

"dolor": ritual and duplicate gray standard essay sample

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In a bureaucratic society, everybody is supposed to have a voice about what they like or dislike. However, some people may disagree that even though they are in a bureaucratic society, they still do not have a voice in many issues, such as the workplace. Theodore Roethke uses personification, long sentence structure, and formal diction in "Dolor" to show the anguish and loneliness of the everyday office routine in a bureaucratic society because it is as if the workers are the same, and have no voice.

Personification of the offices and its supplies metaphorically emphasizes the feelings of the work people. The "lonely reception room, lavatory, switchboard" (5) and the "ritual of multigraph, paper slip, coma" (7) are the feelings that only people can feel. However, the rooms are lonely and ritual is endless. In actuality, the people who work in the reception room, lavatory, and switchboard rooms feel the loneliness of working everyday, doing the same "rituals" over and over. The "sadness of pencils, neat in their boxes" (1-2) gives the reader the impression of the unhappy workers sitting neatly, side by side in their cubicles, as if identity is nonexistent. By using personification of the office rooms and objects in them, gives the reader a better understanding of how lonely and sad the workers are while doing their jobs.

The long sentence structure shows how the narrator and the workers feel bored and tired of the workplace life. There are only two sentences in the poem, which requires many commas that stress the routine procedures of their work life. The first sentence begins with "I have known the!" (1) the narrator lists the misery of the workers in personifications because one can

not see the misery, sadness, etc. of the objects; they are not tangible. On the other hand, the next sentence begins with " And I have seen the" (9), which the narrator lists a tangible thing falling upon the workers " dust. Dust accumulates over time, usually on objects that have set for a while and have not been taken care of properly. Thus, meaning the workers are not taken care of in the sense of voicing how they do not approve of the habitual work place. The dust is finer than flour and drops a " fine film on nail and delicate eyebrows, glazing the pale hair, the duplicate gray standard faces" (12-13). The dust almost settles into the long sentence. The " duplicate gray standard faces" and " pale hair" gives the image of old people that all look the same because they do not matter in the bureaucratic society. The long sentences make for a feeling of ritual, where the personifications in the first sentence set the reader's tone of misery and last sentence, by placing a more tangible feel about dust, puts the reader into the reality of the work people's feelings.

Formal diction allows the reader to conform to the office lifestyle of ritual and pain. Words like, " duplicate," " unalterable," " ritual," and " endless" are words that have more than two syllables and relate to each other in the fact that they all have the same denotation. They relate with a process that occurs the same way over and over again. Because of the process they are bored and they feel like the words " misery," " desolation," and " delicate." Also, these words have more than two syllables in them, which give greater power to how unhappy the workers are. " Dolor," the Spanish definition meaning pain or ache, and the English definition meaning sorrow and

anguish, is used in for the title and in the poem to verify that the workers, as well as the narrator feel sorrow, anguish, pain.

Theodore Roethke uses formal diction, sentence structure, and personification in "Dolor" to certify the pain and boredom the workers feel as they attend work everyday. Formal diction is used to let the reader understand how intense the workers feel about their workplace, where the long sentence structure shows the rituals of the workers. Personification of the offices and work materials provide a metaphorical look at how the workers see pain and desolation whenever they work.