

Example of rhetorical analysis of metaphors article review

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Metaphors effectively convey the message about intertextuality because a reader's understanding of the context of the words used by the writer produces the overall meaning of a written work. When the writers use metaphors, the readers are able to get the message because these words represent bits and pieces of experiences which the reader already has a knowledge of. The meaning of a text becomes fuller because of the reader's previous knowledge. The metaphors, therefore, facilitate a greater understanding about the texts and enables the reader to enter into a discourse community. In the discussion of intertextuality, James E. Porter, through his essay entitled *Intertextuality and the Discourse Community*, made use of at least three metaphors that this writer believes have effectively conveyed his message. Further discussions of each metaphor are presented below.

Intertext is a seamless fabric

A fabric is generally understood as a material, such as a cloth, which is generated by the weaving together of thread while seam is that line that appears when the materials are joined or sewn together. In clothes and curtains, having the seam creates a border for the material. The length or the area of the fabric would already be completed and specified. The metaphor of intertext as a seamless fabric could be understood as having no borders of the ideas that gets connected to the one idea being discussed. Like a fabric without seam, intertext means the words or works can continue to have more ideas contributed by more people which can be attached to the perimeter of the fabric.

In the example of the Pepsi commercial which contains a wide mass appeal,

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Porter explains that the audience is able to relate to the images presented because they have knowledge, personal or otherwise, about the setting of the commercial. When the audience looks at it there is a connection because at one point in their lives or in that of their generations, there has been an experience in such a place. The entry of the spaceship is something that is easily relatable to because such “ occurrence” has been a part of the popular culture, being a scene in a movie. Thus, to connect the commercial to the idea of the seamless fabric, as the audience or reader brings with him/her a certain understanding about the context of a certain work, there would be no limit to the understanding of various texts. These texts may come in the form of videos, short stories, or movies.

The creative writer is the creative borrower

Writer and borrower may not be totally antonyms, but this writer feels that these two concepts do not often go together. A person becomes known to be a writer when he/she has been able to produce original materials. He/she may allude to something already produced but there would always be something new that comes from the writer, thus he/she calls that work his/her own. The metaphor of the writer as a borrower is somewhat difficult to accept by this author especially since the concept of plagiarism has been extensively discussed in today’s society. The question of how can someone be called a writer if he/she just borrows ideas? Where is the original thought that he/she contributes to the body of knowledge?

The example used by Porter to expound on the idea of the writer being a borrower is in the creation of the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was

a “ skilled writer chiefly because he was an effective borrower of traces” (36). The ideas and phrases included in the Declaration can actually be traced to specific works. In the process of writing this section, this author understood that indeed the writer is borrower because the concepts (such as those in the Declaration) which have already been described in other works are too important not be used again to appropriate situations. The understanding about the creative borrower enables this writer to conclude that writers are gifted because they are able to identify which materials previously introduced could give a deeper meaning to their current creations.

Entrance into a closed society

The words in this phrase are totally opposites, entrance and close that is. The initial take of this author on this phrase was confusion. The image evoked by this phrase is a picture of a door on a wall which signifies an entrance but the location is a wall with no actual physical opening. This author believes this phrase is an interesting metaphor to a writer being acknowledged of his worth as a writer in his/her milieu. In the initial paragraphs, Porter discussed Jefferson’s authorship of the Declaration of Independence. Although his use of several lines that are attributed to several other sources may be more applicable to the preceding section, this author believes that the points raised about how Declaration reached its final form would belong more to this particular section. The Declaration was able to gain access into the strict and somewhat closed society of the learned

because it was written by Jefferson and because it went through several stages of revision.

Conclusions

Metaphors enable the writer to convey effective messages. Any written work is a product of its context and therefore represents a combination of different traces. At first glance, the three metaphors used by Porter seemed too unrealistic. However, these were explained in detail and the connections, traces, and relationships of these ideas became clearer for this author as the essay progresses. The message of Intertextuality and Discourse have indeed become more understandable with Porter's use of the three metaphors.

Works Cited

Porter, James E. " Intertextuality and the Discourse Community." Rhetoric Review. 5. 1 (1986): 34-47. Web. 25 Sept 2013.