

Critiqueassignment assignment

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The article which I will be critiquing on is titled ‘ For some, wounds will never heal’ written by Max Venables. It was published in “ The Sunday Mail” on 18 March 2007, p. 42. This article is about a former Prisoner of War’s views and his feelings about Australia’s Prime Minister’s agreement with Japan for a closer relationship and co-operation between the two militaries. I will be examining how the author put up his argument, using Aristotle’s rhetoric namely ethos, pathos, logos and fallacies. Ethos can be defined as sets of values held either by an individual or by a community, reflected through language, social attitudes and behavior.

The concept of ethos is divided into ‘ two interdependent concepts, Personality and stance’ (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 2005, p. 16). Personality is referred to as the image that was projected through interaction involving spoken or written persuasion. It is also defined as a projection of character traits of the writer matching the reader and the topic (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 2005, p. 28). Max Venables was a prisoner of war in Singapore during the occupation by the Japanese. He had personally gone through the suffering inflicted by the Japanese, hence making his view more credible and valid.

According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft, stance refers to ‘...something inherently interactive, reflecting group values but decidedly subject to the persuader’s own control’ (2005, p. 28). The author’s stance was negative as he did not like the idea of working closely with the Japanese. It can be seen in the quoted sentence in the article ‘...if I close my eyes, I can see, hear and smell a different Japan – a country I still can’t trust’ (Venables 2007, p. 42). It revived negative thoughts and feelings that he had personally experienced during the Japanese Occupation where he was a prisoner of war.

Pathos is defined as emotional appeal where graphical vividness is used to create images in the mind of reader thus arousing ‘strongly positive or negative connotations...’ in the reader (Cockcroft ; Cockcroft 2005, p. 62). ‘

Although pathos may be used to distract the persuadee from making a rational judgement on a specific issue, it may equally be used to give force and focus to rational argument’ (Cockcroft ; Cockcroft 2005, p. 79-80).

Emotions on hunger and dying are being provoked in the below few pointers.

...Changi PoW Camp took my youth, my dignity and my health’ (Venables 2007, p. 42) ‘ We were starved, bashed, and very sick on the working parties at Bukatima, digging foxholes’ (Venables 2007, p. 42) ‘ No lunch, so one man decided to eat something, He was spotted by a Japanese soldier and, in a rage, the Japanese emptied everybody’s food onto the road’ (Venables 2007, p. 42) Words such as starved, bashed, no lunch, sick arouses strong emotions and sympathy, hence able to win the readers’ empathy. Emotions on threats to a personal life is being stirred up in the below statements.

About August 10, 1945, while carrying the soil past a Japanese soldier, he said to me: “ If Singapore is invaded, you will carry the ammunition to the foxhole and we will shoot you...” (Venables 2007, p. 42) “ We have lost the war but we will come through the back door. “ (Venables 2007, p. 42) ‘...if I close my eyes, I can see, hear and smell a different Japan – a country I still can’t trust’ (Venables 2007, p. 42) Statements such as shoot you, come through the back door and a country I still can’t trust were being used hence arousing strong emotions where life is at stake.

Thus it is easier to win the reader’s empathy. Emotions on hurt and grieves is being projected in the statements below. ‘ I recently asked to have the

Japanese flag taken down from the Grand Hotel in Glenelg. ' (Venables 2007, p. 42) '...was told to purchase any goods, I would have to change my money to yen. It hurt' (Venables 2007, p. 42) Emotions on Nationalism and patriotism is being stirred up in the below few statements. ' I am not in favour of our Government giving Australia away to anyone. ' (Venables 2007, p. 42) ' John, you can be a friend without giving Australia's heart away. (Venables 2007, p. 42) ' I understand that the world has changed, but don't ask me to forget what happened just 65 years ago. ' (Venables 2007, p. 42) Statements like giving Australia away, giving Australia's heart away and forgetting what happen just 65 years ago had been used to arouse strong emotions of national identity and patriotism, hence able to win the readers' empathy. Logos is defined as ' the rational appeal' based on logic (Reinking 1999, p. 157). Reasons have to be substantiated by evidence in order to convince.

As one reasons, reasons and evidence needs to be presented so that readers will be more likely agree, or at least see it as plausible. Evidence can be classified in the following categories: established truths, opinions of authorities, primary source information, statistical findings and personal experience. The strongest arguments usually combine several kinds of evidence. In the article, there are two type of evidence visibility used by the writer, respectively established truth and personal experience. Established truth can be defined as facts that no one can seriously dispute. This week Prime Minister John Howard signed an agreement for regional co-operation and a closer relationship between the Australian and Japanese militaries' is something that had already been signed, hence making it a undisputable

fact (Venables 2007, p. 42). Another fact which cannot be denied was the Japanese Occupation of Singapore which took place historically. The end of the occupation together with world peace happened on 15th August is a historical fact. Personal experience defined as telling stories of others to persuade, often using graphic vividness.

The writer wrote the article based on his own personal experience, telling his story of suffering hence making it a form of evidence. In this article I have found two of models of argument at work. Testimony model of argument referred to the testimony of witnesses or evidence to support the argument. The whole article had been written from the writer's personal experience of the Japanese Occupation hence the testimony model has been seen at work. Root meaning model of argument can be defined through a question querying on what are the original origins/meaning of the words used in the argument. I am not in favour of our Government giving Australia away to anyone. ' (Venables 2007, p. 42) This sentence makes me question the underlying meaning of the argument. Was the government really giving Australia away? Or was it just trying to improve inter-country relationship. Deduction can be found in the structure of the article. Deduction starts with a general observation most people accept as true and then show how certain conclusions about a specific thing follow from that observation. Below is the deducted statement from the article. He started off joining the A.

I. F. with war preparation effort, followed by the fighting in Singapore. He went through Japanese occupation with much suffering hence making him feel very bitter about Australia have close links with Japan 65 years later.

Categorical syllogisms can be defined as a set of three statements that

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follow a fixed pattern to ensure sound reasoning. Below is a syllogism that is defined from the article Prisoner Of War had their youth, dignity and health taken away. Max Venable was a Prisoner Of War. Max had his youth, dignity and health taken away.

Fallacies are ‘...lapses in logic that reflect upon one’s ability to think clearly...’, and therefore weakening the argument (Reinking 1999, p. 167). Arguing off the point is defined as sidetracking an issue by introducing irrelevant information. For example, the author mentioned that ‘ Japan has been a dynasty for a thousand years. The dynasty can wait another thousand years to take over Australia. ’ (Venables 2007, p. 42) However, the article did not mention Japan being a dynasty, nor did it mention Japan having any plans to take over Australia. Making such a point is irrelevant, and hence this can be categorized as an example of a fallacy.

Argument ad hominem means an argument that attacks one’s individual rather than one’s opinions or qualification. In this statement ‘ John, you can be a friend without giving Australia’s heart away’, the author made an unfair statement. He verbally attacked the Prime Minister, claiming he was giving Australia away when it was co-operation with the Japanese (Venables 2007, p. 42). Hence he was found to be attacking the individual instead of the problem. Appeal to the crowd arouses an emotional response from the reader playing on irrational fears and prejudices.

In the following statements, ‘ I nearly died. I was 21. ’ and ‘ I understand that the world has changed, but don’t ask me to forget what happened just 65 years ago. ’, the author can be found trying to instill fears of death and also

stirring up emotions of readers that history is being forgotten in the light of advancement and better relationship with Japan (Venables 2007, p. 42). In Conclusion, the writer's personality as a Prisoner of War gave him an advantage in rallying support with him as there are many war veteran still around.

This argument has got many pathos points, pulling on the readers' emotions. But there isn't much depth in the argument as most of the argument is regarding the writer's emotions and suffering through the war experience. Considering the Logos pointers, the writer used mostly relational models to bring up emotions of the reader. With a few fallacies found, they had weakened the argument as strong logos pointers were not found. Having considering the evidence presented throughout the body, one can only conclude it is not a strong convincing article.