

Red Tide Ride

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Pull Quote: “By translating an ethos and logos-based article to a pathos-based song, I discovered the importance of questioning the purpose, audience, and conventions to know which mode of persuasion to employ when writing in any genre.”

For this assignment, I translated the educational web article, “Red Tide: Everything You Need to Know,” by Dashel Pierson into a song called “Red Tide Ride.” In the article, Pierson explains what red tides are, their causes, and their effects. Using this information, I found that I had raw material to build a song with. Although both works share the subject of oceanic red tides, their main purposes differ due to the nature of their genres. For example, the article is educational and its tone informative, as its purpose is to explain the phenomena of red tides. On the other hand, I made the song’s purpose to captivate and entertain the audience through the alternative lens of pathos while still employing key information from the article in the lyrics. Instead of just listing facts about red tides, I gave the phenomena a more mystical power, shedding light on how it can make humans feel. In my song, I contrast the deep emotions of joy and elation from seeing the mystic bioluminescence of the tides at night with their murderous and bloody tendencies by including phrases like, “more than 100 dead in Monterey” to achieve the purpose of captivating the audience.

Notable differences between the article and my translation are the rhetorical and textual conventions. For instance, Pierson structures the article in a question-and-answer format, using complete sentences with proper grammar. Conversely, I formatted “Red Tide Ride” as a song – with multiple verses, a bridge, and a chorus that is repeated three times. Furthermore, the song

lyrics contain no periods, and they include many “improper” words with chopped off endings such as: “nothin,” “sittin,” and “somethin.” Moreover, the song contains significantly more figurative language and literary devices than the educational article, looking and feeling more poetic. Furthermore, I have created a musical tab for “Red Tide Ride” online. In the tab, I include musical information about the song, such as that it is in the key of G and standard guitar tuning (EADGBE). Also, I outline all of the chords and the different forms of the chords I use, showing how to play them on guitar. I strategically placed each chord letter above the words directly where the chord changes in the song. By doing this, I have expanded the songwriting aspect of the song, as my writing now includes direct musical information of how to play the song. The tab can be found through the link listed at the end of this piece. This addition proves to be another difference between my song and the article, as the informative article does not include any musical information. The textual and rhetorical conventions of both texts reveal major differences between these genres.

Audience plays another important role in the translation of the article and demonstrates a difference between the genres. In the article, published on *Surflife* (a surf forecasting website), Pierson writes towards an audience of surfers, as well as others who are interested in learning the basics of red tides. By translating the article into a song, I appeal to a wider audience as virtually everyone listens to music. I made the song lyrics suit this general audience by using simpler diction, similes, and metaphors such as “like flowers of the ocean” to relate to a broadened audience. By creating a guitar tab on the very popular site *Ultimate-Guitar.com*, a lyrical annotation on the platform of *Genius.com*, and uploading a video of my performance of the song on YouTube, “Red Tide Ride” is now readily available to the public. However, more focused audiences may develop for the song, as “Red Tide Ride” contains educational information about

red tides in a playful form. For example, by including terms like “dinoflagellate bioluminescence,” the song can be employed in an educational science video to a targeted audience of teachers and students. A targeted audience of oceanographers and surfers may also form, as they are people that are most intimately involved with the phenomena of red tides.

While integrating information from the primary text into the song lyrics, I had to be selective in what to include. Keeping in mind that my song was focused on pathos, I chose pieces of information that I could integrate into the song to give it a more emotional appeal. For example, I often played on the extremes that the article provided. I quickly mentioned that red tides are typically relatively harmless to humans, but I emphasized the couple dozens of species of harmful phytoplankton that can form red tides in my second verse to play on the destruction they can bring. I chose to incorporate a few scientific terms such as, “phytoplankton,” “dinoflagellate bioluminescence,” and “Harmful Algal Blooms” to echo the primary article, but I did not overuse these terms, as heavy scientific jargon does not belong in a song with a wider audience. Furthermore, I excluded information from the article such as where red tides are most frequent and if there have been more bouts of red tide recently, as I did not find that information helpful in creating an appeal to pathos in my song. The purpose of captivating a wide audience in my song heavily influenced what I chose to incorporate from the primary article.

During this genre translation, I encountered numerous challenges. My main challenge was beginning to compose lyrics and building an idea for a song. I found it hard to know what direction to take with the song when the article I started with was scientific and informative in nature. However, an extremely helpful tactic I used was first order thinking. By letting my intuitive, creative writing flow onto the paper without structure to get my ideas down, I overcame the challenge of building an idea for a song. After creating several lines, I began to

sort the lines and form distinct verses, one of which I picked to be my chorus, which really helped to give shape and direction to the rest of the song. By then applying second order thinking and analyzing my lines, I created a structure, flow, and form to the song.

Another challenge I came across was translating the somewhat boring article into an exciting song that makes the audience brightly imagine the phenomena of red tides. My main tools to overcome this challenge were literary devices: imagery, similes, metaphors, and personification. For example, the personification of bleeding algae creates not only startling imagery for the red algae, but it also plays on the algae's harmful tendencies by attributing it a gruesome personality. I created the main theme of opposition in the song, as I contrast this bloody-red personality with the "electric blue" glowing bioluminescence of the waves at night that "light up hearts all around" and show the joy of the red tides. I believe this theme of opposites—red vs. blue, sadness vs. happiness, destruction vs. light-creating—solved many of my translation challenges, as it created a pathway for me to evoke deep pathos and explain the positive and negative effects of red tides.

By translating an ethos and logos-based article to a pathos-based song, I discovered the importance of questioning the purpose, audience, and conventions of a piece of writing so I could figure out which mode of persuasion to employ when writing in any genre. In his article, Pierson uses the logos of scientific research and the ethos of scientist Katie Day to effectively communicate the purpose of the article: explaining the phenomena of red tides. On the other hand, with my purpose of captivating the imagination of the audience, I found that pathos was the best mode to capturing the audience's attention, as pathos reaches the emotional core of humans. Moreover, during this process I learned how diverse and creative songs are as a genre, particularly when compared to educational web articles. Before beginning the translation, when

researching the lyrics to some of my favorite songs, I observed that there are not many limitations in songwriting. The writer may use any language he or she desires and does not even have to write coherently to achieve their purpose. Conversely, with the web article I saw the contrast of how this genre uses a straightforward mode of presenting information, which wisely places a lot of limitations on the author of the article so that the reader can clearly understand the text. This taught me how limitations, such as limitations on using abstract language and complicated metaphors, can be good while writing educational and academic pieces, as it helps the author achieve the purpose of their text. However, I learned that in some genres (like poetry) it is better not to have limitations, giving the writer full creative authority—a difference that further reinforces the importance of genre.

When making this genre translation, the main concern I had in mind was forming a song and following songwriting conventions. To do this, I did research on other song lyrics to see if there were any common ideas or conventions I could follow. For example, a common theme I noticed in songwriting was repetition, so in the chorus and all verses of “Red Tide Ride,” I included repetitive lines beginning with “this red, red tide” or “some red, red tides.” Furthermore, I asked questions such as, “how do I relate to my audience?” “what will the structure of my song look like?” and “have I incorporated the conventions of this genre in my song?” to choose what to incorporate from the article. As I mentioned earlier, I believe one of the most valuable skills I have learned in Writing 2 is first and second order thinking, which I relied on heavily to write this song. Utilizing the skill of writing stream-of-consciousness creative ideas on paper and then organizing them critically, was extremely valuable to my process. By using these skills, examining both genres’ purposes, and asking questions, I not only created the song

“Red Tide Ride,” but I further learned about the importance of examining the differences between genres and questioning my own writing to create a successful translation.

In my revision of “Red Tide Ride,” I did not alter my lyrics significantly, as I really like how they portray red tides and flow as a song. One of my main changes was altering the first two line of the second verse from, “Most are relatively harmless / But there are some up to no good for us,” to, “Relatively harmless, yes most species are / But several dozen of these buggers can make livin life quite hard.” I like these two lines better, as they rhythmically flow better and match each other with the near rhyme of “are” and “hard.” Moreover, by referring to the harmful phytoplankton species as “buggers,” I personify them as a negative entity, a detail which my previous lines did not have. I made multiple other small adjustments to my lyrics to create a sense of flow in the song.

As mentioned earlier, I created a musical tab for “Red Tide Ride,” which strengthens my translation more as it now fully includes the musical components of the song, which is very important in songwriting. Furthermore, I have uploaded and annotated the lyrics to Genius.com, where I highlighted and commented on my lyrics directly. My annotations reveal the direct connections between my lyrics and the article, as I explain further factual background information that my lyrics pertain to. Finally, I have uploaded a performance of the song to YouTube. I am very grateful for this final chance to revise and expand my piece, as it has been an amazing and creative journey. I have learned a lot, and I am proud to say I have written and performed my first song.

Work Cited

Pierson, Dasher. “Red Tide: Everything You Need to Know.” *Surflife*, 10 May 2018, www.surflife.com/surf-news/red-tide-everything-need-know/23478.

Author Profile: I love to surf, spend time in nature, listen to music, and play guitar. When I was assigned this project, the coast of Southern California filled with red tide algae blooms. Naturally, my interests inspired me to write this song about the ocean and the wild joy and inspiration it brings.