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Project 2: The Portrayal of Purpose via Rhetorical Devices

Turkey and its investments in African countries have led it to becoming not only more of a global superpower but a country facing more global attention for its activities on the world stage. Specifically when it comes to Somalia, Turkey has attained infamy for its immense successes there economically and with its humanitarian efforts, though there is wariness of these investments and what their implications are for the future. Regardless of the interpretation of this investment, it is receiving increased media coverage and it seems that it is easy for coverage of this topic to be just as nuanced as it is to be sweepingly positive. Examples of slightly different interpretations of this topic are to be found in a mostly impartial and academic article by an American foreign affairs analyst, Brendon J. Cannon, writing for an American publication dedicated to in depth coverage of current events, and a youtube video by Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) World giving a broad and Turkish-centric introduction to the topic at hand. In these two artifacts, one can compare the ethos, audience, and tone of the artifacts to understand how they all contribute to two slightly different perceptions of Turkish investment in Somalia, and how these rhetorical devices make the purpose of these artifacts distinct from each other.

With ethos in particular, these two sources establish and explain both how they will interpret this topic and where their perspectives on this issue are coming from. The piece by Cannon entitled “Turkey’s foray into Somalia is a huge success, but there are risks” for a publication called *The Conversation* conveys how the author is writing from a

non-Turkish-biased perspective and is attempting to critically and academically cover Turkey's investment in Somalia. *The Conversation* describes itself as "a global group of news organizations founded in Australia" and a "nonprofit, independent news organization dedicated to unlocking the knowledge of experts for the public good" (Who we are, *The Conversation*), which indicates how this publication is dedicated to giving in depth and unbiased coverage of the news. This is elaborated on with their goal to "publish trustworthy and informative articles written by academic experts for the general public and edited by our team of journalists" (Who we are, *The Conversation*), which shows how this publication wants to report specifically from an academic and scholarly perspective. Meanwhile the author himself is an "Assistant Professor of International Security at the Institute of International & Civil Security (IICS), Khalifa University of Science & Technology in Abu Dhabi, UAE. He earned a Ph.D. in Political Science with an emphasis on International Relations at the University of Utah, USA (2009)" and a published author, specializing in East African politics (Brendon J. Cannon, *The Conversation*). With these kinds of credentials and purpose, it shows to readers that Cannon, while being incredibly qualified to discuss this issue, is also not biased toward either Turkey or Somalia and merely seeks to present the issue in an academic and informative way. That being said, this also establishes both himself and *The Conversation* as lacking the credibility of a Turkish or Somali inside perspective on the topic at hand.

The second artifact on the other hand, TRT World's youtube video entitled "Why is Turkey investing in Somalia?", has both the credibility of an established news organization and an incredibly Turkish perspective to both its detriment and benefit. TRT World is a Turkish based news organization that aims to cover global affairs with particular focus on Turkish affairs for their audience of "global citizens" in order to provide "new perspectives on world events to a

global audience” (TRT World, About Us). In comparison to *The Conversation*, TRT World makes itself out to proudly be a more Turkish perspective on world affairs with a more traditional journalistic approach rather than a more academic one. TRT World in its mission to introduce and educate the world on Turkish issues and the Turkish perspective, indicates to readers that its source is going to be more generally informative than analytical, while being credible but also quite Turkish focused. This makes TRT World appear as a somewhat biased source, while also granting it the credibility of having a better understanding of the Turkish perspective when it comes to Turkey’s investments in Somalia; an understanding that’s essential for both artifacts’ audiences.

An analysis of the audiences these two artifacts are writing for further demonstrates the similar yet still contrasting approaches to this topic and how the audience they’re aiming for makes it more clear as to what their respective purposes are. Their perspectives on this matter truly become evident when one examines within the writing of these two artifacts who their audience is and what they’re trying to have their audience understand. The Cannon article for instance is already known to, based on analysis of the ethos, attempting to reach a global audience and present information on current events from an academic and impartial way. Additionally, Cannon specifically assumes his audience has heard of the topic but desires further details about it. This is made obvious by Cannon describing how “Turkey’s presence in Somalia certainly embodies one of the most interesting regional geopolitical developments in the past decade. It also represents one of the most misunderstood and confusing” (Cannon) which makes it clear that he is appealing to an audience that is involved with or simply interested in international affairs who would also agree on the importance of this topic. Cannon follows this with “Why did Turkey choose Somalia? And, after its initial humanitarian intervention in 2011,

what internal and external forces have shaped and expanded that involvement? Furthermore, what explains Turkey's reported triumphs" (Cannon). In asking these rhetorical questions, Cannon indicates that while he expects his audience to be somewhat familiar with Turkey's investment in Somalia, he also expects them to still have questions about this matter and what its implications are, good and bad. While Cannon seems to be writing to a general audience that isn't as knowledgeable of Turkish or Somali foreign relations, the TRT world artifact makes it clear how general the audience they're aiming for is. TRT World once again has a similar mission to Cannon when it comes to their reporting, however, TRT World is reporting for an audience that has little to no knowledge of Turkish-Somali relations and they seek to provide this audience with a Turkish-centric introduction to the topic at hand. The very opening of the TRT world piece alludes to how uninformed they believe their audience to be on the subject by introducing it with, "There is a country where lots of girls get named Istanbul and boys Erdogan. It's got the largest Turkish embassy in the world, is filled with Turkish hospitals and schools, and many of its people adore Turkey, some can even speak Turkish. But this country isn't one of Turkey's neighbours or even in the same region. That's right, Somalia"(TRT, 0:00-0:23). By introducing this topic as if someone has no knowledge of Turkey's involvement in Somalia, as evidenced by the general facts about Turkey's influence in Somalia and even the line "In case you haven't heard, Turkey and Somalia are really good buddies" (TRT, 0:23-0:27), TRT World is simply introducing this topic to someone who has little awareness of it and even someone who has little knowledge of global affairs in general. This means that while the Cannon piece is attempting to provide a more nuanced, detailed, and academic perspective on the matter, TRT World is presenting this topic in a very introductory and broad manner with the clear intention of introducing it not just from the Turkish perspective but in a very pro-Turkish light.

When looking at the presentation of the topic given by the two artifacts, one can look at ethos and audience to get a clearer idea as to what their respective purposes are, but it's in analysis of their greatly differing tones that their true goals become blatantly obvious. What has become increasingly evident after analysing the ethos and audience of the two pieces is that the Cannon piece is attempting to provide a more detailed and impartial account of Turkey's involvement in Somalia while the TRT World piece aims to report on this topic from a Turkish perspective that it hopes to share with those who are not as exposed to Turkey. A perfectly good example of the differences in how the two present the topic at hand to their audiences via tone is when they both describe Turkey's opening of a military base in Mogadishu, Somalia, with Cannon describing how "Turkey's recent opening of a military training base in Mogadishu to train the Somali National Army has also raised eyebrows across the wider Horn of Africa region" (Cannon). Meanwhile, TRT World boasts how "Turkey just recently opened its largest overseas military training facility in Mogadishu where they can train more than 1,500 Somali troops at a time. And the investment is paying off. Turkey has earned the appreciation of the Somalis who see Turkish support and aid all around them" (TRT, 2:36-2:54). One can read these two different interpretations of the military base and understand that Cannon even in this instance is showing the matter in a more complex and subtle light, by not outright damning the base but merely alluding to how it is worrisome for both Turkey and the region it's invested in. TRT World on the other hand is clearly looking at the matter from a far more positive and light hearted perspective, omitting any description of the detriments that come with the base and presenting it as being overtly beneficial for Turkey and Somalia. Cannon's critical and academic tone contrasts with TRT World's optimistic and pro-Turkish tone when discussing the humanitarian aspect of Turkey's involvement in Somalia. Cannon states that "Its (Turkey's)

status in Somalia is part humanitarian and part financial, but is at its heart about influence and prestige” (Cannon) while TRT World simply declares that “While Turkish officials express that it is out of humanitarian duty that they’re helping rebuild Somalia, it’s a win-win for both sides” (TRT, 2:57-3:05). Cannon overall is using a more academic and critical yet delicate tone when describing the matter while TRT World besides appearing as very supportive of Turkey, utilizes a very informal, optimistic, and at times somewhat juvenile tone when discussing this matter. Cannon uses his tone, in tandem with ethos and audience, to emphasize that Turkish involvement in Somalia has both imperiling and promising outcomes, while TRT World uses its tone alongside ethos and audience to introduce Turkey’s investment in Somalia as an overwhelmingly and mutually advantageous venture.

Regardless of one's perspective on Turkish investment in Somalia, these two artifacts using ethos, audience, and tone make their purposes on this matter clear and in doing so hope to have their audiences understand and share their perspective. The three rhetorical devices they utilize above all work together to establish what their specific purposes are in how they cover this topic. They also give an excellent example as to how important purpose is for an audience to care about and understand what an author is saying. With both perspective and purpose, these artifacts when analysed together present how when an audience is aware of an author’s goal, it can make their message more meaningful to the audience since they know where that message is coming from. In this way, these two artifacts demonstrate together the importance of outlook in covering and discussing topics and how regardless of the biases in an outlook, an audience can be more compelled by the content of a piece if they understand why, to who, and how they’re approaching a particular topic.

Works Cited

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