

An analysis of the writing in america and i by anzia yeziarska

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For this final paper I chose to take a closer look at the writing of Anzia Yezierska in *America and I*. I decided to examine the symbolism used by Yezierska in this piece. Yezierska tells the story of her struggle to find America. As she writes about this Yezierska uses symbolism to convey ideas and connotations about her feelings and her perception of America. The words and images of darkness and light are used throughout the piece. Yezierska uses the idea of darkness and light to symbolize the negative and positive aspects of her experience and understanding in America.

As it is commonly regarded darkness symbolizes those things which have negative connotations. Yezierska uses the notion of darkness to symbolize her feelings of despair, confusion, and the hardships faced by her. On the other hand the image of light is used to symbolize hopes and dreams about her life in America, and the unraveling of her confusion. Yezierska, in using these images, is able to present a clearer picture of the emotions that should be interpreted from the story.

Even from the very beginning of the story Yezierska uses images of light and dark to describe her coming from Russia to America. She describes her hopes for America as sunlight burning through my darkness. In this instance she has used light and dark to emphasize her feelings. Sunlight is used to symbolize the hopes and dreams of a better life while darkness is used to illustrate the hopelessness and disparity she felt in Russia. Furthermore, she depicts the people of Russia as colors that never saw light. In saying this she reemphasizes the hopelessness of Russia and demonstrates her longing to move a better place.

The first use of light and dark in describing her coming from Russia to America sets the standard for the feelings that the reader interprets from the symbolism in light and dark. From this point on the idea of light and dark plays a part in the telling of Yeziarska's story.

She next uses the idea of dark and light when talking about her first job. She imagines what it will be like to get her first wages in America. The symbol of light is used when she describes her expected pay as visionary wages shining like light over my head. A sense of hope and belief in her idea of America is felt from these words, to show the feelings she had in anticipation of her first pay.

However we see the image of darkness again when she discovers that she would receive no wages. As she is coldly told of this she claims that it went black for my eyes. A picture of darkness can be seen when imaging what she says. The darkness represents the confusion and misfortune of her circumstances. She is bewildered at what has happened and finds herself in a state of disappointment. It is now seen that Russia is not the only place of darkness to her. She finds that America has both darkness and light.

In a way darkness now takes on the form of not just disparity but also a sense of uncertainty and misunderstanding of America. She begins to find that she is not so sure she has found the America that she was looking for and uses darkness to symbolize that which she feels is not America to her.

At her next job she emphasizes the darkness of the cellar that she works in. She does so to show that she was not happy with what she was doing and it

that could not be her America . However she seems to find light in the darkness again. This time light represents the hope in rebelling to move away from the gloom of her cellar job that did not bring her any sense of satisfaction. She says, The light of self-assertion broke into my cellar darkness.

Yeziarska seems to keep finding herself in the darkness, but there is always some light that keeps her going and searching for the America that she wants to find. It seems that no light can ever bring her out of the darkness. Her search for her America seems to be helpless and all that she does brings her no joy. This gloomy and empty feeling felt by Yeziarska, due to her inability to do something that gives her life, gives the sense of darkness that prevails through the story. When she can no longer take the struggle she is in she claims, All the light was out of my eyes .

At this point in the story she has lost all hope. The loss of the light symbolizes this lost hope and emphasizes her lowest point of disparity. No light symbolizes total darkness. This is the one point in the story where she hasn't even a shred of hope left in her and she is at her wits end in trying to figure out the great mystery of America . The image of total darkness gives the picture of blackness. Just like in a pitch-black darkness, Yeziarska can not see a thing. She has lost her way and has no light to follow and no sense of where to turn. This total darkness therefore symbolizes precisely how she felt at that moment in her life.

As she finally begins to understand America she describes her revelation as a light. The light this time represents the feeling of understanding and a renewed sense of hope. In understanding America she feels no longer in such darkness. With and understanding the disparity and uncertainty dwindles, therefore symbolically she links this to going from darkness into light.

Darkness and light are images that can easily be pictured in the mind. These images correlate with the story to give the reader a clear picture of the way yeziarska felt about things. Emotions and feelings are emphasized and consequently better understood by those reading her story. These symbols of light and dark parallel Yeziarska story and create solid support for her writing. The use of light and dark make this piece much more affective to the reader.