

Analyze jealous husband returns in form of parrot

Literature



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She buys him and takes him back to the house they had once lived in as husband and wife. In spite of the fact that he is physically transformed, he still feels jealous of all the men in his former wife's life. Every time he sees a man with his former wife, he goes crazy with jealousy, venting his anger on the toys in his birdcage, and insulting the men through his bird talk. However, after a while, the feelings of his new identity overtake those of his past life, and all he wants is the freedom to fly into the limitless sky.

The story is told in the first person and always from the parrot's point of view, even when he is describing his human life. The tone of the story is one of intense jealousy, that has been carried over from a former existence. Butler begins the story with the feelings of love that the husband felt for his wife in his former life; enjoying the sight of her beauty, and the touch of her fingers as she ruffled his feathers. This is followed immediately by the jealousy and anger displayed by the bird when he sees his former wife with a new man; waiting for him "to draw close enough for me to take off the tip of his finger." Butler relates similarities in the two lives of the husband, where he is as helpless, where his wife's infidelities are concerned, both as a man and as a parrot. His inability to communicate his insecurities to his wife is likewise not dissimilar in either of his lives. The parallels that the author draws between the two lives of the narrator are possibly meant to draw the reader's attention to the fact that a man is as helpless in certain situations, as a bird that flutters helplessly in a cage, beating its wings against it, in its effort to escape.

Perhaps Butler's choice of a parrot as a reincarnation of a human is related
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to the fact that parrots have been used as messengers, and can be taught to speak in a limited fashion. The parrot's outbursts of jealousy seem at times amusing, as well as ironic. The disdain with which the parrot remarks " We keep our sexual parts hidden, we parrot, and this man is a pitiful sight." makes one laugh. The parrot's frustration at being unable to intervene when his wife is with another man is vividly brought out when he remarks, " I watch the men go in and I hear the sounds but I can't quite see. And they drive me crazy". He however does experience small comfort when he sees the man surprised at being called ' Cracker', and in a fit of rage ' peanut' which is his way of insulting the man. Butler has portrayed the frustrations of his character through the typical habits of the Amazon parrot, who is known to pace in his cage. This kind of parrot is also known for its attachment to one person. Butler is perhaps trying to portray the fact that in his human life, the husband could not tolerate the thought of his wife belonging to another, and this trait is carried over into his next life. Perhaps the inability of the parrot to adequately express his feelings, and the resulting frustration, and the conflict within, is another similarity that the author wants to highlight between the human and the bird.

Butler through this story could be exploring the idea of rebirth, and the concept of karma, according to which a man cannot attain moksha or freedom without making amends for the sins that he has committed in his previous lives. The narrator's consciousness changes as the narrative proceeds, with the human element slowly giving way to the animal's instinct for freedom from captivity. This could also be construed as the final attainment of freedom of the soul.

Jealous Husband Returns in Form of Parrot is an age-old saga of love and jealousy. It is narrated so as to touch a chord in every human heart. People everywhere regardless of race, color or culture can empathize with the feelings of jealousy and rage, that is aroused in the mind of a spouse, who has the misfortune to be married to someone who is unfaithful. The unhappiness, and feelings of frustration, anger, and helplessness, are graphically described through the actions of a bird that is confined within the bars of its cage.