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Backpacks vs. Briefcases Discussion

Critical Questions:

Where is rhetoric work used in today's media seen largely, as stated by Laura?

Why is rhetorical work crucial to understand?

Analyzing rhetorical situations is essential for understanding the reasoning behind them and their origin. Rhetorical situations come in many different forms including in the form of both questions and statements. From a personal perspective there has been such situations coming from the use of social media that most of the time pertain to the ability that social media usage has to be able to change the views of its users.

Evaluating rhetorical usage in our world can help shape the process of understanding the reasoning behind their usage. This process of evaluating their usage helps in analyzing how and why a rhetorical statement was made. In page 47 of the short-written work titled “Backpacks vs. Briefcases” by Laura Bolin Carroll, Laura goes over the importance of understanding media rhetoric, and how that when one refuses to stop for a moment to understand how and why it can persuade them, that there can be a chance for them to become “mindless consumers” in the way that they question their self-worth. This can be seen in many online advertising commercials, including in a video on the YouTube social media platform titled “In e.l.f we Trust | e.l.f Cosmetics Game Day Commercial 2024” published by the e.l.f. Cosmetics channel, where it

shows Judge Judy roleplaying as “Judge Beauty”, and how she found a defendant guilty for overspending on other products and sentenced them to an “affordable” 14 dollar makeup product being advertised. This gives a clear example of how evaluating rhetorical usage can help one refrain from questioning their personal needs and self-worth, with this case being sales in the mind of the advertiser.

Getting the context of a rhetorical situation is key to evaluating its reason of use. Context helps in understanding the circumstances that led up to an event and is used gain background information. Laura Bollin also shows this in page 48 leading to page 49 of “Backpacks vs. Briefcases”, stating how there are three parts used in understanding the context behind rhetorical work, and they include exigence, audience, and constraints. Laurel explains exigence as the cause behind a motive or response, audience as those that would be receiving the message either formally or informally, and constraints as limiters in rhetoric usage that come in the forms of many things such as morals, beliefs, and values. This gives one a good understanding of the usage behind rhetoric work when analyzed. This can be seen in political propaganda on social media, including in a YouTube video published by CNN, a news media company, titled “‘Friendly Father’: North Korea releases new song praising leader Kim Jong Un”, that goes over North Korea in a “joyous” state with military and student personal dancing and appearing happy for the leader in a seemingly obvious way meant to enhance his political image. This is a great example of understanding context behind rhetoric work including the exigence where North Korea is seen as a depressive dictatorship-led country, the audience being people countries who know it’s background, and the constraints of aggression by not showing military weapons of which they are known to do in a way to seemingly show a force of power.

To conclude, the analyzation of rhetorical work is essential for understanding their reason of use. Rhetoric work is seen in many parts of the world we interact with, including social media as discussed. The more we take our time to understand the reasoning behind such work, the more likely we are to fully grasp how and why our world works the way it does.