(5) Purpose - the reasoning of an act; looking into the intent

The second step in pantadic analysis deals with ratios. A ratio, in this situation, is a pairing of two elements in the pentad in an attempt to find the dominant element. For example, the act element can be compared to the scene element. By finding the dominant element you can see what is most important about the artifact. In this case, we are looking to reveal the motives that would encourage someone to explore the catalog further. The motive shows how the source is attempting to show a common bond between the source and receivers. If a receiver can identify with the source, the receiver is more likely to be persuaded.

Rhetorical Analysis

The photograph on the cover will be the focus of much of my analysis. The act being portrayed in the photograph is camping. It appears that the couple is either setting up their sleeping bags to prepare for rest, or rolling up their sleeping bags to continue a journey. The couple seems very focused on their actions. The male has somewhat of a smirk on his face giving the impression that what he is doing is both necessary and easy. The female gives the impression of being eager to finish the chore.

The scene appears to take place during the spring or late summer. The clothes worn by the people in the photograph look feasible for a temperature of about fifty to sixty degrees. The grass appears to be somewhat dry and yellowish in color. The Evergreen trees in the background are tall and a vibrant pine green. The body of water appears to be a small lake or maybe a stream or river; dark blue in color and it appears calm. The mountains are even farther in the distance than the water and trees. They are somewhat
blurred but suggest a snow covering as the tops are white and the bottoms are dark. The sky is a very pale blue, even white in parts.

The *agents* in this situation would be the people in the picture. They are the representatives of what lies within the catalog. Their actions, impressions, and overall appearance paint an important picture of what might interest a potential customer of L. L. Bean to look into the catalog further. A potential customer would be more likely to investigate further if a positive impression is made.

The actual catalog cover is the instrument used to promote sales, or the *agency*. The cover’s sleek, eye-catching design is used to attract potential customers. This attraction is done through portraying an appealing situation. When someone views this cover they might think how nice it would be to take a break from everyday life, go to somewhere where the landscape is breathtaking, the air is clean, and camp with someone they are involved with.

The purpose of the cover is to get people to open the catalog. If the cover puts a person in the right “mood” he/she might look into the content of the catalog and possibly buy a product. The sale of a product is the ultimate goal, but getting someone to look at the inner pages of the catalog is the first step towards that goal.

In this analysis I am trying to find out what makes a potential customer pick the catalog up, look at its contents, and purchase an item. To find this out we must see what attracts that customer most by using ratios. The act and the scene are the most dominant elements of the catalog. The act/scene ratio reveals the source’s motive. In this situation, the act is camping brought together with the mountainous scene. The act of camping,
getting away from everyday life, and exploring the world is attractive to most people. While showing the act of camping it is obvious that with the right clothing and equipment, camping is made easier and more enjoyable. The setting is important to this situation because it supports the act. Without a nice setting the idea of camping would not be that appealing. For example, there is not much to do on a camping trip in a rainstorm. Rain often makes mud, takes the place of sunshine and nice weather, and limits several camping related activities. If a rainy scene was portrayed, the act of camping would not seem as inviting. L. L. Bean is attempting to build a common bond with the receiver (potential customer) through a common experience; camping and vacationing (most people have gone on outdoor trips or vacations, so they can identify through their own experience).

**Conclusion**

The motive found in this analysis was that people can relate to the act of camping and the inviting outdoor scene; both illustrated on the cover of the catalog. This motive is the rhetorical strategy L. L. Bean uses to encourage a potential customer to look into the catalog. An individual’s relating to the act and scene motivates them to explore the catalog further.

The act/scene ratio used by the L. L. Bean catalog is successful in getting people to open the catalog. People can relate to the photograph on the cover of the catalog by envisioning themselves performing the act of camping in the setting illustrated. This immediate attraction to the cover motivates people to explore the catalog further. The
positive image depicted on the cover leads people to identify L. L. Bean (printed on the cover) with the attractive notion of camping, getting away from everyday life, and enjoying the outdoors.

The success of L. L. Bean catalogs can be shown through some positive sales statistics. L. L. Bean sells more than 16,000 outdoor products through catalogs, a downtown Freeport retail store, and eight stores in Japan. The Freeport flagship store is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Maine, receiving more than 3.5 million visitors a year. The company also has nine factory outlet stores: six in New England, one in Delaware, and two in Oregon. The company has grown into one of the world's leading international mail-order suppliers, with sales over $1 billion a year. Customers number more than 4.5 million and place orders from all over the world, including Japan, Canada and Europe. The phone representatives, located here in Maine, take as many as 180,000 orders every day (L. L. Bean Homepage, 1999).

Although L. L. Bean has several repeat customers, their growth in sales and customer base indicates that they are entertaining new customers as well. One of the primary means of attracting new customers is through advertising. L. L. Bean uses their catalogs as direct advertisement. They are true in showing what they have and why you should purchase something.

The L. L. Bean Outdoors Spring Camping 1999 Catalog deals with three concepts. First, the catalog encourages people to go on a camping trip or outdoor vacation. Second, the catalog suggests that to get the most out of a trip or vacation, you must have the appropriate camping supplies and apparel. Third, the L. L. Bean catalog
states that they can supply you with the finest in outdoor camping supplies and apparel.

Given these three concepts, a person would be persuaded to purchase an item from the catalog.
References


http://www.llbean.com/