The Munk debate

Steven Pinker and Matt Ridley make an argument on Humankind’s best days by arguing against Alain de Bottin and Malcolm Gladwell. Pinker and Ridley make a better argument due to the inclusion of string facts and concrete evidence making the debate more powerful. The choice of rhetoric tools allows them to present through enduring beliefs the current status of humans. They provide deeper insights into the role played by human civilization and its impact on humans in the long-term. The comments of the team capture all aspects of advancements and developments. Their responses are not limited to the belief that humans have become a better place to live in. Through the clear choice of ethos, pathos, and logos the team presents a valid argument that the world is getting better. The debaters start by comparing the past with the present, thus bringing the audience to a state of realization.

The inclusion of logos adds more power to the argument of Ridley and Pinker. Ridley in his debate assesses progress regarding "population, literacy and life expectancy." These are the economic indicators used for determining the progress of the world. According to the claims he makes a clear point that the world has become a better place for a living because people enjoy better health and literacy. Logos are visible in the statement, “on average people are living longer, healthier, richer, safer, freer, more literate and peaceful lives." the logic provides sufficient evidence that reflects the better status of humans.

Logic is visible in the claim, "do I think that the progress of science, discovery of deep geological time, discovery of vast accesses of space, the discovery of the genome." Pinker through the practical choice of words attempts to define progress regarding scientific and geological advancements. The logos add more strength to the debate by highlighting the developments made by humans through their imaginative minds and creativity. According to him the people today are having better lives because the discoveries made today have contributed towards overall advancements. When comparing to the past, he comes to a logical point that these things were not attained in the past because people lacked such imagination. It is only due to the civilization and growth that human beings can make discoveries in every aspect of life.

Pathos permits Ridley and Pinker to evoke emotional appeal in the audience. Their technique of consistently comparing the past events with the current period brings the audience in a thoughtful position where they can learn the deeper meaning of their argument. Pathos is apparent in Ridley's claim, "optimism is self-fulfilling prophecy so is pessimism. The progress we enjoy is not the result of some mysterious historical dialectic or law never into progress or our bending to our justice". He brings the audience to a position where they realize that everyone is free to remain optimistic or pessimistic. However, better judgment relies on the assessment of the outcomes. The statement includes an ethical appeal, convincing viewers to see the perspective of the speaker. Ridley uses the appropriate technique of building an emotional connection by talking about important issues. The inclusion of health outcomes, literacy and life expectancy, allow people to find their relevance with these factors. Pinker also use pathos in his statement, "do I think that we are going to cure happiness on a pill, unhappiness with a pill." The pathos allows people to see the situation from a realistic perspective as the speaker attempts to explain the real meaning of progress. His debate identifies the rights meaning of development by removing the vagueness. Through pathos, he builds effective interaction with the audience throughout his discussion. The inclusion of these terms allows people to see how advancements and civilizations are linked to each human. The use of emotional words like happiness and unhappiness create an attraction for the listeners as they find the debate inciting.

The debate presented by Botton and Gladwell fails to cover all aspects of human life. Their discussion lacks appropriate choice of rhetoric tools thus making it weaker compared to their opponents. The weakness becomes discernible as Botton tries to confront Ridley by accepting that the concerns of the future are due to the attitudes of humans. Compared to them, Ridley and Pinker provide strong reasoning for behind why they accept human lives are better today. Although they identify the risks of the future and that the world may not be in its ideal state, but still it is better compared to the past. They reject the idea that humankind was better without these advancements or human civilization. The prominent strength of their argument is their ability to stick to their initial claims.

Ethos is also incorporated for making the debate more powerful. The ethical appeal is discernible in the statement of Ridley, "past performance is no guarantee of future returns." It depicts that the speaker accepts that nothing can be guaranteed about the future. The assumptions he present are based on the current state of the world. It also highlights the credibility of the speaker as he mentions “epidemiologist Hans Rosling." The name of the renowned researcher adds more reliability in the argument made by Ridley. The ethical appeal is also apparent in the claim, “the world faces formidable challenges." He accepts that the world is facing challenges and the condition of future remains uncertain. It indicates that the debate is not limited to one side of the argument. He also addresses the difficulties faced by the world. Pinker also incorporate ethos in his contest for making his viewpoints more clear and valid. The fact that he backs the claims with the ethical appeal becomes another strength of the team. His discussion about the increase in literacy rates provides a practical example of how world transformed after civilization. He makes it clear that without education and discoveries it was not possible to enjoy the benefits of the current period.

The most striking element of Ridley and Pinker’s debate is the strategy of deciding that is based on the comparison of the pros and cons of human civilization. The weakness of Botton and Gladwell becomes visible at the point when they are unable to reject the claims made by their opponents. The comparison of the debates made by two teams depicts that Ridley and Pinker manage to present a strong argument by the clear choice of the rhetoric device. The use of logos remains the prominent element of their debate as both speakers include facts and evidence for backing the central argument. The logic of education, population, and increased life expectancy prove the claims that humankind is living in a better state today. Both speakers rely on pathos for making the debate attractive for the listeners. Through the inclusion of standard terms like happiness, they manage to provoke the emotions of the audience, bringing to a state where they accept their claims. Similarly, the addition of ethos allows speakers to make the debate more potent as it confirms the reliability of their argument. The discussion of Botton and Gladwell lacks these rhetoric tools, thus making the conference ineffective and powerless.

Work Cited

Munk. Progress . 2018. 14 11 2018 <https://www.munkdebates.com/The-Debates/Progress>.