

Ege's personal narrative {analysis notes and full essay}

Acceptances: Columbia, Northwestern, Johns Hopkins, U of Michigan

Notes

Content

Even though he doesn't state it directly, Ege is conveying that he can overcome himself and adapt to new ways of thinking. He has the ability to change and evolve by considering others and their ambitions in the larger scheme of life. The vehicle he uses to convey this, which allows a host of other ideas and metaphors, is his daily running routine. He begins with the run that will change it all: a run among the orderly daily routines of business people and athletes of Melbourne, Australia. From the beginning, he sets up a contrast between humans and their ambitions with the beauty, even if somewhat disordered, of Australia's wildlife. What's more, he begins with an image, a metaphor, of the ultimate instrument of human order: a traffic light that is currently red. This is where he questions the necessity of order, which has guided his life heretofore.

His other daily running routines give us a glimpse into his and his family's past and how he most likely found the need for order and perhaps a longing for self-importance. Yet, during his runs, he's constantly reminded he can't control everything. The world runs on in its own chaotic fashion whether he likes it or not and he must come to terms with the fact he's .

Of course, with the descriptions of all his other runs, we get a cornucopia of sights, smells, sounds and tastes. This is what helps bring the essay to life and lets us see the world as Ege sees it. In other words, it makes him a real, rounded person to the reader.

But finally he also philosophises about why running forces him to see things differently. He considers deeply the people he runs by, how he could just as easily have been one of the laborers he sees--or perhaps worse, one of the business men. After reading Ege's extensive CV which includes very detailed and difficult scientific research, the reader knows it's a great thing Ege is pursuing intellectual pursuits--so a kind of dramatic irony is utilized without being stated explicitly. In the end, Ege knows his whole life can't be dictated completely by order. He must allow a little chaos into his life to live fully.

Voice

Ege's unique voice is achieved here by both the content which he is talking about and his method of delivery. As mentioned before, he uses great imagery. He takes risks with the very personal, perhaps quirky, interjections (like using rhetorical questions and a simple joke at the end). But also his sentence and paragraph structures aid in conveying his voice. The first short sentence brings a question to the reader's mind. And then he brings in the red light, followed by two very short sentences for emphasis. This begins his writing style early and we begin to forget it's an essay and almost hear Ege speaking to us through the page.

Grammar, spelling, the small things

As always, you must edit edit edit. Refine, refine. He definitely takes risks with grammatical structures but he's consistent and has made sure the rest of his grammar and spelling is air-tight, which allows him to take those risks.

Overall, a solid essay. To tell you the truth, all the risks he took worried me at the time, but I trusted Ege's instincts. He was very passionate about the essay....and it worked out beautifully in the end.

The Essay

Order makes you stop.

There, a red light. Impersonal. Authoritative. In such dramatic contrast to the rowers, joggers, and endangered Australian Grayling swimming aimlessly in Melbourne's Yarra River that passes through the business district of the city. Red lights. In tune with the fast-paced men and women of business who kept slowing me down as I ran. So out of place with the calm, empty bridges I crossed along the way and the raindrops that kept falling on my shoulders as a reminder of Melbourne's cold breeze.

Until then, I had run in the ancient city of Myndos amidst smiling fishermen and Roman bathhouses. I had run in Nicosia along the barbed wires and artilleries that reminded onlookers about the war that divided Cyprus and my father's childhood in half. I had run in the crowded streets of my mother's hometown, Eskisehir, and imagined her as a 5-year old with braids holding the hands of her own mother I never got to meet. I had run in Palo Alto and Menlo Park in between my stops at the library and my temporary dwellings where I could finally enjoy the marionberries procured from the farmer's market, all the while listening to the choo-choo's of Caltrain and being enveloped by Californian eucalyptus scents that reminded me of our summer house in Myndos. I had run along the Embarcadero during the San Francisco Marathon as the breeze from the ocean made me shiver, helping me recognize in one split instant that I'm nothing but just another pebble in that same ocean.

But how can a person who used to categorically refuse running become absolutely obsessed with it? The answer might not be obvious to most, but to me, running is possibility.

The people I run by embody the totality of all experience, so much so that what I feel I'm destined to do in life, the research of esoteric happenings, loses its centrality. I could easily have been one of those businessmen I ran by, oblivious to their surroundings, or that particular geisha in Kyoto who could still preserve her sincerity under white paint and kimonos. When I was running alongside the Porsuk river in Eskisehir, the boundaries of nature forced me into the town's industrialized neighborhoods crowded with mechanic shops and day workers. I might well have been one of these guys devoting their existence to the manufacture of a bolt, right? Seeing how many different things I could have been makes my present self less important, but that much more Free.

Have you ever felt so little and unimportant that if you were to disappear one day, no one would notice? When I was standing among thousands of people waiting for the San Francisco Marathon to start, I felt precisely that. In that chaos, there was neither order nor any semblance of it. It was almost as if in that moment the self-entitlement I carried with me since childhood disappeared just like that. I did not need to look okay. I did not need to worry about how someone might mock the silly red bandana I just can't avoid wearing while running. I did not need to pretend that the world hovered around me and that I was the final arbiter of things. There were all these people waiting for the gun to go off to start running, and when we began running, there was no I.

See, I used to be a man of order and structure, thinking that they stood at the pinnacle of a civilized state of affairs. I was the walking excel sheet, the fun killing organizer, the excessively serious leader, the tireless sprinter racing against the hour and the minute hands. So when I started to run, I started running away from perfection. Sometimes I run backwards just to mock

Order.

Just kidding.

The point is, I guess order also happens to make you run.