

### *Author's Notes*

Writing 220 is the gateway course to a writing minor at Michigan, and entering this course I was excited to explore the same goals I had in mind when I applied for the minor. First, I wanted to improve my writing skills specifically in communicating more concisely and clearly. Second, I desired to improve my rhetoric and conscious ability to appeal to emotion, credibility, and logic. With these goals in mind, I ultimately decided upon several genres to analyze throughout this past winter semester that both interested me as well as encapsulated my goals to work on within them.

My first experiment through the semester was an opinion column, those commonly found in the opinion section of newspapers and typically written by sources unaffiliated with the newspaper. The reason this experiment stood out to me was the flexibility to discuss a diverse number of subjects without the constraint in english classes of following a chosen prompt to write about. In my case, I wanted to dive deeper into the topic of gaining a passion to learn and what that would look like. Although I had this initial goal in mind of having more freedom of topic, what I discovered as I read various opinion columns were several different elements to this genre. For one, many of the columns were direct to the point and the strongest suite was appealing to emotions. I analyzed a doctor's column about what it's like when a patient says they want to die. I analyzed a writer's perspective of what it was like to be a journalist in China with the government controlling the media and who was hiding certain injustice. I analyzed a writer's findings of what allows Costco's chicken to be sold at such a low price. As mentioned, each of these articles strongly capitalize upon an appeal to credibility and trust, but mostly work towards evoking certain emotions within the audience such as anger from the China injustices, sadness in the responses of doctor's patients who lose the will to live, or disgust as in Costco's chicken column. This analysis connects to the framework of considering audience focused as opposed to author focused pieces.

Moving onto my second experiment, I chose to explore the short animation genre. This genre has many similar focuses to the opinion column genre and one commonality I found apparent was again the strong appeal to emotions. Short animations have always held a special place in my heart. There is something about them which I find beautiful and are able to touch upon a variety of human emotions and themes. At its core, the reason I wanted to explore short animations was due to their storytelling nature. From my initial goals of the semester, rhetoric connected with storytelling and I wanted to explore not only what makes an effective story, but also how to tell an effective story. My motivation for this desire came from Pixar animations such as *Up* and *Coco* which have spoken to me in different stages of life. While researching storytelling and short animations, I came across many intriguing formulas for stories and ideas. For one, I explored how Pixar itself goes about the storytelling process as well as where their inspirations are drawn from. However, overall by analyzing different short animations I

gained a much greater appreciation for all the conscious author choices and thoughts involved within the creation of the storyline, the lighting and colors, as well as the music. One aspect which I did analyze was watching each short animation once without music and once with only the music and seeing how each sensory dimension added onto the piece. What resulted from that experiment was a deep appreciation for seeing what goes on in every frame of the shot and how using the opportunity to combine multiple senses together into a multimodal piece yielded greater results . Ultimately, through analyzing short animations I have gained more insight into how effective storytelling arises with a story that adds to the human experience.

For my last experiment, I chose the podcast genre. Podcasting was something I was unfamiliar with since I usually don't listen to podcasts, but since I've been listening to audiobooks more during the COVID pandemic, I thought it would be interesting to give them a shot. Podcasting interested me because of its commonality to an interview. Recently I was considering several questions of how to be a better interviewer as well as how to facilitate a conversation and make the interviewee feel comfortable in the situation. These driving motivations led me to choose three different podcasts. I chose two podcasts hosted by comedians Conan O'Brien and Marc Maron who interviewed Will Ferrell and Larry King respectively and for my last podcast I chose the TED Interview with Chris Anderson as host and Susan Cain who discussed the mind of an introvert. As I listened to each podcast, I was curious to observe what made certain podcasts effective as well as what pieces of advice I could pick out when going about my own interviews and conversations in everyday life. What I found was a common theme that was stated by Larry King. As Larry King put it, curiosity is something that he can't teach, but is something that makes the difference in an interviewer. Another aspect of podcasts that stood out was the appeal to credibility to the interviewee or the interviewer which occurred almost naturally in each podcast conversation.

As a result, by analyzing each one of these genres, I gathered different elements and gained more appreciation for what author choices are made during the creative process. Ultimately though, for my final experiment I chose to fully realize my experiment through the opinion column genre since I concluded that the opinion column would not only allow me to practice gaining more intentional usage of certain rhetorical strategies, but it would also enable me to best write about a topic that I intrinsically cared about which is growing a passion to learn. Through reading this piece, I hope to invite new thoughts to the reader and add a new perspective on the idea of learning and school. I hope it sparks new thoughts and I hope you enjoy the piece.