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Between True to Academia and True to Life: The Rhetoric Behind Hirschauer's Writing

Subverting expectations, subverting roles. "Gender (In)Difference in Gender (Un)Equal Couples. Intimate Dyads Between Gender Nostalgia and Post Genderism" challenges the norms of both gender and academia. Stefan Hirschauer marries both *pathos* and *logos* techniques in academic writing to investigate how gendered couples use inequalities and equalities to create relational meaning between each other in an increasingly gender-indifferent world. Similar to how the author finds couples to both reproduce and dismantle the meaning of gender relations, Hirschauer is able to simultaneously maintain credibility and logic suitable for an academic paper while reflecting the sentimental reality of the topic.

To begin, Hirschauer's use of *pathos* reflects the emotional nature of intimate relationships as a means to build bridges between the author's points. Throughout the paper, it is not uncommon for a reader to experience epiphanies and gain understanding. This is because the writer's examples speak to a (mostly) universal experience, illustrating pictures that speak more than a thousand words could. For instance, when examining inequalities in relationships, Hirschauer cites Jean Claude Kaufmann and Cornelia Koppetsch's observations on gift exchanges between couples. The two authors find that within couples, love and intention render anything, from housework and affection, valuable by cultivating appreciation and a heartfelt desire to reciprocate those efforts (Hirschauer 313). Furthermore, inequality between the pair during a gift exchange marks a key feature of its symbolism. As Hirschauer wrote, "[The gift] is

devalued if it is immediately paid back in kind” (Hirschauer 313). With a concise statement, Hirschauer summarizes the key takeaway of his paragraph: the sincerity of giving without expecting anything in return is a gesture of care as much as the act on its own is *unequal*. Not only that, but the writer reframes the meaning of inequality to his audience from a charged connotation to a nuanced and interpersonal perspective, which he continues to reiterate continuing into the paragraph. Hirschauer mentions not all inequalities are strictly “socioeconomic differentials”; that other forms of inequality exist in power dynamics, including age, health, and gift-giving. (312). In doing so, Hirschauer effectively reframes the rhetorical situation; this is not a paper analyzing data points from an experiment, this is a paper dissecting human relationships. This shift in paradigm allows the writer to approach the topic with an experimental, yet realistic and practical angle. Moreover, Hirschauer has unlocked the paper’s potential to introduce a broader scope of possibilities both in topic and rhetoric with a simplistic, yet epiphany-inducing logical conclusion that marries *pathos* and *logos* together by applying reasoning to relations.

Furthermore, Hirschauer takes advantage of this assumed rhetorical situation by amplifying language that appeals to *pathos*. In a further paragraph discussing the increase in gender blindness in romantic relationships, Hirschauer highlights the dissolving distinctions between the concepts “heterosexual” and “homosexual”. The author does so by appealing to *pathos* when referring to the lack of a meaningful difference between a “lesbian” and a “lover”. In the words of the writer, “...the word ‘lesbian’ means little more than ‘lover,’ implying a willingness to affectively affirm another human being ‘warts and all’. This encompasses gender affiliation just as it does disabilities, hair colour, accent and countless other outrageous idiosyncrasies” (Hirschauer 327). In this example, not only is the tone illustrative and romantic,

but it also speaks to the emotions of people with close and intimate connections. In most of these connections, there is (ideally) admiration for one another's peculiarities and differences, much like the one expressed in Hirschauer's quote. Overall, although "Gender (In)Difference in Gender (Un)Equal Couples. Intimate Dyads Between Gender Nostalgia and Post Genderism" is categorized as a theoretical/philosophical paper, the practical examples of the phenomena Hirschauer describes are effective because as practical as they may be, they are also profound. A picture paints a thousand words, and in these instances, Hirschauer repeatedly chooses to paint the reader pictures of sincere and unbridled love and compassion. These rhetorical choices allow the author to connect to and persuade the reader that gender differences are increasingly irrelevant based on modern definitions of what it means to love somebody.

Moving on, throughout the paper, Hirschauer relies on induction, cause-and-effect, and decomposition- all elements of *logos* and reasoning (Indeed.com). For example, in a brief overview of the essay's various topics, Hirschauer describes the need for gender blindness within couples formed via gender distinction because such a transformation is necessary to personalize a relationship as much as possible (311). Within the paragraph on these ideas, the writer notes that "...gender is an obvious schema of complexity reduction that people reach for when encountering unknown persons..." (Hirschauer 317). Using the writer's logic, it follows then that once a person is in an intimate relationship with somebody, their partner is not an unknown person anymore, thus disrupting the need for gender as a category. Not only does the author assert that gender distinctions are impractical within established couples, but the writer also asserts that gender and gender relations alike are becoming obsolete in the face of movements for gender equality. To support these claims, the author continues to use inductive reasoning and places a stronger emphasis on cause-and-effect reasoning. According to Hirschauer, from the

19th century to the 21st century, gender stereotypes have gone from being enforced by “unequal divisions of labor” to being increasingly irrelevant (321). As the lines dividing the “two dimensions” get blurred, men and women are no longer constrained to one realm of labor but rather experience every step of life intertwined with each other for equality’s sake (Hirschauer 321). Because of these observations, the author poses the question: “If men and women are finally to be equal in every possible respect, then what is ‘hetero’ about a gender-unequal couple?” (Hirschauer 321-322). Among other things, Hirschauer’s use of rhetorical questions is far from an isolated instance but instead, a catalyst used extensively and effectively to emphasize the writer’s points. To a large extent, one can deduce from Hirschauer’s organization of topics the kinds of appeals to *logos* used throughout the paper that the author intentionally employs these techniques to create connections between complex ideas. For instance, the use of the word “hetero” in the last quote directly references a previous paragraph and serves as a segue to another related claim, further supporting this conclusion. In this way, the claims the writer presents are more digestible to academics and the general population alike.

In conclusion, Hirschauer’s unique techniques of employing *pathos* and *logos* to work together not only emphasize and support the author’s claims, but they also add a new dimension of life to an academic paper, fitting for its subject. Hirschauer’s work sheds light on the complexities of gender dynamics, encouraging readers to question the validity of gender norms in shaping romantic partnerships. Since this philosophy does not agree with the status quo, Hirschauer must employ both *logos* and *pathos* to connect with any reader that can understand an experience of love, no matter their political inclinations. Overall, Hirschauer’s thesis and execution serve as a call to action for individuals and couples alike to strive for genuine

connection and mutual respect, not just in intimate relations, but also in our day-to-day interactions by reminding the layman that even academic papers are written by people, too.

Works Cited

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