

Recitatif: Black or White?

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“Recitatif”: Black or White?

“Recitatif” is a short story of two young ladies, Roberta and Twyla, trying to cope with the challenges they faced together as children. This short story involves these ladies struggling with abandonment, family relationships, and the strength to find out who they truly are. The most important factor in this story is them distinguishing their differences from one another. Roberta’ and Twyla’s racial difference caused them to identify things that separated them and also brought them together. These women also recognize and deal with harassing a disabled woman and living with the consequences. “Recitatif” teaches the reader that color should not determine a person’s position.

Twyla enters the shelter St. Bonaventure’s while young because of her mother’s desire to dance. Her mother’s passion to dance signifies her longing to be young forever. She gave up her child just to continue to “move around.” This context of dance not only means to move, but to be youthful. Her mother wanted to continue to enjoy herself while she could and had no intentions of keeping her child. Because Twyla did not have an ordinary relationship with her mother she took on the role as the mother, disciplining her for her behavior at church, judging her appearance, and hating her for not being able to hold a bond. “And Mary would have kept it up- kept calling names if I hadn't squeezed her hand as hard as I could.” (5.) This statement by Twyla

shows how she felt the need to be the one to take charge and make sure her mother behaved. This quote also reveals the respect that she had for her mother. She calls her by her first name instead of mother. This shows that Twyla never valued her mother's presence. She did not accept her mother for who she was because of the differences her mother had with other mother's.

Relevance?

Seeing their relationship also exposes Twyla's feelings for her mother. In the story there is a disabled woman, Maggie that for some reason Twyla and Roberta hates. She is mute, childlike and disabled. She also wears clothes that Twyla says reminds her of an adolescent. Just like Twyla's mother, Maggie reminds her of a child. Twyla's dislike for Maggie was just like her hate for her actual mother. She abused Maggie even if it was within herself because she reminded her so much of who she came from. She hated Maggie and mentally abused her because she could not physically abuse her actual mother.

3

4

On the other hand, Roberta arrives at the shelter because her mother is very sick. When her mother comes to visit, she is dressed really well, prepared to enjoy church, but is extremely religious and rude. She is specifically rude to Twyla's mother. Because they are so different, Roberta's mom does not approve of Twyla or her mother.

Roberta and her mother's relationship is best described as normal. Roberta seems to live a normal life compared to Twyla but one can tell that something lies underneath them being so vague. "I sneaked a look at Roberta. Her mother had brought chicken legs and ham sandwiches and oranges and a whole box of chocolate-covered grahams. Roberta drank milk from a thermos while her mother read the Bible to her."(5.) This quote from the story describes Twyla's feelings from their mother's visits. Her mother brought nothing for them to eat, while Roberta's mom did. If Roberta's mom was so perfect in that aspect why would she be in a shelter? Why would

5

TRI
Development

TRI
Development

TRI
Development

Roberta have to suffer abandonment along with Twyla? By reading the story that answer may be hard to find, but from observation it is because her mother was not able to take care of her the best way that she could. Because this story is told from Twyla's point of view Roberta's feelings cannot be clearly understood.



What can be understood is the guilt Roberta held from abusing Maggie. Although it was never physical, Roberta's internal abuse towards Maggie hit worse. Maggie was disabled and sickly as well as her mother. She took the hate that she had for her mother out on Maggie. Maggie was the only person that was similar to her mother that she was near and she felt the need to internally despise her.

TRI
Development

dev

Relevance?



Roberta and Twyla's racial differences made it hard for them to cope with each other and even harder to cope apart. Although their racial identities cannot be distinguished one can tell that they both fell into times where their races did not really matter to them. Neither was defined specially as black or white and in this case it makes the story better. Both girls have stereotypes of both black and white. The author's intentions may have been to show that everyone goes through the same struggles no matter what race you are. These two ladies had to come together to manage their feelings towards their mothers. They both used Maggie as their target and regretted it later on in life because they realized their mothers were the actual cause of their pain. Maggie was a mixture of Twyla and Roberta's mothers being that she was youthful, unable to defend and take care of herself, and disabled. They hated that even away from their mother's there was still signs of them while living in the shelter.



Vague Words



FINAL GRADE

49 / 100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ms. Dukes,

Thank you for your submission.

I'm afraid this is unacceptable as a final showing of your literary analysis, though.

I'm not sure what's been going on with you regarding your work lately, but I'm certain that you know how to do this assignment better than what's been submitted. Essentially, this is the same draft with the same issues as the previous one.

Why so much apathy towards your assignments lately? This is unlike much of your previous semester's work, overall.

Let me know if you have any questions.

PAGE 1

1. Author? Year of publication? So far, this reads as the same version as the previous draft. Where's the Works Cited?

Quotation Marks <p>Quotation marks signal to readers that the exact words between them come from someone other than the writer or the narrator. They are used to present words taken directly from research sources or to report dialogue between speakers; <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=496&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 42a and 42c. When material that you want to quote already includes a quotation, then double quotation marks are used to enclose the entire quotation and single quotation marks are used to enclose the quotations already in the original; <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=497&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 42b. Quotation marks are used to set off the titles of short works; <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=498&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 42d. They may also be used to set off words used in special senses; <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=498&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 42e. Be careful to use quotation marks correctly with other punctuation marks; <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=499&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 42f.</p>

Omit second person.

TRI

2. Summary.

Properly introduce quoted material.

MLA Documentation <p>The Modern Language Association (MLA) provides a citation style used to cite sources in the fields of English, rhetoric and composition, foreign languages, and literature. Using the MLA style in your humanities paper allows your readers to easily identify the source of information or a quotation and find the relevant publication information. The MLA style includes two basic components: (1) citations of summaries, paraphrases, and quotations given inside parentheses in the body of the text, and (2) an alphabetically organized Works Cited page at the end of the text, which provides the author, title, and publication details for each source used. <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=181&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">See chapter 13. If you need an example of how to cite a particular kind of source, such as a book or an article, <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=181&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see the list of MLA indexes on page 181. <a> <p> <u> <i>For instruction on and examples of MLA in-text citations,<a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=182&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 13a. For Works Cited information, <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=193&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 13b. To learn how to format a paper in MLA style using Microsoft Word, <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=224&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 13c. For a sample paper that uses MLA style, <a

onclick="javascript:window.open('http://college.cengage.com/english/enhanced_insight/writing_manual_digital_age_brief_2009_mla/index.html?page=231&anchory=null','blank','location=0,toolbar=0,menubar=0,status=0,width=960,height=720')"

href="javascript:; ">see 13d.

Connection to the thesis?

TRI

3. Summary.

4. Support?

TRI

TRI

5. The period goes after the parenthetical citation.

6. You're summarizing, Ms. Dukes.

TRI

Development Each paragraph performs a certain kind of work in the larger piece of writing--it may advance the argument, provide illustrations and examples, discuss the effects of a solution the writer is proposing, and so on. Paragraphs also have an internal logic; they focus attention on one idea at a time, along with a cluster of closely related sentences that explain, extend, or support that idea.

For a general discussion of the paragraph structure T-R-I (topic sentence, restrictive sentences, and illustrative sentences) see page 20.

For paragraph coherence, which is a network of relationships within a paragraph that keeps the information flowing and understandable, see pages 21-22.

For developing paragraphs that use patterns to fulfill specific purposes, see pages 23-27.

For information on revising your work, see chapter 3.

Connection to the thesis?

7. Support?

Omit vague words.

8. Your entire paper should be analyzing the issue of color. This is the only paragraph that seeks to do so on a more consistent level. It's missing support, though.

9. Support?

10. Where's the conclusion? With no works cited, this paper doesn't demonstrate a intent to research effectively. I made this same comment in your previous draft.

CONVENTIONS (25%)

2 / 5

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| EXCELLENT (5) | Assignment is an analysis of a specific poem or related poems OR short story. Adheres to the academic conventions of formal writing and research, writes confidently, organizes logically, proofreads prior to submission. |
| GOOD (4) | Assignment is a breakdown or examination of a literary work but may lack in a minor academic expectation. |
| SATISFACTORY (3) | Assignment lacks two or more SPA expectations. Eg., lapses in formality, research, vague references, word choice, coherence. |
| UNSATISFACTORY (2) | Assignment does not meet reader's expectations in most instances. Summarizes instead of analyzes. |
| UNACCEPTABLE (1) | Assignment does not resemble a literary analysis. |

MLA CITATION (20%)

1 / 5

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| EXCELLENT (5) | •Includes parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page. •Cites consistently and correctly, paying attention to source type and formatting. |
| GOOD (4) | Minor errors in citation, but contains both in-text citation and a Works Cited page. |
| SATISFACTORY (3) | Source or sources are present but lack in consistency; may lack thorough information and citations or works cited entries. |
| UNSATISFACTORY (2) | May lapse into a mixture of citation styles. |
| UNACCEPTABLE (1) | Formatting is careless or lacking. Assignment does not meet the Citation requirements. Assignment contains no Works Cited page. Assignment may be plagiarized. |

DIRECTIONS (15%)

2 / 5

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| EXCELLENT (5) | •Provides at least 3 pages in length (not including the heading), cited in MLA. •Incorporates 1 inch margins rule all around (top, bottom, left, and right) •Includes academic title and heading. •Produces a double spaced Word document •Types in Times New Roman 12 pt. font |
| GOOD (4) | Assignment meets page requirements but may lack in one minor requirement such as margins, academic heading, or font /size. |
| SATISFACTORY (3) | Assignment meets page requirements may be missing a minor and a major requirement such as academic title. |
| UNSATISFACTORY (2) | Assignment almost meets page requirements, but contains major omissions such as spacing, MLA omissions, and proofreading/spell check. |
| UNACCEPTABLE (1) | Document does not follow assignment instructions. |

LANGUAGE (25%)

4 / 5

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| EXCELLENT (5) | Style, tone, and expression appropriate for academic writing; diction well chosen; syntax and mechanics virtually error-free. |
| GOOD (4) | Style and tone suitable for academic writing; syntax and mechanics have minor errors; diction appropriate in most instances. |
| SATISFACTORY (3) | Style and tone fall short of academic standards; distracting usage, diction, and mechanical errors. |
| UNSATISFACTORY (2) | Little resemblance to academic writing in most respects. |

UNACCEPTABLE
(1)

Frequent errors inhibit clarity and meaning.

FOCUS (15%)

3 / 5

EXCELLENT
(5)

Clear introduction, historical significance evident, framework evident; title and thesis that indicate a connection and the thesis is a clear analysis. Academic title and supporting paragraphs are effective. Concludes satisfactorily.

GOOD
(4)

Introduction may be clear and thesis may be present, but document may stray somewhat from the analysis. Title connects; supporting paragraphs may need to be more development. Conclusion present.

SATISFACTORY
(3)

Introduction lacks engagement and connection and thesis present; however, the document lacks in connection and support. Title may not connect to the analysis. Conclusion present but may not end effectively.

UNSATISFACTORY
(2)

Introduction fails to properly signal topic of literary work. Title and thesis do not connect. Thesis is wordy, convoluted, or unclear. Title is insignificant. Underdeveloped conclusion.

UNACCEPTABLE
(1)

No achievement in any of the focus criteria.