

Kun Yang

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ENG 104-01

### “Privacy” Response essay

In this essay, the student will make an argument with the contexts from the “Privacy” by Ford. In this story, the main character was not this typical man, who has a job, family, and going into a successful path in the further future, however his life and environment was surrounded with negativities and depressive elements. The main character himself needed to spy on his neighbor, in order to express his pent up emotions. The student has concluded that the main character has developed chronic depression throughout his time spending in the apartment, the reasons are, his broken marriage, overly depressive apartment setting, and the direct comparison between his apartment and the old Chinese lady’s apartment.

At first, the author purposely expressed “This was at a time when my marriage was still happy.” With such opening, the audience has the chance to crack into the main character’s core life, where his marriage was clearly on the stake. Throughout many occasions of the story, the main character would just go home and sleep beside his partner. “Each night when my wife came back from her work, we would go out into the cold, shining streets and find a restaurant to have our meal in.” (Ford 3) it was great to see that he and his partner have their own routine of going out, however the conversation between them seems not be too meaningful, where he would be hesitate to express his failing work “Later we would stop for an hour in a bar and have coffee or a brandy, and talk intensely about the translation my wife was working on, though never about the work I was by then already failing at.” With such line, it could indicate that the main

character was ashamed the fact that his success in writing was not in the same level as his wife's translation job, it affected his masculine core. Another point would be him watching another woman being naked while his wife going off to sleep. "Nothing more happened. Though in the nights to come I stayed awake to watch the woman, letting my wife go off to sleep in her fatigue." (Ford 4) It clearly showed that he enjoyed the action of take a peek of another woman over his own wife, granted the fact that his wife is exhausted every night when she came back from work. With the above two points of his broken relationship, it can conclude that the problem has slowing pushing him over the edge into some other extreme actions.

Second of all, the setting of his apartment has made him unbearable. Imagine a writer who lives in an all dark setting room, where nearly feels like death, and he was told to write a good story or book; two together made it into mission impossible for him to be successful at being a writer. "The apartment we rented was in the old factory section on the south end of the city, the living space only a great, empty room with tall windows front and back, and almost no electric light." (Ford 3) "nihilistic plays there, so that all the walls were painted black, and along one were still riser seats for his small disaffected audiences." (Ford 3), with the above two descriptions about his room, the reader can take in the fact that depression can be developed through extreme depressive setting, which satisfied the main character's apartment.

Last of all, the light setting difference was between his apartment and the old Chinese lady's apartment. He had acquired the knowledge that the person he was spying who has the totally opposite light setting than his. The following descriptions are the direct comparison. "For not only was there almost no light inside, but each night at seven the building's owner would turn off the heat, so that by ten-on our floor, the highest-it was too cold to be anywhere but in bed piled over with blankets, barely able to move." (Ford 4), "I saw, inside a long, yellow-lit

apartment, the figure of a woman slowly undressing, from all appearances oblivious to the world outside the window glass.”(Ford 4). The direct comparison has taken a toll on his mind set, because later on he would have a direct confrontation that he had found out the lady that he had been spying; she turned out to be an old Chinese lady, where it messed with his mind, and in such a way that he grew envious of the old woman. “She was old, after all, I might suddenly have felt the urge to harm her, and easily could’ve.”(Ford 7), this was the classic scenario where expectation exceeded reality. He couldn’t feel more than the fact that he was a broken individual at the end of the story.

With the above three points, his broken marriage, overly depressive apartment setting, and the direct comparison between his apartment and the old Chinese lady’s apartment, which made him seem like a chronic depression individual.