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Project 2 Reflection

Prior to this project, my understanding of writing was need based. I believed that the purpose of a piece of writing was to attain a certain goal determined by the author. Be that appealing to a certain audience, conveying a message, or sharing an argument, I believed that writing was defined by its purpose. After this project, my belief in this idea has been strengthened. Throughout project 2, I reevaluated my understanding of genres and how the term "rhetorical feature" is even defined. Before, my personal definition of genre was more in line with what is most commonly held, that it is a way of categorizing the contents of a piece of media. Now, my understanding aligns with that of categorizing containers. Horror movies, for example, are a sub-genre of movies, which in of itself is a genre of motion picture. By better understanding the genre, I also better understood the purpose in writing.

Genre choice can be used as a vehicle for purpose, which I explored during my undertaking of project 2. In project 2, I explored the concept of certain genres playing better with certain purposes. For this project, I examined personal blogs found on the internet. The purpose of a blog is to share information or experiences, but what makes a blog particularly effective in recording this information. Specifically, how do technology internet blogs are hosted to further its purpose? As opposed to purely text, the internet gives its writer a large spectrum of available tools to utilize and integrate into their work, in order to enhance their blog. I found the flexibility of this subgenre to apply well to the concepts project 2 led me to dive deeper into.

The internet offered (and still does if you pursue it hard enough) a means for users to express themselves personally to the whole world. The accessibility of shared information is

what makes the internet so important even in modern contexts. Personal blogs are a way for one to express their own experiences and feelings. This is the main purpose of personal blogs. These blogs express the writer's own thoughts and experiences. Anything written inside of a personal blog is written with the intention to be shared and viewed by a theoretically limitless number of people. This is a feeling regarding personal websites I have always felt, but project 2 allowed me to experiment with my own application of such concepts. Through this project, I learned to categorize the concepts I had considered but not named while writing in the past. I knew of terms like purpose and organization, but not terms like exigence or this alternative definition of genre I have been using since I began approaching project 2.

In the past, I would have considered what is exigence part of purpose. Project 2 provided new definitions for terms I had already known, and terms for those definitions I had held prior that were now termless. Exigence is what inspires purpose, whilst purpose is the goal of said piece of writing. With this new perspective, I was able to separate reason from goal, which felt less restricting to me, as a writer. From this, my greatest challenge in this project arose, defining my purpose. My exigence was simple; I made a website because I wanted to. Although I had a sense for what my purpose was, I did not have a concrete definition. I knew the ultimate goal was to express myself, but putting that feeling into words was my greatest difficulty. As a result, however, I can now more cognisantly think about the reasoning behind my rhetorical choices when writing.

Project 2 Imitation

<https://english101-burner.neocities.org/>

Project 2 Analysis

In the advent of social media, the spirit of the internet, its purest essence, has gotten far more corporate. In the past, the average user of the internet had to learn how to “surf the web”. While businesses were present, the nature of the internet did not bend to the will of solely companies, but that of its users. In the past, most individuals seeking to have some sort of presence on the internet had to resort to one thing. The creation of their own personal website. These personal websites offered an at the time new form of self expression, allowing users to represent themselves however they wish. Different users created websites to fulfil their own creative or personal needs, leading to the creation of many subgenres of personal websites. The subgenre I am choosing to analyze is personal blogging.

The tone in which these blogs are often is reflected by its writer. Being a more personalized genre, the syntax and linguistic choices reflect the thoughts and feelings of its writer. As a result, the tone of personalized blogs lean informal, with conventions only being followed if deemed necessary by its author. For example, the text I am choosing to analyze, *random site portals*, accessed at ribo.zone/blog/random-site-portals, lacks capitalization. As the blog post states in its introduction, “many people, myself included, have fond memories of finding new websites through stumbleupon, a now-defunct site which featured a “stumble” button that would redirect you to a semi-random website” (ribo.zone). The writer of the post found capitalization to not fit the “vibe” they were going for, so capitalization was omitted. As I had stated prior, the text’s purpose is to share personal experience. The topic of this blog post is titular, that being of “random site portals”.

Being a personal post, it follows some semblance of narrative, as the author recounts their experience with random site portals, and how they have failed to find an alternative website to

replace the old promise of “...being whisked away to somewhere new and interesting is a compelling one!” (ribo.zone), which was lost when *stumbleupon* was rendered defunct. This narrative means of organization is prevalent in the genre of personal blogs, as personal experience is often told in the form of anecdotes. Narrative is an effective way to express thoughts and feelings in a way that is not forced, and is an effective way to express yourself. Evidence, as a result of this structure, is also mostly anecdotal. There is no way to cite your own feelings, so blogs often speak from experience rather than scholarly sources. Although *random site portals* refers to or links other sites or texts, not one citation exists. Personal blogs are a low stakes means of expression, so they are not placed under the same scrutiny as those that are more formal in nature.

Syntax is equally as informal as the source of evidence in these blog posts, as similar to tone, syntax is adapted to suit the needs of the writer’s personal expression. Any formal standard for writing a text is disregarded, as the mindset shifts to “what conveys my thoughts the best?”. When it comes to the audience, personal blogs are put into an interesting situation. There is no explicit need for advertisement, nor specific type of person the blog caters to first. Personal blogs are written by the author, for the author, to be enjoyed by those who are like-minded and/or share similar interests. However, this does not mean there is no sense of connection between reader and writer.

Many blog sites have direct contact information, or a comments section. Often, groups of websites with similar interests will align themselves with each other, and link themselves to each other in succession. This leads to the creation of “webrings”, as they are called. I believe this most adequately shows what the audience of personal blogs end up being. Like-minded people who are just as passionate as the writer is about certain subjects. This can be seen in *random site*

portals, where the author writes “here's the [random redirect php script](#) i use, and here's a [javascript option](#) if that's more your style. make your own! my site doesn't replace the ones i mentioned, and yours won't replace mine. there's room for all of us to make our own niche portal into the world wide web” (ribo.zone). The author, with fair certainty, assumes that the reader is likely the type of person to share their interest in random site portals, to the point where they share what code they used, sharing their experience by making it accessible to those who feel similar.

In my imitation, I aimed to emulate the purpose of sharing my own feelings to an audience of people who might be inclined to listen, as did the blog post on ribo.zone. For my imitation, I made a mock “let's play” like post, where I provided commentary and screenshots regarding the popular indie game *UNDERTALE*. I wrote about my own feelings regarding the game, any tips that aren't inherently obvious, a guide for certain sections, and my own insight as someone who is a passionate fan of this game. In a sense, I adapted the essence of the purpose of the original work. However, I changed the topic in which I chose to share. Rather than sharing my thoughts and experiences regarding random site portals, I shifted my topic to *UNDERTALE*. The reason behind this is simple, as I am deeply passionate about this game. I chose to talk about and share my experiences with *UNDERTALE* because this game talked to me personally as random site portals spoke to the maintainer of ribo.zone. This can be seen when comparing their conclusion with mine. As quoted prior, “make your own! my site doesn't replace the ones i mentioned, and yours won't replace mine. there's room for all of us to make our own niche portal into the world wide web” (ribo.zone). My conclusion is similar in structure, being “i hope you all enjoyed my playthrough, and i hope you all pick up the game, if you havent. on sale, it gets pretty cheap. hope that i sold you on this game by now” (Zamora). Both implore the reader to

explore further if they like what the topic of the post is, encouraging them to dig deeper into their potential passions. A difference in my adaptation lies within evidence. Instead of relying solely upon anecdotes, due to imitating a video game, I was able to provide more evidence while aligning myself with my intended subgenre. I included over 30 screenshots, cataloguing my experience through (re)playing *UNDERTALE*. However, I did not stop myself from making unsubstantiated claims. I drew from my own personal experience and knowledge as someone who has been a fan of this game since 2019. My organization is another feature I modified when I imitated this text. Although both texts are anecdotal, mine also teetered into being instructional. Instead of just talking about my subject of interest, I guided the reader through each section, with screenshots to represent what I was discussing. I made these changes so I could convey my thoughts regarding *UNDERTALE* in the best way possible, considering its medium. For ribo.zone's blog post, the poster spoke of "[stumbleupon](#)", a now-defunct site which featured a "stumble" button that would redirect you to a semi-random website" (ribo.zone). The website of focus is defunct, whilst my game of focus is a still existing piece of media. For that reason, I was able to gather and provide more evidence, which created a greater reliance on photos.

When I wrote my imitation, I decided to keep a tone similar to the original work. An example of the tone in *random site portals* is "i do find value in these sites, but ultimately, i'm dissatisfied. instead of submitting all my favorite pages to each site in a futile attempt to mold them into something more suited to my personal taste... i decided to make my own portal, [spore dispersal!](#)" (ribo.zone). This text is informal and passionate, assuming you're already along for the ride if you are reading, whilst also not taking itself too seriously. I aimed to recreate this in my imitation, with lines such as I wrote regarding an item entitled the "abandoned quiche", "healing 34 hp, its a pretty decent heal at this part of the game. i wouldnt hold onto it for the

whole game though, maybe it was abandoned for a reason???? that feels messed up, sorry quiche!!!!” (Zamora). Although I exaggerated myself more than ribo.zone, I chose to write what I had felt in the moment, choosing to ignore how corny or over the top I was being. I chose to revel in however silly and nonsensical I wanted to be, recreating the informality seen in the original text. The core purpose of personal blogs are to express oneself unabashedly, serving your own thoughts and feelings over any expected norm or formal framework. I exaggerated my tone because it suited how I felt in the moment, which suits the revised purpose of this imitation. My syntax is something I also changed. I made my syntax more informal, choosing not to hold back from overusing punctuation as a means of emphasis, as seen in the last quote from my imitation. The purpose of this change was similar to the last, as I felt it suited me better. This, too, is a personal piece of writing, standing between video game walkthrough and mini-diary, and I wanted to reflect that in my tone. Lastly, my audience shifted too, to people who would be interested in what experiences I had to share, rather than those of ribo.zone. This text was created with an audience of myself in mind, and for those who might enjoy my form of self expression. I wrote for myself and a community of like-minded people, similar to ribo.zone’s audience.. Our audiences might overlap (as I found *random site portals* very interesting), but they are different.

Many of the changes in the rhetorical features of my imitation can be attributed to the same processes being applied to a different author, as I also aimed to share my own thoughts and feelings. I believe I succeeded in retaining the personal aspect found in personal blogs, which is what gives personal blogs their own appeal. I did not find myself being restrained by this adaptation, as both rhetorical situations are very free-flowing and accommodating. This was reflected in this text, which represented the mindset I put myself in when wanting to share my own experiences.

Although this imitation was created in response to the undertaking of project 2, I used it as a vehicle to express my own wants, which is its purpose. Personal blogs, and personal websites as a whole are self fulfilling, to be viewed by an audience of people who are as equally willing to partake in expressing themselves shamelessly. In my blog, I talked about a topic passionately, akin to ribo.zone. The difference in purpose and in audience was caused by a difference in author. Personal websites are inherently personal, and each individual person is intrinsically different. By expressing yourself passionately, what makes you different becomes stronger and stronger. While both of our blogs started very similarly in exigence (i.e giving our thoughts), as one develops their own unique sense of tone and vocabulary and purpose, the differences in rhetorical situation become apparent.

Works Cited

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