

Venice commentary



Tyler Every March 25, 2013 Written Commentary 6: Venice by Jan Morris The author's purpose is to describe the setting by contrasting her culture to Venice and by using irony to display the people, surroundings and daily life. A mother who just started living in Venice is telling us about the setting and her life in Venice. She uses irony, humor and contrast to build the imagery of the city and people. Throughout the passage the author uses irony to convey the surroundings and the image that the city is not somewhere you would want to live in.

The irony of her arguments is that her reasoning in why Venice isn't a pleasant city to live in, because it is "inescapably urban," (line 8) and that there are no gardens for kids to play. A worthy excerpt is "It is not altogether an easy city for children to live in. It has no dangerous traffic and few unspeakable rascals; but Venice is inescapably urban, and only lucky children with gardens, or with parents indulgent enough to take them to the distant park, have somewhere green to play" (Lines 7-9).

She uses false dilemma by focusing only on the black and white of Venice. She focuses on that Venice has no garden, so that she still misses her culture and country. She focuses only on the immoral instead of the safety or great things about Venice. She sees Venice being inescapably urban as a gigantic dilemma while she says it is a rigid city to live in; it has no dangerous traffic and rascals. Here the mother uses sarcasm to present humor during the passage. The protagonist also uses irony when describing actions, people and the setting.

Morris uses two words in pair like sickly intensity, unashamed delight, exquisitely ludicrously, inescapably urban, blithe pathetic, lugubriously

assure, dauntingly spotless and frighteningly well informed. Using two words that are opposite, Morris creates irony. By juxtaposing these words, Morris also creates imagery. It creates an image of what the mother sees as an outsider. Through her eyes we see Venice as a city filled with buildings and houses and no green gardens because of the surrounding buildings.

The author uses detail and diction to indicate her attitude toward the Venetian people. She does this mostly in the first and second paragraph. “ Venetian mothers show signs of instant cardiac crisis if little Giorgio ventures within six feet of water” (line 2-3), she makes fun of venetian mothers by pointing out that they will have a cardiac crisis when their children are close to the water, they are to over protective of their children. The humor in this is that Venice, Italy is surrounded by water, and so Venetian mothers would be losing their cool for their little Giorgio.

With these details and diction, she is making a mockery of the Venetian people. “ Venetian children are exquisitely, if sometimes rather ludicrously dressed: the minutest little baby girls” (lines 3-4), minutest means extremely small, by using repetition, the author is emphasizing the point that the mother doesn't like the Venetians because she criticizes them throughout the passage. Using exquisitely and ludicrously who are on complete other spectrums in terms of meaning. The children are beautiful, but at times foolish. Blithe but pathetic are the groups of urchins to be found entertaining themselves” (line 10) blithe and pathetic are two contrasting words. The mother also stoops so low by calling the children urchins again going to mischievous and raggedly dressed. The author also uses humor to appeal to our sense and keeping us attracted. Humor is present in “ When the Doge's

palace was burnt in 1479, the only record left of Petrarch's inscriptions upon the walls was the notebook of Marin Sanudo, who had taken the trouble to copy them down when inspecting the palace at the age of eight. He went on to write a history of the world in fifty-five volumes)" (lines 30-33). It made me laugh the thought of seeing little Giorgio next to the water while his mother loses her cool. The last two sentences leave us with a wisecrack about the Venetians. When the Doge's Palace burnt they had no copies of Petrarch's inscriptions except the one of a child's notebook. It is hilarious to think that they had to copy someone's notebook's writing or put that as their historical record. Also saying that this kid went on to write the history of the world in fifty-five volumes is absurd.

Who would ever do this? The mother leaves us with this remark again mocking the Venetians for their "lack of intellect and absurdity" and reliance on a kid's notebook. When reading that this kid later writes the history in fifty-five volumes, the author creates this image that the Venetians lack the purity of Petrarch's records and that their claimed knowledge from the child's notebook might be terribly wrong. Thus, leaving us laughing at the Venetians and proving her point of mockery.