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My theory of writing

Every once in a while, a movie gets ingrained into my brain, one being *Copenhagen*. Written and directed by Mark Raso, *Copenhagen* drifts between realism and alienation forcing the lead to mature albeit through some morally questionable events. Through some of my favorite movies, I learned how to improve my own writing. I mostly wanted to emulate the same feelings I felt when I first watched it. I began picking apart the dialogue in some of my favorite films because it was something that taught me how to become more open and comfortable with my writing. Being confident in my writing is something I've always had trouble with; for me, starting any paper whether it is academic or non-academic paper is almost impossible to start, let alone finish. I go through a certain process where I overanalyze everything and try to form my thoughts into words that end up leaving my mind blank. My relationship with writing never felt genuine because it almost always felt like a part of myself was missing from everything I wrote, especially in my personal writing. I constantly felt like I was under pressure to fulfill everyone's expectations of what my writing should be.

The pressure to fulfill these standards had the complete opposite effect because instead of developing a love for it, I began to dread it and saw it as an obligation. My attitude towards writing was quite negative; I wanted my writing to be the best it could be, nevertheless, it just was never enough. It didn't matter how many books I read or how many essays I wrote I was

never truly satisfied with any of my writing, at most I found them passable. I had this rigid understanding of what ‘good’ writing was. The only way to write productively meant to follow a strict set of guidelines and use a certain language, so this idea of freedom through writing wasn’t something I was convinced of. My academic writing always followed the same format which was taught throughout my previous English courses which made writing monotonous and unenjoyable, yet the stress to perform well still permeated. In my personal writing, screenwriting is a way to practice my skills and challenge myself, which makes it simpler to write and develop any piece of work, screenwriting allows me to explore any corners of my mind without placing any limits or boundaries. It gives me so much more freedom to explore different strategies and is a way for me to try to create three-dimensional characters along with an intricate storyline. Most importantly, I became more relaxed and did not feel the constant clouds of pressure hanging over my head because I knew that these personal pieces were for my enjoyment. I found it difficult to introduce any assignment whether it is academic or not, but throughout this semester, I’ve developed new strategies and things to keep in mind when writing which has made writing those first words less stress-inducing.

Prior to coming into this semester, I was aware of some rhetorical terms, but I rarely used them in my writing. Whether it was an academic or personal piece, I mainly focused on following the guidelines that were provided to me in order to make sure my writing fulfilled all the requirements. However, I have learned to develop my own set of guidelines that would help to me and make my writing process simpler. Elements such as audience, language, and genre were not essentials in my writing, which weakened my work at times. It wasn’t until this semester that I really began incorporating them into my work, both in the course and outside the course. The audience became a major component of my writing because it determined what

language and tone I would use throughout my composition. In a non-academic setting I'm allowed to express myself however I desire and have the freedom to take my writing in any direction I want. While the latter is more restrictive in regard to who my audience is, what my purpose is, and what language I can utilize; it is still a necessary part of becoming an efficient writer. I viewed writing as an opportunity to challenge myself and what I already knew—a chance to develop new skills and make my writing process less cumbersome. Before this course, I had trouble adapting to new forms of writing, making it almost impossible to begin let alone finish any assignments. One issue I had trouble with was structuring my ideas; I thought of each new assignment as an opportunity to become more comfortable with my strengths and improve my weaknesses. Although I was familiar with some rhetorical concepts, I still struggled using them efficiently in both styles of writing. Rhetorical concepts like audience, language, medium, and most importantly, genre were new to me. The introduction of each assignment allowed me to gradually understand how to apply each rhetorical concept in my academic papers which soon enough transpired into my personal writing.

Beginning with the source-based essay proved less challenging than the other assignments as it was meant to establish an understanding of how to integrate the rhetorical terms into my writing. Beside the source-based essay, the composition in two genres required more emphasis on the audience and genre as it played a large factor in determining how I would communicate my points to the reader. Although the composition in two genres allowed for more freedom choosing the genres, I felt slightly lost in terms of how to format and structure my articles, specifically my opinion article. This assignment was one of the most significant assignments to me as a writer because I learned how vital knowing who your audience is. Before this course, I generally disregarded the audience as I wasn't targeting anyone else besides my

English teacher. However, this assignment gave me an opportunity to become familiar with that genre and ultimately make a connection between how genre influences the audience. In my inquiry-based research essay, synthesizing my information was slightly challenging which made some parts of my essay weaker. Because this genre was new to me, I wanted to find an efficient way of organizing my research that would appeal to my audience and provide an in-depth look into the issue. Each assignment led me to adapt to new genres and improve my comprehension of how using the rhetorical terms would improve my skills as a writer.

My writing has become much more well-founded on how I convey information to my audience. Initially, I tended to neglect other aspects of the rhetorical situation in my writing which made my compositions idle. The major difference between my previous writing process and my current writing process is the use of the rhetorical terms and my use of revision. Before I begin any paper, I create a loose outline that gives me a sense of what information I need to include and how I can apply the terms to my writing. For instance, in the first piece of the composition in two genres assignment, I focused my writing on one specific group of people which meant that based on the audience, I had to adapt the appropriate tone and language to assess what kind of information I should include and how I could make my writing transparent yet detailed. Initially, my understanding of the term medium meant the means in which something is conveyed, but I soon learned that is also important to consider how you choose to deliver your message. Depending on the genre of the writing, medium ranges from email to podcasts and can be distributed across various platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or blogs meaning that there are no limitations to how we can convey our messages it is simply a matter of choosing which is most successful in your work. In my inquiry-based research essay, I wanted to project a neutral tone, and an objective stance on my topic as the main purpose of the essay to

explore a research question from an impartial viewpoint and simply present statistics that would support my claims. This assignment differs from my personal writing regarding who I'm targeting and what attitude I want to be reflected in my composition. The tone I used throughout my research paper was objective because the purpose was to explain and inform not convince. The most influential example of how tone and language were used to communicate with the audience was the commentary/analysis video about the disturbing yet interesting incel community shown in class. Although, I had previously seen the video it was informative to have a breakdown of the strategies used and how the rhetorical terms are utilized throughout the video.

Gradually, I began integrating these terms into my own writing; for instance, in a scene, I wrote where two characters are discussing a certain political issue the tone is relaxed and humorous at first, but it quickly shifts to a hostile one ending in a broken friendship. Because the scene is written with enough detail for the reader to interpret each character's purpose and values, I want my audience to get a sense of what the underlying issue was without being explicit. I wanted my stance on the issue to appeal to both perspectives and my purpose was for my audience to actively analyze my writing and make assumptions of what each character is meant to represent.

My writing process has changed in regard to the steps I take before beginning any paper. At first, I viewed my personal writing as a linear process where all my thoughts were written without preparation in one sitting with minimal editing. However, my current writing process requires that I use different strategies to start my paper. Generally, I brainstorm ideas because it allows me to think freely and create as many new ideas as possible. Since this part is in the pre-writing phase this is important as it sets up my paper for what my main focus should be. Another

part of my writing process is drafting; the main purpose of my first draft is to simply exist as my first draft—it does not have to be perfect. My first drafts serve as an idea or rough outline of what does and does not work making it easier to revise the final draft. Following my first draft, revising my paper several times is a larger process because there may be details missing or that are unnecessary that may even need to be edited after the final draft. These are the steps I constantly revisit throughout all my writing because it gives me the chance to ensure that my audience is targeted, my purpose is clear and that my goals for the composition are fulfilled. My writing process differs depending on what I'm writing, academic pieces require more preparation while my personal writing is centered more towards attention to detail, even so, the same process still goes where heavy revision applies to both circumstances. Feedback is also another major part of my writing process; in the course, we were able to peer-review our writing, which allowed me to improve my work based upon other people's suggestions. At times I overlooked grammatical issues or formatting issues the longer I spent on a piece. My syntax also required practice and my ideas might be repetitive which is why it is important to have others read and suggest improvements for my work.

This semester, my writing has changed because I have a better grasp of the rhetorical terms and how they should be used constructively. Like I established before, prior to this semester I only focused on elements such as tone and language, but with more exposure to the different assignments throughout the course and in my writing I learned how to adjust my writing to the situation making my writing stronger. I believe writing is a great form of expression that allows us to say things we normally wouldn't because it is an opportunity to reflect our thoughts and experiences into words. Nevertheless, my struggle with is introducing my pieces, whether it is a short two-page scene or a ten-page research paper there are still

moments where I question my writing, but with the new strategies I've acquired from this course, my writing process has improved and made me realize how important setting a guideline is for myself and my writing. Most importantly, I realized that writing itself is a process and it can be challenging even intimidating, but with the appropriate elements my confidence in my writing improved as well.