

## "Question 2" Rhetorical Analysis

Suggested time — 40 minutes

(This question counts as one-third of the total essay section score.)

Michel de Montaigne, a French essayist whose *Essais* first appeared in 1580, often examined the customs of his own society by comparing them with those of other cultures. (His essays have influenced writers and thinkers for centuries, including William Shakespeare.) In the following excerpt from "Of Cannibals," Montaigne describes an Indigenous people of the Americas and then reflects on what Europeans call "barbarous." Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay that analyzes the rhetorical choices Montaigne makes to develop his argument. In your response, you may wish to consider such features as comparison, definition, cataloging, contrast, and shifts in tone or perspective.

In your response you should do the following:

- Respond to the prompt with a thesis that analyzes the writer's rhetorical choices.
- Select and use evidence to support your line of reasoning.
- Explain how the evidence supports your line of reasoning.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the rhetorical situation.
- Use appropriate grammar and punctuation in communicating your argument.

It is a nation . . . that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters, no intelligence of numbers, no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, come, or mettle. The very words that import [ lying, falsehood, reason, dissimulations, covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. . . . Furthermore, they live in a country of so exceeding pleasant and temperate situation that, as my testimonies have told me, it is verie rare to see a sicke body amongst them. . . . Their buildings are very long, and able to containe two or three hundred soules, covered with barks of great trees, fastned in the ground at one end, enterlaced and joyned close together by the tops, after the manner of some of our Granges, the covering whereof hangs downe to the ground and steadeth them as a flancke. They have a kinde of wood so hard that, ryving and cleaving the same, they make blades, swords, and grid-irons to broile their meat with. Their beds are of a kind of cotton cloth fastned to the house-roofe, as our ship-cabbanes: everie one hath his severall cowch; for the women lie from their husbands. They rise with the Sunne, and feed for all day as soon as they are up: and make no more meales after that. . . . Their drinke is made of a certaine root, and of the colour of our Claret wines: which lasteth but two or three daies; they drinke it warme: It hath somewhat a sharpe taste, wholesome for the stomack, nothing heady, but laxative for such as are not used unto it, yet verie pleasing to such as are accustomed unto it. In stead of bread they use a certain white composition, like unto Corianders confected. I have eaten some, the taste whereof is somewhat sweet and wallowish.

They spend the whole day in dancing. Their young men goe a hunting after wilde beasts with bowes and arrowes. Their women busie themselves therewith' st with warming of their drinke, which is their chiefest office. Some of their old men, on the morning before they goe to eating, preach in common to all the household, walking from one end of the house to the other, repeating one self-same sentence many times till he have ended his tume (for their buildings are a hundred paces in length), he commends but two things unto his audiorie: First, valour against their enemies, then lovingnesse unto their wives. . . .

They warre against the nations that lie beyond their mountaines, to which they go naked, having no other weapons than bowes or wooden swords sharpe at one end, as our broaches are. It is an admirable thing to see the constant resolution of their combats, which never end but by effusion of bloud and murder: for they know not what feare or rowts are. Every Victor brings home the head of the enemie he hath slaine as a Trophy of his victorie, and fastneth the same at the entrance of his dwelling place. After they have long time used and entreated their prisoners well, and with all commodities they can devise, he that is Master of them; sommoning a great assembly of his acquaintance; tieth a corde to one of the prisoners armes, by the end whereof he holds him fast, with some distance from him, for feare he might offend him, and giveth the other arme bound in like manner, to the dearest friend he hath, and both in the presence of all the assembly kill him with swords: which done, they roast, and then eat him in common, and send some slices of him to such of their friends as are absent. It is not, as some imagine, to nourish themselves with it . . . but to represent an extreme, and inexpiable revenge. . . . I am not sorie we note the barbarous horror of such an action, but grieved, that prying so narrowly into their faults we are so blinded in ours. I thinke there is more barbarisme in eating men alive, than to feed on them being dead; to mangle by tortures and torments a body full of lively sense, to roast him in peeces, to make dogges and swine to gnaw and teare him in mammockes (as wee have not only read, but seene very lately, yea, and in our owne memorie, not amongst ancient enemies, but our neighbours and fellow-citizens; and which is worse, under pretence of pietie and religion) than to roast and eat him after he is dead.

I am grieved, that we are so blinded in our faults.