

It is time to consider the lobster: the strategy of david wallace

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In David Foster Wallace's article, *Consider the Lobster*, Wallace starts this article off explaining the festival he was attending, known as Maine Lobster Festival. Wallace starts by explaining what the Maine Lobster Festival is all about, from the crowd that is drawn in right down to the exact ways the lobsters are treated. He also uses this article to show and turn the readers to the cruelty that the lobsters endure for people's entertainment. Wallace's main point is to try and provoke the readers in the morality of cooking and eating of any animals.

"We do not have direct access to anyone or anything's pain but our own"

Wallace uses this quote in the article *Consider the Lobster* which brings the tone throughout the article as aggressive and all around bothered by the topic on the way animals, but mostly lobsters are treated. There are parts of the article that show the direct focus of aggressiveness and being bothered especially when he starts to talk about the way they are handled and how people do not really see anything wrong with how they are cooked, along with them being able to feel and have human reactions to being boiled.

Wallace uses the aggressive tone, to get his point across when stating that it is wrong on the way that us humans treat animals for our own pleasure and entertainment, not only does he have that tone throughout the article you can also get the sense of him just being all around bothered. "... from which you can pick out your supper while it watches you point..." Wallace not only seems to be bothered by the way the animals are cooked but also by the way that the festival is ran, and that people are still attending it without seeing a problem with it. Wallace also brings up the point about this being a part of a cultural divide, by stating that lobster used to be seen as a lower

class meal and now they are holding an entire festival surrounding the idea of cooking and eating live lobsters for an entertainment and tourist attraction.

When you begin to read the article you are not sure what to expect or where this is going to go, every sentence seems to contradict the last or not make any sense to why it is being put in there. Wallace begins with talking about the festival and what it does, along with how it attracts people to the area, his main point throughout the article always circled back to the point of it being wrong and inhumane with how the lobsters are treated. Although, Wallace supports his argument about it being wrong to cook lobsters alive he also adds in the fact that many people try and defend it by saying that it does not matter because the lobsters themselves can not feel pain. " We do not have direct access to anyone or anything's pain but our own". When Wallace uses that statement he is showing us that not everyone believes the way they are handled matters because they do not believe they can feel pain, but Wallace strongly uses pathos in the middle of the Consider the Lobster.

He uses pathos when he explains what happens at the Maine Lobster Festival and compares it to how a Nebraska Beef Festival could be played out as, by saying " at which part of the festivities is watching trucks pull up and the live cattle get driven down the ramp and slaughtered right there..." this is used as a way to play off the likeliness to feel bad for the cattle and how that would never happen, which in the long run is no different than the way the lobsters are being handled, differently. Using pathos, Wallace is able

to pull at the heartstrings of the readers by referencing those two topics, many people do not reference to eating a cow when they are eating beef because of the attachment it gives to the meat. Except when they are referencing to lobsters they do not think anything different about it because as Wallace states “ the point is lobsters are basically giant sea-insects”, because of that many people do not bring any attachment to it and do not think twice about eating it, just because it is not a household animal people do not really think there is anything wrong with eating it but say it was a household animal that would be a whole other topic and probably not as common as it is now.

In the article Wallace is back and forth on arguing the points of animals not feeling any pain, to how the animals are used to be tortured as an entertainment purpose and or a gourmet meal for the people, but I believe Consider the Lobster was written to really make you think about the way we all treat animals. Wallace begins to explain the process of what the lobsters and of the chefs who are cooking them have to go through. Not much thought goes behind the cooking of them and everyone just sees it as a gourmet or out of the ordinary main meal. After reading and figuring out But, throughout Consider the Lobster, Wallace makes many main points in supporting his claim that the morality behind cooking and eating lobster is wrong. He makes it very clear that it is an ethical issue with cooking the lobsters. “ The lobster in other words, behaves very much as you or I would behave if we were plunged into boiling water” using this statement gives the

readers a sense of guilt for comparing such a human reaction to an animal, and how the thought of it would make anyone uncomfortable.

“ A detail so obvious that recipes don’t even bother to mention it is that the lobster is supposed to be alive when you put it in the kettle” when he is talking about cooking the lobsters, Wallace shows that is just apart of the norm to harm the lobster without thinking about the animal itself, that goes to show that our culture has made it normal to inflict pain on the animals just to cook them and enjoy them. Wallace also states that many cooks will have to leave the room because they do not want to hear the process of cooking a live lobster. “ Or the creature’s claws scraping the sides of the kettle as it thrashes around” this quote alone shows how bothered Wallace is with the entire process of cooking the lobsters, as everyone should be. If the way we were cooking the lobsters was not wrong then the cooks would not have to leave the room. This does not always have to be only about lobsters, but can be used towards any animals, it is an inhumane way to treat animals.

My final thoughts with reading this article came to the simple fact of how we treat animals is inhumane, David Wallace proved that through Consider the Lobster. After reading this I believe that many people can see the bigger picture to something if they simply take the time and really understood the meaning to it. While Reading this article it really makes you sit back and open your eyes on the way we treat animals everyday. Wallace used an interesting strategy, while reading the article you never know what you are going to read next considering that Wallace was all over the place, leading up to the sensitive topic of animal cruelty that you didn’t see coming. This

forced the readers to read what else was happening behind the festival instead of it all being a great thing for tourists to do, this causes us to stop and think about everything that was stated in the article. Consider the Lobster was an interesting read because of all the things Wallace covered, from a festival, to how the animals are treated, and finally just the cultural divide between the classes. I believe this article can and will be used to show the way that humans treat any animal is wrong because it goes into details of what is happening when you cook a lobster and how inhumane it is. All and all this article was very well put even if it did not have a strong structure on where it was going next.