Muhammad Siddiqi Final Portfolio

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Literacy Narrative: To Write is to Read

*I chose not to edit my literacy narrative. After reading this at different points throughout the semester, I believe that this still best explains and represents my discovery of the wonderful world of writing. I do want to say that I was able to build off of this experience this semester which I specifically mention in my reflection letter.*

“Fight it… Focus… Wait, what? … I can’t do this…”, I told myself as I sat at my desk with my face against the table struggling to keep my eyes open. My boredom was taking control. I could not withstand the immense power of my boredom as I slipped into my subconscious… Zzzzzzzzzzz…

A few days later I had found myself in the same situation, fighting to stay in control, yet again… Zzzzzzzzzzz… This clash continued, recurring frequently and I soon realized this was not a battle, but a war, a war that I was losing, a war that could not be contained.

“I need to conquer this…”, I thought to myself. I needed answers. I started to explore my mind, going through all of my memories for something that could give me a clue. I had finally found something. There is a saying to “fight fire with fire”, I’ve always wondered what that had meant. How could I fight fire with fire, if the fire was what I was fighting? I continued to search through my immersive collection of memories until I had tried everything I could’ve possibly imagined. I was finally ready to give up, I had officially disliked writing.

Years later I had found myself being placed into the wrong English class; Creative Writing. Through my research, I had discovered that this class required A LOT of writing. I instantly repulsed this class. I had gone to every possible length to change my class, but in the end, I was given a sickening rejection. “This year is going to be HELL!!!”, I thought. There was no way out of this class, I just had to accept my fate and face it.

As the professor discussed what the class was all about, I had quickly zoned out. Every class I would fight a familiar battle with my boredom, trying not to slip into my subconscious within the first 5 minutes of class. As swiftly as I had zoned out, I was given my first assignment, my first “creative” writing piece. I stared at the prompt for hours continuing to draw a blank. The prompt asked for nothing specific, which was the problem. After hours of silence, I decided to write down random things to complete the assignment.

With each assignment, we would read an anonymous student’s piece while providing peer critique followed by a class discussion. As I read the piece written by the anonymous student, I started to realize that what I wrote was completely different than what they had written. Nothing was similar in any aspect except a small relation to the prompt. “Shit… I messed up…” I thought to myself. As the semester progressed and as we read more responses, I started to realize how different each one was. Even in the class discussions, each sentence was interpreted differently from each student. I was simply intrigued.

Randomly while doing some cleaning, I started to look through some of the old English portfolios that I had strangely saved over the years. I began to read each one and I saw my progression as a writer of the years. There was a common theme of a “standardized” essay format throughout the portfolios. From one assignment to another, none of them spoke my voice. I started to wonder, “Did I ever have a voice to begin with?”

As we read more and more responses throughout the semester I started to pick up on the different tools and styles my classmates used in their writing. These tools and styles were used to make their voices in their responses. I tried to imitate some of the writing tools, styles, and tricks that my classmates used to discover my writing voice. The more I tried to imitate, the closer I felt to find my writing voice.

Even though finding my writing voice is something I’m still pursuing till this day, I’ve learned so much from this experience. Out of all my years in school, I was always taught to respond to the prompt in the “standard” format. To start with a thesis, to add fluent transitioning, to include shreds of evidence, to have a conclusion, and to be as clear and concise as possible. I always thought there was only one “correct” response. Since my realization, I have been more open-minded. Reading books to discover different voices authors use, and how they go about infusing it within their text. Writing as a way of expressing myself and publishing my ideas to the world. And learning through the different lens the world has to offer.

Annotated Bibliography: Crime/Detective Fiction

*I made a few edits to my annotated bibliography. I chose to make majority of my edits before submitting the assignment, but the changes I made were for certain sources. Some of the sources I was working with were multi-genre sources that had both a lot of emphasis on both the genre I chose and its mix. I also added direct quotes into my rhetorical analysis for sources that contained text.*

Hanson, Hart and Kathy Reichs. *Bones.* Episode 1: “Pilot”. Fox Broadcasting Company. 13 September 2005.

Bones: Pilot, written by Hart Hanson, is a 2005 TV drama/crime/detective fiction series that centers around Dr. Temperance Brennan or “Bones”, a forensic anthropologist working with the FBI, specifically Special Agent Booth, in order to help solve crimes. In the beginning of the episode “Pilot”, Brennan’s friend, Angela Montenegro, comes to pick her up at the airport from her trip to Guatemala. As Angela and Brennan are walking through their airport, they are being followed by a man in a black suit. After following them for a short period of time, Dr. Temperance Brennan confronts the follower by taking him down, while other cops surround her as she supposedly takes down a homeland security agent. They take her bag to find out that she’s carrying a human skull. Hart Hanson uses a very unique scene to introduce us to the series, immediately creating suspense and diving right into the action. Brennan is later bailed out by Agent Booth, where we find out that she is a forensic anthropologist that works for the FBI under Agent Booth. Dr. Brennan is brought to a crime scene to help identify the body under a pond of a cemetery. Dr. Brennan is able to determine the age (18-22), sex (Female), and body type (Athletic: Tennis Player) by just examining the bone structure of the body. After the body is brought to the lab and tests are run, Dr. Brennan’s team is able to identify the body (Cleo Louise), the murder weapon (Hammer), a motive for murder (Cleo Louise was pregnant and rumored to have an affair with the Senator), and place of murder. Hart Hanson subtly builds suspense throughout the episode not only through logos of the lab experiments but also adding drama into the scene. The drama Hart Hanson adds to this specific episode is when Dr. Brennan choses to confront the Senator Bethlehem, Ken Thompson (Cleo Louise’s Boyfriend), and Oliver Laurier (Cleo Louise’s Stalker) on different occasions about the murder of Cleo while almost putting Agent Booth and the investigation at risk. This mix of drama with the crime/detective fiction genre allows Hart Hanson to appeal a wider audience, laid-back tv series watchers, crime/detective fiction fans, and drama genre fans.

Ohba, Tsugumi. *Death Note*. Obata, Takeshi, Illustrator. VIZ Media LLC. 03 October 2006.

In the Death Note, honor-student Light Yagami comes across a supernatural notebook called the “Death Note”. As Light explores the contents of the notebook he discovers its ability to kill anyone whose name is written in the notebook, this power influences Light to embark on a journey to become a “god” of the world who passes rightful judgement to the criminals and those who oppose his goal. Tsugumi Ohba starts off the series by giving a little insight into who Light Yagami is (a purposeless bored high school senior honor student) to give backstory to Light Yagami’s goal and his cleverness. Soon after discovering and testing out the Death Note, Light Yagami begins to kill criminals through the use of heart attacks gaining the support of numerous people via the internet, nicknaming him as Kira. As the National Police Agency (NPA) observes the deaths of criminals by heart attacks, they are introduced to the world's greatest yet anonymous detective, L, who immediately begins his investigation into this crime. As L initially tests Light Yagami through a stand-in broadcast in a region of Japan, Tsugumi Ohba uses this opportunity to build suspense by introducing these arch-rivals to each other through logos, specifically as L outsmarts Light Yagami by only broadcasting a fake stand-in for himself over a region of Japan to locate and learn more about Kira’s killing ability. The fact that both Kira and L have been introduced to each other but do not know of each other’s real name or face created even more suspense for Tsugumi Ohba to work with. Tsugumi Ohba doesn’t only do this to create suspense but also to introduce two different ideologies into the series. As the series progresses, Tsugumi Ohba poses the question: “Is it a crime to kill those who have done mischief or is it a crime to try to save those who have made their decision of causing mischief”, to the audience with each side reflecting through Kira and L in the series. This creates a new twist to the genre of crime/detective fiction as both Kira and L hunt each other down, both desiring to bring justice to the world while carrying different ideologies.

Doyle, Arthur Conan. “A Scandal in Bohemia”. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. George Newnes. 14 October 1892.

In “The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia, an unorthodox private detective named Sherlock Holmes with his companion Dr. Watson are hired by a mysterious client to retrieve explicit photos of the king and “The Woman” Irene Adler, which if leaked would damage the upcoming royal wedding. The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: A Scandal in Bohemia starts off with Sherlock greeting Dr. Watson after a long time. As Sherlock greets his old friend Dr. Watson, he begins to deduce things about him in a rather clever yet unorthodox way. Sherlock quickly explains how he is able to come to his deductions by explaining what details he uses and what they tell him about an individual. Arthur Conan Doyle uses this opportunity to introduce to us both who the main characters are and to build suspense around Sherlock Holmes. This immediately catches the eye of the reader setting the tone for the rest of the short story. Sherlock Holmes begins to investigate the letter he receives from his mysterious client; he asks Dr. Watson to give the letter a look to see if he also comes to the same conclusion. As Dr. Watson inspects the letter and explains his thoughts, Sherlock rushes in and explains what he has deduced from the letter. Later, when the mysterious masked client arrives, Sherlock continues to deduce who he is by the way he dresses, his transportation method, the letter that was written to him, and many more details to come to the conclusion that he is the King of Bohemia. The client was surprised that Sherlock was able to identify him while he had a mask on. Arthur Conan Doyle uses a lot of logos specifically through Sherlock Holmes explaining his deduction to others, which helps create suspense around Sherlock Holmes himself.

Nolan, Christopher, director. *The Dark Knight*. Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. 18 July 2008.

In The Dark Knight, Batman, alongside Lieutenant James Gordon and District Attorney Harvey Dent, cleanse Gotham City of its criminal activity until a psychopathic criminal, called the joker, begins to take over Gotham City through his organized crime and constant run-ins with the mob, once again creating the mass criminal activity in Gotham City. The Dark Knight starts off with the scene of five clown-masked men attempting to rob a bank planned by an anonymous mastermind named the Joker, who instructs each of the robbers to kill the other when their job is done to increase each person's share. At the end of the scene only one clown is left standing with all of the money, mysteriously revealing that he is the Joker. Christopher Nolan uses this scene to emphasize the Joker's love for chaos which he will build off of throughout the movie. The police use this opportunity to investigate the bank to collect more evidence to persecute the mob. As their investigation continues, District Attorney Harvey Dent with the help of Batman are able to catch one of the members of the mob and get him to accept a plea deal, essentially ratting out the rest of the mob. District Attorney is able to use this and put the mob behind bars, becoming the hero of Gotham City. The Joker then begins to target Harvey Dent, James Gordon and Batman to begin his path to taking over Gotham City. As the Joker begins to target the heroes of Gotham, Christopher Nolan uses the concept of chaos (a special form of logos) as a way to create suspense from the Joker’s actions. Soon after beginning his path to taking over Gotham, the Joker is caught by Batman and Lieutenant James Gordan. While in Jail the joker was able to capture Harvey Dent and his fiancé, attorney Rachel Dawes, and hold them as hostages. The Joker ends up killing Rachel Dawes while severely injuring the hero of Gotham, Harvey Dent, turning him into a criminal (called two-face) seeking vengeance for the death of his fiancé. Christopher Nola’s use of chaos keeps the Batman fans as well as others on their feet throughout the movie. Christopher Nolan uses the concept of Chaos till the very end of the movie, as the famous words said by Harvey Dent ironically come to life: “You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain.”

Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Murder in the Rue Morgue*. Graham’s Magazine. April 1841.

In the Murder in the Rue Morgue, Edgar Allan Poe writes about an unnamed ordinary protagonist who recollects his companionship with a strange, yet intellectual man named August Dupin through their adventure to solve the mysterious murder in the rue morgue. The short story starts off by the protagonist telling us how he and the character August Dupin had met and how their relationship had begun. Soon after, Edgar Allan Poe starts to describe August Dupin specifically through a conversation the protagonist had with August Dupin. Edgar Allan Poe uses this as an opportunity to open the general reader's mind to the genre of crime/detective fiction specifically using logos to explain the way August Dupin thinks, acts, and feels. This use of logos creates a “exciting” moment for the general reader which allows for him to build suspense off of. After the initial introductions to the main protagonist, Edgar Allan Poe truly starts off the adventure with a run-down of the case (all the preliminary details gathered by the police) while specifying that the police were overwhelmed. August Dupin determined that there had to be an answer begins to investigate the case himself while the protagonist accompanies him. Edgar Allan Poe uses August Dupin’s investigation to build on the suspense he created in the beginning of the short story while keeping the reader “excited” through his clever tone portrayed from August Dupin’s explanation of his own reasoning.

Harris, Thomas. *The Silence of the Lambs*. Demme, Jonathan, Diretcor. Orion Releasing LLC. 13 February 1991.

In the Silence of the Lambs, FBI trainee Clarice Starling is selected by Jack Crawford, the FBI’s behavioral science unit, to investigate Dr. Hannibal Lester, a psychopathic-cannibalistic-serial-killing psychiatrist, to learn more information about Buffalo Bill, a psychopathic-serial-killer. The Silence of the Lambs starts off with Clarice Starling, an FBI trainee, being called by her former professor Jack Crawford from her training. As Clarice Starling walks into Jack Crawford's office she sees images of murder victims with part of their skins missing. Jack Crawford assigns her to investigate Dr. Lester and complete a simple questionnaire. As Clarice Starling investigates Dr. Lester he begins to make conclusions of Clarice Starling: She isn’t really an FBI Agent based on the expiration date on her badge, she’s one of Jack Crawford’s “people”, and what lotion and perfume she usually wears just by smelling the air through the hole of his glass cell. Thomas Harris uses this conversation to introduce to us Dr. Lester’s personality and his intelligence allowing there to be suspense around Dr. Lester and Buffalo Bill. At the end he mentions one of his patients name for Clarice Starling to investigate. Clarice Realizes that the name she was given was acronym and locates a storage unit, as she investigates the storage unit, she finds a decapitated head in a jar with parts of skin missing. Clarice returns to Dr. Lester with what she has found, and he offers to profile Buffalo Bill if he can see the case papers and can be transferred to a different prison where he can see the outside world. Jack Crawford and Clarice Starling investigate a severely injured corpse left by Buffalo Bill and see the similarities in his way of killing: Starvation, removal of skin, planting of a cocooned moth in the mouth of victims and disposal of the corpses by rivers. The scene of the body brings horror accompanied by suspense to the audience. After Dr. Lester profiles Buffalo Bill as a want-to-be transvestite, he is moved to a different jail cell, where he then is able to break out, mask himself as injured officer by changing clothes and ripping the face of the officer he killed and using it as a mask. This moment in the movie climaxes both the horror and suspense feeling for the audience. Thomas Harris uses Pathos through these inhumane scenes and actions taken by both Dr. Lester and Buffalo Bill with a underlaying use of Logos through Dr. Lester to create suspense for the audience. The mix of the horror genre with the crime/detective fiction complement each other, creating a new experience for the audience.

Research and Audience Essay: Technological Advancements

*I chose to edit this assignment this assignment for minor details in both essays.*

Technological advancements, specifically over the past decade, are happening at an alarming rate. This technology is making the world more efficient than ever, but the cost and risks are not being brought to attention. Being educated on the technology we use is very important because it can be used to cause harm to ourselves and others. I chose to write to big corporations and the everyday consumer. I chose to write to both big corporations and the everyday consumer because each represents one side of this issue. I chose to write this as a letter to both audiences.

Dear everyday consumer,

A lot has happened over the past decade. I remember ordering movies on Netflix online for it to come in the mail, I remember listening to music on my iPod, and I remember when I got my first flip phone. All of that has changed, the old technology we grew up cannot compare with what we have now. The electronics and technology industry is booming, every year there are new TVs, cars, phones, etc. that are better than the last, making technology from just a few years ago almost obsolete. This technology is helping the world become more efficient than ever, allowing us to work from practically anywhere, allowing medical records to be documented digitally so they are easily accessible, allowing us to get in contact with our loved ones, allowing us to connect with friends and others, and so much more. But the fact remains the same, the cost and risks of this technology is blind to us. An example of this is our freedom. Big corporations like Facebook and Google collect data on us and sell this information to other companies. Now Google and Facebook claim that they don’t necessarily “sell” the information they collect on their consumers, but rather use this information to help other companies market their advertisements to specific groups of people. Even outside of the company applications, they still are still collecting data based on what you are doing. Recently there have been two big investigations into this issue of data collecting, specifically targeted at Google and Facebook. Google has recently been fined around $170 Million, for the data collection of kids through YouTube without parental consent. Most of this information is not relayed simply to us, instead we are given terms and conditions to agree to before using their services. Majority us don’t take the time or don’t have the level of understanding to comprehended exactly what we’re are agreeing to. Another cost of technological advancements is security. Over the past decade there has been an increased number of cybercrimes. The same companies we trust with our information are the ones that are getting targeted for cybercrimes, jeopardizing our information. In recent years, companies like Equifax, Yahoo, and Sony have had their data breached and millions of personal information was stolen. Just to give some perspective, Equifax, one of the largest credit bureaus in the world, was hacked in 2017 and around 140 MILLION user information was stolen such as social security, names, addresses, and more. Now these are big corporations who invest millions into their own security, but we as consumers don’t. Most of us have the same password for multiple accounts making us much more venerable.

Dear Big Technology Corporations,

Over the past decade you have made billions to trillions of dollars by investing and creating new technology. This technology has taken over the world, accomplishing what was just a dream a couple years ago. We the consumers are thankful for all that you have done, but I believe you must address and serve justice to the concerns that will be brought forward. Many of you are being hacked on not only a micro level but also on a macro level. The technology you guys can only be so good until it comes to security. Now I know you guys are investing millions into protection against cybercrimes, but it is not enough. Cybercrimes are increasing every year, as technology is advancing making it easier to do things, so is cybercrime. A lot of Cybercrime is happening at a local level more than before, making not only you venerable but also your consumers. Another issue with the advancement of technology is clueless consumers. NFC cards is the new technology every consumer as on their debit and credit cards in addition to chip readers. The problem with this is the fact that the information of consumers can be stolen be someone who has an NFC reader. This is something that can happen subtly without the victim noticing. Through my own experience I find that a lot of people are lacking knowledge of how to properly safeguard their card from falling victim.

Dear Professor Jewell,

Throughout the course of the semester I believe that I have improved much as a writer reader and thinker. In the first unit of the semester literacy narrative I feel that I had improved much as a reader and a little bit as a thinker but not much as a writer. In the first unit I was intrigued by the readings that we had assigned for class followed by the discussions and comments made based upon the readings, specifically Gloria Anzaldua’s and Amy Tan’s text. I was specifically intrigued by Gloria Anzaldua’s and Amy Tan's text because of the similarities and differences that they both had. I specifically liked Gloria Anzaldua’s opening paragraph which she hooks the reader into her writing by comparing her experiences with language to a common experience shared by all audiences. In Amy Tan’s text she begins to explore the idea of speaking broken English yet understanding full English through her experiences with her mother's tongue. Amy Tan declares that through her experiences with her mother's tongue she writes for her mother giving her purpose in each of her writings. we later see this same concept in Malcom X learning to read as he talks about his path to learning to read and write so he could articulate his ideas to his audience through his limited resources. Through these texts I learned that a writer must be able to express themselves freely yet be able to articulate themselves to their specific audience and spark interest in other readers outside of their specific audience. I chose to specifically copy these into my literacy narrative through the first two or three paragraphs where I tried to hook the reader with a common yet symbolic experience while then transitioning into my own personal literacy narrative. The reason I believe that I did not improve much as a writer in unit one is because there weren’t many written assignments.

 In the second unit of the semester I was challenged greatly in my writing ability. I was able to learn a lot and improve as a reader and thinker, but it did not reflect on my writing. In the second unit I learned a lot specifically through the annotated bibliography assignment. As I was exploring different sources within the crime/detective fiction genre and writing my annotated Bibliography, I really began to understand logos, pathos and egos. The most notable example that stood out to me was MLKs “I have a Dream” speech. Watching his speech in class really opened my eyes to what it truly meant to use these techniques to improve your writing to your audience. In my previous years in English classes, I’ve never talked or analyzed specific techniques used by writers in their text, I always remembered talking vaguely about them. Through my research of my genre I saw these techniques come to life before my eyes. Unfortunately enough, I wasn’t able to reflect what I learned into my writing, I specifically struggled with finding what the creator wanted to persuade to the audience, so I chose to center my attention around how these authors of the crime/detective genres created suspense for their audience. With that in mind, I tried to write rhetorical analysis for sources that had venues of movies and tv series. I soon realized that the longer the venue was (E.g. Longer movie, longer episodes. Etc.) the harder it became to do a rhetorical analysis. Even with this obstacle in my way, I kept referring back to what my peers had wrote for their annotated bibliographies. I looked if anyone did anything related to my topic or a venue of a movie, those who did something similar did not have the best example to work with as they simply wrote summaries of the source. I started to look at what others had written for different genres, and I learned that they had used specific words or sentences as evidence of their rhetorical analysis while dissecting what they believed they main argument posed by the author. I took a similar approach in my first draft by describing specific scenes in a summary format and using that to make a rhetorical analysis. I took my time completing the assignment to have better clarity each time I tried to do the rhetorical analysis of each source. I ended up revising my Annotated Bibliography to include direct text from sources that were in the form of a text, proper MLA citation for my sources and to complete anything I had left out in my rhetorical analysis.

For unit 3 of the semester, I was able to apply what I had learned from unit one and two into my research and audience essay even though I wasn’t able to be preset through majority of the unit. I believe that I improved as a writer the most in unit three because I was able to apply what I had learn into my own wiring. I feel that the first draft of my research and audience essay did not take advantage of the tools and techniques I learned throughout the course, but in my revision, I was able to change that. The reason I chose to revise my research and audience essay was because of the unit three presentation. I had realized that I was not taking full advantage of the sources I was using and after giving it a second look was not giving a convincing argument for even myself. I decided to work off the 3 main factors I had written about, implement more of a logos approach to complement my message.

Overall, I believe I learned a lot as a reader, writer, and thinker at different points of the semester. Unfortunately, I wasn’t able to be present through majority of the third unit and wasn’t able to submit the annotated bibliography and research and audience essay on time, leaving me with no critique from you. I was also unable to participate in peer review for 2 of the 3 units due to lack a time management throughout the semester. I would have been able to improve much more as a reader, writer, and thinker if I was able to properly time manage my own personal situation by discussing it personally with you at an earlier point of the semester. Also due to my lack of time management I wasn’t able to submit much other written assignments that would have given me more evidence that I had improved as a writer. I still continue working with what I had to make the best of what was available to me and I believe that I’ve improved a lot, which reflects in my major assignments and will through my upcoming experiences with writing.