

Thesis statement

In the novel Nightjohn Gary Paulsen uses word choice, ethos and imagery in his overall theme of prejudice to slaves.

Introductory paragraphs

Is it right to deny a particular group of their basic rights because of certain differences?

In the complex non-fiction novel Nightjohn by Gary Paulsen, the author wrote on true events of the past. The novel was set on a plantation, this indicates it was about 100 years ago, despite this Paulsen conveyed his struggle for the characters in a very vivid manner, showing his knowledge and a very clear opinion on slavery. Paulsen also fueled this novel with emotions that seemed very candid, he also uses many different elements of writing to convey his ideas and thoughts on slavery which is discussed in the next paragraph.

Paulsen was able to convey his thoughts and ideas so vividly that it seemed life like, this was due to help from many writing elements. In the writing Paulsen included very effective word to explore and tell the tales of every single struggle each character faced. Secondly he applied ethos, an appeal to ethnicity to reach out the certain audiences and make it relatable for some readers. The novel also contained very vivid sceneries that made story more realistic and heart throbbing, this was a very effective display of

imagery. In the novel Paulsen uses effective word choices, ethos and very vivid imagery to advance and share his overall theme and thesis of *Nightjohn*.

In the novel *Nightjohn* Gary Paulsen uses imagery in his overall theme of prejudice to slaves. Paulsen created a graphic scenery with his words, his imagery was so vivid it felt real. In the book Paulsen wrote, "Standing in the sun with the rope going from his neck up to the saddle, tired and sweating because Waller ran him. Dust all over him. Flies around his shoulders." This section from the book was one of many clear sceneries I could imagine, this scene put me in it I could see the slave tired and sweaty and imagine all of it, making the book more realistic. This scene also shows how bad the slaves were maltreated. Another example of imagery in *Nightjohn* is, "Waller had two field hands to hold one of John's feet on the block. He put the chisel to the middle toe and swung the hammer." This was the part of the book where Waller cuts off some of John's toes, I could feel the horror in this scene because of how real the words make it, it also shows how far slave masters would go to maintain pride and enforce their rules, and their mentality of slaves being property is also shown here.

Another piece of imagery in this book is, "Those three you said in the back in the dark corner? Can you teach me those?' 'I sure can.' He used the edge of his hand to rub out what I had written in the dirt. Then he made a drawing with his thumb. A" This was a scene that was more inspiring than the others it felt real and it makes people wonder more about why John does what he does. It also creates John as a very caring person, one

who put other people before him even after all the pain and torture waller put him through. Paulsen imagery in this book makes it very interesting and captivating.

In the novel Nightjohn Gary Paulsen uses word choice to advance his overall theme of prejudice to slaves. In the last 2 paragraphs we discussed imagery, for Paulsen to advance his theme of prejudice to slaves he had to use effective diction to create the imagery. Examples of effective diction in this book are, "He ain't no master of nobody except that he's got dogs and a whip and a gun and so can cause hurt to be on some, bad hurt, but he ain't no master for all of that. We just call him that when we have to. Keeps him from whipping on us." this shows the literacy level of the slaves, it also amplifies the how little slave masters thought of their slaves. the slaves weren't taught english so they couldn't speak with proper grammar this shows that. Another example of good diction is "Waller he loves to carry the whip and carry the gun and so he rides in the wagon his ownself and makes on to be big. Sitting there like he don't know we hate him." this shows the different thinking of slaves and masters, waller used fear to control the slaves so they hate him but they wouldn't dare speak out for fear of being tortured or badly beaten.

Another example of good diction is, "Pale white maggot ugly and I could smell his ugliness on him-white ugly. Stink of bad sweat and whiskey and smoke and fat food. I didn't say nothing." this is how the slaves thought of waller, it shows how simple their vocabulary was because they couldn't learn english. One more example of good diction

is "I didn't know counting but I knew a little of money. Once I found a penny in the dirt by the quarters and I went to mammy and held it out." this piece of evidence shows how little the slaves knew of the world outside the plantations they worked in, their masters saw them as property to do with as they please. Paulsen uses effective diction to create a more realistic story.

In the novel *Nightjohn* Gary Paulsen uses ethos advance his overall theme of prejudice to slaves. In *Nightjohn* paulsen creates an appeal to ethics with his words. An example of ethos in the book is, "he wants that we should call him 'master', and they's some do when he can hear but we call him dog droppings and pig slop and worse things yet when he ain't listening nor close." this show how slaves felt of their master because the bad treatment, it lets us know the moral principles they had and things they went through all embodied in this statement. Another example of ethos in this book is, "my birthing mammy was sold when I was four years old because she was a good breeder and Waller needed the money. My mammy said that my birthing mammy brought enough for four field hands and that she cried when the man bought her." this would appeal to our senses as something that's shameful and sad, and allow us to feel a certain way for sarny in this statement. This also shows the morality of slave dealers back then, and our morality creates empathy while we read.

More examples of ethos in this book are, Old Waller brought him in bad. Sometimes they come in not so bad. Spec'lators bring them to sell sometimes all in a wagon, sell them from the wagon and Waller he buys them one or two or whatever, right from the wagon." waller a slave master buying slaves like items from a super-market, this applies to ethos

because it's morally wrong. and also we feel some of the pain the slaves were put through, losing family and other things. One more example of ethos in this book is, "My life is short, but some live long and the one thing we know, short or long-it's wrong to run. Not because it's wrong. But wrong because nobody ever gets away." this statement is like a lesson and it's something everyone can learn from the book it's morally correct and it also shows the way the slaves were thinking. Also this applies to ethos because the statement sends a message and helps everyone both the characters and us.

In conclusion Paulsen wrote a very thorough book that conveyed important details of life like a slave. He used imagery to create graphic sceneries, effective words and diction to show us how the slaves acted and how literate they were, it also conveyed how little the master thought of them. Paulsen also uses ethos to appeal to morality and see why the things then were wrong, it also taught a few moral lessons. In the novel Nightjohn Gary Paulsen uses word choice, ethos and imagery to advance his overall theme of prejudice to slaves.

