

Literary analysis popular mechanics by raymond carver essay sample

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The short story “ Popular Mechanics” by Raymond Carver is a very compelling literature piece on family breakdown. The short story, told as a narration by a third person divulges the dialogue and the actions between a couple and their tussle over a baby. The theme of the story based on the subject of male-female conflict is therefore universal and timeless. The involvement of a baby in the couple’s tussle allows even more interpretations to the story. The story contains several literary devices that bring about its meaning, themes and enhances its understanding among its readers.

The story is full of allusions and gives very scanty details on the events and characters in it. The narrator moves quickly through the actions and the characters leaving the readers to make their own interpretations. He comes to a speedy climax that is devoid of a resolution. The author simply describes the weather and “ runs” through the rest of the story. He caps the story off by stating that “ In this manner, the case was decided” (Carver). The use of this style provokes the readers’ thoughts and draws them into the themes of the story in an attempt to elicit critical and pro-active thinking.

The story has foreshadowing as a literary device. “ but it was getting dark on the inside too” (Carver). In this case, foreshadowing implied that not only was the day coming to end but so was something else. We can presume that this statement foreshadowed the marriage collapsing. A kitchen is a place where things heats- up and its mention foreshadows the melting of the snow. The literal melting of the snow foreshadowed the breakdown of the marriage.

The author has used the title “ popular mechanics” symbolically. The author does not give an explanation in the genesis of the conflict between the couple. He therefore leaves it to the readers to assume that the reasons for the conflict are the usual tensions common in all relationships. The couple’s fight for the child signifies of their quest for a happy future. The baby is symbolic of happiness and tranquility each of parents is seeking as they separate.

The use of the word “ popular” in the title of the story is also paradoxical. The story tells of the sad events preceding a separation. Separations and divorces are usually painful experiences for the parties involved. Therefore, there would never be a reason “ mechanic” that would be said to be widely acclaimed by many people as to be branded popular. Few people would wish to engage in conflicts, and so no reasons would be said to be popular.

The author uses symbolism to tell the story. The very first statement “ The snow was melting into dirty water” (Carver) symbolizes the disintegration of the family in question. This powerful opening phrase sets the tone for the story and arouses the interest of readers. The phrase “ Am glad you are leaving! Am glad you are leaving!” (Carver) symbolizes a raging person who is out of control. The child had been used as an allegory. It symbolizes the innocent parties that suffer harm whenever there is a conflict between the entities it is reliant on.

The author also uses repetition. In the instance “ Am glad you are leaving! Am glad you are leaving” and “ get your things and get out” (Carver). These

words are said in presumably raised tones which help readers to understand the severity of the situation. These repetitions are used to put emphasis on the central theme of the story-family separation.

The author also employs tragedy to enhance the theme of the story. The narrator tells of a series of unfortunate events, which the innocent baby undergoes. “ he tightened his hands on the babythe baby was red-faced and screaming” (Carver). After some tussle over the baby he events “ he felt the baby slipping out of his hands” (Carver) we can presume that the baby fell. The culmination of the events in a disaster elaborates the theme of the story (Literary Devices).

The author has used rhetoric questions in the story. Carver writes “ You can’t even look at me in the face, can you?” and “ Are you crazy?” These rhetoric questions emphasize the theme of family conflicts. The rhetoric questions give the readers a glimpse into the motivations and thoughts of the conflicting parties (Literary Devices).

Works Cited

Carver, Raymond. Popular Mechanics. 1981. Web 12 Mar. 2012.

<http://www.tesltimes.com/pmech.html>

Literary Devices. 2010. Web. 12 Mar. 2012. <http://literary-devices.com/>