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Rhetorical Analysis: “So, Mark Zuckerberg wants to repent for Facebook's sins? He can start here”

The topic of potential harm produced by social networks, and particularly by Facebook, has been quite concerning for the last several years. Due to increasing globalization and computerization, issues associated with irresponsible policies and ineffective algorithms developed by Facebook are becoming even more problematic and dangerous. In her article “*So, Mark Zuckerberg wants to repent for Facebook's sins? He can start here*” Ellen Goodman explored the sins made by Facebook and how Mark Zuckerberg can repent for them. This article is engaging to read because of various interesting rhetoric strategies applied by Goodman and how this talented author can combine personal experiences, deep research of Jewish culture, and facts.

Ellen Goodman is a talented writer and columnist whose work brought her a Pulitzer Prize in 1980. She also works as a public speaker and commentator. Usually, she writes on issues that concern U.S. society. In this particular case, Ellen Goodman writes as a concerned user of Facebook and as a U.S. citizen who is highly concerned with Facebook’s policies and conduct. The potential audience of this article is millions of U.S. Facebook users. Goodman talks about issues related to the U.S. elections and other problems which Facebook caused. The major goal of this article is to explore how Mark Zuckerberg can earn forgiveness as it is required by Jewish culture. Goodman explores what “forgiveness” and “redemption” mean for Jewish people, as well as what Jewish tradition tells on how they can be earned.

The author predominantly uses logos and pathos throughout the whole paper. Considering that Goodman is a famous columnist and everyone knows her, she is considered by readers as a reliable source of information, which can also be considered ethos. Moreover, Goodman is also ethnically Jewish, which makes her statement and interpretations of the words of Zuckerberg look credible and trustworthy. While talking about issues and harm done by Facebook, Goodman refers to them as “sins,” which causes an emotional impact on the reader. The topic of religion and sins can be observed in almost every paragraph of this article. Religion is highly important to the vast majority of people, and therefore appealing to religion and using such terms as “sins” and “repentance,” Goodman wants to influence her audience. She even cites the Yom Kippur prayer, “For the sin which we have committed before You by swearing in vain.” Another interesting example of how Goodman uses pathos is the use of the personal pronoun “We.” It is common in collectivistic cultures to use this pronoun, while in individualistic countries such as the U.S., people tend to use the pronoun “I” more. The personal pronoun “We” is also frequently used in religious literature. When Goodman writes “We,” she emphasizes that she is voicing the opinions of other American citizens as well as Jewish people who want Mark to repent. Considering that she has a highly positive reputation, Goodman may act as a voice of society.

As for logos, the author provides various facts proving how Facebook has caused problems, as well as how the Jewish religion tells to repent of sins. Goodman mentions the influence of Facebook on Trump’s elections and provides a detailed explanation of how Jewish people can achieve forgiveness. She states that according to Jewish tradition, a person should “name the sin, repair the damage, and engage in “tzedakah,” meaning doing justice, including giving to charity” (Goodman, 2017). This leads to the conclusion that Zuckerberg can be forgiven only if he initiates positive changes, which will prevent future harm that can be done by Facebook.

The effective mix of all rhetoric strategies used by the author has a strong impact on the audience, which can be observed in the comment section on the website. Goodman as a writer, did a

great job because her text is both easy to read and engaging at the same time. Furthermore, Goodman makes readers look at the issues caused by Facebook, as well as the apologies of Mark Zuckerberg from a religious point of view. This contributes to the public discussion of what exactly should be done by Mark Zuckerberg to fix problems caused by Facebook. This article is a perfect example of how it is possible to increase public awareness regarding socially important issues and make people reconsider their attitudes towards this issue by appealing to emotions and religion. Goodman makes people understand that the situation with Facebook is rather serious and should be addressed effectively, and without positive changes, it won't be possible to achieve success.

Works Cited:

Goodman, E. (2017, October 2). *So, Mark Zuckerberg wants to repent for Facebook's sins? He can start here* / Ellen P Goodman. the

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