

Letter concerning music – Language Analysis

The recent trend in youth and teenage culture in listening to harsh music at extremely high volumes using headphones has sparked a debate in the public. Mrs Kathy Knowles, an assistant at a hearing aid clinic, shares her concerns, through a letter to the editor, and argues reasonably that the use of headphones must be limited; educating the readers that headphones have a significant contribution to the 'jeopardy' that teenagers' ears are already in. In support of Knowles, Gregory Drab strongly dejects the use of headphones and puts forth the idea that headphones strip teenager's ability to socialise while simultaneously, the harsh metal music negatively influences their values. However, others such as Carli Spellbound, a music therapist, and Jack Snip, disapprove Gregory Drab's views on current music trends by drawing on themselves and past events as examples. While on the other hand, both, Snip and Spellbound, are considerate about Knowles's concerns about the health of teenagers.

Kathy Knowles immediately attempts to seize the reader's attention within the title of her letter, through the use of a hyperbole, "...the youth of today Deafening Themselves". Through this Knowles attempts to stress her point and convey the message that teenagers' health is in grave danger due to the use of headphones. Prior to extending her argument further, Knowles states her profession, an assistant at a hearing aid clinic, to establish a sense of credibility and tries to convince the readership that her concerns are valid and reasonable. Shortly after, she utilises a concerned tone, evoking a sense of fear within the readers by presenting future possibilities of increased middle-aged patients having hearing disabilities. Due to this, readers are informed of the imminent dangers posed by the usage of headphones and the scale of this issue, motivating a sense of awareness within the readers. Knowles then specifically targets relatives of teenagers, "people who know and care", and makes a call for action. Following this, she finishes her letter with yet another hyperbole, "blasting your eardrums with music too loud", to remind the readers again that headphones can have damaging effects on hearing capabilities. Consequently, ensuring that readers have grasped the issue.

Sharing similar views as Knowles, who contends that headphones should be avoided, Gregory Drab reports in a contrasting, critical tone, through his letter to the editor – 'Anti-Social Behaviour', that headphones dwindle teenagers' opportunities to socialise and simultaneously discriminates their choice of music; claiming that it's "corrupting" their moral integrity. Drab commences his letter to the editor, by establishing a connection with the readers through the question – "has anybody else noticed...?". Implementing stronger vocabulary and hyperbolic statements when compared to Knowles, 'berserk' and 'corrupting', Drab demands the reader's attention and alike Knowles, positions the readers to believe that this is a growing issue which may eventually become uncontrollable. By later using colloquial language, he addresses the elder audience and tries to informally commit them into agreeing that teenagers must immediately stop using headphones, alike Knowles.

Whereas, Carli Spellbound's reply to Drab in the form of a letter to the editor, 'The Healing Power of Music', starkly opposes Drab's views, as initially indicated by the title itself. In further disapproval of Drab's views, Spellbound invites the audience to tune into her letter

and positions the readers appropriately in a much more kind and gentle tone, as a pose to Drab's harsh and critical attitude. As a result, Spellbound effectively attempts to attract both, proponents and opponents to consider her opinion. Mimicking Kathy Knowles, Spellbound then states her profession as a music therapist, which has a similar effect on the audience. That is, to incline the chances of the readers believing her following arguments. Thereafter, Spellbound lists her arguments in an organised structure - 'firstly', 'secondly' and 'finally', unlike Drab and Knowles, to make her arguments more accessible and unambiguous, therefore suggesting that her arguments are logical and reasonable. Within this, Spellbound also criticizes one of Drab's key arguments (values in society) thereby, appealing to the younger audience and causing them to agree. However, in doing so, she simultaneously isolates parental audience. Ultimately, she later finishes her letter with a statement attempting to praise the elder audience "...learned from your grandparents...", in an effort to reinvite them.

On the other hand, Jack Snip makes an effort to justify the actions of teenagers in a reasonable tone, through his letter to the editor, 'Need for Balance and Understanding Between Old and New'. Snip initiates his letter by implementing a short anecdote about the 'problems' in his generation while they were young, to suggest that he has personal experience which helps establish a connection with the readers. Snip then finishes his anecdote through the use of a rhetorical question, to supposedly ease Drab's concerns.