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Mocking the Mocking of Bald Individuals is Entertaining but Ineffective

Bald individuals have historically been the butt of many jokes related to their baldness, as people believe that their lack of hair is a fair topic to mock. As a result, some have tried to advocate for greater awareness about the bald situation, including the article “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald” by Phill Lytle, which uses traditional argumentative methods, and a video from Saturday Night Live (SNL), “Bald Guys,” satirizing the issue. The article explains the benefits of baldness from a bald man’s perspective, appealing to logic and credibility, but it stays casual in tone, trying to convince readers, members of the general public, to change their minds and rethink the negative connotations associated with baldness. The satire, on the other hand, aims to mock unfavorable views of bald people by showcasing an over-the-top musical number of happy bald people explaining to SNL viewers--usually more mature audiences who can catch hidden undertones that children typically would not understand--that bald people should not be undervalued when compared to people with hair. However, the SNL satire is less compelling in conveying this message than the traditional article because a lot of the message is lost to the humorous absurdity of the video. Although the Saturday Night Live video “Bald Guys” is undoubtedly memorable and entertaining to watch, the satire’s bizarre musical number is not as effective in convincing audiences to improve their attitudes toward bald individuals as the article “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald,” which appeals to both logos and ethos while maintaining a casual tone.

“Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald” incorporates numbers and logical thinking into its argument, whereas “Bald Guys” has logical fallacies that contribute to the humor of the video, but not the overall message. The author of “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald,” a bald man himself, explains why baldness saves time: “My baldness has allowed me to save an estimated 2 minutes every time I shower. I shower daily, which means I save 14 minutes a week, 56 minutes a month, 672 minutes a year, and 26,880 minutes over the course of 40 years of balditude” (Lytle). Although Lytle uses colloquialism and even makes up the word “balditude” to describe a period of time when one is bald, he uses numbers to reason how much time is saved from being bald, providing logical proof for the time saved by not having hair. By proving that baldness does have some benefits, Lytle debunks the argument that lack of hair only has negative consequences in order to paint baldness and bald people in a better light. On the contrary, there is no statistical evidence or logical reasoning provided in “Bald Guys.” One of the only attempted appeals to logos is based on a logical fallacy intended to add to the humor of the video. In “Bald Guys,” one of the bald individuals solemnly mentions a mean gym teacher who used to make fun of him and holds up a headline that reads, “Pedophile gym teacher fired- was also mean to bald men” (see Appendix 2). It is implied that because the gym teacher was mean to bald individuals and was a pedophile, those who mock bald people should also be associated with pedophilia, which is an overgeneralizing logical fallacy, a claim that aims to convince people to not be mean to bald men or they will be perceived as pedophiles too. Although this logical fallacy is funny, it is not effective in promoting better treatment toward bald men because it leaves viewers with a feeling that making fun of bald people may be bad, yet it is evidently not as bad as pedophilia, which weakens the overall argument that bald individuals should be treated better. Overall, the article “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald” had a more effective appeal to logos than the satire “Bald

Guys” as the article included numbers and a clear connection to the main message while the satire used a logical fallacy that entertained more than it persuaded the audience, which ultimately causes the article to have a more compelling argument.

Both “Bald Guys” and “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald” list out the names of many successful bald men to make an appeal to ethos using the famous names, but the satire’s appeal is too brief and underemphasized to be very compelling whereas the article’s inclusion of more context about the examples increases their credibility and provides further evidence for why bald individuals should receive better treatment. “Bald Guys” attempts to appeal to ethos by mentioning the names of a few famous bald people, but their faces are displayed during an especially chaotic portion of the video (see Appendix 2), where a bald man dances on the screen while two other bald men sing about America’s mascot, the bald eagle, and then briefly list the names of several famous bald people. As a result, there is not much emphasis placed on the famous bald individuals. The lack of attention put on the credible examples of bald success and the lack of any clear explanation for their inclusion weakens the overall appeal to ethos. The traditional article, however, places more emphasis on famous individuals who are bald, listing out eight successful bald men, from athletes to entertainers, and how baldness did not restrict them from success (Lytle). This explanation helps the audience understand that the individuals mentioned are credible sources as they themselves are evidence that bald people can be just as successful as people with hair and should not be looked down upon. By explaining the reasons for citing these individuals as examples, Lytle crafts a more credible argument than the SNL satire that drops them into the video without a proper explanation why. The vagueness of the Saturday Night Live satire’s appeal to ethos, caused by the satire’s prioritization of humor and absurdity, resulted in a less effective appeal to ethos than the article’s similar but better-explained

list of famous bald people, which made the argument “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald” more effective.

Though the Saturday Night Live video “Bald Guys” funnier and more memorable than the article “Five Reasons It is Great to Be Bald,” the article builds a more compelling argument using colloquialism and appeals to logos and ethos, while the satire is more focused on humor and absurdity, which shifts attention away from its appeals and makes its goal to improve the public’s view and treatment of bald individuals less successful.

Works Cited

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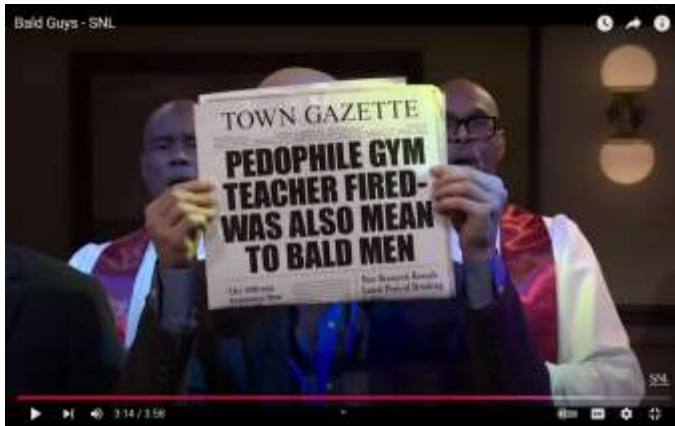
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Visual Appendix (“Bald Guys”)

Appendix 1 (3:14)

A bald man holds up a newspaper article revealing that a gym teacher who was mean to him due to his baldness was a pedophile



Appendix 2 (2:18)

A bald man dances in a dark environment while two bald men sing about the bald eagle and make references to famous bald people whose faces are displayed on screen.

