

# Rhetorically Criticizing how VIM Magazine Presents their Identity

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## Introducing the Community and Artifacts

VIM Magazine is a community of students who are driven to becoming professionals in the fashion, media, and entertainment industry. Together, the entirely student-led organization creates magazines and online content for Michigan State students and invests their time in the greater Lansing community. VIM is broken up into many teams and meets biweekly to host workshops, talks from current professionals (including/or past VIM members), and preparing the members for their entry into the world of fashion and media. Gaining over 200 members in the last two years, the organization has succeeded in enticing students to devote their time to this extracurricular. This is mostly achieved by sending out regular and consistent information found in their newsletter, sent out at least every two weeks. This begs the questions: What strategies have they utilized within the “About” page to ensure it serves its purpose of informing its readers?

### The Source for Style at Michigan State University.

Founded in 2010, VIM is an entirely student-run fashion, beauty & lifestyle publication at Michigan State University. We publish a bi-annual print magazine, along with two bi-annual digital issues.

VIM is more than just a magazine, we strive to be the leading organization on campus for students interested in fashion and media. With a staff comprised of students interested in advertising, graphic design, photography, finance, marketing, public relations, video production, social media, event planning, professional writing & editing, and more, there is truly a place for everyone at VIM. Our mission is to work collaboratively and efficiently to produce the best college fashion publication in the country. We hope to grow together creatively while providing our members with the legitimate experience and necessary skills to succeed in the highly competitive fashion and publishing industries.

## VIM

### Meeting Recap

Thank you to all who were able to join us last night at our GMM! If you are interested in connecting with Cat O'Brien, please click [HERE](#) for her LinkedIn. Our next virtual meeting will be **November 2nd** at 8 p.m. EST with Erika Wayne from Marchesa.

**Merch Update:** get excited!! VIM merch will be available for purchase **THIS WEEK!** We will be sending an email with links when available.

If you are interested in joining our GroupMe, please click [HERE](#).

We are excited to see you all at our next GMM via Zoom!

### VIM Tentative Schedule

All General Member meetings are always on Monday's at 8 p.m EST!

- \*October 26th (7 p.m. EST): Senanchie Making Workshop
- \*October 26th (8 p.m. EST): Pumpkin Carving
- November 2nd: Meeting with Erika Wayne from Marchesa
- \*November 9th (7 p.m. EST): Fitness Class Workshop
- November 23rd: Meeting with Darryl Humes from MATURE
- \*November 30th (7 p.m. EST): Street Styling Tips Workshop
- November 30th: Meet with Christina Binkley, fashion and entertainment writer for The Wall Street Journal and Vogue Business

### Vogue Forces of Fashion

Don't miss out on the opportunity to attend Vogue's Forces of Fashion summit! As a student, you will receive a major discount using code, "student," at checkout.

**When:** November 16th-17th

**What:** "Discover the latest on the fashion industry, hear compelling conversations and get behind-the-scenes access."

**Speakers include:** Naomi Campbell, Virgil Abloh, Lizzo, Jeremy Scott and so many more!

How to sign up: <https://vogueforcesoffashion.com>

Purchase tickets by entering the promo code "student" at checkout. **Tickets are \$15 with the promo code.**

### Be featured in the Fall Issue

Want a chance to be in the fall issue? VIM's Lifestyle Team is doing a piece on Gen Z and wants to authentically represent the generation - which is us.

If interested, please email submissions of you individually or with your friends to [vimlifestyle@gmail.com](mailto:vimlifestyle@gmail.com).

### Social Media

**Instagram:** @vimmsu  
**Facebook:** VIM MSU  
**TikTok:** @vimmsu  
**LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/vim-magazine>  
**Website:** <https://www.vimmagazine.com>

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The artifacts that I have chosen to analyze are the “About” page from VIM Magazine’s website, both displayed above. Sonja Foss lists a couple units of analysis in the second chapter of journal, *Rhetorical Criticism*. Foss explains that an artifact is appropriate to use when it contains certain units of analysis that focus on distinct parts of the artifact, such as “strategies, types of evidence, values, fantasy themes, and metaphors.” These artifacts meets that criteria as they contains several of VIM’s values, strategies, and types of evidence. Next, she asserts that the artifact must be something that piques the interest, passion, or curiosity of the analyzer. The newsletters interests me because I personally seek them out on a weekly basis to find out information about the organizations current subjects and upcoming events. The “About” page is of personal interest to me as I have been working with VIM’s User Experience Team on redesigning the website, and this page has been a topic of many of our discussions. As I continue to reconstruct the “About” pages, this analysis will be useful in understanding how users react to the content of the page.

### ***Methods of Criticism***

The first method to be utilized, the cluster analysis method, arranges “clusters” of key words or phrases that are synonymous or representative of a certain idea, symbol, expression, etc. First you must identify the artifact you want to analyze, and then outline key terms that appear most often or strongly. It should be noted that this first step exemplifies the method’s most obvious limitation: the artifact requires text. Provided that the artifact meets this requirement, the artifacts patterns, associations, and explanations are revealed after clustering the terms.

The second method to analyze the artifacts will be the Fantasy-Theme rhetorical criticism method. This serves to get an understanding of the groups thought process and the impacts of their understanding. This takes place by identifying the setting, characters, and actions of the artifact; then finding patterns in these elements that reveal the shared perception of the group. However, this method can be rather time consuming and does not provide instant gratification of analyzing why an artifact was designed in a particular way. This method builds

up analysis of the thoughts and views first, which are not based on fact. This method is difficult to accomplish as it requires either prior knowledge or extensive investigation of the group first.

The final method that will be applied is the Ideological method. By examining the artifacts from an organization, one can assume their ideologies. An ideology is defined as as “[...] any doctrine, belief, value, myth, or principle that essentially guides a person or organization to action” (Newbold 2017). When conducting this method, it is important to consider that the ideologies are assumptions, as not every individual within an organization will have the exact same ideologies and basing an entire organizations beliefs solely off one artifact is not thorough enough to declare According to his outline, the first step is to analyze the features of the artifact. Then proceed by connecting the elements and asking what they allude to. The process is followed by grouping the primary ideologies drawn from the rhetorical elements of the artifact, and proceed by concluding how the ideology impacts the organization.

## ***Method Results and Analysis***

### *Ideological Method*

The “About” page provides a limited amount of features to use for this method, therefore the key terms distinguished in the Cluster method contributed to framing the features needed analyze VIM’s ideology. Immediately, VIM’s pride of being “an entirely student-run fashion, beauty & lifestyle publication” is noted. The passage also describes what (and how often) they publish and lists the pursuits of its members. It also states that “there is truly a place for everyone” and that their “mission is to work collaboratively and efficiently.” The last point made is that they want to help members “to succeed in the highly competitive fashion and publishing industries.” As a member, I know that the name “VIM” was drawn from the words “vitality” and “enthusiasm” in the university’s fight song. These terms connect the elements of the artifact by embodying VIM members spirit and drive. After further developing these values, this artifact definitely portrays that the organization is promoting their ideologies of tenacity and community. When people interact with this page, the rhetorical elements validate VIM Magazine’s credibility and achievement.

Within the contents of this weekly newsletter, one will find: a summary of the most recent general meeting, a chance to featured in the next issue, an promo code for an acclaimed fashion summit, a schedule of upcoming workshops, and links to VIM social media accounts. The concept behind these features is to allow members to become involved outside of their usual position or routines, and making them accessible. These elements illustrate how VIM Magazine values participation and education of its members, therefore promoting the ideologies of engagement and cultivation. For those who read these emails, the newsletter acts as a tool to ensure VIM members' success.

### *Clusters Results*

Through conducting the cluster analysis, the key concepts were identified and given meaning with the words found within the text of the artifacts, shown in the tables below. By selecting keywords from the artifact and centering them around a certain concept, these key terms clearly identify what the magazine values and it's reason for being. Although the clusters were created individually, there are clearly repetitions from each artifact. This strengthens the analysis as several key terms are reinforced. It displays the tone and style in which VIM members communicate and shows what brings them together.

<b>From the Newsletter</b>				
<b>Network</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Informatoin</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Magazine</b>
connecting meeting LinkedIn industry summit business	sign up Zoom student workshop team tips	recap update schedule general GroupMe	merch Marchesa Vogue purchase fashion street styling	issue lifestyle piece entertainment Editor's-In-Chief
<b>From the "About" page</b>				
<b>Magazine</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Industry</b>	
source publication print digital issue editing	fashion beauty lifestyle media creatively	student-run campus students collaboratively college grow together	competitive staff produce work organization professional	

## *Fantasy-Theme Analysis*

The Fantasy-Theme method or rhetorical criticism required me to delve into the text in a less literal way. Beginning with the setting of the “About” page, I made note that it exists entirely on the magazine’s site which includes access to all of their content including social media, blogs, issues, and generic club information. It is impossible to pinpoint every exact type of VIM member, but I know that the main characters playing a role in this “About” page are students in VIM magazine who are right-brained thinkers seeking left-brained employment. These young characters are likely women (or a majority, as there are significantly more women in VIM) who are looking to use their digital/web skills in a creative environment. This web development could serve as a portfolio or resume builder for future employers. In terms of the action, this page was designed to showcase VIM’s work and values to future members and as a reference for VIM members to use themselves when they enter the job market. The page was created to reflect and meet the expectations of other fashion magazine’s online platforms. After identifying these elements, an apparent pattern presents to highlight the pages intention to define the community and their shared visions of taking on the fashion and media industry.

Regarding the newsletter, the setting clearly depends on whatever email server the member is using, although its most likely Outlook provided by Michigan State University. These emails are sent out biweekly to all VIM members typically the day after a general meeting is held, which occur every other Monday. The “main” characters here are the the two Editors-In-Chief, who write and send out the newsletter. These positions are traditionally held by senior students who have been in VIM for much of their college experience and have had a leadership position within the magazine before. One could consider the directors of the Marketing team and the assistant to the Editors-In-Chief as those with “supporting roles.” Lastly, the general members, team members, and team directors make up the rest of the cast as the audience/readers of the newsletter. To define the actions of the newsletter, they are created to give pertinent information and remind members to stay involved. Additionally, they intend to generate excitement within the community by providing the members events to look forward

to. Through analyzing the newsletter through the Fantasy-Theme method, one can envision how VIM members share a commitment on staying up-to-date on collaboration.

### ***Conclusion***

After completing several methods of rhetorical analysis, it is evident to me that a stronger analysis occurs when one chooses various analysis methods as well as multiple artifacts. As seen in my use of the Cluster method, an artifact develops deeper criticism and insight when there is a similar artifact nearby to reinforce and support the analysis previously made. Later on, one can bolster their argument by using other methods to stress certain takeaways. For VIM Magazine specifically, the analysis of the artifacts built the case that VIM members are united in their efforts to prepare themselves for the fashion industry. By forming a credible organization, they not only showcase their skill, but also receive experience that translates to the real-world. As always; the more data collected, the stronger the argument.

## References

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