underproductive. Furthermore, it creates a negative image of America to the rest of the world. As he states, tourists may fear visiting such locations because they may not find appropriate foods for them.

The situation has been propagated by the belief systems, habits and values of the American people and it can therefore be corrected or modified through discourse or utterance. The author has used his utterances to try and correct this exigence. In other words, the matter requires positive input from him so that it can be rectified. An audience in any rhetorical situation refers to those people who hear one's discourse/ utterance and are capable of using that message to modify the exigence.

In other words, they can take on a role of change mediators. In "Grub", the audience is composed of members of the American society who eat and live unhealthily. If any of these people were to read Scott Sander's article, they would be prompted to reexamine their core beliefs and might even fight off their inclination towards the grub they like to enjoy every time they are hungry. It should be noted here that a person who just reads the article may not be in a position to alter this unhealthy American lifestyle because that individual is not living it. However, those who are already trapped in that lifestyle have the power to turn it around by listening to the discourse which has disseminated through the article.

On the other hand, the audience may also be composed of persons /agents of change or people of influence in the American society. They may be moved by the grave statistics and murky situation to the point of becoming proactive about it. They could form organizations that address the challenge or they could start talking to friends and family about these dangers. Either way, the person will be attempting to modify the exigence through a proactive stance on the matter.

Lastly, constraints in any rhetorical situation means those obstacles that may impede the modification of an exigence and they may include the statistics at hand, the belief systems of the audience, the interests involved or even traditions held by them. Constraints need not be treated negatively because sometimes they can be crucial in causing change within the audience if the speaker or the discourse is aware of them and utilizes them to his advantage. These constraints can therefore become tools when the speaker is creative enough. Scott Sanders must confront a series of internal and external constraints in the rhetorical situation.

The author is a victim to the very 'disease' that he is trying to 'cure'. He talks about how horrible the food is but still goes on and eats it. He provides an explanation for the problem but never really gives an indication of the solution. It may therefore be difficult for the rhetorical audience to think of the solution on their own and this may impede the correction of the exigence. Also, because eating habits are firmly rooted in the lifestyle of the audience, it may be very difficult to actually cause them to modify these choices. In other words, the traditions and belief systems of the people of Indianapolis may come in the way.

These eating preferences are as a result of decades and generations of wrongful habits so they may not necessarily be questioned or altered any time soon (Sander, 62).

## **Conclusion**

The author Scott Sanders has been prompted to speak out against unhealthy lifestyles because of the danger it poses as seen in the newspaper which

provided the report on obesity. The author is part of the exigence because he indulges in this lifestyle and so does everyone else in his community. He is somewhat different from them because he is acutely aware of the dangers of the problem and has provided an explanation for it. He has traced the matter to its roots which is the farming lifestyle and failure to adjust after abandonment of that life. His location of discourse is a newspaper and he is speaking to those who engage in fat enhancing habits or those who may want to help unhealthy eaters.

However, instead of directly calling for change, the author uses his own experiences as a platform for questioning their lifestyle and perhaps changing those around him. Essentially this may be constrained by the traditions of the community as well as his own weaknesses as a healthy example.

## **Work Cited**

Sander, Scott.

Grub ed. *Motives for writing*. Minneapolis: Milkweed, 1999