Differences In Points Of View Between James Joyce’s Short Stories “Araby” And “Counterparts” Essay, Research Paper

There are many techniques that authors use to communicate their intentions for writing a work. Each of these literary techniques has their own purpose in influencing how the reader perceives what he or she reads. James Joyce is no exception in relation to the use of literary techniques that enhance his compositions. Although there are several different techniques used in his two short stories, ?Araby? and ?Counterparts,? his use of point of view in relation to the general meaning of each of these stories is what will be the focus of this paper.

In Joyce?s short story ?Araby,? a man thinks back to his childhood and reminisces about his excursion to a bazaar in Araby. This first person account enables the reader to know exactly what he feels in this situation.

The reader learns that, as a young boy, this man, probably Joyce himself, has an infatuation with Mangan?s sister. Mangan is the deceased priest that used to live nearby. Joyce conveys to the reader exactly what the boy thinks and how he feels about this woman through his use of first person point of view.

Through the use of first person point of view the reader learns of the boy?s anxiousness to go to the bazaar, where he believes he will meet the woman whom he dreams about. Upon his arrival he is disappointed that the bazaar is closing and visits one of the booths that is still open. It is when the woman working in the booth, that he visits, asks if he would like to buy anything, that the reader realizes why his crush speaks to him in the beginning of the story. The boy feels that the woman at the booth speaks to him ?out of a sense of duty.? Only then does he realize that this is why Margan?s sister speaks to him. The reader is made aware of the ?anguish and anger? the boy experiences as the bazaar closes through the use of this point of view.

Unlike ?Araby,? Joyce chooses to use an omniscient third person point of view in his short story ?Counterparts.? James Joyce?s use of an omniscient third person point of view is very effective because the reader is able to interpret the feelings of all of the characters in this work as well as know what they are thinking.

In this story, the main character, Farrington, encounters conflict with his boss, Mr. Alleyne, and the stress builds up until Farrington snaps and lashes out in a defiant manner towards Mr. Alleyne. He also physically vents his stress and anger on his son, thus being the reason for the title ?Counterparts.? Joyce chooses this as the title because Farrington is a counterpart of Mr. Alleyne as well as a counterpart of his son. The reason for this is because Farrington plays the part of the oppressed, just as his son does, and he also plays the role of the oppressor towards his son just as Mr. Alleyne does towards Farrington.

In comparison of the points of view in Joyce?s works ?Araby? and ?Counterparts,? both tend to let the reader know exactly what a character is thinking and feeling. However, in ?Counterparts? the reader is able to know the thoughts and feelings of all the characters since there is an all-knowing narrator. This aspect makes the story much more effective in a sense of general meaning because it enables the reader to understand exactly what is going on in each character?s mind. It is difficult to imagine ?Counterparts? being written from any other point of view than third person. If it were to be written in a different point of view, the story would lose a great deal of its effect on the reader and would not sound very realistic.

?Araby? seems to only be concerned with what happens to the boy rather than any of the other characters. Since no other character is really important other than the woman that he has an infatuation with, the use of first person point of view is effective. However, if the story had been told from an omniscient third person narrator the reader would be able to know what the woman is thinking and feeling as well, therefore making the story better. Yet, since the story is a reminiscence of the past, the use of first person point of view suffices.

Conclusively, different works of literature are written from different points of view to make the reader interpret the work in the way that the author intends it to be interpreted. Certain literary works would lose many of their concerns if it were written any other way. These reasons are why James Joyce has such a variation in his use of the literary technique of point of view in his compositions.