

### **EXAMPLE of a SOAPStone Analysis:**

“America’s Good Food Fight,” by Nicolette Hahn Niman, Los Angeles Times, Op-Ed pages, Sunday, Jan. 9, 2011

#### Speaker:

Nicolette Hahn Niman, author. She is a rancher in Bolinas, Calif., and the author of *Righteous Porkchop: Finding a Life and Good Food Beyond Factory Farms*. She wants a broad audience for her message, so she wrote a book and submitted this to the LA Times (not a local paper). She is a wife, mother, member of a diverse family, generally open-minded (entertains mixed family), presents a positive, balanced view.

#### Occasion:

Family was discussing topic during holiday dinner, and members have varied opinions. Topics of sustainable farming and poor economy have been in news lately.

#### Audience:

Readers of LA Times Op-Ed pages – generally middle to upper classes, Southern California residents and visitors, college-educated (or well educated), interested in current events and opinions.

#### Purpose:

To show the reader that sustainable farming can produce plentiful food for the world without damaging the environment. To convince reader that agribusiness carries large, long-term and hidden costs, including cost of government subsidies, ecological expense of transporting the foods, loss of family farms, increased use of chemicals (long-term resistance and health problems), and negative impact on dumping subsidized goods on the economies of third-world countries (destruction of their farming system). She wants people to “push for public policies that will help bring good, wholesome food” to everyone, not through huge agribusiness companies.

#### Subject:

Sustainable farming seems expensive to the consumer, and agribusiness provides what appears to be cheaper food everyone can afford. Agribusiness has unseen costs that will negatively impact people and the environment long term. Government policies favor big agriculture, which author says must change.

#### Tone:

She starts out friendly, family-oriented, describing her holiday dinner. She shows how open-minded she is in describing a very mixed family. She provides the counter argument first, summarizes it, and then provides evidence why it is not accurate. She remains friendly, caring, balanced, rational, providing quotations from other experts to bolster her argument. She ends with positive reminder of family. Niman is quietly passionate and positive, but impatient about progress.

Ms. Lockwood, 01/11

**S.O.A.P.S.Tone** - Analyzing point of view (or **S.O.A.P.S.**)

Speaker: Is there someone identified as the speaker? Can you make some assumptions about this person? What class does the author come from? What political bias can be inferred? What gender? Is the speaker reliable?

Occasion: What may have prompted the author to write this piece? What event led to its publication or development?

Audience: Does the speaker identify an audience? What assumptions can you make about the audience? Is it a mixed group in terms of race, politics, gender, social class, relation, etc.? Who was the document created for? Does the speaker use language that is specific for a unique audience? Does the speaker evoke Nation? Liberty? God? History? Hell? Does the speaker allude to any particular time in history, such as ancient times? The industrial Revolution? World Wars? etc.

Purpose: What is the speaker's purpose? In what ways does the author convey this message? What seems to be the emotional state of the speaker? How is the speaker trying to spark a reaction in the audience? How is this document supposed to make you feel?

Subject: What is the subject of the piece? How do you know this? How has the subject been selected and presented by the writer?

Tone: What is the author's attitude toward the subject? How is the writer's attitude revealed? What words or phrases show the speaker's tone?