

Here is an example of a good essay, written about the short story "Living Arrangements". It has been submitted through Turn-It-In so attempting to pass all or part of this essay off as your own will result in you being caught for plagiarism.

Living Arrangements final essay

When first person narration is used, the story which is being told takes on a variety of characteristics. These characteristics are often universal and they enable the reader to identify this type of narration. The characteristics of first person narration in light of the opinion of J.O. Hendry (152) will be discussed in this essay. In order to illustrate Hendry's assertion accurately, the discussion in this essay will refer specifically to the short story 'Living Arrangements' by Alistair Morgan, looking at the way in which the character, Honorata, is portrayed.

First person narration immediately causes a story to become more personal (Hendry 152). The reader is able to believe in what is happening as he/she is sharing the experiences of the event with the narrator (who is going through it himself/herself). For this reason, it can be said that first person narration indirectly becomes a way in which the author can interact with the reader. The author is also able to ensure the direction of the reader's thoughts through this narration. As the author knows what he/she wishes for the reader to think, he/she can add a sense of realism through first person narration so as to ensure that the reader is able to have a more authentic experience of events (Hendry 152).

This sense of authenticity is evident in the short story 'Living Arrangements' by Alistair Morgan. The narrator is the main character and it is through her eyes that we experience the story. It is through this that the story becomes more personal. From the beginning, the reader is immediately faced with the personal aspect of first person narration (Hendry 152). He/she, too, is faced with the prospect of someone living with the narrator and therefore has to deal with the emotions that accompany this suspicion along with the narrator (Morgan 175).

This type of narration also allows the reader to get to know the narrator very well. In 'Living Arrangements', the narrator is a single woman who has never been married (Morgan 175). She has no children, is a perfectionist and can be seen as bordering on neurotic as the 'subtle' evidence of someone living with her is truly miniscule (Morgan 175). This is seen in the fact that she measures her food to make sure that her suspicions of someone living with her are

valid (Morgan 175). She is even able to notice that the toilet roll in her bathroom is 'noticeably slimmer' (Morgan 175).

The reader also learns that the narrator has adopted quite a nonchalant attitude towards the stranger in her home. This is seen in the fact that the narrator begins to make sandwiches for her 'guest' and chooses not to tell anyone about him/her (Morgan 177). It is in these actions that the reader can assume that the narrator is not that perturbed by the fact that someone is living with her. In fact, the reader discovers that the narrator finds the company of this unknown person 'strangely comforting' (Morgan 177).

As the first person narration can only deal with one person's experiences of the action (Hendry 152), the reader finds himself/herself learning about Honorata (the 'guest') through the eyes of the narrator. The reader is forced to form opinions and make assumptions about Honorata through what the narrator thinks or says about her, as well as through what she does and says (as reported by the narrator).

From the beginning, the narrator finds that her 'guest' has no intention of hurting her and therefore does not fear him/her (Morgan 177). This is also evident in the narrator finding companionship in the person living with him/her, commenting on the news to him/her and speaking to him/her while cooking (Morgan 177). The reader thus learns that this 'guest', Honorata, is grateful that the narrator is allowing her to stay. This is seen through Honorata choosing not to harm her (Morgan 177). Another testament of this gratitude is the fact that the food which the narrator leaves out for Honorata is eaten, and all the dishes which were used are washed (Morgan 178). The reader also becomes aware of the likes and dislikes of Honorata namely, her dislike of horseradish sauce as it is noted, once again, by the narrator (Morgan 178).

These are all things which the reader learns before Honorata is introduced as a visible character in the story. However, when she is, the reader is shown a biased view of Honorata. This is due to the fact that the reader is learning of her through the narrator's eyes. The narrator describes the woman crawling out from under her bed as a small, 'scrawny' woman who is dressed in clothes which are testament to her poverty (Morgan 179). The reader learns, along with the narrator, that this 'confused and disorientated' woman's name is Honorata and that she is from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Morgan 179).

When the narrator decides to leave the situation as it is for the remainder of that evening (or morning), Honorata once again displays her gratitude by saying 'thank you' (Morgan 180). The reader is thus able to assume that Honorata is polite. It is also evident from the fact that Honorata is trying to find a job that she does indeed have a sense of responsibility as well as understands the gravity of her situation (Morgan 180)

As first person narration limits the reader's view on Honorata, he/she is forced to evaluate her character and the situation in which the main character finds herself in, from the narrator's perspective. This aspect of first person narration is suitable for a short story as it does not burden the reader with different interpretations of events. This allows for the story to include much more relevant information. However, it is limited and therefore the reader is unable to see the thoughts and feelings of Honorata or witness the development which takes place within this character.

The reader is thus only aware of the turmoil that the narrator experiences with regard to the dilemma in which she finds herself in. She finds it difficult to accept the presence of Honorata in her house now that she has been forced to deal with it (Morgan 181). She cannot, however, bring herself to put Honorata out (Morgan 181). When the narrator arrives home that day, the reader is once again faced with the depiction of Honorata as a pathetic character. She cannot meet the eyes of the narrator and stares at the carpet, without saying a word (Morgan 181).

Here the reader is forced to make assumptions about Honorata's personality and character. Firstly, he/she has to decide whether the reason that Honorata 'never replies' or is 'not much of a talker' is because she is ashamed of the situation in which she finds herself in, or whether it is simply a character trait (Morgan 181-182). The reader also has to assume that Honorata eats everything on her plate because of the fact that her hunger is so intense as opposed to, for example, it being part of her culture (Morgan 181).

Honorata's integrity is shown to the reader through her desire to pay the narrator for that which the narrator has done for her (Morgan 183). Although the narrator does not accept it, this does not diminish Honorata's actions in the slightest. In fact, it forces the reader to consider the possibility that Honorata's name might be a physical representation of one of her dominant characteristics: honour. The reader is then also confronted with having to answer the question of why Honorata has been put in this position.

As seen in the discussion in this essay, first person narration does indeed allow the story to become more authentic; it also allows for the reader to become more involved in the events being told (Hendry 152). The reader is, however, also faced with the limitation of having only one perspective told, forcing him/her to make his/her own assumptions (Hendry 152). This means that the reader is faced with a subjective view of events as seen through the eyes of the narrator. Nevertheless, this does suit the needs of a short story as it allows for 'unity of action' and enables the reader to follow the story without being bombarded with different perspectives (Hendry 152). These assertions are all proved in the above discussion of the use of first person narration and the portrayal of Honorata in the short story 'Living Arrangements' by Alistair Morgan.