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Rhetorical Analysis of “No White Sauce Allowed!”

When writing this essay, entitled “No White Sauce Allowed!,” I intended for it to be a clever yet funny essay. This essay was written not only for an in-class assignment but also as part of the application process to get into Longwood University. “No White Sauce Allowed!” is mainly about my unofficial visit to Longwood during my sophomore year of high school. During this visit, I toured campus with the assistant coach of the time, Jen Steele. After our tour, we went to the Dorill Dining Hall to eat, and it was here that I learned that having white sauce was not allowed. It was not allowed because white sauce, by definition, contains a lot more fat than the coaches wish for us to eat. As seen in that essay, I was in shock! Sour cream and ranch were the condiments I used on everything, and to learn that I could not have them anymore was devastating. Alas, I had to give them up to be a part of the softball program, and seeing as that was my goal, I started to ween myself off of my beloved white sauce. That essay is still one of my favorite essays because it was there that I finally learned to write while inputting some personality into my style, instead of just restating facts.

**Exigence:** Exigence can be defined as a problem that needs to be solved. Well, I wrote “No White Sauce Allowed,” because it was an easier choice for an essay that would allow me to answer the college essay topic while also showing who I am. This particular topic was easy for me because it pertained to softball and since I basically always spend my time playing ball, I had a lot to talk about. Also, because, as it was my very first unofficial visit, it was a memory that I still remember vividly. This essay was a great way to show my personality, especially since the point of the topic was to make yourself stand out, something I think I accomplished. The problem I had to solve was more about the writing style instead of the reasoning behind the assignment. I have never been able to write about myself, mostly because I tend to write very formally. This topic was more informal, so I had to push myself to succeed.

**Context:** Context focuses more on what drives you to write. Honestly, the only reason this essay was written was because I needed it to get into my dream college. Otherwise, because I never wish to write, it would have remained as just a memory. I definitely think that, even though I never wanted to write, this essay turned out to be one of my best, probably because it was a memory I cherished so much.

**Constraints:** Constraints can be defined as things that cannot be changed, or something difficult you have to face. Well, as mentioned above, my constraint was my own writing style. I used to tend to write very formally, because that was the way I was taught. Even that form of my writing style was not very successful. I never was a good writer, but this essay slightly changed things around for me. After my first draft, my AP English teacher handed me back my essay and said that it was a good essay, but it lacked personality because I simply stated what happened instead of making it a personal story. So that of course begged the question of how to insert personality into my writing style, to which she answered, “Write how you talk.” A light bulb went off in my head that day. I finally learned how to write in a way that would still seem formal but also showed the reader who I am. As I went back to work on my second and later third drafts, I inserted more and more little jokes that really expressed who I am as a person. What started out as a constraint for me was fixed and I finally became a slightly better writer.

**Audience:** The audience is really who is meant to read your essay. My intended audience was the admissions board at Longwood University. There was nothing in particular I wanted them to do with my essay, except learn who I am. I wanted the board to enjoy reading my essay, and to laugh at my jokes. I did not want them to go through it and think, “Oh, look just another boring essay.” I wanted them to actually like reading it, and have no problems rereading it if it became necessary. Because of this, I included pathos and ethos techniques. Pathos, an emotional appeal, was used by inserting jokes into the essay. An example of this would be in the concluding paragraph when I said, “After I cut out ranch, I continued to survive, living *almost normally*.” The entire concluding paragraph was meant to make the reader laugh, and to learn my depression of giving up white sauce. Ethos, an ethical appeal, was more used as a credibility source. Because it was a personal narrative, it was obviously credible. Plus, it helped that the one person I referenced in my essay, was at that time a coach of the softball program. As a logical fallacy, I did not find any that stood out to me as illogical or irrelevant information. However, my first draft included information like the beginning of the tour, which was taken out because it made no difference to the story. This essay was not only meant to get me into the college, but to make it an enjoyable read. I am not quite sure if I succeeded in this aspect, but I sure hope I did.

After looking back at this essay, I remember what it was like to enjoy writing for the first time, and to have the words just flow out of me. It has been a while since that has occurred, and I cannot wait to write something else that makes me feel that way. If I were to write that essay again, I am not sure if I would change anything. “No White sauce Allowed,” to this day, remains one of my favorite essays. To make changes to it would not really be beneficial, mainly because there is nothing I would change except maybe to enhance the vocabulary some. After rereading my old essay, I have realized that I might need to go back to writing more about personal experiences again, because it seems to me that that is when my writing thrives.

**Appendix**

No white sauce allowed!

“White sauces aren't allowed!” As those words reached into my mind, I started to panic. Could I really survive without my daily dosage of ranch and sour cream? I was about to find out.

I'm committed to play softball at Longwood University which is a Division One program. The coaches are somewhat strict about about the eating habits of their players. I knew before deciding to play softball in college that restrictions might be placed on what I can eat, but I was not prepared for what was to come.

I learned about the eating restrictions while I was on my unofficial visit as a sophomore in high school. Coach Steele and I were sitting in the cafeteria while I coated my salad with white dressing. She never attempted to break the news gently to me; no, she wanted me to panic. “White sauces aren't allowed!” She then continued to explain the different restrictions for players as we ambled to the fields, oblivious to my distress. I remember this moment very clearly because it was such a traumatic experience. I eat ranch on everything!

It's okay now. I recently adjusted my eating habits to eliminate ranch from my diet; however, sour cream is a different story. I find it hard to part with this beloved topping for tacos or just stop eating it off a spoon, and I have yet to find a suitable replacement. After I cut out ranch, I continued to survive, living *almost* normally. I'll keep you posted on whether or not I survive after sour cream is no longer a regular dietary staple. As of now, I am persevering.