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Dogs Are the Best Rhetorical Analysis

Intro

It is pretty apparent in America that people's hearts have been stolen by dogs, both their own dogs and dogs who are considered internet sensations. Dogs are being praised and cared for like no other animal, while other innocent animals are being killed for meat and mistreated. Nicholas Kristof's essay regarding the difference in treatment of dogs and farm animals is effective because it captivates readers through the use of appealing to their emotions.

Lens

Emotional appeals is a lens through which writers use various methods to engage readers through connecting with the readers' emotions and making them feel for the subject of the essay. According to Robert Rowland, author of *Analyzing Rhetoric*, Aristotle proposed three different ways to persuade people. These methods are called logos, ethos, and pathos which translate to argument, credibility, and emotional appeal. Rowland claims that rhetoric carries no emotion, rather those who write rhetoric analyze values, needs, or symbols that typically correspond with strong emotional associations that can cause an emotional response (Rowland, 2012). According to rhetoric experts at the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill, the three most effective ways to pursue creating an emotional response include using storytelling, employing the correct emotions, and being authentic. Storytelling is typically the most common way to appeal to people's emotions, as it can help build empathy and sustain attention (LB, 2024). Authors can

successfully appeal to people's emotions through their word choice, examples, and language used in their writing. Using words with specific connotations relating to the specific emotion authors are trying to reach is also a beneficial strategy. (*Pathos, Logos, & Ethos*). There are numerous ways in which authors choose to appeal to their audience's emotions, most of which can be seen in rhetorical writings.

Analysis

The author of this specific essay does a wonderful job of appealing to the author's emotions. It begins by sharing delightful stories about dogs. The essay first begins by talking about how dogs outnumber children in the United States. According to Kristof, "97 percent of U.S. pet owners consider dogs (or other pets) part of their families." This is an incredibly high stat, showing how much pets mean to their owners. The author references other services and articles that can be purchased for dogs, including spa treatments, clothing, noise-canceling headphones for dogs scared of storms or other loud noises, high-end food, treats and food from dog restaurants and bakeries, and even specific plots at cemeteries that allow owners to be buried next to their pets. While the subject of how much dogs mean to humans takes up about the first page of the paper, it is not the main message being conveyed.

To introduce the main point of the article, the author states "Still, the point of this column isn't to highlight why dogs are the best people, but rather to highlight our hypocrisy: While we increasingly pamper our dogs, we blithely accept the torture of pigs." The first portion of the essay excites people and brings forth pleasant feelings. People are thinking about their dogs or other pets and specifically how much they love them. Kristoff shares statistics about just how much dogs mean to humans, creating feelings of happiness and joy for anyone who loves dogs.

Then, their happiness fades quickly as the main message of the article is revealed. The happiness and joy is turned into shame and hurt. Pigs, which are the main animal talked about in the remainder of this article, as well as other farm animals have similar characteristics as dogs. Each pig can have its own personality, just like dogs, and they also have a similar level of intelligence. So why are they not kept as pets? Why are they tormented and slaughtered for their meat if people shame eating dogs and other pets? The author uses this stark contrast to appeal to the reader's emotions, and he does so very effectively. His specific word choice makes the reader feel terribly sorry for innocent animals who are being hurt and killed for the benefit of humans. Strong language is used when comparing how dogs are neutered vs how pigs are neutered, which makes the reader almost feel the pain of the poor, innocent pig. Kristoff says, "In a nutshell, we indulge dogs and abuse hogs. A dog is neutered by a vet under anesthesia. A pig in an industrial hog barn often has his scrotum slit without anesthetic by a farmhand who then yanks out each testicle." This storytelling makes you empathize with any innocent animal that is treated poorly and makes you wonder what the point of this torture is. Another way in which the author compares dogs and pigs is by saying "Someone mistreats a dog and we'll call 911. But if a company tortures millions of hogs as a business model, we dine on its products, invest in its shares and honor its executives." The contrast between the treatment is a strong emotional appeal that makes any reader feel awful for these innocent animals. These things bring about emotions such as sadness, anger, and rage. There is no real answer as to why dogs are praised and farm animals are killed. Kristoff adds to his point by saying "Yet in general we draw a distinction between dogs and farm animals that is difficult to find a moral basis for." No one knows why this difference in treatment exists, and this essay will truly make people think as it appeals strongly to the reader's emotions.

Conclusion

This piece is incredibly effective at getting its point across. I believe it is an ethical piece. It focuses on unethical human behavior in a way that intrigues the reader and makes them think. While it may not make everyone happy, it is very eye opening. The point that the author brings forth is true- people favor dogs but are okay with other animals being treated terribly. The use of emotional appeals is what intrigued me when first reading this essay, and I believe this essay should be spread to more people, as it is an effective piece of writing.

References

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