

Good example of  
essay on michael  
herrs narrative  
strategy and why he  
used such a ...

[Countries](#), [Vietnam](#)



Michael Herr stayed in Vietnam for 18 months as a war columnist for Esquire magazine. During his entire stay, he anticipated scripting a book about he had gone through and witnessed; *Dispatches* was the product. Just as the title suggests, *Dispatches* is fragmented, wavering back and forth in time, but is concentrated around twofold actions: the Battle of Khe Sanh and the Battle for Hue during the Tet Offensive. Herr decides to focus solely on the men who fought the war and the men who covered it as a reporters rather than focusing on the battle itself.

Herr undeniably calculatedly mixes events and scenes in the book to make a particular point clear to the public and improve their understanding of the war. Outrageously, though many scenes are real, some are hypothetical made-up scenes intended to emotionally and intellectually engage readers. Herr's intention of using such a style was not to give the readers a word-perfect interpretation of his time in Vietnam; it was envisioned to give the bibliophiles the spiciness of that time. Much of the book is written in a "torrent of mindfulness" style, with fickle punctuation, run-on sentences and weighty dosages of the 1960s popular culture and philosophy. Certainly, Herr does not give a history of the war but having some circumstantial information can boost one's understanding of the stream of proceedings and backstage characters like Robert "Blowtorch Bob" Komer and General Westmoreland. He pulls the readers with a unique identity and great supremacy. The hallucinatory qualities of the confrontation portrayed in *Dispatches* are a clear indication of mishmash of comic and scepticism. Herr consciously used atypical model for memoir because he was essentially not writing a straight memoir. He was certain that using a nonstandard style,

readers will gain a better comprehension of the war and the circumstances surrounding it. If he used a standard model, statements such as, " Search and Destroy, more a gestalt than a tactic, brought up alive and steaming from the Command psyche," would not have come out plainly (pp. 61).

Though much of the description in *Dispatches* may seem like platitudes, Herr's overall vibe and mania is quite stimulating and poignant. *Dispatches* persuade readers to discover other humiliating specifics about Vietnam and the then world. He considered this method of narration as the best method to express the traumatization of the war and bring to light devastating facts. He does this in a smart and interesting manner that stimulates the readers to read the book despite the appalling realities being revealed. He says, " Brutality was just a word in my mouth before that. But disgust was only one color in the whole mandala, gentleness and pities were other colors, there wasn't a color left out" (pp. 67).

The above elucidation clearly indicates that Michael Herr intentionally uses a nonstandard format of writing a memoir. The title *Dispatches* gives him the opportunity to present various stunning details in an exclusively remarkable and disgusting manner. This enables him to convey the real facts of the war and help the reader gain a vibrant understanding of the men who fought in the Vietnam War.