

Michael Thomas Harbuck
Ambrose
04-02-2008

English 1102-SCC
Sanford, Florida
Literary Analysis Essay

The Darkness Calls

Known and unknown have manifested themselves in mankind in many fascinating, strange and, at some times and places in the past and present, unimaginable ways. The perception of mankind along linear points of time, when which persons at a later period are to understand, becomes completely dependent upon the writings and descriptions of persons who lived, worked, loved and died at that same period. Some of these writings are astonishingly conventional while being extremely direct with the views and values which they wish to put forth onto the table of the adjourned historians. Spectrally opposite finds those writings which convey meanings so hidden in the depths of the shadows of literary art, that these same hints of memory and experience forged into mere text by the author must be gleaned from the corners of the very pages upon which they are printed.

Keys Locks and Open Doors by Jane Wallis Hicks represents one of the more befuddled of these aforementioned types of work, whose meanings are not so clear to the reader as some stories which may have previously been read. The story begins with a severe foreboding of evil combined with an exhorbantly strong contrast to the contrary. The total lack of setting in the traditional sense, is replaced partly by the symbolism, and the descriptions of certain objects and beings along the time line of the work. A relegation to the reader which can be an enjoyable aspect of reading, comes in the form of the malleable persona, whereby one can become the narrator, infusing one's own imagination and experiences into the setting, virtually personally customizing the complete cognizant experience.

Thematically the short story represents a struggle to increase in maturity and

knowledge, whilst the narrator stands independent between two opposing forces, neither of which play a personal role, but rather hinder the forward progress of the narrator, and thus man as a whole. This theme becomes portrayed within the various sub-themes and symbolism written into the work. The repeated hints of the struggle to grow, and progress into a new age with the associated responsibilities, new found freedoms and enjoyment which follows such a forward step are numerous. The narrator progresses through the story as all the while an increasing familial importance corresponding to her age and the natural occurrences thrusts her into adulthood.

Facing the death of a parent is certainly a large part of being an adult, and is the first of the mentioned stages of the growth process (3). The second of the stages toward the ultimate goal of self sufficiency is seen in the passing of the keys from her father (18). Religion in life performs a function, upon which man and women rely. As the padre Filton breaks the bonds of religion which have bound her to her family and childhood, the narrator experiences a new freedom of adulthood, where she is now able to make her conscious decisions, and the true nature of a cruel world (49). This point is strengthened by the admonition by the narrator, that she has feigned a family ritual, and therefore shown disobedience mutually with free thinking. In turn, the widow Range is taken ill, the narrator is called to her occupation, being that of the mother. Having already run the trial of the household chores, she has graduated to the role of caretaker (63). After the second death which she has had to endure, the narrator has an enlightening to the verity of life. Consequently, she makes a decision to be free, to let herself to the outside world; to await the unknown with an open mind and heart. This decision is the culmination of the story, and the end of a phase for the young woman, while being only the beginning of the new life; rebirth.

Objects of importance in *Keys Locks and Open*

Keys Locks and Open Doors by Jane Wallis Hicks

- I – Opener
- II – Thesis
- III – Theme
- IV – Symbology
- V- Characterization
- VI - Closer

- Theme-
1. The uneducated being thrust into the new world order.
 2. Religion as the savior of mankind.
 3. The role of the guardian of man, and who this will be.
 4. Growth, and or puberty and the yearning to be free, to go out into the world.
The pain of leaving home, and the associated fear.
Free of the double standard of religion and family.
Curiosity, Adolescence
 5. Consequences and responsibility
 6. The evil of illiteracy
 7. The indescribable energies of the changing times, and how they are alliterated.

- Symbology-
1. Ironwood - Industrialism
 2. Ironstone - Fusion of old and new world
 3. Padre -
 4. Keys – Metal key to responsibility / also imprisoning
 5. Breakfast Bread
 6. Flinty Ground
 7. Pa's skin

- Characterization-
1. Pa – guardian – father - God - authority
 2. Ma
 3. Bairns (3) dann (2) – Bairn ist ein Kind in der Altsprache
 4. Rory
 5. Sim
 6. Padre Filton
 7. Lucy Lovedance
 8. Lucy Makepeace
 9. Widow Range
 10. Tildy

11. Dog

- Significant events –
1. Death of Ma – Burial - Natural
 2. Disappearance of Sim – Consequence
 3. Displacement of Rory – Consequence
 4. First Voices - Undetermined
 5. Removal of Voices with distance from home.