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ENG 110: Writing and Rhetoric

Professor Jesse Rice-Evans

Assignment #2- Rhetorical Analysis

Cover Letter

My audience for this assignment are movie fanatics, specifically shrek lovers and my classmates/professor Jesse. I tailored my language and rhetorical choices to appeal to them by using quotes from the film and explained its connection to the rhetorical strategies pathos, ethos and logos. I tried to be extremely clear and straightforward in my reasoning so that you (the reader) can understand and agree with my writing. I specifically chose examples that I could provide links to so that you can visually follow along. I also chose the examples that I thought were the strongest and the funniest so I can keep you entertained and wanting to read more. I referred to some of Shreks potty humor in order to do this.

Writing this assignment has given me a deeper dive into the film. Through my search to find evidence for my statements and analyzing them for rhetorical strategies, I realized that a lot of my favorite scenes had deeper purpose than to just “be funny”. I completely underestimated the writers of Shrek. Prior to this assignment, I thought it was just another funny children's movie with occasional adult jokes. After analyzing the film, I can see that the actions and conversations between the characters serve a greater purpose than making people laugh. The film's language and literacy has furthered my knowledge on how to appeal to my audience using simple analogies. It has also taught me that creating relatability between my writing and my reader can be essential to their understanding of my words.

The concept/terms that have most impacted my learning and writing practices is rhetoric, audience, and purpose. The rhetoric used in the film has shown me that humor can be used to appeal to my audience and keep them hooked onto my writing. The author/producer writing for their intended audience has taught me that referring to a specific demographic will strengthen my writing practices by making it easier to find and use the correct rhetoric that will appeal to them. Lastly, I have learnt that the details I provide in my writing have to contribute to my purpose. Otherwise, I will have miscellaneous information and it will end up confusing my audience.

Assignment #2 : Shrek

Shrek is an animated comedy film about a fairy-tale land with ogres, creatures, swamps and magical kingdoms. The ogre, Shrek goes on a quest to reclaim his swamp and rescue Fiona, the kingdom's princess. Along this journey, Shrek and Fiona end up falling in love and go against the traditional fairy-tale story line. This film uses rhetorical strategies such as Pathos, logos and ethos to appeal to the audience's conscience.

In Shrek, language devices like humor are used to appeal to the audience's pathos. Throughout the film, the characters use a variety of jokes, puns, and other comedic devices to create a lighthearted and humorous atmosphere. For example, Donkey says “I hate it when you’ve got someone in your face, you try to give someone a hint and they won’t leave and then there’s that big awkward silence, you know?” which is ironic since that is exactly what he is doing to Shrek. The writer purposefully made Donkey's character dimwitted, optimistic, and talkative in order to contrast Shrek's stern personality. The purpose was to appeal to the audience's pathos by using a likable side-character that eventually brings out Shrek's sweet side. This makes the audience admire and root for Shrek's character as the story develops. The author/producer's intended audience is children and family. This influences the movie script by including light hearted jokes that can be enjoyed by all. The writer also uses language to make humor specifically targeting adults. In the scene where Donkey shows Shrek the Lord Farquaad's large castle Shrek says “ Do you think he's compensating for something” insinuating that he's compensating for something smaller (wink wink). The use of humor for audiences of all ages is interesting to me because watching this film as a child and as an adult, you see a lot of jokes that

fly over your head as a child.

The script writer appeals to the audience's logos by showing the audience that Shrek is aware of his unattractiveness and its effect on the behavior of the people around him. Shrek uses the comparison of ogres and onions by saying “Ogres have layers. Onions have layers”. This comparison is an example of logos because logically onions have many layers that we peel to reveal the inside. Similarly, ogres have layers that need to be peeled to see their true character under their unattractive exterior. This example explains to the author's intended audience: children, that people's true character goes beyond their appearance. Using simple comparisons is easier for children to comprehend and further their interest and understanding of the film. This rhetorical strategy is interesting to me because the message that the author is trying to convey is easy to understand, even though the scene was so short. I also love this analogy because it can be applied to many other subjects. People who are interested in computer science can relate this to the different layers of software. I can relate this to music and the different layers of understanding lyrics and overall meaning of a song.

Appeal to ethos is shown during conversations between Donkey and Shrek. Both of these characters are used to being by themselves. During their first interaction Shrek tells Donkey to celebrate his freedom with his own friends and Donkey replies that “he doesn't have any friends”. Shrek responds to this by roaring in his face to scare him off, a tactic that he thought would work because it probably has in the past. This shows ethos because the audience can trust that the duo has no friends because of how their personality is written. Shrek, being an ogre with an aggressive personality and Donkey, being an extremely talkative (almost annoying) side character, the audience can understand why they have been alone most of their life. This rhetorical strategy is interesting to me because Shrek and Donkeys conversations show the

contrast in their personalities yet they seem to share similarity in their solitude. The contrast between their characters and lines are also the reason as to why the two get along so well. They both balance each other out and keep the other in line. When we are introduced to Shrek's character, we see that he is just like us. He does everyday things like using the bathroom, brushing his teeth, farting, bathing, etc... The author purposely wrote Shrek into doing human-like actions in the script, to appeal to the audience's ethos by creating relatability between us and him. Creating this relatability makes the audience like and understand his character better. The genre of the film being a family friendly film influences the author to not only give Shrek mundane actions, but also farts and burps while he is getting ready. Farting and burping is relatable, but the primary intention was to make the children watching laugh.

The author/producer uses these rhetorical strategies, pathos, logos and ethos in order to captivate and engage their audience throughout the story. The author/writer used these strategies to develop the audience's perspective of Shrek's character from the initial judgment of being a monstrous creature into a heroic protagonist. The use of rhetoric in this film persuades the audience to empathize with Shrek and eventually root for him to get his happily ever after with Princess Fiona. At the end, the children and/or adults watching this film will learn the lesson to never judge a person by their looks through humor and the writer's rhetoric.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FtCTW2rVFM> (logos example- ogres are like onions)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGE_TWz-ZLw (ethos example- donkey has no friends)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em9lziI07M4> (ethos example shrek is just like us)