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Rhetorical Analysis of Rob Greenfield’s Argument “Against” Veganism

“The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”

-Ghandi (Greenfield)

Rob Greenfield, the author of *An Argument Against Veganism… From a Vegan*, used this interesting quote in his blog on July 33, 2015. During this time, veganism, the environment, and meat consumption was a popular topic of debate. The article was originally published on his personal blog, RobGreenfield.tv. He runs this website to promote caring for the environment, mainly through a vegan diet. In the post, the author aims to validate meat consumption in some cultures, but to also further emphasize the author’s belief in the importance of veganism in preserving the environment. In his article, the Greenfield utilizes strong diction, personal examples, and eventually a passionate style to effectively deliver his argument to vegans and non-vegans alike. (Greenfield)

The post’s title, *An Argument Against Veganism… From a Vegan*, seems to contradict itself at first (Greenfield). However, this was a tactful decision by the author to catch the attention of anyone who glances at the article. It gets the reader’s attention, but it raises several questions, predominantly with the vegan audience. To avoid alienating his supporters, Greenfield makes sure his stance on the issue is clear. For example, he explains that he “utterly [supports] eating vegan.” “Utterly” emphasizes his ironclad belief in eating vegan to further relate to a vegan audience (Greenfield).

The author liberally utilizes diction to inspire emotion in both categories of his audience. When he states the “complete disregard to animals being living beings,” he triggers the innate sense within most people that life has value. Other examples include: “the horrifying practices” instead of “bad practices”, “full of dangerous hormones” instead of “hormones”, and “are not created equal” instead of “are not the same” (Greenfield). Strong word choice is key in the debate over veganism. For vegans, the powerful statements might inspire them to answer Greenfield’s call to action. For open-minded non-vegans, it may cause them to question their eating habits and heed Greenfield’s advice for creating less waste. There is also a subtle use of word choice. The author states that “we do have a moral obligation.” “[D]o” adds a sense urgency to the phrase, an urgency that can be easily created in a speech but hard to replicate within an essay. It’s both an appeal to a person’s morals and a call to be more responsible. (Greenfield)

The examples the author provides supports the original purpose of the blog. Each example highlights the low environmental impact each culture’s food has. For example, he often refers to the transportation and plastic packaging of food needed in cities (Greenfield). Repeatedly bringing the environment issue to light focusses the argument to the environment, another emotional topic. The readers, including non-vegans, will now be more receptive to arguments framed around the environment. Since any visitors to the blog are likely to be environmentally conscious – considering the purpose of the website – they will be significantly affected by Greenfield’s points. (Greenfield)

The author changes his style after talking about the treatment of animals. It becomes a moving monologue. He “commends all vegans and vegetarians” and “everyone… who is reducing their meat consumption” (Greenfield). This leverages some of his status as a prominent activist to inspire the reader. The list of benefits of Greenfield’s lifestyle, both emotional and physical, helps guide audience’s inspiration, likely bringing them to seriously consider following some of his recommendations. (Greenfield)

Despite effective usage of emotion in the article, it contains some logical fallacies that severely affect his credibility. For example, he states that “creating cropland to grow plant-based food displaces animal populations.” However, earlier he stated that this displacement occurs to “feed the animals that we eat” (Greenfield). This partially invalidates the argument that veganism in cities is unsustainable. A reader of his blog, likely a sympathizer for Greenfield’s cause, pointed this error out in the comments section of the blog. (Greenfield)

Otherwise, *An Argument Against Veganism… From a Vegan*, energetically shares the author’s viewpoint on veganism. Greenfield’s diverse word choice suites his audience well by invoking emotions on both sides of the vegan movement. The well-presented examples further prove his point, tying cultural lifestyles with the environment. However, there were some logical fallacies that affect Greenfield’s credibility among the readers. Otherwise, Greenfield’s spirited style and speech-like conclusion moves the audience to sympathize or take up his viewpoint in the vegan debate. Through a passionate writing style and strategic use of personal anecdotes, Greenfield provides a strong defense for his viewpoint. (Greenfield)

Works Cited

Greenfield, Rob. “An Argument Against Veganism... From a Vegan.” *RobGreenfield.TV*, 23 July 2015, robgreenfield.tv/vegan/.