

Kaya Barker

Rhetorical Rationale

ENC3416

10/05/2021

When deciding my original artifact I was going to us for this project it felt overwhelming because there are so many directions that could have been taken. I decided on the show, “Friends” and to focus on sitcoms since there have been so many sitcoms made since the making of Friends in 1994, and I found a huge list of failed series attempts. Choosing this show allowed me to construct my argument better on my intertextual map. Some of the connections that I found were almost unbelievable, they were so explicitly there that I cannot believe I had not noticed them before. My argument shown on my map is that there are many common themes and similarities that are seen throughout sitcoms and they have been carried on for years. The three shows that I found related the most to “Friends” and are successful are, “How I Met Your Mother”, “The Office” and “New Girl”. These three shows had implicit and explicit references, genre conventions, plot devices and stylistic similarities.

I felt that all three of these shows represented great connections and tropes, and many of them actually had connections that crossed over. The most popular tropes in sitcoms/television is the “Geek gets the girl” and “Will they end up together”, we see the geek getting the girl in friends when Ross Geller, who is a scientist ends up dating Rachel Green, who is a beautiful woman. In How I Met Your Mother we see Ted Mosby, who is a so called nerd, end up dating Robin Scherbatsky who is also the beautiful girl in the show. It is the same again in Friends

when it comes to the will they end up together trope, Ross and Rachel date and breakup throughout the show, and the audience knows they are perfect for each other and are waiting to see if they end up together when the series ends. In *New Girl* this trope was shown with Nick Miller and Jessica Day, they dated in early seasons then broke up but were perfect for each other. The thing with this trope is they typically do end up together.

The first text from our class that I would like to connect my argument to is in the piece from Amy J. Devitt, "Generalizing about Genre". I found this part in the text that says, "Genre's develop because they respond appropriately to situations that writers encounter repeatedly" (Devitt 576) and I felt that applied to the reoccurring themes throughout sitcoms. Since sitcoms have so many themes across many shows, this would make sense because the shows end up hire writers that have dealt with similar shows where the writing could easily be the same and just twerked a little. It is the same with writers who specialize in horror movies, some of their movies may come across as similar because the writer has his style of writing to that genre.

The next text from our class that I would like to make a connection too is a piece from James Porter, "Intertextuality and Discourse Community". The discussion of Thomas Jefferson basically plagiarizing the, "Declaration of Independence" was really eye opening to me and if he can do that then you better believe sitcoms are gonna do it too. Reading this text really made me understand that so many people remix and reuse text from times before them, it was happening back then and it will continue to happen now. This goes hand and hand with my next connection, which comes from Julia Kristeva, where she explains that no text is "Self-Born". If writers for these hilarious shows are not allowed to copy certain skits or lines or themes, all the

shows after “Friends” would have been boring and have not stayed on the air. I think writing is very difficult, especially for a comedic television show, so it should be expected that there are cross overs.

I think my argument of reoccurring themes in sitcoms shows represents a popular category of television that people like. I have watched all of the shows I mentioned and I never get tired of them, even though they can be so similar I end up finding comfort in that. Sitcoms are such a safety show and I am happy I got to examine all of my favorite shows and find the similarities within them.