

Short story essays examples

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In “ Cathedral” by Raymond Carver, the writer tells a story about discernment and personal change. The narrator sees himself as being superior than his wife’s friend because he is blind. He refuses to see himself as someone having a deficiency but gets a rude awakening when he experiences and realize that the blind man could actually see far greater things being blind, than someone who has physical sight. In “ A Rose for Emily by William Faulkner, the narrator makes the reader feel horrified by what Ms. Emily did, but uses intrigue to weave the plot and make the people feel sorry for by showing her strength of character and pride. Although the two stories are different, if one look beyond the obvious differences, we find that there is an underlying theme. Both show bitterness and resentment and suppressed feelings.

The two short stories show evidence of the characters psychological problems that prevent them from living. Emily killed her only lover, Homer Baron and then sleeps with the dead body for years. In Cathedral, The narrator assumes that he is far superior than his wife’s friend, Robert because he is blind. Because he could see he thinks that everyone including his wife must be a fool to associate with the blind who has no insight.

Setting is an important aspect in a story. It offers the author a means of reinforcing and communicating his or her vision, and to the reader a means of understanding more fully the details of the story. The setting in “ A Rose for Emily” is Miss Emily’s house. It is old, big, gloomy and decayed. It is filled with dust and is located in the middle of a new growing section of the town. The author uses the time period to show the changes that took place in the lives of many and how many did not change with the times. Miss Emily’s

house, when she died and many people came to show respect, the house, old and magnificent, still reigns among the more modern structures. Time had also passed and though new laws were established, Miss Emily was not aware so when she was asked to pay her taxes she said that Colonel Sartoris had abolished her taxes. She did not realize that the Colonel had died ten years before. In “ Cathedral the setting is in the home of the narrator and his wife. The home is very ordinary and this reflects the ordinary people.

Compared this to the loftiness of a Cathedral and the narrator’s home the writer tries to bring out the fact that what one sees or where he is is not important. What matters is what one feels and imagines.

The rich symbols used in both stories help to further enforce meaning and brings a connection between the writer and the reader. Emily’s house is much like her, it had decay like her mind. She holds on to everything old and refuses to let go although the society has changed. The house also stands for mental illness and just as how she locks up the bedroom door upstairs with the dead corpse so she locks her mind and would not allow anyone or any fresh thought to enter. The strand of hair found on the pillow is a symbol of love lost. She hangs on to it even when it is gray with age, she refuses to let it go. She did murder but her mind does not tell her that it was wrong. The title of the story “ Cathedral” is a symbol in itself. The cathedral is a place of worship, where people go to find peace. The narrator however, saw it as only a building and nothing of significance. But when he was asked to talk about it he couldn’t find words. He makes excuses that the reason for this was that he didn’t believe in anything. However, when he was allowed to draw it with his eyes closed, he got an awakening. He realized that what he saw when his

eyes were closed was even more significant than what he saw when his eyes were opened.

Ironically, you are supposed to see more with your eyes open than closed. It is strange that the narrator begins to see much more when his eyes were closed. He feels weightless, he feels peaceful and now realizes that the blind man had more insight than he does. Even his wife he began to look at differently. He had made fun of her when she told him that her friend was coming to visit. “ Maybe I could take him bowling” he said. In “ A Rose for Emily” one would think that since Emily had so much death in her family, her father dying, then her aunt, and nothing was said of her mother but if we assume that she also died, we would think that that would be enough. But she killed Homer too, who would be her companion. Also the rose is a symbol of love and faithfulness, but she got none. The irony used in both stories is subtle and provokes the reader to think harder and analyze situation. It is more effective here than direct statements

Who is telling the story and where the person stands in relation to what is going on in the story are important. First person narrative, when used, limits your story as your main character, if he cannot see, hear, touch etc. you cannot use him in the story. If you want to include him you will have to use words or use another person in the story who can see. First person stories are limited and almost all the times are internal. Third person stories are often full of excitement and fun. In both stories, the first person and third person narration is used. In “ A Rose for Emily” the story is told by the first person narrator. This person uses what he/she hears to tell the story and therefore can influence or twist the story to suit whatever situation he/she

pleases. Speculation is used too and can get out of control as when she/he says..” we had said she will marry him.” Or when she went to the drugstore and bought the poison .” we all said, she will kill herself.” It leads the reader to speculate too. In “ Cathedral” the first person narrator is more into himself than what he should be telling about the events of the story. He tends to make his mind wander and put things in at times that are not relating to the story. He tends to lead the reader on at times and makes the reader wonder which way the story will go next. Writing in the third person gives the person more freedom in how the story is told.

Both authors, in their stories, set the stage for human change, the acceptance of change and situations, intimate communication and the unity of human beings. Faulkner, in giving details about setting and atmosphere is able to allow society to understand motivations, actions and reactions in human beings and how the individual’s life is mortal. Carver teaches the lesson of having insight; the act of looking and seeing are actually different and when one is able to see rather than look he will realize that the experience that is gained from human inadequacies are immortal.

Work Cited

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