

Salvation rhetorical analysis

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Hughes achieves his purpose through his use of change in syntax, polystyrene, and Irony. Every person has the natural desire to conform, but children especially feel the need to conform. Hughes' story of his initiation into the church community emphasizes that it was almost a necessity for him to conform.

He did this by showing the differentiation between the two generations: him and his grandmother. The adults pressured the children to accept Jesus, thinking that it would naturally happen, but they did not realize that the children would simply conform even without accepting Jesus.

For example when Hughes states “ I believed her” after a string of long sentences, the change in syntax mimics the simplicity of the childish mindset. Hughes also states “ she said you could see and hear and feel Jesus in your soul”. The use of polystyrene places equal emphasis on each thing his grandmother is telling him because he believes that each thing will actually happen. Hughes is reflecting on this experience with a bitter attitude because he realizes how naive he was.

The effect of pressure can also be seen when there are only two boys left on the bench, Longings and Wesley. Wesley states, “ God damn!

I'm tired o' sitting here. Let's go up and be saved. ” Then he got up and was “ saved”. This is highly ironic cause: One, Wesley is being blasphemous at a ceremony where he is supposed to be accepting God; and two, because it accentuates that anyone can do it, and It is more of a following thing than anything spiritual.

He was not really saved, but the pressure from the congregation got to the child. The same thing happened to Hughes eventually. Young children simply look to please their elders. Question #14: If the passage is titled, what is the significance of its reflection on the passage as a whole?

The title of this passage lends itself to the irony of the entire passage.

Salvation's definition means the act of saving or protecting from harm.

However, Hughes uses it to emphasize that he was not actually saved. In a way, he is cringing at the church for pressuring little kids to conform to something that they don't believe in. He is also pointing out a flaw by using irony. He is highlighting that things that people are pressured into, are more about following than about faith. Throughout the passage he places more emphasis on the fact that he was not actually saved, but pressured terrified the kids into being "saved".

He states "The preacher preached a wonderful hotmail sermon, all moans and shouts and lonely cries and dire pictures of hell, and then he sang a song about the ninety and nine safe in the fold, but one little lamb was left out in the cold".

He uses transitions from "wonderful rhythmical sermon" to "dire pictures of hell". He is using two contrasting ideas to accentuate the tactics used to get the children to conform. The most significant use of irony comes at the end of the passage when Hughes realizes that being "saved" was supposed to make him believe, but in turn the entire process caused him to lose any belief he had before.