“Abandoned Farmhouse” Critical Analysis

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Introduction

Every reader has his or her own view of literary work. Thus, some people do critical analysis and look into the deep meaning of the poetry, while others are interested in the author’s language. Therefore, every person creates his or her interpretation and understanding of the poem or literature he or she is reading. But critically analyzing a poem involves evaluation and examination of the literary devices authors use in their work. Also, it involves the themes and the main ideas of the literary work. Hence, the paper answers the question of which is the most and least successful poem between “Abandoned Farmhouse” by Ted Kooser and “Ars Poetica” by Archibald MacLeish. To understand these poems, you have to examine the poems’ themes, main ideas, and literary devices. Therefore, “Ars Poetica” by Archibald MacLeish is a very straightforward and blunt poem. The author uses the poem to convey his feelings about poetry. “Abandoned Farmhouse” by Ted Kooser is a poem full of literary devices, themes, and several ideas. The author portrays loneliness and sorrowful sentiment throughout his poem. Thus, the paper presents a critical analysis of both poems.

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To critically analyze this poem, I will examine the poem’s literary devices, ideas, and themes to understand the poem’s poetry.

Themes

There are different themes in the poem “Abandoned Farmhouse.” These themes include abandonment, failure, and the ability to interpret things in our own way. The author says that the man was not capable of farming, although he had land that he could cultivate. Since the man lived with his family on a farm and he could not farm, this implied that “the man” was incapable of catering for his family (Kooser, 12). He continued to say the family had no cash to show that they were. Thus, an inability for the man to produce meant he failed. Also, lack of money insinuated that the man was unhappy. Therefore, these assertions represented the theme of failure and unhappiness.

Also, the author demonstrates the theme of abandonment by commenting on the weed. He said, “the weed-choked yard (Kooser, 12).” This imagery helps to bring home the idea of abandonment. This

theme could be a physical absence of others or self-abandonment. The family's absence helped in asserting the theme.

Consequently, the theme of one's own understanding and interpretation is conveyed by the form of the poem. The author uses the material things in the home to reveal abandonment. The theme helps in understanding other people's opinions, motivations, and problems.

Simile

The author says that 'toys spread in the yard like branches after a storm (Kooser, 13)." Therefore, the author uses branches as an example or simile. The branches-after-storm statement helps the reader to create a picture of the scene. Thus, "storm" implies that the family experienced a problem that led them to abandon their home. Also, the word "storm" is used to bring home the literary device of metaphor.

Personification

Personification is the attribution of human qualities to non-living things to tell a story about human beings. Therefore, the poem employs the literary device of personification. Thus, the family in the poem was never physically present, but the readers understand the family's existence through perceiving the objects in the home. For example, the toys are personified to say that there were children in the home (Kooser, 13).

"Ars Poetica" Critical Analysis

The first stanza recapitulates the entire poem. He begins by asserting how simple and discreet the poem should be. The author's ideas are compared with similes and examples throughout the poem. He uses a piece of fruit to compare his ideas with examples. He asserts that poems should be effortless and pleasant; thus, poems are dumb. Therefore, based on the first stanza, we understand that the author is very simple and straightforward with his thoughts and opinions. He doesn't use literary devices of deeper meaning and symbolism since he just wants the reader to understand his feelings about the poem. Thus, he desires to let the reader understand the poem without any complications. He states that a poem should be wordless, for example, like the flight of birds. By saying this, he implies that the reader should understand without much thinking. The author uses simple verses and shallow thoughts to convey his ideas to the reader.

Consequently, the author uses the same arrangement and flow in the second stanza. He says that poems should be simple, and we should understand them without even knowing. He compares the poem with a moon and says that the moon should rise and fall without being noticed. In his third line, he vehemently continues to illustrate that when the moon goes through, sometimes it is seen, and

other times it is invisible. By saying this, I believe he was saying that we should not worry if we cannot understand the poem since sometimes we can and other times we can't, which is normal according to him.

Moreover, in his last stanza, he expresses his true emotions in the poem. He states what a poem should entail. In this stanza, his opinion is unclear, and it can be interpreted as if he were trying to say a poem should be equal to nothing or that poem interpretations should be the reader's understanding. He further urges that the poem should reflect people's feelings and emotions. He discusses people's feelings about love and hardships. Thus, he says that all poems should be meaningful and should reflect people's thoughts and experiences. He encourages all poems to be straightforward. I have used the poem's plot to analyze it.

Conclusion

"Ars Poetica" by Archibald MacLeish is a very straightforward and blunt poem. The author uses the poem to convey his feelings about poetry. "Abandoned Farmhouse" by Ted Kooser is a poem full of literary devices, themes, and several ideas. Thus, I used the plot of the poem to critically analyze "Ars Poetica," while I used the themes and literary devices to conduct an analysis of "Abandoned Farmhouse." Therefore, based on the poem analyses, I choose "Abandoned Farmhouse" by Ted Kooser as the more successful poem of the two. The other poem by Archibald is the less successful poem. Hence, a poem should always have a deeper meaning rather than being straightforward and blunt.

Works Cited

Kooser, Ted. *The poetry home repair manual: Practical advice for beginning poets*. U of Nebraska Press, 2007.