

Humanity as a providing theme in a clean well-lighted place novel

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The short story, "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," written by Ernest Hemingway, is known to be an excellent example of his understanding of humanity. To begin with, this particular short story takes place in a clean and pleasant café. Hemingway introduces three extremely interesting characters with a diverse set of personalities. The majority of the content in this short story consists of the conversation between the two waiters who work at the café. They discuss their daily situation about a deaf, old man who stays at the café late at night. The dialogue between the two waiters allows the audience to analyze the two characters' personalities and the kind of people they are.

I believe that the young waiter is the most relevant of all the characters. He acquires similar characteristics to many people in my generation. Despite the lack of activity in the story, Hemingway effectively portrays the personality of the young waiter solely through dialogue. There is not much going on in the story besides the conversation between the waiters. However, by the end of the story, the audience learns that the young waiter is an impatient and misguided individual.

To begin with, the first trait that the audience discovers from the young waiter is how he is impatient. He despises the old man for forcing him to stay at work late. As a result, the waiter never gets home to bed before three o'clock in the morning. In the short story, Hemingway writes, "You should have killed yourself last week," he said to the deafman" (Line 26). This shows how impatient and insensitive the young waiter is. He would rather have the old man die than to stay up late serving him. The reason for this character's impatience is because he claims to have a wife at home, unlike the old man. The young waiter boasts, "He's lonely. I'm not lonely. I have a

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wife waiting in bed for me” (Line 44). It is evident that the old man’s lasting presence at the café causes the young man to be absent at home and as a result, he resents him for it.

Another trait from the character that is discovered from the story is how ignorant he is. He is too stubborn to realize the deeper meaning of existence. In contrast to the young waiter, his older coworker empathizes with the deafman. The older waiter attempts to explain to the young man how the deaf man finds peace in the well-lighted café. Hemingway writes, “ It was the light of course but it is necessary that the place be clean and pleasant. You do not want music. Certainly you do not want music. Nor can you stand before a bar with dignity although that is all that is provided for these hours” (Line 89). The older waiter is similar to the old, deaf man because he also finds peace in his life at the café. He contemplates the emptiness of human existence and understands the pleasure of being in a clean and well-lighted place at night. On the other hand, the younger waiter only cares about going home to his wife and thinks that his time is more valuable than the old man’s time.

Both the young and old waiter represent different perspectives in regards to their age. The young waiter symbolizes our generation’s youth and their lack of judgment. He only cares about the materialistic aspects in life such as going to bed early. This character is similar to our generation’s youth because they do not value time as much as adults. Younger people tend to misunderstand the true value of time and only think about life in the short term. In our society, younger individuals are only concerned with

materialistic objects rather than sentimental value. The younger waiter demonstrates his unconcern of sentimental value when he discusses with his coworker about the deaf man's wife. He states, "A wife would be no good to him now" (Line 46). This statement displays his ignorance because of how he only thinks of women as a tool for pleasure rather than as a lifelong companion. The older waiter, on the other hand, symbolizes adults and their sense of rationality. The wisdom portrayed in the older waiter is seen through his empathy with the deaf man's situation.

In conclusion, I believe that the young waiter is a relevant character due to many of his characteristics. He is extremely similar to our society's youth who only worries about the materialistic things in life. I believe that this character is capable of changing his beliefs because as time goes on, he will mature into a wiser individual. Once he becomes older, the young man will realize that not everything is about worldly objects. His older coworker is old enough to realize and contemplate human existence on a deeper level. However, with time, the young waiter will eventually recognize the more important aspects of life.