

Consider the lobster by david foster wallace essay example

[Food & Diet](#), [Cooking](#)



Summary

In the article Consider the Lobster, David Foster Wallace is quick to vividly describe how inhuman human beings are. He makes use of lobsters as an example and more specifically the Marine Lobster Fest which is a popular festival in which large quantities of lobsters are consumed. David begins by introducing the culture and tradition of the festival and then vividly describing the large number of lobsters available. He estimates the lobsters to be about twenty five thousand pounds, fresh and ready for human consumption. In the subsequent part of the article, he describes in detail how the lobsters are cooked and that the most widely used method of cooking lobsters is by boiling them. The fact that lobsters are cooked alive is disheartening and inhuman in all aspects and most recipes withhold this information although it is widely known. The lobster experiences unimaginable torture and pain during the cooking process due to the fact that it is mostly boiled alive. David makes use of a gloomy tone aiming at explaining to the reader the horrible experiences experienced by the lobster. He explains the unique sight and smell that is at the festival. He explains that in most cases people are absorbed by their environment and ignore that cooking an animal alive is being inhuman in all measures.

Critical Response

The main reason for writing the article was perhaps to expose the circumstances and acts surrounding the Marine Lobster Festival and the numerous moral implications that are associated with the festival. Wallace does not aim at teaching people how to think but rather encouraging them

how to be considerate. He challenges his obstinate readers by posing the question whether their refusal to engage in the thought process a product of their real thoughts or is it that they simply avoid thinking. This reveals that he aims at instilling a culture of critical thinking among his readers. He frequently uses a sarcastic tone in the article which he gets by the use of the long comments at the sides he places in the article occasionally together with the language that he uses to write the article. For instance, he highlights how people avoid mentioning that lobsters are dipped in batter when describing how healthy they are as a dish. Even in cases where he offers objective judgment and detailed insight about a situation, the following paragraphs is often a sarcastic explanation of the preceding detailed and objective information. In my opinion, I am of the view that Wallace chose a gloomy tone in order to point out how selfish and inhuman people are without making use of their critical thinking skills and without being rational. The post-modern moralist asks the question whether it is correct and moral to boil a sentient creature alive just to fulfill our gustatory pleasures.

Wallace's reason for writing this long article is to trigger people into thinking about lobsters and what they experience for the festival to come to fruition. He explains how they are caught, prepared/killed, and finally dished out to the awaiting crowd. He dedicates a entire section just to explain in great depth how the lobster is prepared, explaining the agony when the lobster is placed in boiling water and suddenly it appears to come to life. He aims at comparing how human beings would behave if exposed to similar circumstances as those of the lobster being prepared. He eve delves into

research work to establish if there are studies that investigate where lobsters have the capacity to feel pain although he does not give a precise answer. Throughout the article, he tries to convince everyone to “consider the lobster”. He also indicates that he is not trying to convince people to join PETA or join his school of thought, but instead wants to raise awareness on the issue. He takes one side of the argument throughout the article and does not come into a middle ground or compromise his position. He uses the article to persuade his readers while simultaneously avoiding being too demanding for them to take his side.

Evaluative Component

Wallace says that most recipes avoid highlighting that the lobsters are cooked alive because it is too obvious and because we don't like thinking about it and now he is about to make you think about it whether you want it or not. This is an argument exposing cruelty to animals and animal suffering in the whole article. Wallace intends to ensure that we understand that he is a just minded person. He explains how the lobster actually behaves when it tries to cling onto the container in order to avoid being put into the boiling water. He adds a lot of scientific information which confirms that he has read a lot concerning the subject with regard to animal suffering. A smaller plot for the article emerges> he goes for the festival, thinks about the lobsters, embarks on an intensive research which leads to shocking revelations on how the meat industry operates and the neuro-composition of a lobster which leads him to the writing of the article. He thinks what a lobster feels, its neurological structure, its pain and its view of the world. He cites various

experts in lobsters and in philosophy. He explains various alternative ways of cooking/killing lobsters and discusses them in detail.

The article is convincing because Wallace goes to the extent of citing philosophers and experts in lobsters. There is also some moral truth in what he states in the article and what he stands for. Wallace describes vividly how a lobster behaves when it is about to be boiled alive which is vividly a gruesome experience for it. The great detail in the process from capture to serving the lobster has been professionally written further revealing that Wallace researched intensively while writing the article and hence underlining the fact that his argument is convincing.

Works Cited

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David Wallace Consider the Lobster: And Other Essays Literary Criticism

Little, Brown Dec 1, 2005 Print.