

Literary Analysis Essay

Introduction:

I chose the topic of “Loss and Artificial Emotions” for this assignment on exploring “The Human Condition” mainly because I thought it would be interesting and I believe that these feelings are somewhat connected together. In this essay I will explain my thoughts behind what “Loss and Artificial Emotions” means and analyze sections from the different readings that we have read so far in the semester and take quotes/examples from some of those texts and explain how I think that it relates to “Loss and Artificial Emotions”.

Explaining my view on the meaning of “Loss and Artificial Emotions”:

“Loss” is not just the meaning of, “Oh, I’ve lost my car keys.”, or something similar to that. It’s a certain kind of feeling/emotion/thought that you experience when you realize that something that you once had you no longer possess, either consciencely or subconsciously. Some ways that people can feel a sense of “loss” is through things like having a death in the family, a sufficient other that you are now parted from, or a change in social status.

“Artificial Emotions” is a term I use to describe when either you are “faking your emotions that you display to others” (ex: Crocodile Tears), or when you are not sure if how you feel is actually genuine or not. (Ask yourself, “Why am I [blank]?”, instead of just stating, “I am [blank].”.)

I believe that these two ideas are connected to each other, which is why I decided to include both of them together for this Project. They are connected because of that similar feeling of “hollow emotion”, the absence or perceived absence of feeling anything.

Texts that I believe connect to the ideas of “Loss and Artificial Emotions”:

"A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry, the Younger family's struggle to attain a better life highlights the loss of their dreams that they had and the persistent hope despite the setbacks that occurred. (Hansberry, Act 1).

"A Perfect Day for Bananafish" by J.D. Salinger, explores the loss of innocence and mental the degradation of the character Seymour Glass. (Salinger, 1948).

"Bartleby the Scrivener" by Herman Melville, introduces us to Bartleby, whose repeated statement "I would prefer not to" can be seen as not just disengagement from work but also disengagement from an emotional connection. (Melville, 1856).

"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula LeGuin, presents the reader with a utopia maintained through the suffering of a single child. The people who choose to stay in Omelas that know of the child’s suffering are choosing to ignore the real emotions they experience from the suffering child and suppress those emotions, while externally they are presenting those “Artificial Emotions” publicly to express that they are not bothered by the situation. (LeGuin, 1973).

"Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats, holds the idea that joy is a fleeting feeling that isn't meant to last forever. This connects with the idea of loss as through the definition I defined earlier, "loss" doesn't have to mean losing something physical. It could mean the absence of an emotion you once felt before. (Keats, 1819).

"Birches" by Robert Frost, emphasizes the feeling of nostalgia when he writes about how he wishes that the birch tree branches were bent due to a boy swinging on them, rather than being bent by the wrath of nature. I felt that the nostalgia expressed here about wishing when times weren't as harsh was a great connection of the experience of "loss" that is relatable to almost any audience. (Frost, 1916).

"Wild Geese" by Mary Oliver, encourages her readers to, "Let the soft animal of your body love what it loves.". I wanted to highlight this as I felt it is a good contrast to the term "artificial emotions". Oliver wants the reader to accept who they are and how they feel and to not fool themselves to believing that they are or feel a way that which they are not. (Oliver, 1986).

Conclusion:

In this Essay I have explained the concepts of "Loss and Artificial Emotions" and shared my viewpoints on them. I have also analyzed many of the texts we have read this semester and connected my thoughts on how they each relate to "Loss and Artificial Emotions". Full citations list of the sources used in this Essay shall be found below.

Citations:

1. Chopin, Kate. *"The Storm."* 1898.
2. Frost, Robert. *"Birches."* 1916.
3. Hansberry, Lorraine. *"A Raisin in the Sun."* 1959.
4. Keats, John. *"Ode to a Nightingale."* 1819.
5. LeGuin, Ursula K. *"The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas."* 1973.
6. Melville, Herman. *"Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street."* 1856.
7. Oliver, Mary. *"Wild Geese."* 1986.
8. Salinger, J.D. *"A Perfect Day for Bananafish."* The New Yorker, 1948.
9. Whitman, Walt. *"Leaves of Grass."* 1855.