

An analysis of "the weapon" by fredric brown essay sample

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



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The best short stories have “ thought provoking ideas expressed in interesting ideas” Do you agree? One thought provoking idea, is expressed clearly in the story The weapon by Fredric Brown. The story suggests many themes, but the main one being the lack of respect humans have with power and their ignorance towards technology. A scientist, Dr James Graham is creating the ultimate weapon. During his study time one night, a guest Mr. Niemand arrives at his doorstep, raising many questions about the weapon that James cannot answer. The ultimate question that James blindly ignores is “ is humanity ready for the ultimate weapon?” Meanwhile James son Harry, a mentally disabled boy insists Mr. Niemand reads him “ Chicken Little”. Dr James later enters Harry’s room, discovering that Mr. Niemand left Harry a loaded revolver. Dr James leaves us with his thought “ only a madman would give a loaded revolver to an idiot.”

The last line suggests many ideas, that arouse the readers’ thoughts. The last line is the key to the authors meaning- that mankind could destroy itself. There is an obvious and very direct comparison created in the story. Certain symbols stand for things, the gun representing the weapons society creates. The gun is an ideal symbol , for it is a weapon that if not used properly can result in unfortunate consequences, including death. Humanity cannot respect or are incapable of respecting power. The “ idiot” (Harry) symbolizes modern society’s ignorance. This enforces the theme that mankind could destroy itself. By using metaphors and symbolism, this theme is expressed quite interestingly.

Chicken Little the story that is read to Harry by Mr. Neimand also presents many ideas to the reader. Chicken Little a story about a bird called Chicken Little, who believes the sky is falling, when an acorn drops off a tree and hits him on the head. He quickly runs to the king to tell him the sky is falling, when on the way to the king, he meets Ducky Lucky, and many other friends, telling them of the news. In the end Foxy Loxy a sly character, tells them that she knows a short way to get to the king tempts them all into her cave, and none of the animals are ever seen again. This foreshadows events that happen in the story. Chicken Little is much like the scientist Dr James Graham- they both jump into conclusions are stubborn and strongly believe that their views are correct.

Chicken Little seems so sure that the sky is falling when the acorn hits him on the head and without a second thought runs along to tell the King. Dr James, is similar to this, as he does not think about the outcome of the weapon he is creating, completely believes that he is doing the right thing for science, and refuses to listen to other people's views. In this way when Mr. Neimand says, " I hope that the sky shall never fall on Chicken Little" he hopes that in Dr James creating this weapon, that it doesn't end up hurting him.

The author includes Chicken Little, as it is a metaphorical comparison between a childhood character that seems so innocent, and an adult scientist. This appears to be quite ironic, and a contrast, but it seems that in the end they are the same, the adult being just as naive and innocent as the

child. In this way the ideas are cleverly expressed through irony and metaphors.

The story is written in third person, giving the reader, an unbiased perception, and a clearer view of what is happening. The atmosphere was created in the story, through what each character says, and their actions. In the beginning of the story, the reader is introduced to Dr James, whom is studying hard, thinking about his son and his disabilities, the atmosphere is quite tense, and we get a sense that something is about to happen. Mr. Neimand arrives at Dr James door, and more tension is created due to conflict between the two. Near the end, the atmosphere seems almost relaxed, and this is where the climax builds up. When Dr James discovers the revolver MR Neimand has left for his son, he bursts out into anger- all the tension that had been built up throughout the story.

The theme that mankind may not be ready for technology also appears in the story Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes, where many emotions and thoughts are provoked in the reader. Flowers for Algernon, reveals the struggle of a thirty-year-old man, Charlie Gordon who is mentally ill. Charlie is put through a series of tests, by his Doctors, Dr Strauss and Dr Nemur, racing against a mouse named Algernon who has taken an operation to triple his intelligence. The doctors decide to perform an operation to improve/ triple Charlie's intelligence like the mouse Algernon and this proves to be successful. But when Charlie starts to realize how people used to act around him, he becomes sad and angry. His intelligence becomes

unbelievable, making it difficult for him to communicate to people on a normal level.

In the long term the operation was unsuccessful, as it leads Charlie to his death due to complications in his brain. It deals with the "inner space" of the mind and heart, and an insight of whirlwind emotions. Charlie and his doctors were obviously incapable of dealing with the results of Charlie's operation, as his intelligence got out of control. He found it hard to communicate with normal people as he was now on a different level. The doctors realized this, but could not do anything to help Charlie; they were unprepared for the consequences- reflecting their unreadiness for this kind of technology.

Another theme in this story is the prejudice of humans towards the unknown. Throughout Charlie Gordon's first months, he describes people laughing and teasing him, but Charlie does not realise this and believes that they are being friendly and affectionate. The lack of respect humans have towards people that are different is exerted in this story. Adding to this, Charlie's lack of awareness raises another theme – that perhaps if you have no knowledge at all, you may not be hurt as much and be happy. In the beginning he was quite a happy person, optimistic, and very innocent to the surrounding world, but after the operation, he suddenly learnt what people were really like, and in a way it hurt him see people act so selfishly. "... people of honest feelings and sensibility...abusing a man born with low intelligence.... I, like this boy had foolishly played the clown" Flowers for Algernon is written in first person, in a diary form, by Charlie Gordon, describing his everyday life, as a progress report. This proves to be very effective in conveying themes in this sort of

form, as the reader steps in to Charlie's life, understanding how he feels, and his emotions. These themes are expressed through the language used. The author creatively and realistically, wrote the story, in Charlie's shoes, the spelling in the beginning is misspelled, and the language is worded so it appears childish and simple- like a second grader's diary. This helps the reader relate to Charlie, to understand his struggles and goals in life.