

Corey noble



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Corey Noble Mrs. Bogart AP English Lang 9 September 2012 Rhetorical Analysis Plato, student to Socrates and Greek philosopher, affirms, " rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men. " Rhetoric, the art of persuasive and effective argument, is evident in every facet of argument, written work, and speech. Writers have tried since the beginning of written language to integrate beautiful rhetorical devices to enhance the persuasive effect and the argumentative power of their pieces. Elie Wiesel, in his essay Why I Write: Making No Become Yes, and E. B. White in The Essayist and the Essay, try to craft arguments to prove their specific purposes in the most incisive ways. Accordingly, Elie Wiesel and E. B. White manipulate syntax and detailed extended metaphors respectively to prove their specific purpose; however, E. B. White's essay is greatly undermined by his inclusion of the theme of self-deprecation. To begin, Elie Wiesel, in his essay Why I Write: Making No Become Yes, establishes the central point of his essay—the inexpressibility of his experiences—by appealing to the emotional conscience of the reader through the use of asyndeton in his diagrammatic description of the holocaust. Wiesel masterfully chronicles, in several instances, the calamitous and unfathomable nature of the holocaust that mercilessly drowns the reader in vulgar detail. For example, Wiesel writes that no one could understand " the fear and hunger of the sick, the shame and suffering, the haunted eyes, the demented stares, " —that no "coherent, intelligible" words could define, could limn the lassitude of the Jewish people (39). This specific commission of asyndeton reads monotonously and quickens the reader's pace. Furthermore, it creates a steady pulse—almost a rhythm—similar to a heartbeat. Wiesel suggests, in the device's effect, a human feature that has significance in the reader: the heart. The heart is essential

to life and health; even more, the heart has symbolic meaning in love and compassion. Elie Wiesel conveys an irony between the steady heart-like pulse and rhythm created and the actual content of the sentence—the event that slowly but steadily decimated the Jewish people. Wiesel's effort offers insight into the atrocity and creates an acute vexation in the reader. Identifying with the human qualities, the heartbeat, given to the asyndeton, the reader can partly understand, though not fully, as asserted by Wiesel, the totality of the events; and, the reader is able to connect on a larger level than words—a human level, and an emotional level. Supplementarily, Wiesel continues to prove the inability of the non-survivors to comprehend the holocaust by describing the " language, " as it were, of the events as " hoarse shouting, screams, muffled moaning, the sound of beating" (39). The absence of conjunctions creates a sort of spontaneity—a feeling of genuine, unpremeditated emotion that comes from the " survivor. " Perhaps the word selection came from the deep internalized anger, hate, and displeasure of his childhood, his suffering, his memory. Perhaps because of the spontaneity, the raw emotion felt, the instantaneous speech created at first thought of the horror of his past, this specific example is the closest and most accurate description words or recapitulation could ever provide. Moreover, the lack of conjunctions, to the reader, appears as though the entire sentence could go on longer emphasizing the extent of how awful the life in concentration camps was. The reader relates to the physical pain associated with every clause Wiesel writes, and as result, the reader comes closer to understanding and connecting, maybe in the only way possible. In a different way, E. B. White writes to prove his point—the dangers of the essay and writing to entertain one's thoughts—by crafting an elaborate extended

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metaphor. E. B. White writes that there are many ways to write, and even many ways to write an essay. However, White warns that it is haughty and presumptuous to write an essay to solely entertain a thought. White creates an extended metaphor to compare the vast possibilities of an essay or the essayist and a wardrobe. He writes that a man can "select a garb" from his closet and choose what facade or persona with which one might want to write. For example one might want to try the "pundit" or the "scholar" sweater on for size. White creates in this metaphor the idea that the essay is a unique style of writing, in that it can take many forms. He suggests, through the inclusion of the shirt-subject comparison, that the essay is not only of many genres, but also the essay is undisciplined. Further, White applies the conceit to his own writing, saying that he has "worn many shirts," and not all of them had suited him well or fit him (32). White proves his major point through this commission of the metaphor. White suggests that he has, over the years, written, and perhaps experimented with, many styles of essays. The reader can infer that it is the "shirts" that did not fit so well are the danger. The reader can equate the danger, the ill-fitting essays, to a larger principle: the essays that do not fit are those that ramble or explore subjects perhaps only entertained in the author's conscience—these are inherently flawed. Elie Wiesel is effective in his writing, as mentioned earlier, through his powerful emotional appeals that are created by his use of syntax; however, EB White's efficacy is hindered by the theme of self-depreciation that is evident throughout the piece. For example, White writes of himself in a terrible light saying that he is by nature "self absorbed" and "egotistical," and that he showed little attention to "the lives of others" (32). In this instance, White calls attention to himself in what could be viewed as a

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superficial claim. In the same way the reader is drawn away from and unimpressed with self-centered, first person prating, the reader may be distracted by the self-denunciation. In the well-intended effort to rebuke his own prior "egotistical" writings and mistakes, he makes a vital mistake of the same caliber and nature: he drew attention to himself and away from the higher purpose, which, in essence, is what he tried to repudiate and rectify. Furthermore, the reader may view this as a decrease in the credibility and logic of the piece, and, as a result, view the paper as less effective. In conclusion, rhetoric, as Plato said, controls the reader's mind and his or her reception of the piece. Writers have tried since the conception of the art of language to integrate beautiful rhetorical devices to inspire the compelling effect and the power of their pieces. Elie Wiesel and E. B. White tried to produce incisive arguments that galvanized the reader. Accordingly, Elie Wiesel and E. B. White utilize asyndeton and extended metaphors respectively to prove their specific purposes; although, E. B. White's argument and the efficacy of his purpose were undermined by his theme of self-depreciation. Work Cited Bloom, Lynn Z. *The Essay Connection*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004. Print.