

Editor: Brooke Harrison (bh14d)

6498-2

11/4/14

Can you imagine yourself being shot, but not being able to die? It seems like it would be incredibly painful. In paragraphs eleven through thirteen of George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant", Orwell uses symbolism to compare the elephant to an older person whom is normally treated with reverence. To further emphasize the agonizing death the elephant is experiencing, Orwell uses descriptive words and similes. Orwell uses symbolism and even his word choice to show that he does not want to shoot the elephant.

Through symbolism we see that Orwell feels almost reverent toward the elephant. Multiple times he compares the elephant to an older person, "he looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old," and "An enormous senility..." and even "One could have imagined him thousands of years old." The significance to this symbolism is normally people look toward their elders with respect and reverence, Orwell is comparing the elephant to an old person to show his attitude toward the elephant at the moment. He was reluctant to shoot the elephant but he does because of his duty and to not feel a fool.

Orwell has a negative tone throughout the passage. He uses words such as "rattling," "agony," "torture," "dreadful," and "painfully" to describe the decline of the elephant. The use of these words portrays Orwell's negative attitude toward killing the elephant. We can tell that Orwell does not want to shoot the elephant and that he is reluctant to do so through the word choice when he explains "I pulled the trigger...I fired again...I fired a third time...Finally, I fired my two remaining shots...". He is almost impatient to find that the elephant just would not die.

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 4:23 PM

Comment [1]: Only numbers 1-9 need to be spelled out.

11, 13

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 7:16 PM

Comment [2]: Place the comma inside the quotation marks.

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 4:27 PM

Comment [3]: who (rather than "whom")

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 7:17 PM

Comment [4]: As you've already used this verb once, I'd recommend choosing a stronger verb, or deleting it altogether.

Orwell's symbolism and even his word choice show that he does not want to shoot the elephant.

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:23 PM

Comment [5]: replace with "of"

The significance OF this symbolism...

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:24 PM

Comment [6]: Insert a conjunction for fluidity.

...with respect and reverence, AND Orwell is...

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:31 PM

Comment [7]: What does this mean, exactly?

I think this is a great place to write more about Orwell's character – expand on his motivations/reasoning. I understand he's reluctant to shoot the elephant, but why does he feel like he doesn't have a choice?

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:33 PM

Comment [8]: Word choice – it's best to be specific. There are many tone words which still fit under the "negative" umbrella.

Bitter
Desolate
Despairing
Gloomy
Somber

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:33 PM

Comment [9]: I'm not sure this quote is appropriate here. I don't think it illustrates his reluctance.

Orwell really did not want to shoot the elephant but once he did, he wanted to put him out of his misery once and for all.

Towards the end of the passage Orwell uses extreme imagery through similes. Orwell explains the shot wound as “thick blood welled out of him like red velvet.” This creates an image of gooey, gross blood slowly oozing out of a small wound on the elephant that does not seem to be doing much damage. Orwell goes on to explain how he “poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat” as his final attempt to put the elephant out of his misery. The word “poured” portrays the repetitiveness, shot after shot after shot just falling easily down his throat. Orwell uses a final simile “the tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock” to show the length of the death. It wasn't speedy but it “continued steadily.” Most of the imagery that Orwell invokes points back to the negative attitude he has towards shooting the elephant.

Through Orwell's symbolism, diction and imagery he is portraying to us that he did not want to shoot the elephant out of reverence. The “agony” of the elephant can be related to the “agony” that Orwell is put through everyday with the burden of watching over the Burmese and subjecting himself to the “torture” of ruling over them. Even though Orwell clearly did not want to shoot the elephant he realized that he had to do it, almost like the British have to make difficult decisions in ruling the Burmese.

MY THOUGHTS:

Dear Author,

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 3:10 PM

Comment [10]: Word choice – does not “explain” but rather “describes”

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:34 PM

Comment [11]: This is very descriptive! Nicely done.

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:36 PM

Comment [12]: Add a comma before the conjunction (this is necessary in lists!).

symbolism, diction, and imagery

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 3:58 PM

Comment [13]: Remember to only use third person.

...he is portraying to the reader...

Brooke Harrison 2/8/15 8:36 PM

Comment [14]: This is an interesting analogy.

I think it would be a good idea to explore this earlier in the essay – as the reader, I would appreciate more context about the original piece to enhance my understanding of your analysis.

This is a very solid piece. I think you've got the bones of a really great essay. This draft has certainly taken you to the next level – away from mere summarization of Orwell's essay and into true analysis. This can be difficult to achieve, as you've got to answer the *HOW?* and the *WHY?* So in writing your final draft, I'd suggest taking a closer look at your word choice in this piece. I've marked several places in the text where you could strengthen your language or simply be more specific. Also, I think it would be a good idea to expand on the context of Orwell's story – give just enough background to ground the reader.

Let me know if you have any questions! I'd be happy to discuss.