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Rhetorical Analysis: *What the Health?*

Has anyone ever thought that these diseases like diabetes and heart disease could come from diet alone? In this rhetorical analysis, the use of ethos, pathos, and logos are shown to be highly prevalent and used in many ways by the directors. The documentary *What the Health* creates a very strong persuasive argument that an animal-based diet is the cause of an amplitude of health issues by using many different examples of ethos, pathos, and logos throughout the film.

What the Health is directed by Kip Anderson and Keegan Kuhn, who set out to find the truth about the animal agriculture industry and how it is affecting the health of everyday consumers. Hitting the road, they begin to investigate how diet and certain diseases like diabetes and heart disease are linked to processed meat and the animal agriculture industry. They connect with many different people, some suffering from an amplitude of health issues, and even talk to residents of small communities that are victims of the animal agriculture industry and its effects on the environment. While interviewing many health organizations like the American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association, Anderson and Kuhn find out the truth about what these health organization are hiding from everyday consumers.

Ethos can be described as an appeal to ethics or showing the credibility and trustworthiness of someone or something specific. The use of Ethos in *What the Health* is appropriate in the sense that this Anderson and Kuhn are not doctors or medical professionals and do not have any credibility when it comes to discussing health related issues, like diabetes and heart disease. The directors use an amplitude of doctors and professionals who are extremely educated about diet, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease to establish the credibility of the documentary and to strengthen the argument. In just the first 10 minutes, there are at least 4 different doctors correcting previously universally accepted information that was just an untrue social normal. There is also the presentation of very quick, but to the point news reporters presenting information that doctors researched. The presentation of these news reporters, doctors, and professionals that are all extremely educated is effective because it provides information that not only strengthens the argument that is trying to be made, but it also gives information that the audience can believe to be true and reliable.

Pathos can be described as an appeal to a viewer or reader's emotions. The use of Pathos in this documentary is appropriate, because it helps strengthen the main argument that the animal agriculture industry in America is not only negatively affecting the environment, but it is affecting consumer's health and lives negatively. Anderson and Kuhn use Pathos by giving visuals of parents feeding their children cigarettes as a comparison to processed meat and introducing in real people who are suffering from multiple health issues that are believed to be a result of their diet that consists of animal products. Just these examples alone are enough to persuade viewers that animal agriculture is negatively affecting all walks of life and our own families. In the beginning of the film, Kip Anderson states, "If processed meat is labeled in the same group as cigarettes, how is it even legal for kids to be eating this way" (*What the Health*,

Anderson)? Anderson uses this to appeal to the audience's, and especially parents' emotions. This is an extremely effective way to grab more support for the argument, because parents essentially have complete control over what their kids eat and can easily help them ditch all animal products from their diet, which adds to the argument that is trying to be made.

Logos is described as an appeal the logical side of an argument or subject by showing facts, statistics, or any reasoning that is universally accepted. An argument can be considered more believable if there are facts or reasoning behind it to support it. Anderson and Kuhn do a fantastic job using logos in this documentary by using a tremendous number of statistics and number-backed facts to show the audience that his statements and claims are accurate and can also be proved. Logos is appropriate in this documentary because trying to persuade the audience that animal products are doing more bad than they are good for people's bodies and even the environment is a big stretch, since it has been such a normal in society for centuries. The vast variety and amount of the statistics and facts backed by professionals and doctors appear throughout the film, providing the most strength to support the argument being made. In the first minute of the film, Dr. Robert Ratner from the American Diabetes Association makes the statement, "Worldwide, we're looking at approximately 350 million people with diabetes. Right now, 1 in 3 Medicare dollars is spent on the care of people with diabetes, and 1 in 10 total healthcare dollars is spent on people with diabetes" (*What the Health*, Anderson). Here, Dr. Ratner gives these statistics to enhance the problem and show just how many people it has affected, and to also grabs the audience's attention. This is effective, because it immediately draws in the audience, and leaves them wondering why that statistic is relevant. The presentation of multiple statistics in this film gives the audience the confirmation that this is a strong fact-backed argument.

As a rebut, this documentary did have a few flaws that could weaken the overall goal of persuasion. The use of ethos, pathos, and logos in this documentary helped to create a strong argument, however, there was an excess of logos and ethos in this documentary that could very easily overwhelm the audience. With more of a balance of the three, the persuasive goal of this documentary could be more successful, as there would be less information to take in, and the audience could easily compare all three argumentative techniques to decide if they were persuaded.

To conclude, Anderson and Kuhn have created a very strong, persuasive argument to prove the fact that an animal-based diet is primarily the cause of serious health issues and diseases like diabetes and heart disease. With the use of ethos, pathos, and logos, the argument is strengthened tremendously and shows that the directors truly are passionate about their side of the argument and having techniques to prove themselves in this documentary. This documentary is extremely effective in presenting the argument it is trying to make, and in persuading the audience to essentially rethink their dietary choices and resort to a plant-based diet for their own good health. The amplitude of the ethos, pathos, and logos in this documentary that was used has the potential to grab the audience's attention in just the first minute. The argument is very strong and fact-based, allowing it to be more persuasive than if only one technique alone was used.

Work Cited

Lunsford, Andrea A., et al. *Everything's an Argument: with Readings*. Bedford/St Martins, 2016.

What the Health. Directed by Kip Anderson and Keegan Kuhn, A.U.M. Films, First Spark
Media, 2017.