

French literature- diderot

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Diderot Questions Word Count: 257 page N2's judgment seems to show disappointment. What are the indications of this? What would N2 have preferred in order to satisfy his expectations of a good story? And how does N1 disagree, or at least defend himself?

The indications that N2 feels disappointment are demonstrated in his manner of speech. N2 would have preferred that a good story would make sense. N1 defends himself by rationalizing that it is a good story.

2. In a similar way, N1 accuses N2 of having listened despite his objections. In this riposte, he sets forth a definition of the good listener much the same way N2 had attempted to define the good story-teller. Write down these two definitions, structuring your formulation in a parallel structure that clearly displays how the two preliminary definitions are pitted against each other or in coordination with each other. These are working definitions that will be constantly modified throughout the story, so your formulations will also need to change; keep close track of these changes, indicating on what page and in what paragraph they occur. These definitions are important. The definition of the good listener begins on page 1, and the definition of the good storyteller also begins on page 1 as well as we follow the story throughout.

3. The last paragraph of this second opening is addressed to the reader and not to N2. Notice that he quotes N2, but this time in quotation marks, pointing out that this is no longer a dialogue but that he is narrating what N2 is saying. How is this different from the technique observed to this point? Note whether there are further occurrences of this technique.

This is a bit of a different technique in tone and the way the author approaches the subject. There are further occurrences of this in the story.

4. And here the story begins (bottom pg. 1). This could be considered the 3rd time the story has begun. What is the effect of these false starts? How do they function with the conceit of the narration? These false starts help us to understand how Diderot's mind works, and how the rhythm of the narration follows.

5. The " first" sentence of the story states a gender stereotype; at the same time, it declares itself a stereotype—find exactly where in the sentence this is shown. It also denies any refutation of same or any converse formulation. What is the effect of these declarations in your understanding of the story? The story has a gendered quality about it that is decidedly male.

6. What about Tanié's selfless decision to leave Madame Reymer seems somewhat disingenuous? And what of Madame Reymer's reaction to his departing? (Be careful to note the source of any information you might use to answer this latter question.) Tanié is not leaving Madame Reymer for purely innocent reasons. Madame is perhaps divided between being upset and resigned.

7. As the details of Madame Reymer's " activities" during Tanié's absence become clearer, who is giving the reader most of the precise information? N2 is giving it.

8. By the end of this section—which could be considered to be the end of the story, except that this is not a story—we know considerable details about N1, N2, Madame Reymer, and Tanié. Describe each of these characters by their nature, personality, and disposition toward the others. N1 is unsure; N2 is self-confident; Madame Reymer is kind; and Tanié is terse.

9. This section ends with an important statement concerning the matter at

the center of our discussion here: the nature of the short story. Once again, N1 prepares his reader, and N2, for what is to come: yet another version or attempt at telling this story. How do you interpret this additional commentary on what story-telling is about? This additional commentary foreshadows the future.

10. The new section begins, again, with the promise of a story: “ the hero of the story I am about to tell.” The words “ hero” and “ story” beg a critical interpretation, and by this time, we’re used to the game. Take this sentence (setting aside for the moment the name and details of the individual) and analyze it: how many times has the same thing been said? Is there any progress? If so, in what direction? If not, what is the effect of this repetition? (This is an important question for your understanding of the story; taking the time to analyze this passage will be of enormous help to you when writing the final WA.) The same thing has been repeated various times throughout the passage. There is some mental progression, but it is in the direction of becoming more tedious as a story. The effect of the repetition is to ingrain certain ideas within the reader’s mind.

11. The exchange between our narrators at the bottom of page 6 begs the question of misogyny. How would you position the two narrators on this topic, remembering that this text comes from the 2nd half of the 18th century?

What is now called misogyny was justified in olden days by the ideas that women were to be submissive, according to the Holy Scriptures.

12. After the long description of the unpleasant scene in Gardeil’s study, we come to the top of page 10, where several questions offer themselves: What

kind of opinion does N1 have of Le Camus' obvious devotion to Mademoiselle de La Chaux? What do you make of N2's distant and general comments, here and in the preceding passage, on the nature of humans in general instead of commenting more directly on the scene under consideration? The last sentence of the paragraph requires some examination: "A true remark, which, however, did not apply in the case of Mademoiselle de la Chaux." To whom is this observation addressed? And what does it say about N1's attitude toward N2? N1 disapproves of Le Camus. N2 seems bitter. The last remark is made towards N1. N1 is disapproving of N2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Diderot, Denis. This Is Not a Story. Retrieved 22 Aug 2011 from:

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