

Research paper on observing the ordinary

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This paper is based on the thesis to analyze the usage of informative and conversational tone purposefully and effectively by author to serve the purpose of his writing: to educate and inform his readers about the facts, and the journey across the historical timeframe of the extraordinary fruit: the oranges. Also, how the significance of the use of historical excursions together with the story-telling style of writing and tone appeal to ethos and pathos of the overall writing, which altogether drive the readers into the world of his non-fiction story about oranges. John McPhee is a celebrated writer who not only makes the juice out of every aspect of oranges that he writes about. The chapters of the book are arranged in the manner which keeps reader interested about the next development with one chapter smoothly transcending into next chapter. The text of the book by McPhee is beautifully woven in a coherent manner which keeps on connecting to reader at various levels through appealing to pathos, deploying logos to convince user and displaying ethos to establish the credibility of the author (Corbett & Eberly, 2000).

Rhetorical Devices - McPhee deploys rhetorical devices to establish the background of the text and enables the reader to comprehend and correlate with the narration. The text is interspersed with rich pathos appealing to reader like “ Its color will go to a deep, flaring cadmium orange, and its surface ha a suggestion of coarseness, which complements its perfect ellipsoid shape” (11). The author efficiently uses analogy for appealing to pathos such as “ Ground fruits is sweeter than the ones that grows high on the tree” and “ oranges grown on the south side of a tree are sweeter than ones grown on the east or west sides”, and that oranges grown on the north

side “ are the less sweet of the lot” (8). By comparing oranges grown from different side of the tree, author appeals to pathos and makes the readers favor oranges that are grown on the south side, and ones that grows high on the tree because they are, according to McPhee, sweeter.

The book, in spite of reader’s attempt to absorb every detail and analyze it progresses beautifully and keeps on presenting new facts and interesting anecdotes for the reader to comprehend and appreciate. The book divulges into the history of the oranges and their journey with their personification by stating “ Migration of the fruit” (6). The author personifies oranges to have the ability to migrate; though it is a non-living being and the reality remains that it cannot migrate. McPhee personifies oranges as they “ migrate” because through personification he describes precisely the information that save him from exaggerating the concept of people carrying and selling oranges across countries. The over-explanation of this phenomenon would have tied the author to creation of unnecessary pathos.

Moreover, the use of similes and symbolism in the text to depict rich details, and vivid imageries on colors of the oranges as McPhee claims “ glisten like an emerald in the tree” when he refers to the orange that grows in some parts of the world where “ the weather never gets cold enough for it to change color” (10) for instance, Thailand. & when he refers to the Washington Navel Orange as: “ Its color will go to a deep, flaring cadmium orange, and its surface ha a suggestion of coarseness, which complements its perfect ellipsoid shape” (11). McPhee vividly depicted the details of the

orange in a way that appeal to the readers' pathos, enabling the readers to visualize those images with him, favoring the beauty of the fruit.

Tone - The tone of the entire text varies from conversational style to narrative to storytelling and then to the conservation style. The styles of the tone keep on altering and are interchangeable and interlinked throughout the book. This variance in styles prevents the monotone and keeps reader engaged in the content. Moreover, reader gets breather and space in the conservational style followed by narrative of history which loads the reader with information. The tone of the paper, continuously, changing from narrative to conversation to storytelling keeps reader interested in the text.

The passionate tone interspersed with similes for oranges scattered throughout the book keeps on conveying the intensity of emotion of author and the passion author has for oranges. The mention of 'Golden Apple' arouses the reader's interest as the new information shared with a little criticism of Romans and Greeks that "Romans and Greeks had the tendency to call any kind of fruit an apple" (49). This amuses readers to imagine that every fruit existing or discovered in those times was classified as apple, but with a changes pretext like orange became the golden apple. Very interesting information and amusing at the same time, paving way for another interesting information that "Portugal" was synonymous with good sweet oranges as Portuguese bought sweet orange to Europe from India.

Logos - McPhee strongly appeals with logos with the opening paragraph of the book by claiming "People in the United States used to consume more fresh oranges than all other fresh fruits combined", follow by the logical

support to his claim by using statistics and of “ but in less than twenty years the per capita consumption has gone down seventy-five percent” (7). The statement by McPhee is supported by the statistical evidence and takes a logical form. The statements supported by fact and evidences have greater acceptability level with the readers and the author makes intelligent use of this technique. This fact also appeals to ethos of the author because it suggests that McPhee did immense research on the topic before making his claim. The initial paragraph of the text which is essential to build rapport and retain attention of the reader has been dealt in an excellent manner by the author as the initial paragraphs of the first chapter piques and arouses the curiosity of the reader about the oranges and their significance beyond their perceived ordinariness.

Ethos - Throughout the book, the author establishes himself as the expert on the subject of oranges as represented from the immense research on oranges and the long history shared by the author. Authors listing of different types of orange that are grown in the U. S.: “ Maltese Ovals, Pope Summers” all the way to “ Bessies and Boones” (12) and Listing of orange as the ornamental & aromatic flower, seasoning for meat and fish, measuring unit of importance of guests instead of eaten as fruit (52). This appeal to ethos because it shows the readers that McPhee really did research on the field and purposefully wants to educate the reader to become more aware of how big the orange industry the U. S. has. Author demonstrates the rich knowledge of soil, the morphology of orange tree, the altitude of groves and mentions the problems of the workers picking oranges “ work of the citrus picker is so hard” (42) that people quit this work very soon though

unemployed otherwise. Shiner is one example which really appeals to the ethos of the reader as they can actually imagine a solitary orange hanging on the orange tree and shining like the light bulb. This permits the reader to imagine instantaneously a bright orange orange hanging on tree. Moreover, this demonstrates that author has performed great research to know the nitty-gritty's of the business. Author in one chapter initiates with discussing the origin of word "orange" and finishes with mentioning the botanical name of the fruit "Citrus Sinensis", thus keeping reader wondering that why author has named the chapter with its botanical name, though not a single reference to its botanical use has been detailed in chapter.

McPhee discusses the conviction that the fruit was somehow useful in the cause of human health continued to develop during the feudal ages, and in the middle of the twelfth century the remedial role of the orange was given professional ratification in a Moslem medical textbook. The Tunisian Doctor Abu Abdullah Mohammed ben Mohammad el-Huseiny el-Ali Billah, in his *Treatise of the Simple Remedies*, said that powdered orange peel stirred into hot water would stop an attack of colic at once" (75). Giving the doctor's reference is a great subtle way to advertise the goodness of oranges and author continues to list the healthy properties of oranges which "are salubrious for people with peptic ulcer, obesity, burns, liver troubleheart attacks, periodontitis, gingivitis, and fatigue" (77).

Pathos - The stories shared by author introduces the fascinating fact whereas the personal experiences of the author interspersed in the later chapters of book makes the text humorous at some places, to illustrate the statement by

author that “ I picked several oranges, squeezed them, and poured the juice into a tall glass. I had what I wanted, but it had been a long day” (21) evokes sympathy in reader for his efforts to get ‘ fresh’ orange juice, from restaurant, motel and every other possible place. However, simultaneously the revelation also struck reader as author being inattentive and lacking common sense as he could have prepared himself the juice by picking the fruit and squeezing the ‘ fresh’ orange juice for himself, rather than asking everyone for it. This anecdote also infuses humor in the story and leaves a smile on reader, simultaneously conveying the passion author has for fresh orange juice. This is a wonderful example of appealing to reader’s pathos and injecting several emotions at one go, thus forming a strong bond with the reader through the text as reader imagines the author as the normal person who has passion for an ordinary and yet couldn’t find it.

The irony of the situation is expressed well when author conveys to reader that in the country full of orange groves where oranges lie on ground waiting to be squeezed and converted into an excellent refreshing drink, people actually drink and prefer concentrate. Author’s realization that his expectation of getting fresh fruit juice easily after seeing fruits lying on ground was mistaken and the readers are surprised to learn that the couple with grove on their property have not consumed fresh orange juice in past ten years and they drink concentrate. These leave readers with the mocking expression in brain.

Conclusion

McPhee, all through the text of the books weaves logos, pathos and ethos artistically in the book for the audience who are interested to read about the ordinary things and their specialized journeys through the history. The book is extremely well represented and is a delight for the reader. McPhee demonstrates the immense capability to transform an ordinary fruit into a special fruit through the use of language. The representation of the ordinary by detailing its special features is an art which has been demonstrated by McPhee in this book.

Works Cited

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