

The analysis of the short story “Love is blind and deaf” by Jonathan Safran Foer

In the short story ‘Love is Blind and Deaf’ the author dwells upon the theme of profound love, putting up with weaknesses of your beloved and Human’s need in another person. The author’s intention is to encourage us to think of the nature of people’s relationships. The story is abundant in allusions to the Bible. Thus, the narrative resembles the Bible itself adapted to the modern day’s picture of relationships.

One of the similarities between the two texts that we notice first is the setting: both stories are set in the garden. The title of the story is also related to the Scriptures. Biblical theme is interwoven into the story. Every human being has drawbacks which may displease others. The title implies that to love someone, a person has to be able not to concentrate on his/her beloved’s weaknesses. The metaphor ‘Love is blind and deaf’ together with an epithet ‘unseeing and unhearing’ express the essence of true love: true love is unconditional. A description of God as unseeing and unhearing implies that His love is unconditional, as stated in the Bible.

The beginning of the text catches our attention at once. The phrase ‘lived happily’ is typically followed by ‘ever after’, this collocation is however replaced by the phrase ‘for a few days’. The unusual beginning foregrounds this part of the text and makes the curious reader eager to get to know the story. The plot of the story starts with Adam and Eve’s peaceful living without being aware of the weaknesses of each other.

However, apples reveal the reality to them. We come across this symbol both in this story and in the Bible. In the Bible apples made characters learn about ‘good’ and ‘evil’. It is quite similar in the story: Adam and Eve were cured of their blindness and deafness, which led to them getting cured of their ‘marital felicity’. ‘Cure’ is usually collocated with words that belong to the semantic field ‘health’. Untypical collocation of the word ‘cure’ with ‘marital felicity’ points to the end of the stage of blind infatuation in modern relationships.

The story is told from the point of view of the third person omniscient narrator. It serves to show multiple characters’ thoughts without privileging one viewpoint. Through inner represented speech Adam is shown as light-headed, and Eve is perceived by him as an ugly woman. We notice a row of homogeneous constructions there which intensify imperfections that characters have (*the oblong, splotchy birthmark, rotated incisor, weakly narcissistic, selectively impervious*).

Using parallelism (*Adam saw spots; Eve heard pulses*) the author creates a clear contrast between characters. It also relates to the characters’ phrases which they shout out. The contrast between words *ugly* and *stupid* (as words specific for two different senses of perception) creates the understanding of Man’s and Woman’s nature and their main values. Describing the whole process of

characters' drifting away from each other the author uses gradation (*fought passively; used the new words ambiguously, then pointedly; hurled the early creations; argued*). It shows us how the resentment increases step by step. Moreover, the length of this sentence itself creates the feeling of how continued their distancing was.

The characters' phrases 'You are ugly' and 'You are stupid' represent the climax of the conflict. There we see both of the characters to be impatient and hot-tempered. They do not try to listen to each other. Giving vent to their feelings they end up far away from each other. 'Opposite sides of the garden' is a metaphor, representing how alien the characters have become.

After their quarrel, the characters' frustration is so deep that all the good in the world means nothing for them. The parceling is used in the paragraph beginning with 'Neither Adam, nor Eve needed to be right'. It is intended to focus the reader's attention on every phrase and it creates the dramatic atmosphere.

The structure of the sentence 'It worked until it didn't' helps to express the idea that the peace doesn't last long. The impression of it is increased by parallelism (It was good until it wasn't). There we see Adam and Eve to be the three-dimensional characters who develop throughout the story. They are no longer so self-centered, they now put effort to keep peace.

There is a repeated allusion in the story - fig leaves - and it is another reference to the Bible. In 'Love is Blind and Deaf' this is quite a symbolic, as it describes how people invent various ways not to be aware of the weaknesses of each other. Although, it is so hard for Adam and Eve to live together, they are essential for each other. Not only their struggles suggest it but also another metaphor used by the author (*The only light in the room of the world*). It is used when Eve is standing on the threshold watching Adam's suffering. It makes us guess that Eve was the only true value in Adam's life. In addition, we observe the specially structured sentence (*'...listened to herself listening to him struggle to breathe'*). On the one hand, it makes an impression that Eve is still quite egocentric, as she is listening to herself in the first place. On the other, it reveals to us Eve's compassion towards Adam but she seems to be hesitating to come up and talk to him.

In conclusion, the ending puts the reader into a thoughtful mood. It makes us wonder that the relationship between people is actually the same, although Humans have been living on Earth for such a long time. The ending suggests a thought that the most essential need of a human being is another person. Although getting along with each other makes people suffer so much, they still never give up struggling to find harmony, to love and be loved. Finally, the incompleteness of the ending encourages further reflection and the metaphor of Life (*the book without edges*) seems to be such a poetic final.