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Course

Date of Submission

Comparison/Contrast Essay

Introduction

In literature, writers use different strategies to breathe life into a story. These strategies include the use of symbolism, allegory, and other figures of speech, as well fantastic elements. The paper compares and contrasts several strategies, such as the use of supernatural/fantasy and various stylistic devices, characters, main point, and storylines of two works of literature, *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and “The Mirror” by Haruki Murakami.

Comparison

Simile

In *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the author employs similes to keep the readers interested. At the beginning of the story, the morning after the marriage of Angela Vicario to Bayardo San Roman, Santiago Nasar is described to have been “sleeping while carved up like a pig” (Marquez 2). In another instance, Divina Flor, a maid at Santiago Nasar’s home, employs simile to describe Santiago’s hand on the morning of the fateful day. She claims that when he seized her by the arm, his hand “felt frozen and stony like the hand of a dead man” (Marquez 8). Correspondingly, in “The Mirror”, the writer also employs similes. For example, when the narrator is going his rounds at night during his work as a watchman, he uses simile to describe the windy weather. He claims that the gate that led to the pool “banged in the wind like some

crazy person who alternatively shakes his head and nods” (Murakami 102). While the narrator is looking at his image in an imaginary mirror, he feels that the figure is looking back at him and loathes “him like an iceberg floating in a dark sea” (Murakami 104). He feels his image hates him for his failures in life.

Personification

Both stories have examples of personification. In *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the writer uses personification to describe the kitchen at Santiago Nasar’s home. He states that “the kitchen was breathing stealthily” (Marquez 5). In another instance, the bishop’s boat is said to be “snorting like a dragon” (Marquez 10). In “The Mirror”, the narrator is afraid of going out to retrieve his lit cigarette as “the wind was howling the whole time” (Murakami 105). It, therefore, makes it unsafe for him to go outside his room.

Onomatopoeia

In *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the writer uses onomatopoeia when he tells that “the boat was tooting, and the cocks were crowing” when the bishop comes to visit the town (Marquez 8). Likewise, in “The Mirror”, the narrator describes how “a swarm of mosquitoes buzzed around” the school hallway (Murakami 101). It is on the night he is going his rounds.

Contrast

Use of the supernatural

In *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the writer employs elements of the supernatural throughout the story. The characters in the story believe in the existence of the supernatural, and a good example here is Santiago Nasar’s mother Placida Linero who believes that dreams are premonitions of things to happen (Marquez 2). The narrator describes her as an accurate interpreter of other peoples’ dreams. Another example is Ms. Flor, a maid at Santiago’s home,

considers Santiago to be a dead man and does not see the need to tell him of the plans to kill him. She claims that when he touched her, “his hand felt frozen and stony like the hand of a dead man” (Marquez 8). The narrator’s sister is one more instance of the theme of supernatural. She thinks about Santiago Nasar as of the angel that passed by (Marquez 11). She believes it is a symbol of good luck.

In comparison, in “The Mirror”, the narrator talks of how the other storytellers concentrate on supernatural stories (Murakami 98). However, unlike his fellow storytellers or the characters in *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the narrator does not believe in the supernatural. In his “thirty-odd years he had never had a premonition or prophetic dream” (Murakami 98). On one occasion, when he takes an elevator with his friends, they claim to have seen a ghost taking the elevator with them. He, however, does not see any ghost. When it is his turn to tell a story, he avoids the perspective of supernatural stories that the other storytellers opt for. Instead, he talks about an experience that scared him out of his wits (Murakami 99). In his case, it is the closest he came to the supernatural realm.

Main point

The main point of the novel *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, is to tell the readers about the events that led to the death of the character Santiago Nasar. At the beginning of the story, the readers already know that Santiago is going to die (Marquez 1). The next chapters detail the events that lead to his death and peoples’ reactions to his death. On the contrary, the main point of the story “The Mirror” is to tell the readers about the narrator’s regret about deciding to travel around Japan during the hippie movement instead of going to college. The image the narrator sees in the imaginary mirror is frightening to him because it precisely shows what he has become after giving up his chance at education. After traveling around Japan, he

finds a job as a watchman at a school in a tiny town in Niigata Prefecture (Murakami 100). At the end of the story, the writer refuses to look in any other mirrors, and therefore, avoids facing his life failures.

Characters

In *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, all characters are active and play important role in the story. They all in their own way contribute to Santiago Nasar's death by not warning him of the Vicario brothers' plan to kill him. In its turn, the story "The Mirror" has only one unnamed active character who talks about his personal experience. It appears that he is telling his story to a group of passive characters who are also storytellers.

Storyline

The story in *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold* revolves around the death of Santiago Nasar. The first point of the story is foretelling. The story begins with Santiago's death having already been prefigured. Then, there is the conflict stage where a reader learns that Santiago is accused of deflowering Angela Vicario. Her brothers, therefore, want to kill Santiago to reclaim their family honor. In the climax of the story, readers learn how the entire town fails to prevent Santiago's death. The conclusion of the story is foretold. Santiago dies just the way it was predicted. On the other hand, in "The Mirror", the story line revolves around an unnamed narrator who stands before an imaginary mirror while going his night rounds as a watchman in a high school. The story concentrates on him standing before an imaginary mirror and regretting his life decisions. In the end, the narrator goes back to his room to sleep and vows never to look at any mirror again.

Conclusion

“The Mirror” and *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold* bear some similarities. For example, in both stories, the authors employ some similes, onomatopoeia, and personification in their writing style. However, the two authors contrast in other literary elements, such as the use of the supernatural. The unnamed narrator in “The Mirror” does not believe in the presence of the supernatural. In its turn, in *The Chronicles of a Death Foretold*, most of the characters believe in the existence of the supernatural. These literary devices give the stories life and enchant the readers.