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8/31/21

Period 1

Owls essay

Is the coexistence between humanity and nature possible? In the story ¨Owls¨, Mary Oliver explores her place within the world of nature, giving the reader a cohesive contrast that balances the story. She shows the different aspects of nature and gives a glimpse into her mind and journey through nature and the life of the owls. She uses tones of elusiveness, trepidation, and glee to convey the contradictory nature of the owl and herself.

As the author observes the owl, she conveys a sense of mystery surrounding the owls and her interactions with them. “And I can imagine sitting quietly before that luminous wanderer the snowy owl and learning, from the white gleam of its feathers.” The author is using languages such as ¨Luminos¨ and ¨wanderer¨ to refer to the owl. Using these words, the reader can see through her eyes; By providing observation and giving a tone of elusiveness concerning the owl. The author shows a disconnection between herself and the owl. Showing detachment between her and nature. She displays herself as more of a bystander, watching and thinking about what is happening around her.

In the next part of the story, the author is showing a drastic change in tone.“I have walked with prudent caution down paths at twilight when the dogs were puppies. I know this bird. If it could, it would eat the whole world.” She conveys the transition of the story by changing the tone and pace of the piece. By giving a personal connection to the forest and owls, she puts herself, along with the reader, into a first-person narrative. She stops using words like ¨imagine¨ and lessens her descriptive language. With this, she Reduces a tone of wonder, mystery, and elusiveness, giving way to a more realistic and inclusive perspective. She provides a contradiction, because unlike before, when the author was neutrally observing nature, now she feels trepidation towards the owls. As she ventures into the forest, she witnesses a different aspect of the forest she could not see before as an observer.

In the last section of the poem, the author demonstrates her personal growth and reflection. The readers can witness this growth because the author transitions the tone from trepidation into glee and acceptance. “I am restless no more; I am replete, supine, finished, filled to the last edges with happiness. And is that not all so terrible? Is it not fighting?” She uses words such as replete, supine, and filled, to expresses her acceptance and glee. She places herself within the ecosystem of the forest. She asks the readers rhetorical questions as a form of self-reflection. She addresses her previous fear and accepts it; As a necessary part of existing in this place. She gives a way to connect these two contrasting emotions and gives them harmony and balance.

Mary Olive is effectively demonstrating that contradiction can lead to harmony. Can all things mix? Is there always a possibility of balance? Or will there always be a dip in the scale, no matter how small?