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AP English Language & Composition OL v4 A

Rachel Carson's central argument in this excerpt from *Silent Spring* is that using poison to kill birds, presumably damaging crops, is not only inhumane but dangerous. To construct her argument, Carson uses a wide variety of rhetorical strategies to create ethical, emotional, and logical appeals. Carson uses rhetorical questions, imagery, allusions, and emotionally stimulating diction in order to construct her argument.

Specifically, Carson utilizes imagery to paint scenes of the destruction and devastation that the pesticides cause, in hopes that it evokes a sense of anger in the reader. She visually describes the aftermath of dumping pesticides on bird populations when she says there were, "pitiful heaps of many-hued feathers." This gruesome depiction of the aftermath of using chemicals on bird populations was meant to appeal ethically to the reader, who undoubtedly would be distraught at such a sight. In addition to this, Carson added that the chemicals did not discriminate and that "rabbits or raccoons or opossums" would likely also face the same fate. By visually telling the reader of the destruction caused by these chemicals on birds and wildlife alike, Carson aims to appeal ethically and emotionally to the reader's humanity.

Additionally, Carson alludes to examples of destruction already caused by these chemicals. Her allusion to the time, "in... orchards sprayed with this same parathion, workers handling 35 foliage that had been treated a month earlier collapsed," is a logical appeal with the goal of showing the reader real evidence of the destruction these chemicals have already had. These allusions appeal ethically and logically to the reader by showing real evidence of the negative health effects these chemicals have on humans as well as wildlife.

Lastly, Carson uses rhetorical questioning to get the reader to delve deeper and truly question the ethics and precedent of using these chemicals widely. She asks questions like, "Who has made the decision that sets in motion these chains of poisonings?" and "Who has the right to decide...?" In asking these rhetorical questions, Carson is trying to appeal to the reader logically and emotionally, getting the reader to call into question their own stance on the matter. In addition to these rhetorical questions, Carson uses emotionally stimulating diction to create emotional appeals. Her choice to use words such as "universal killer" or "lethal film" is another attempt to appeal to the reader's emotions by shocking them with harsh, emotionally stimulating diction.

Overall, Rachel Carson uses rhetorical strategies like rhetorical questions, imagery, allusions, and a persuasive tone to create ethical, emotional, and logical appeals; this is aimed at constructing her argument that farmers need to find other solutions to birds damaging their crops

because the chemicals are too unethical and damaging. Carson's use of rhetorical strategies in constructing her central argument was absolutely crucial in convincing the reader of her argument.