According to Aristotle, an enthymeme is a rhetorical syllogism. “What is rhetoric? What is a syllogism?” (You may ask)…

According to scholar Thomas Gage, students may naturally use enthymemes to develop written arguments. He states, “The structures of whole arguments can be seen to derive from a single enthymeme, one which produces both the essential logic of an argument as well as its essential structure” –

Enthyememes have two properties:

1. They have clearly general logic
2. They need not to say anything more than that which is needed to persuade

Therefore, true enthymemes require easily persuasive evidence and topical clarity. If we anticipate the role of an active audience, enthymemes must also be aware of probable arguments for and against these two properties.

A → B

A → C

Syllogism:

A: All men are mortal. [major premise]
B: Socrates is a man. [minor premise]
C: Socrates is mortal. [conclusion]
A | B
---|---
All men are mortal | Socrates is a man

A | C
---|---
All men are mortal | Socrates is mortal

C ⇒ B ⇒ A

**Thesis:** Socrates is mortal [C] because he is a man [B] and all men are mortal [A].

**Question:** Do we agree with this? Why or why not?

*My Papa’s Waltz*

**Enthymeme:**

A: All fathers who drink whiskey physically abuse their children.

B: The father in Roethke’s poem drank whiskey.

C: The father in Roethke’s poem physically abused his child.

A | B
---|---
All fathers who drink whiskey physically abuse their children. | The father in Roethke’s poem drank whiskey.

A | C
---|---
All fathers who drink whiskey physically abuse their children. | The father in Roethke’s poem physically abused his child.

C ⇒ B ⇒ A
Conclusion [C] | Verb | Minor Premise [B] | Conjunction | Major Premise [A]
---|---|---|---|---
The father in My Papa’s Waltz physically abused his child | *because* | the father in Roethke’s poem drank whiskey | *and* | all fathers who drink whiskey physically abuse their children.

Thesis: The father in My Papa’s Waltz physically abused his child [C] because the father in Roethke’s poem drank whiskey [B] and all fathers who drink whiskey physically abuse their children [A].

**Q: Do we agree with this? Why or why not?**

*Now let’s try to do it backwards. This time, think of a thesis statement for The Road Not Taken and break it down into an enthymeme.*

**The Road Not Taken**

**Thesis:**

|---|---|

*because*

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<tr>
<th>A [Major Premise]</th>
<th>C [Conclusion]</th>
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</table>

**Enthymeme:**

A: 
B: 
C:
Do we agree? Why or why not?

*Colorless Rules (pg. 31 Choice Voice)*

**Thesis:**

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<tr>
<th>A</th>
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<table>
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“Dwight Schrute Interlude”

**Thesis:**

Figure 2: Dwight is awesome.

**Enthymeme:**

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Works Cited


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7W4duuCb2c>.

