

Prompt: What effect do the drawn out, extended sentences create in the essay "Westbury Court" by Edwidge Danticat? Does breaking the rules of grammar enhance or detract from the essay? How so?

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I immediately noticed that throughout the essay "Westbury Court," Danticat has a number of run on sentences: some that run for the majority of paragraphs. And so, I wanted to understand what this deliberate craft choice did to the essay. The last time I was guilty of stuffing my stories full of easily identifiable run on sentences, those that would share form with the ones present in this essay, was back in my early days of high school: the same age as Danticat in this story. My first idea as to the purpose this craft decision serves is to emulate the voice of young people. This grounds the piece in the voice of the version of Danticat that experienced the ordeal, and it seemingly works to make the reader more easily identify with the character within the story. That being said, this doesn't feel effective in my mind. The imagery and sensory experiences of reading this essay did a far better job of putting the reader into the mind of the child's experiences. What I believe this choice did far more effectively is convey the chaos and confusion that would come from being ushered from your home by a number of firemen as you neighbors may be burning to death in the apartment next door. The run on sentences draw readers through the descriptions of the experience in the moments where it would make sense for recollection to break down as the storyteller is confused by the events taking place before them. And in that respect, I think the craft decision works very well.