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

John Greenfield authored *An Argument Against Veganism… From a Vegan* on July 33, 2015. It was originally published on his personal blogsite, RobGreenfield.tv. He runs this website to promote caring for the environment, mainly through vegan diets. The primary audience are vegans and/or people who care about the environment. The vegan debate, especially when regarding the environment, tends to be an emotional issue. The post’s purpose is to validate meat consumption in some cultures, but also to further emphasize the author’s belief in the importance of veganism in preserving the environment. In his article, Rob successfully utilizes strong diction and a rebuttal to a counterclaim against veganism to enhance his points.

First off, Greenfield establishes that he is a supporter of veganism. Considering the title, *An Argument Against Veganism*, this was a smart addition to the post as to not alienate the vegan audience. He does this by passionately elaborating on his lifestyle using words with strong connotations. For example, he explains that he “utterly [supports] eating vegan.” “utterly” adds some extra {oompf} to further relate to a vegan reader.

Rob continued to effectively use diction to strengthen the emotional appeal throughout the article. When he states the “complete disregard to animals being living beings,” he triggers the innate sense within most people that life has value and should not be disregarded. It brings strong emotions to the reader, especially if they are sympathetic to vegan cause. 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.” A significant but subtle use of world choice happens when Rob states that “we do have a moral obligation.” The “do” 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 action.

That subtle phrase is also a rebuttal to the idea that we don’t have a moral obligation. This theme of rejecting the ideas of people who disagree with Greenfield perpetuates itself in many paragraphs. However, the main rebuttal is rather noticeable. Despite the title, and the fact that he gives four whole, detailed examples why meat consumption can be beneficial, it provides powerful lines of reasoning for his claim without invalidating veganism. In fact, it further validates veganism. The counter argument leads the audience to consider the impact of eating habits on the environment. By connecting the environment to eating habits, Rob puts the reader in a position where they are likely to consider the impact of their own personal habits on the environment. There are several other ways he uses the argument for meat to accentuate his points. He provides a counterclaim to the idea that the “moral obligation” makes humans “so elevated that even just the death of an animal by our hands is inhumane.” This provides a smooth transition that provides more ethical substance in his argument that human lifestyles directly affect the healthiness of the environment. In the end of his essay, Rob argues against the argument for meat, giving San Diego as an example of a location where meat eating greatly and negatively impacts the environment. Greenfield also uses a sizeable amount of logos to support any pathos fueled statements in his points.

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