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Welcome to my first attempt at describing the “The theory of Writing”.

This assignment is going to be based on my understanding of the previous three articles I read (might’ve skimmed through). Charles Bazerman’s article on genres, Bitzer’s article on Rhetorical situations and Anzaldua’s article on audiences.

I am more of a pictorial person and I went about this assignment by drawing a Venn diagram for the three articles, so expect to see me explaining the likenesses between two and then finally among all three towards the end.

I’m going to begin with explaining how the genre and audience are related to each other. The purpose of any literature or discourse is to instill in its readers, viewers, and/or listeners with the message the author desires to convey and this message is communicated in its context only when the crucial relationship between the two are understood.

A school may send out flyers to bring to their students’ attention some important issue in the school, maybe a change in the final exam schedule or maybe a new organizations creation. A UN Conference meetings sole purpose is to discuss the world affairs and make the various countries representatives aware of the global threats. Genre plays a critical role when addressing an audience. And audience is very specific when picking out a genre. In brief they are co-dependent or as I would say “symbiotic”.

Here, the point I'm trying to make clear is that there may be an audience, but the audience may not be completely focused on listening to or understanding what is being said. To reach the most people and achieve the goal of any

writer which is to properly convey their message, they must know their genre and what kind of audience it attracts.

" With Chicanas from Nuevo Mexico or Arizona I will speak Chicano Spanish a Little, but often they don't understand what I'm saying. With most California Chicanas I speak entirely in English (unless I forget). " (Anzaldua) from Anzaldua's, we see that when the same speaker comes across different audiences, they have to change the way they want to convey their message to suit their audiences understanding ability. Or change the way they convey their messages to reach a bigger audience.

"In any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle: it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected. The exigence may or may not be perceived clearly by the rhetor or other persons in the situation; it may be strong or weak depending upon the clarity of their perception and the degree of their interest in it; it may be real or unreal depending on the facts of the case; it may be important or trivial; it may be such that discourse can completely remove it, or it may persist in spite of repeated modifications; it may be completely familiar — one of a type of exigencies occurring frequently in our experience — or it may be totally new, unique. When it is perceived and when it is strong and important, then it constrains the thought and action of the perceiver who may respond rhetorically if he is in a position to do so." (Bitzer)

This extract from Bitzers' article explains how understanding the context of the discourse depends on the audience and how the way the context is presented to them is very important to fulfilling the aim of the discourse.

For example, NASA could publish an entire magazine about the constellations in the North American sky or how the Area 51 raid is nothing more than an internet fad, not only will the astronomers and astrophysicists enjoy and understand the content of their publication, but someone that loves to star gaze, or is entirely amused by the Area 51 Raid would also be able to pick up this article and comprehend what is written. They were able to inform a larger community of more than just the physics enthusiasts on their findings and the news concerning their area of work. Their target audience for this specific piece could have been the internet savvy and alien obsessed along with their regular readers. To reach them, they added the respective articles to their genre and made it more approachable for them. Thus, getting their point across to the masses interested.

Now that I have related genre to audience there is a very noticeable need to explain how rhetorical situations and rhetors come to play in their resemblances.

Rhetorical situations, for a rhetorical situation to even exist, there need not be any rhetoric speech. But for something to be said in a rhetoric way, there must be a rhetorical situation. The existence of rhetorical discourse depends on the existence of a rhetorical situation. Genre and audience are codependent, but here, rhetoric speech or discourse is dependent on the rhetorical situation only. There can exist a rhetoric situation with nothing rhetoric being said. But for something rhetoric to be said, there must be a rhetoric situation.

“There are three constituents of any rhetorical situation: the first is the exigence; the second and third are elements of the complex, namely the audience to be constrained in decision and action, and the constraints which influence the rhetor”

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strong or weak depending upon the clarity of their perception and the degree of their interest in it; it may be real or unreal depending on the facts of the case; it may be important or trivial; it may be such that discourse can completely remove it, or it may persist in spite of repeated modifications; it may be completely familiar — one of a type of exigencies occurring frequently in our experience — or it may be totally new, unique. When it is perceived and when it is strong and important, it constrains the thought and action of the perceiver who may respond rhetorically if he is in a position to do so.” This extract from Bitzer’s article, explains how the message the speaker wants to convey may or may not be understood by the listeners.

Basically, the existence of a rhetorical situation is a prerequisite for any rhetor. So, the rhetorical situation is a prerequisite for the existence of a rhetor, but what is the prerequisite or necessity for the existence of a rhetorical situation? An exigence is necessary for the rhetorical situations very existence. In case of an emergency, an immediate response to the emergency is the positive modification that the rhetor would bring about in the situation.

In the case of the UN Conference meeting on global warming, they have gathered their audience selectively, the country wise elected national representatives. So, the audience is present, and the target requirement is met. The audience will absorb everything mentioned and discussed in the meeting as it is their job and sole purpose to be there. There is a rhetorical situation at play, as the very reason for the meeting to occur is to fix a global emergency, Global warming. Global warming as we all know is not only an immediate threat to all of the worlds’ citizens, but it has been a persistent exigence for the last 30 years and seems to be only getting worse. So, since an exigence exists, a rhetorical situation is present as well (by deduction). In response to the exigence a positive adjustment to fix or at least attempt to fix it must occur. For the positive modification to occur, the readers must be informed on the topics and of its urgency. This also constitutes the genre, as the various statements said and conveyed are characteristic to the “worldly affairs” category. The rhetor would be the information that the

audience keeps with them and which influences them to take steps toward implementing a few if not many positive changes in their lives for the cause of global warming. Thus genre, audience and rhetorical situation are interlinked and dependent on each other.

In writing and in general, these three are used to accomplish many things. In the theory of writing, these are all necessary for the desired action to happen. For the writing to fulfill its purpose, it should comply with these three appropriately.

In short, even though I feel like I'm repeating myself repeatedly with different examples, genre is dependent on the audience and the rhetorical situation, which is also dependent on the audience, and the audience is dependent on the rhetorical situation. The three are inclusive.

CITATIONS AND SOURCES

Llyod F. Bitzer, "The rhetorical Situation", pg.11.

Gloria Anzaldua, "How to tame a wild tongue", pg.84.