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Global Warming? More Like Global Warning!

Stemming from the Industrial Revolution, climate change is a global environmental issue that is becoming increasingly prominent today. Along with the climate crisis, the question of what individuals can do to help slow climate change arises. Professionals and internet gurus alike gather to discuss this issue of how the general public needs to unite and act. In both articles “Global Climate Crisis Demands Immediate Action for Justice” and “Climate Scientists Announce Earth Doing Pretty Good Today So You Can Take Afternoon Off And Have Fun”, the authors attempt to address the same issue of climate inaction using starkly different devices. However, The Onion’s satirical article more effectively establishes this point due to its digestibility and ability to engage with a broader audience.

The two articles are similar in their tendency to frequently appeal to ethos. The Onion mentions how they rely on “climate scientists at Columbia University” for their claims (The Onion). Similarly, the UN Office for Partnerships cites a range of different figures of climate justice authority, such as the “Director of the Indonesian Agency for Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics”, the “Chief Sustainability Officer at Google”, “Jamaica’s Climate Change Minister”, and the “UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador” (“Global Climate Crisis Demands Immediate Action for Justice | UN Office for Partnerships”). This credibility is usually established early in the article, with many of the succeeding claims relying on these sources. By

appealing to ethos, both pieces establish why the article should be held in high regard and acknowledged for advice on how to act. Although The Onion's source may be a faux appeal, both articles are structured around references and quotes from these highly regarded individuals.

However similar in structure, The Onion mocks aspects of the UN article through satirical devices such as burlesque and irony. The previously established ethos of the speaker falls short when the article cites descriptions such as "A-okay", "pretty good", and "have fun" (The Onion). The incorporation of burlesque throughout the passage establishes the piece as a satire and makes the tone more informal. By doing so, the authors create the illusion of vulnerability in the figures of authority, like the climate scientists from Columbia. This makes the passage feel more inclusive and personal. In addition, the article exaggerates situations and includes verbal irony from figures of authority. Included quotes like how "Earth could use a little extra carbon" or to "Hit the beach" because Earth will "still be facing a mass extinction in the near future" further cement the interpersonal tone of the passage (The Onion). The frequent use of irony force the reader to think about the true intended meaning behind what is actually said, subconsciously engaging them. The Onion uses irony to convey how complacency in climate activism can lead to a cycle of inaction. The authors emphasize specific actions such as booking "a private jet" and buying a "Keurig" that are okay to do when taking a "climate cheat day" (The Onion). By highlighting specific actions that have a large impact on the environment, the authors discourage individuals from doing these actions for the sake of the environment. This takes a complex social issue and reduces it to a couple impactful actions, which give the reader a simple perception of what the environmental crisis represents. Satirical devices are used to engage the audience and to help them simply understand complex social issues.

By weaving the environment into a broader social criticism, The Onion makes the issue more personally relevant and pressing. Using satirical devices, the authors humanize the scientists to make them seem more approachable. This shortens the disconnect which is so often observed in formal argumentative essays like the UN Partnerships article, when lengthy titles and lists of achievements can make professionals appear completely isolated from the general public. By reducing these individuals, The Onion appeals to pathos by creating a sense of companionship with the reader. Contrasted with the UN Partnerships article, which lacks pathos, the satire is able to better captivate the audience through a personal call to action.

Both articles address the call for climate action from the audience. The Onion, however, better illustrates this point through various satirical devices. Despite the fact that satire can often fall short due to a lack of context or relevance, the climate crisis possesses enough global recognition such that satire as a medium can often lead to a better invocation for change than traditional argumentative articles. Through engagement and appeal to pathos, satire can better establish the need for change compared to an argumentative essay.

Works Cited

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