In his article, published on the tenth anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez invokes the ideals of Dr. King and advocates for nonviolent resistance. Implementing a resolute tone, he asserts that only nonviolence will be able to achieve the goals of civil rights activists. By using contrasting diction to differentiate violent actions and nonviolent actions, he is able to reason for the virtues of the later; likewise his convictions and use of plural pronouns and a rhetorical question help to drive his argument for nonviolent resistance.

Chavez begins his essay recalling the power of nonviolence as demonstrated through Dr. King, and moving on to compare and contrast violence and nonviolence. Through very direct sentences, he indicates that nonviolence is more powerful than violence while violence leads to “injuries and perhaps deaths on both sides...total demoralization...” (paragraph 4), nonviolence is “supportive and crucial.” His contrasting diction from images of deaths and injuries as compared to the righteousness of nonviolence helps to convince his listeners which they would prefer. Likewise, his mentioning of violence as being harmful to “both sides” help establish an unbiased character, and demonstrates how violence is detrimental to anyone, regardless of his position on civil rights. He later moves on to once again directly stating contrasts. “Nonviolence has exactly the opposite effect” (Paragraph 5). His attachment of words like “support,” “conscience,” and “justice” to nonviolence has the effect of making it more appealing to the audience and depicting why it is right and effective.

Throughout the passage, Chaves implements the plural pronoun “we.” His repetition of “we are convinced” in his article is appealing in that it is very inclusive. It does not alienate his readers. He contrasts “we” with “these who will see violence as the shortcut to change” (paragraph 7). He portrays the “we” as a righteous sympathetic people, ones who “know the [struggle] cannot be more important than one human life” (paragraph 6), and who “are not blind to...frustration, impotence, and anger” (paragraph 7). By contrasting a compassionate nonviolent people, who are able to comprehend the importance of even one life, to the almost heartless people advocating for violence, his use of plural pronouns is in fact an emotional appeal that prompts the audience towards his side of the argument.

He furthers this idea towards the end of his article, not only invoking the virtues which Gandhi taught in addition to Dr. King, but also by means of a rhetorical question. He is able to advocate for nonviolence by appealing to authority; his allusions to the teachings of Dr. King and Gandhi work as historical proofs that nonviolence is powerful and effective. Likewise, Chavez pairs this with a logical appeal in the form of once again, very direct and declarative sentence – short but powerful. He, for example, asserts towards the end of his article “people suffer from violence. Examine history.” He once again call upon references to the past to make a logical argument on why nonviolent resistance is the most successful form of resistance and pairs it with a rhetorical question: “who gets killed in the case of violent revolution?” In an instance of hypophora, he answers “the poor, the workers, the people do,” logically outlining the detriments of violence.

Chavez is able to present a very effective arguments for nonviolent resistance through countless rhetorical devices. His resolution and conclusion polishes off his point nicely and is able to instill the same confidence in his audience. His powerful assertions whether in the form of short sentences or phrases such as “we are convinced,” “we know” or “we believe” effectively persuade the reader on the merits of nonviolent resistance.