

Analysis of

Literature



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Master and the Man, and Commencement Address The themes in the “Commencement Address” of David Wallace have a strong, supportive relationship with the themes in the novella, Master and Man by Leo Tolstoy. The two writers depict the themes of life and reality, as well as the nature of the human social relations from different points. Wallace talks about a young fish living and swimming in the waters, but does not understand the status of the water. Wallace puts across the point that the most obvious and imperative realities in life are the ones quite often hard to perceive and talk about (Wallace, 1). Wallace’s theme supports incomprehension in Tolstoy’s Master and Man. In the novella, Nikita, Brekhunov’s servant lives and works for a second guild wealthier, merchant who values wealth and is determined to acquire a plantation of oak trees in the neighboring city. Brekhunov is motivated to purchase the land he believes will earn him a tidy profit and increase his wealth.

However, Nikita is a drunkard who takes life as it comes and apparently, he does not understand the essence of money. Although Nikita works and lives in a wealthy home, he is not alarmed with acquiring wealth. Nikita has swindled his boots and garments in the endeavors of making vodka (Tolstoy, 2). He lives hopelessly obliged to the cunning and exploitative Vasili, to an extent that his master underpays and mistreats him for he has no other place to work (Tolstoy, 2). Wallace urges young graduates to pay attention to the things happening right in front of them in life, rather than of what happens in the brains. Similarly, Nikita failed to pay attention to the things happening in front of him in his life. He is a complete opposite of Vasili. While Vasili was in a hurry to get to the other village as soon as possible, lest other buyers forestall him from making a gainful purchase, Nikita only seeks to

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serve the master and only accompanies Vasili.

Additionally, Wallace discusses the theme of consciousness and awareness while paying attention to things (Wallace, 4). The idea of knowledge and awareness refutes the theme of greediness in Tolstoy's story. Tolstoy uses Vasili Adreevich to highlight the theme of greed. Though a rich man, he does not get satisfaction and goes to an extent of sojourning in the snow, windy, dull and cold weather just to purchase a land (Tolstoy, 1). Vasili's wife warns him not to travel in that weather, but Vasili is too arrogant to listen. Vasili, accompanied by Nikita then goes out in the storm, and they get lost and stuck in the snow at night. Vasili takes the best place as the master while Nikita whorls up in the ice under a blanket. The novella ends with the death of Vasili and survival of Nikita (Tolstoy, 43).

Wallace argues that learning how to pay attention helps people realize other options in life. Simple critical awareness of the real and essential things in life improves the capacity to make noble decisions and exercise some control over their thoughts (Wallace, 4). In addition, when one is aware enough to give themselves a choice, they will choose to look at things differently. Wallace disproves the actions of Vasili in the Master and Man since, regardless of the snow covering the roads, Vasili insisted on the trip, which eventually kills him. According to Wallace, if Vasili is conscious and thinking straight, he could have decided meaningfully and consider another possibility. The realities about in life need people who think straight and make noble decisions, and the crucial type of self-determination involves attention as well as consciousness.

Works Cited

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