

ENGLISH: USING LANGUAGE TO PERSUADE

The Issue of Violence Against Women and its Impact on the Community Was Discussed in Late 2012, As Debate Has Arisen Over Where The Responsibility For These Crimes Lie.

The issue of violence against women and its impact on the community was discussed in late 2012, as debate has arisen over where the responsibility for these crimes lie. In her opinionative online blog published on the 1st of October 2012, mamamia.com, Amy Stockwell contends in a passionate and at times outraged tone that “no one should ever” have to experience victim blaming, and as women we should stay aware and safe. Her empowering approach seeks to elicit a sense of unanimity in women, and appeals to their sense of justice, similarly, Susie O’Brien’s opinion piece published in the Herald Sun, 30th of September 2012, contends in a concerned and at times somber tone that women should also be careful and take caution, as these horrible attacks could happen to anyone. Although her style is a lot more emotive, her use of statistics is a lot more emotive. Comparatively, Andy’s piece, posted as an online comment, 7:56AM 30th of November 2012, contends in a biased tone that the offenders are “CRIMINALS” and deserve to be put in jail, no matter the size of the room. Adopting a simple and straightforward approach, he appeals to narrow-minded people, evoking a sense of justice.

The heading “In our thoughts and hearts. Always remembered” is placed prominently across the page along with an image of flowers and a letter to be placed down at Jill Meagher’s memorial. Stockwell employs both emotive and inclusive language in her title, evoking a sense of great sorrow and grief. The title positions readers to feel as though they are a part of Meagher’s memorial, which coincides with the image. A letter is the focal point of the twitter picture, stating “You’re in our thoughts and hearts. Always remembered. Xoxo” which feels somber and heart-breaking, encouraging readers to read on as a tribute to Meagher’s “tragic” death. These two elements work to support Stockwell’s article, as they are both eye catching and position readers to feel sad and distraught, preparing them for her next targeting argument – to work together.

She begins her article with emotive language such as “tragic events” and “nation’s grief” which work to elicit feelings of sadness that link with the title and image. She continues in this distraught, yet positive tone to state that Australia has been at its “best”, showing support for Meagher and her family. This makes readers feel happy and proud of their country, yet this is soon juxtaposed with Stockwell’s sudden change in tone that Australians have also been “most disappointing”, setting us up whilst using colloquial language to express anger for her defensive and outraged rant on how “punters” and “fools” have been “blatantly blaming Jill for putting herself at risk.” Here, Stockwell uses Meagher’s first name, putting up the pretense that they were friends, making her argument seem more heartfelt. This positions readers to see her arguments as more genuine and feel more compassionate. She then goes on to use a series of outraged rhetorical questions, “Do women who go to parties not deserve safety?.. Should (they) expect fear? Do shoes incite violence?” These sound absolutely ludicrous and position readers to feel a mutual sense of outrage at the sheer ridiculousness of society’s expectations. Finally, Stockwell’s extensive use of inclusive language “we have all experienced incidents..”, “You are aware, and you stay aware” and “..We are strong and deserve to live free from fear.” Work to bombard the readers with feelings of empowerment, seeking justice for what they “deserve”. Thus, the writer effectively persuades readers to agree with her idea that women should all come together to rise up against these “fools” and seek justice for those who experience victim blaming.

Similarly, O’Brien’s heading is also in a bold, large font, but instead in a ghostly and eerie colour that works with her foreground of Meagher’s last whereabouts. “There but for the grace of God..” means “it could have been me..”, giving off a sense that the assault could of happened to anybody. This is coupled with the sub heading “Jill Meagher’s death will make us all re-evaluate the way we live” which looks like caution tape placed over Meagher’s death location. This appeals to women’s sense of fear, which is intensified by the stark contrast between the Meagher “happy snap” and her memorial – future stripped from her. The image of the clothing store captured on CCTV gives the

audience the underlying message that there is not enough security on the streets and “we are not safe” as ironically, the dresses were protected in the store, yet Meagher was not. Thus, O’Brien’s titles and images contrast greatly with Stockwell’s, but both provide the idea that women should take great caution.

Similar to Stockwell’s piece, O’Brien peppers hers with inclusive language, “...we think we will be okay.” “we think we can walk streets alone..” this use of cumulative language builds up the idea that we think we can do all these things that men do, but the harsh reality is that it’s “simply (not) the case..”. This gives readers the idea that we should really begin to advocate risk management as O’Brien’s reality check opens our eyes. Unlike Stockwell, she then goes on to use numerous forms of imagery, such as the fact that Meagher’s murder occurred in a “cosmopolitan, busy and vibrant” street, which elicits fear in the readers as these are things normally associated with safety and security. This safe image is juxtaposed with the reality of Meagher’s “tragic death” where she was “allegedly raped and murdered... dumped(ing) in a shallow grave..”. This juxtaposition amplifies O’Brien’s contention that it could happen to anybody, anywhere, positioning readers to feel horrified and that they should be more careful wherever they go. Thus, O’Brien effectively persuades her audience of women to agree with her contention that caution is compulsory everywhere and every day.

In contrast to the other two articles, Andy’s online comment does not have a heading, nor an image to catch reader’s attention. However, his opening sentence “who cares if prisons are overcrowded????” provides a sheer sense of exaggeration and his informality is easily relatable, positioning readers to want to read on. His four question marks almost work like an image, as they express his utter confusion as to why “CRIMINALS” are not placed in prisons. This is followed by “seriously, just put more in each cell..”, this simple minded approach provides not only a solution, but also acts like a subheading to reel readers in with its simplicity. It is similar to Stockwell’s piece in the way that it also contends to denounce and serve justice to those that do wrong, thus supporting Andy’s following arguments as he continues to talk about placing criminals behind bars, seeking a sense of justice in the audience.

He begins his comment with alliterated emotive language, “detriment and danger” which outlines the reasons as to why criminals should go to jail. Through this he positions readers to feel threatened by these “scum bags” and want for a way to keep them off the streets. He intensifies this feeling with his restatement of the idea that these people should do nothing more than “spend their days in a small cell”. Unlike Stockwell’s inclusive language, Andy then goes on to include the readers subtly through “...law abiding tax payers” which not only positions them to be in a positive light, but makes them feel like good citizens that deserve to be free from the fear that these criminals provide. He finishes with a condescending attack on “bleeding heart do gooders” who appear to be stopping us from achieving justice. This positions readers to see these “do gooders” as annoying and like a barrier that is stopping us from being safe. Finally, Andy finishes with the colloquial language “peace out homies!”, which gives the underlying message although he wants all these “CRIMINALS” in jail, it is only because he wishes for peace. With this, the writer effectively persuades readers to agree with his contention similar to Stockwell’s, that criminals should be put into jail, no matter the size of the cell, as law-abiding citizens deserve safety and justice.

Amy Stockwell’s opinionated online blog effectively employs an inclusive and empowering style that appeals to her audience of women as it seeks to put her audience of women as it seeks to put forward justice. Likewise, Susie O’Brien’s opinion piece’s overly inclusive style also appeals to women, effectively persuading them to agree with her contention that we should always take caution on the streets. Although it is more emotive and visual than Stockwell’s it still appeals to the sense of justice and fear. Finally, Andy’s informal and simplistic approach clearly persuades his audience of narrow-minded people to agree with his contention that criminals should be locked up for the horrendous crimes they have committed.