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English 110C (ADD YOUR CRN)
Rhetorical Analysis
November 1, 2018
Word count: 1021

1. A clear introduction and thesis statement
   ___/10 pts
2. Explanation of Rhetorical Concepts:
   a. Description/definition of the concepts
      ___/10 pts
   b. Justification of usage by the student (e.g. why are these concepts appropriate?)
      ___/10 pts
3. Brief description/summary of documentary
   ___/10 pts
4. Identification - How the documentary uses these concepts, and how they are effective.
   ___/15 pts
5. Connection of analysis to theme of documentary (evaluation of documentary based on
   analysis, e.g. is it effective and the rebuttal)
   ___/15 pts
6. Conclusion
   ___/5 pts
7. Grammatically sound language
   ___/10 pts
8. Proper format (as discussed in class), including 1” margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt.
   font, at least 900 words, double-spaced, work cited page, and submitted in a pronged
   folder with brainstorming, rough draft with my notes (if you had a conference), and peer
   reviews (-15 points each if missing)
   ___/15 pts

Extra credit:

FINAL:
Mass Incarceration Explained Through Aristotle

The criminalization of African Americans is a trend in America today and in the past and Duvernay uses three rhetorical strategies in *13th* to implore the public to take action and realize what is happening in our country. By choosing to state her beliefs through a documentary, this gave viewers images and spoken language rather than an article with written words. Overall, the documentary provided a first hand look into the director’s stance. The documentary started by defining what the documentary is titled after, the 13th amendment. This is the amendment that freed the slaves in the United States. However, the events that followed this amendment being put in place did not live up to this freedom. The reasoning behind the extreme criminalization of African Americans originated almost out of necessity as the American economy in the late 1800’s revolved around slavery. The labor force in the entire country was made of slaves. This caused an influx of prison labor, which was, in essence, a new form of slavery. This new system increased the desire for more prisoners, most of whom were recently freed slaves thrown back into the same situation they just were removed from. The documentary *13th* was directed by Ava DuVernay and employs the use of ethos, pathos, and logos when discussing the issues of racism in American history and the present day. In doing this, the director attempts to persuade the target audience to agree and recognize her stance and beliefs when it comes to prejudice in America’s history.
Ethos is the use credibility or authority to convince an audience of a certain opinion or belief. There have been other events in American history that have continued to corroborate this theme, this included the War on Drugs, Jim Crow Laws, and the political campaign of being tough on crime throughout the 70’s, 80’s, and 90’s. In regards to the strategy the director uses to convey her theme, DuVernay uses credible speakers throughout the documentary. These speakers included Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Dr. Martin Luther King. These speakers draw upon points that *13th* agrees with and further strengthens her argument. These are all powerful leaders that have impacted the United States of America in some way. The documentary also can be considered more credible because it includes speakers that disagreed with the portrayed stance. For example, she also included Donald Trump’s thoughts and opinions that may have differed from the director’s. This shows that DuVernay is acknowledging views different than her own, ultimately causing her stance to be stronger because she is considering all sides of the argument. By using them in her documentary, DuVernay proves to her audience that the content of this documentary has been touched upon by major influencers in history, and has included conflicting views causing the audience to be more informed when making their decision and further inclined to side with what she is arguing.

Another strategy DuVernay uses in her documentary to persuade her audience is the use of pathos. Pathos is the appeal to one’s emotions in order to continue persuading the audience. In the documentary, there are clips featuring the KKK, drugs usage, and even lynching images. All of these cause the audience to become emotional over seeing the disturbing and upsetting images and clips and make the viewer want to take action. The director wanted to show the viewers how America has kept its back turned to African Americans in many ways, finding
loopholes to keep the racism alive. An example of this was the rampant segregation of races throughout the country as a result of the Jim Crow laws such as different bathrooms, bus seats, schools, and water fountains. As a result, the audience is more likely to side with DuVernay’s argument that although the 13th amendment was passed, this did not necessarily mean that African American community was freed from slavery and racism.

Finally, DuVernay uses logos in her documentary to persuade the audience to side with her views on American racism through history to today. Using logos by providing numbers and proven facts throughout an argument causes the argument to become stronger and less likely to be refuted. For example, DuVernay provides detailed information and statistics on incarceration rates, crime rates, demographics of the prison population, and the definition of the 13th amendment. These aspect of the documentary can be ultimately more effective because this research and proven facts can not be questioned. Therefore, viewers are provided with more than enough information to draw conclusions for themselves based on what the documentary has given them.

On the other hand, *13th* lacked to wholeheartedly acknowledge an opposing stance. The voice of current president, Donald Trump and executives at ALEC are heard but not in a professional sense. The audio clips and images of these individuals are used to mock them and portray them in an deceptive sense. This does not add to the credibility of the director’s argument because she only includes her own side of the story without acknowledging there are other possibilities. Furthermore this brings up the question of weather DuVernay and *13th*’s argument could really hold up against an opposing stance.
Overall, the documentary, *13th*, directed by Ava DuVernay is a powerful testament to how racism and prejudice is still a major problem the United States of America faces today. Throughout her documentary, DuVernay uses the rhetorical strategies ethos, pathos, and logos, to persuade the viewer to take a stand and create change. In conclusion. Ava DuVernay uses credible speakers to further reinforce the legitimacy of her argument and pushes for an end to the division in America. She also uses upsetting and controversial images and clips to draw upon the emotions of the people watching. Finally, DuVernay uses facts and statistics to solidify her argument and further persuade and prove her stance. And despite the lack of a strong representation and rebuttal to an opposing opinion *13th* still does a great job of persuading viewers of DuVernay’s take on the issue. In conclusion, as a society, we must rise and take initiative to stop recurring racism in the United States of America.

Reflection

In my rhetorical Analysis of the documentary *13th* there are multiple improvements I could have made. The most prominent one is that I did not include any direct quotes from the piece. Quotes are an important part of this style of paper because they help back up the points I am attempting to make. Due to the absence of quotes in my paper I also failed to make concrete connections to from the documentary theme to my analysis. Using such an important part of the particular style of writing would have greatly improved my paper.