Student

English 1010

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16 November 2017

A Conversation on Immigration

**Immigration Overview and Context**

Immigration is a very controversial topic, and many Americans are debating if it is good or bad for the country. Immigrants often rely on American tax payers to help them, at least initially, but those same tax payers also rely on immigrants for doing the low-class, unwanted jobs necessary for the country to prosper. People get information about immigration from many sources - newspapers, radio stations, magazines, social media, YouTube, and TV. Much of it is biased to some degree, some being more biased than others. I have compiled three genres each giving a specific stance and opinion of immigration in the United States and its immigration policies. Both the strengths and weaknesses can determine what a reader understands from a medium/genre, this molds an individual’s opinion on specific issues and topics. This paper will analyze the effect genre has on how Americans view immigration based on the medium where they get their information from.

**Our Streets Will Now Be Safe Summary and Review**

Matthew Disler discusses his opinions on immigration in his articles titled “Our Streets Will Finally Be Safe from Hardworking People Who Contribute to Society” which was published on the humor website *McSweeney’s*. Disler’s tone of voice throughout his article is sarcastic with a hint of humor. His argument that immigrants contribute to our society is clearly understood when he sarcastically states, “I’ve been worried about the number of hardworking people who contribute to society who are in our country” (Disler). Disler’s main point is to explain the great contributions immigrants have in our country, and to highlight the ironic thinking of those who are against this.

Disler recounts the “nightmares” he has where he is in a board meeting with Hispanic, Indian, and Chinese men. He says this “frightens him” because it is SO horrible to be “overrun with contributors to society” (Disler). With all these hard working immigrants contributing to society Disler poses the question, “Isn’t it wrong…to kick out such people? Isn’t it heartless and cruel?” (Disler), I would say it is. Many immigrants flee their war ravaged countries to come here. They have nothing, and sending them back is not going to solve the problem.

Disler also jokes about the “proper way” one comes to our country, which was on a boat in the late 19th century (Disler). America was built on immigrants, and somehow they are not helping build America now, so, yes, that is enough reason to deport all those who were not already here 100 years ago. Just because white culture has been here longer doesn’t make it superior to others. America is this supposed “Land of Opportunity” where if you work hard you can have anything. But is this true? Not really. It’s hard to move up in the world if you don’t have money, an education, or white-colored skin.

The genre of this article is an opinionated piece where writer Matthew Disler only expresses his views without supportive evidence. Because this medium is published on a humorous website, it is meant to be read for pleasure and agreeance, not for understanding of immigration. But, because it is opinionated it is very easy to agree or disagree with Disler. Readers understand his side of the argument very well, and because it’s also funny, the readers believe him and accept it.

The advantage of using this kind of genre is that readers will accept your ideas and automatically agree with you, and if they don’t agree, then they will probably just stop reading and forget about it. Because of this it’s easy to get your opinion out and have your voice heard. But, it can also be a problem for these very same reasons. This article is so one-sided that readers don’t understand the underlying issue. If readers just read funny, opinionated articles like this one, about what they already know and believe in, then they would never understand the opposing side of any argument.

**Welcome Video Summary and Review**

The process for a non-American citizen to cross the US border and process through US customs is tedious and long. Saturday Night Live posted a video on *YouTube* titled “Welcome Video” to comically illustrate this process immigrants and other visitors face when crossing over our border. The video opens with an American flag flying, the Statue of Liberty, and great open lands and prosperous cities in the US. Next a friendly, female government worker greets visitors by saying “welcome” in different languages such as French, Chinese, and Spanish. Upbeat music is playing in the background while this “welcome scene” is happening which makes America seem like the best country in the world.

Next, the video cuts to the real purpose, to show the reality of the struggle it is to get into the US, by saying “Portions of this video have been recently edited”. It then proceeds to list every possible thing an immigrant will encounter while trying to enter, all of it making the viewer laugh. To poke fun at the President Trump’s new immigration ban on Middle Eastern countries, we come to a scene where big red X’s are drawn on people’s faces who are not allowed into the country, these people being all non-whites of course. Next, a “few hundred confusing documents”, along with a “highly detailed questionnaire” asking if you are Muslim or not, are required to prove you’re not here to blow us up, because apparently everyone coming here is planning on doing so. We Americans as so fearful of people who are different from us, people who bring new ideas and change. But we don’t need to fear them, we need to accept them.

This short two-and-a-half-minute Saturday Night Live video comically shows how ridiculous our border control is. Most of the requirements are not needed, and recent court rulings and Executive Orders banning immigrants are over-the-top dramatic too. A viewer watching this YouTube video would get a good kick out of it and find it very entertaining, thus forming an opinion in which border control is a joke, and agreeing with its message. This video pushes the real immigration issue aside in hopes to humor the viewers with the failures of the US government and its ineffective enforcement of border control.

**Effects of Immigration Summary and Review**

Andri Chassamboullie and Theodore Palivos examine immigration’s effects on a host country’s economy in their academic article titled “The Impact of Immigration on the Employment and Wages of Native Workers” published in the *Elsevier Journal of Microeconomics*. The argument on whether or not immigrants are benefiting America is controversial, and many Americans are actually blind to the impacts immigrants have. With the “estimated 214 million international migrants” (Chassamboullie pg. 19) this problem needs to be addressed, and quickly. It is also estimated that “1 in 32 people are immigrants” (Chassamboullie pg. 19), with these numbers, movements like this cannot be ignored or go unnoticed. This is why immigration is not only an issue in the United States, but throughout the world.

Chassamboullie and Palivos analyzed the effect immigration had on a host country and found it to be a positive one. This positive impact results in a “rise in wage rates, and a fall in unemployment for skilled native workers” (Chassamboullie pg. 20), thus benefiting those natives who work and contribute to the economy. So if immigration is proven to be beneficial, then why are we trying to send them back? This positive impact can only happen if it is set up to do so. Immigrants have to come at a steady flow that can be handled, when too many people come too fast it breaks the bubble, this is why people are hesitant to let others into the country.

Academic articles like this one are very factual and have very good information. Being a mostly unbiased source as well, it provides readers with information so that they can form their own opinions, instead of someone else forming their opinion for them. This specific article presents a lot of information all at once and can be really hard to understand from beginning to end. The article’s introduction does a very effective job outlining what information follows. Reading the introduction provided me with an outline which I understood, but as soon as I got to the body of the paper, it became much more difficult to comprehend. Because this academic article is very factual and hard to understand, only those who want to read such things are going to look for it. Those who are not interested in academic journal articles will not go out of their way to find them.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The media has vast control over what information the public receives. But, with that said, we still can choose where we get our information. As an individual we need to be careful and cautious when forming an opinion on hot topics or political issues, especially immigration. I have analyzed three genres/mediums about immigration and what effects they have on their audiences.

YouTube videos specifically filter viewers through multiple videos portraying the same message as the one the viewer started on, thus effectively giving the viewer an inherited opinion about immigration with no counterargument or backup evidence. The “Welcome Video”, published by Saturday Night Live, comically showed the struggle immigrants have with our ridiculous border control. Viewers watch for the sole purpose of entertainment, not education. What they don’t realize though it they subconsciously form an opinion where the United States Border Control is the enemy to immigration.

Academic articles are very factual and non-biased. Readers are bombarded with lots of information which can be difficult to process. Many individuals would struggle with the comprehension of this academic article I chose because of the mental stamina required to understand it. Therefore, the majority of the audience doesn’t really form an opinion at all. They feel immigration is too much of deep issue only meant for intellectuals. However, those who do read an academic article form an opinion knowing immigration is beneficial and can be backed with the evidence provided.

Disler’s humorous article was meant to bring some satire and sarcasm to the heavy topic of immigration. Because it's meant to be taken lightly, readers brush off the underlying message and only get a good laugh. The effect this has is the lighthearted, I-don't-really-care mentality. But articles like this could also spark an interest for readers to want to dive deeper and understand the impact of immigration better.

While engaging with these three specific mediums and genres about immigration, the audience would most likely form an opinion in favor of immigration. Each medium I chose portrays immigrants as “good guys” and the United States Government, along with their immigration laws, as the “bad guys”. Because of this, the audience won’t really know of the downside to immigration, and how it can also be bad for our country. Our country needs to solve our immigration problem; we need to legalize immigrants but still regulate the flow. There are pros and cons for every outlet of media. What the audience learns from these genres is based upon the voice and evidence in each source. As an individual we need to be wise in the choices we make on where we get our information, especially when it comes to controversial topics like immigration.

Works Cited

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