

Rhetorical analysis veiled insult

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Veiled Insult” A Veil of Disrespect Anne Applebaum’s “ Veiled Insult” first appeared in the Washington Post in 2006. In this essay, Applebaum aims to convince her readers that it is disrespectful for Muslim women to wear their headscarves or niqabs (full bodied cloak) in our western society, just as it is disrespectful for our women to go to their society uncloaked. In delivering her message she also brings to attention the political issue of whether or not it is religious discrimination to allow, or not allow muslim women to wear their cloaks, and in the end she gives us her opinion, “ it isn’t religious discrimination or anti-Muslim bias to tell her that she must be polite to the natives, respect the local customs, try to speak some of the local patois — and uncover her face. Applebaum uses her personal experiences combined with her American worldview to convince her readers (the American public) that for Muslim women to wear their cloaks in American culture is disrespectful and insensitive. Although those techniques may have worked, her strongest argument is perhaps playing on the emotions of the still sensitive and emotionally scarred, post 9/11 American public. Applebaum begins her essay with a personal experience describing the “ Herd of 20-something backpackers” that she traveled across Southeast Asia with.

Applebaum speaks of the respect that she and her colleagues had for the natives by wearing a sarong in the balinese temples so that they wouldn’t offend anyone. By using this appeal to ethos, Applebaum immediately informs us of her experiences and credibility on this topic and also captures the attention of her intended audience. Also, this personal experience that Applebaum shared with us was used throughout her essay to make her point

that “ if we can be respectful to the natives of other countries by wearing what they wear and joining in on their customs than why cant they do the same for us”. Throughout the essay, Applebaum uses several different instances in several different countries where muslim woman refused to take of their cloaks, sarongs, niqabs, or whatever else they may be called. By doing this she is greatly able to attend to her intended audience’ emotions.

By using the appeal of pathos throughout the essay, Applebaum effectively gets to the emotions of those who read the Washington Post, the American people with the still post 9-11 mentality of muslims or the post 9-11 american worldview. By using examples of the muslim women’s insensitivity to the natives of both England and the U. S. A. Applebaum clearly effects the emotions of all those who feel so strongly against muslims and the muslim religion and it is obvious that this is her goal when she says “ critics call the veil a symbol of female oppression or rejection of Western values.

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.... surely it is also true that the full faced veil — the niqab, burqa, or chador — causes such deep reactions in the West not so much because of its political or religious symbolism but because it is impolite”.

Applebaum effectively tries to convey her feeling that it is not just a political issue but it is rude and insensitive. Although she uses appeals to the emotion of her readers, Applebaum also uses the method of comparing her experiences which she shared with us in the first paragraph and contrasting them with those experiences of others across the globe. Shortly after she spoke of how impolite it is to wear these veils in Western culture she

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continues on to say “ just as it is considered rude to enter a Balinese temple wearing shorts, so, too, is it considered rude, in a Western Country, to hide one’s face”. Here we can see how Applebaum compared her experience in a Balinese temple to reason the fact that if we should have to change the way we dress to be respectful to their culture than they should definitely have to change the way they dress in order to be respectful to us and our culture. Although Applebaum uses this technique to show the insensitivity of the muslim community and the muslim woman, she also uses it in a somewhat weak and self-contradicting counterargument.

Applebaum attempts to say that just because it is rude and insensitive of Muslim woman to wear their cloaks it should not be outlawed because it is rude of us to be insensitive of their culture. She says “ It would, of course, be outrageous if Tony Blair of the French government were to ban veils altogether — just as it is outrageous that Saudi Arabia bans churches and even forbids priests from entering the country. But just because authorities persecute Christians and Jews in some parts of the Muslim world, that doesn’t mean we need to emulate them”. Throughout the essay, Applebaum conveys a sense of unsettling emotion to the fact that muslim women refuse to take off their cloaks however in this paragraph she reminds us that we should be rational and not as extreme as the other countries who outlaw our customs in their territories which although may be true, may have also weakened her essay. In this essay Applebaum did a good job of using ethos, to show that she was qualified on this topic, and logos, to remind us that we cannot be irrational and ban their religious customs just because they might be foreign to us. However she was strongest in her use of pathos, when she

plays on the sensitive post 9/11 American public, to bring her American audience a negative feeling toward the muslim use of cloaks.

Also, Applebaum did a great job of using these appeals by tying them into a compare/contrast type essay. Although Applebaum spends a lot of time building up the emotion of the reader against the muslim's religious idea of cloaks she makes a great point in her argument that we should not totally ban their customs just because they are foreign to us, even if it did weaken her essay.