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English 102

4 February 2016

### Comparative Rhetorical Analysis

In “What’s the Matter With College?,” Rick Perlstein describes his, as well as other students’, college experience. As a response to Perlstein’s article, Liz Addison wrote “Two Years Are Better Than Four.” In Addison’s article, she disputes against Perlstein’s article and describes her own college experience. When comparing the two authors’ essays, it is very well noticed that each is unique with their usage of the three rhetorical appeals: ethos, pathos, and logos.

However, Liz Addison’s “Two Years Are Better Than Four” would be more persuasive to an audience of students who attend the University of South Carolina Upstate, because she explains her essay a lot more clearly, her essay is uplifting, and it is also short and sweet.

Each author tackles the three rhetorical appeals differently. Though, Addison’s article has the most excellent ethos compared to Perlstein’s article. One example of ethos being used by each author is the voice and tone they individually use. Perlstein’s essay is sophisticated, his voice is intelligent, and his choice of diction is astonishing. To further illustrate his diction, Perlstein uses words like, “idiosyncratic”, “provincial”, and “infantilizing.” Those three words aren’t in the vocabulary of the everyday college student, so using those words will risk losing that particular audience. On the other hand, Addison maintains a clear, reader-friendly framework. She doesn’t use massive diction to where the audience has to keep a dictionary by their side as they read. Because Addison’s article is fairly easy to read, an audience of USC Upstate students will appreciate her article more and won’t be confused. Another form of ethos is

the experience of each author. Rick Perlstein is an author, an American historian, and a journalist. Perlstein also attended the University of Chicago and it is also the university he speaks of in his article. On the contrary, Liz Addison is a biology major with hopes of pursuing an occupation as a large animal veterinarian. Addison actually has attended two community colleges where she earned her biology degree. With that being said, Addison's article is more appealing to USC Upstate students, because they can relate more to a community college versus an Ivy League School or a private university. Perlstein went to a private university, therefore, USC Upstate students can't relate to his college experience as much as they can with Addison's experience.

Like ethos, Addison has a stronger pathos as well. Pathos is heavily used in Addison's article when read next to Perlstein's article. Compared to Perlstein, Addison also comes across as younger than she really is when in reality both of the authors are nearly the same age. An example is when she was slamming Perlstein by saying, "Today, at the University of Privilege, the student applies with a Curriculum Vitae not a book list. Shudder." Her tone is adolescent as she mocks Perlstein and she makes the audience feel as if she's ranting to them as a close friend. This forms a trust between the author and the audience. The audience feels as if they can trust the author, because she makes her audience feel as if they are talking with a close friend or family member. Addison also allows the audience to feel positive and understood. For instance, Addison uses hope and dream to describe community colleges within the quote, "They offer a network of affordable future, of accessible hope, and an option to dream." Addison is basically admitting that community college is one of the best institutions ever create. In contrast, Perlstein's essay doesn't exactly connect with an audience of college students from this generation. Perlstein himself writes, "Why aren't people paying attention to the campuses?"

Because, as a discrete experience, “college” has begun to disappear. My radical, alienated friends brought up the University of Chicago’s marketing materials: bucolic images of a mystic world apart, where 18-year-olds discover themselves for the first time in a heady atmosphere of cultural and intellectual tumult. But college no longer looks like that. They wondered how long the admissions office thought it could get away with it before students started complaining they’d been swindled. I posed the question to a brilliant graduating senior, someone I’ve been friends with for years. ‘They’re assuming that the marketing is for students,’ he explained. ‘It’s not. It’s for parents’.’” In his quote, Perlstein claims that college isn’t what it used to be, it’s no good, and that the marketing is solely for the parents. Perlstein isn’t encouraging kids to go to college. Instead he’s telling them it’s okay if they don’t go, because it’s not as good as it once was anyways. Times are changing, Mr. Perlstein. College students and future college students need all the encouragement they can obtain.

Although Addison’s pathos is better, Perlstein’s logos is spot on. There seems to be an abundance of logos in both articles, from analogies to testimonies and authorities. Addison uses analogies in order to make fun of Perlstein and to give the audience a visual as they read. One example would be when she refers to Perlstein as “a retired ballerina taking a seat in the stalls.” Perlstein also uses analogies but his aren’t so humorous. An example of his unpleasant analogy is, “the fascination was rooted in reasons as fresh as yesterday’s op-ed pages.” Perlstein’s analogy isn’t funny or even cute. He’s talking about how fresh yesterday’s op-ed pages are. Some students may not even know what op-ed pages are. However, picturing Perlstein as a retired ballerina sitting in the stalls is quite funny. On another note, each author also uses testimonies and authorities. Addison uses the famous Thomas Jefferson and Perlstein uses President Ronald Reagan. The audience trusts each of these men and what they have to say, so

it's a smart move for each of these authors to include them in their articles. In summary, Perlstein appears to be more logical and his logos is well demonstrated. He uses Ronald Reagan in his article frequently and he has a lot of evidence to back up his essay. Perlstein may have won the logos battle against Addison.

In conclusion, both articles are useful and make good points, but only one would be more persuasive to USC Upstate students. The article that is more persuasive to an audience of USC Upstate students, is without a doubt, Liz Addison's "Two Years Are Better Than Four." Considering the attention span of a college student, it is highly appreciated that Addison's essay is short. And overall, Addison's essay is to the point, easy to read, and more entertaining. With her essay being about community college, USC Upstate students will be more likely to relate and understand her view of college. Her use of the three rhetorical appeals is also very well established. Although her logos is trailing a tad behind Perlstein's logos, Addison's pathos is definitely much stronger than Perlstein's pathos. Indeed, pathos is more important to an audience of college students than logos, because it's college students and not college professors. Those college students need to feel something in order to connect with the article. All in all, Liz Addison's essay serves as more persuasive to an audience of USC Upstate students.

Works Cited

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