

Assignment example

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



March Disorientation and Enlightenment in Pounds " In a Station of the Metro" and Roethkes " My Papas Waltz" Ezra Pound's " In a Station of the Metro" and Theodore Roethke's " My Papas Waltz" are ideal examples of poems that illustrate the subject of disorientation. Both poems portray speakers who are experiencing something that they want their audiences, to not only see, but more importantly, to feel. " In a Station" only has two lines, but it has a perplexing tone and sinister imagery. The exact identity of the speaker is unclear, though he/she is someone who sees the metro as a crowd of ghosts, but manages to also have the imagination of seeing the crowd as flower petals too. " My Papas Waltz" narrates a young son's frightened encounters with his drunken father. As his father waltzes him around, the poem creates the same dizzying effect on the audience too. These poems evoke the senses to assert that, disorientation may be confusing at first, but they have their enlightening moments.

The main subject of these poems is disorientation that can create a feeling of dread. " In a Station" is a metaphor of contrasting images about seeing an " apparition" (Pound 1) and seeing " petals" (Pound 2). An apparition is usually worrisome, while petals tend to evoke appreciation for their delicate beauty. Using these images create opposing emotional effects that result to a sense of disorientation for readers, as if the poem also wants them to feel the confused state of its speaker. " My Papas Waltz" talks about disorientation too. The speaker is merely a little boy, but his drunken father aggressively tosses him around as his dance ritual before putting his son to bed. The grace and aristocratic nature of a " waltz" conflicts with the working-class roughness of a father who smells like " whiskey" (Roethke 1), has "

battered” knuckles (Roethke 10) and “ palm caked hard by dirt” (Roethke 14), and hurts his dance partner by scraping his ear with his buckle (Roethke 12). Again, this poem puts readers into the place of the speaker- a particularly physically and emotionally dizzying place. These poems have a powerful way of forcing their audiences to step into their shoes and feel their disorientation.

To feel confusion, these poems stimulate the senses to create strong visual and emotional effects. The title itself of “ In a Station” easily helps readers see the metro’s darkness, feel its coldness, and smell its wet, dank scents. Adding the description of the “ apparition of these faces in the crowd” heightens the feelings of creepiness and fearfulness of the setting (Pound 1). Furthermore, the “ petals, on a wet, black bough” increases the wet image of the station, while, at the same time, creating confusion because of the contradiction between an unnatural apparition and the petals’ natural delicate beauty. The readers can smell the petals that replace the humid scent of the station. “ My Papas Waltz” also maximizes the senses in sending a confusing impact on readers. Readers can smell “ whiskey” (Roethke 1) and feel the “ battered” knuckles (Roethke 10), “ palm caked hard by dirt” (Roethke 14) of the father, the pain of ears being scraped with a buckle (Roethke 12), and the tapping of the beat on their heads, as well as the dizzying sensation of being twirled and romped around that they have to cling hard unto their partners. The poem wants the audience to feel physically shaken and anxious too. These poems underscore that readers can be in the confused position of their speakers.

Despite the disorienting effect, these poems have positive endings that

indicate enlightenment. The “ petals” (Pound 2) leave a message of hope and beauty, while the father’s rough dance in “ My Papas Waltz” is his way of showing his affection for his son. The apparition is less scary because of the petals that help readers find beauty in the station. It suggests that even darkest situations have beauty in them. Furthermore, “ My Papas Waltz” is essentially about a father’s love. He might be rough and drunk, but he wants to be the one who puts his son to bed. His dance may be a form of a ritual that helps him express his affection. Moreover, the boy clings to his father’s shirt, as if to signify that, though scared, he still loves his father. In this dance, they are uneasily together, but they continue to be one.

These poems tell readers that the world is a disconcerting place. It can be scary and chaotic. But it is still more beautiful to live in this world because one still lives. Life has so much potential to be better. Life begins better when people change how they see their experiences. An apparition can be petals, and a dizzying dance can be a form of everlasting love.

Works Cited

Pound, Ezra. “ In a Station of the Metro.” Compact Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Eds. Laurie G. Krizner and Stephen R. Mandell. Boston: Wadsworth, 2013. 745. Print.

Roethke, Theodore. “ My Papas Waltz.” 1948. Compact Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing. Eds. Laurie G. Krizner and Stephen R. Mandell. Boston: Wadsworth, 2013. 889. Print.