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Rhetorical Analysis

What is fear? Why do we live in a world of fear that dismantles our view of others? Does fear create tribalism in politics? Arash Javanbakht wrote an article, “The Politics of fear: How it manipulates us to tribalism”, on March 19, 2016, detailing the emotion of fear and how it has drastically become a weapon in society that overlooks logic both in human experiences and the obscenity of politics. Javanbakht discussed how fear has a major impact on the brain and how many experiences contribute to how people react to danger and tragedies. He also goes on to introduce the term ‘tribalism’ and how it has drastically shifted people’s views for years not only in politics but in culture, race, religion, and nationality. Javanbakht’s article proficiently establishes credibility and emotion, as well as reason by giving examples and logic of his own to create a persuasive argument for his audience.

The article’s audience would be targeted towards young adults and readers who have also misunderstood politics and the use of power it has over society. The article itself is on a website, *88-Open Essays- A Reader for Students of Composition & Rhetoric*, dedicated to students giving them access to many essays, which in turn makes this article one for young adults. The article also addresses many of the flaws held in politics. This reflects how readers misunderstand the truth of many issues revolving around the world and in certain groups held in society.

One of the main appeals Javanbakht uses in his article would be pathos, which is detailed in the article to support his argument of fear in politics. For example, in the first paragraph he makes an intro that is strong of emotion by stating, “The cruel murder of 50 people in New Zealand was another tragic reminder how humans are capable of heartlessly killing their own kind just based on what they believe, how they worship, and what race or nationality they belong to” (Javanbakht). He appeals to using this as his first sentence to bring out emotion in the reader and to grasp onto the unjustifiable behaviors in the world he classifies as inhumane. He also brings out frustration and anger by stating, “some politicians have managed very well to create virtual groups of people that do not communicate and hate without even knowing each other: This is the human animal in action!” (Javanbakht). By expressing his own emotion, the reader can grasp the effect of tribalism and how it has deterred people to believe what they believe is the truth especially when it comes to politics. He also expresses a logical standpoint when he conversed with a soldier, he recited, “A soldier once told me: ‘It is much easier to kill someone you have never met, from distance. When you look through the scope, you just see a red dot, not a human’” (Javanbakht). This validates his point on how fear is the main conductor in how we perceive others and how brutal politicians use their power to denote what ‘danger’ is.

Javanbakht also provides credibility throughout the article, which also builds on his use of pathos and logos. For example, in the beginning of the article he claims, “I am a psychiatrist and neuroscientist specializing in fear and trauma, and I have some evidence-based thoughts on how fear is abused in politics” (Javanbakht). With the author being a psychiatrist and neuroscientist, it builds on his use of ethos and pathos. Javanbakht establishes pathos in this statement by his use of the topic for the article which establishes how deeply he feels about the subject of fear. He also gains trust and credibility by being a psychiatrist and neuroscientist making the reader rely more

on his information he provides for the article. It also credits his use of logos due to it backing up his research of the subject of fear and how affecting it can be on the brain. He brings in his own knowledge when he states, “One is that logic is slow; fear is fast. In situations of danger, we ought to be fast: First run or kill, then think” (Javanbakht). He emphasizes based on what he knows as a psychiatrist and his basic knowledge builds on pathos and ethos because it is a reliable source he provides for the audience, and he connects the audience to situations of fear and experiences they may have had. This statement also uses logos because Javanbakht states evidence to perceive that fear is a “fight or flight” response by claiming, “That response has helped us survive the predators and other tribes that have wanted to kill us” (javanbakht).

Logos is present in the article; it is annotated through the use of Javanbakht’s own logic and examples. For instance, when he states, “Evidence from cultural neuroscience shows that our brains even respond differently at an unconscious level simply to the view of faces from other races or cultures” (Javanbakht). This demonstrates his use of logos because he is detailing a case study of the brain that is a physiological behavior. This details Javanbakht’s use of the term ‘tribalism’ and how he believes it has shaped humans not only mentally but in reality, too. His use of logos with his own logic and examples allows the reader to further understand the fear present in society and how affecting it can be.

Ultimately, the article “The Politics of Fear: How it Manipulates Us to Tribalism” details how fear is used in politics to oppose people against one another not only in communities but around the world as well. Arash Javanbakht wrote the article in the year 2016, a time where the political stances were severed by terrorism and society as a whole. This details how the audience for the article would have been against oppression and war during the time the article was

published. The author made an effective article by appealing to credibility, giving emotion, and using reason to persuasively gain the audience.

Work Cited

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