

Subject: English Literature

Short Story Assessment: The Good Corn & Turned

Discuss how cultural circumstances effect a character's reaction to certain situations.

Mark: 80%

There is one major difference in The Good Corn and Turned and that is the reactions of the wives to their husbands actions. In reality what the two men did was the same but how the two women reacted was entirely different. Mrs. Mortimer forgave her husband and Mrs. Marroner up and left her husband. This difference in reactions is caused by the different

cultural circumstances that the two women were in. Mrs. Mortimer from the Good Corn was a farmer's wife, she was uneducated and had not

known any other lifestyle besides her country one, her isolation caused her to become dependant on her husband and besides him Elsie was her only companion.

Mrs. Marroner on the other hand was a well educated, high society woman. She lived in

Boston, an upper-class suburb, had a Ph.D. and once lectured at university. Because of her

suburban upbringing and education she was a confident and independent lady who relied on

no-one. She was the more dominant person in their marriage whereas in The Good corn Mr. Mortimer was the dominant partner.

In The Good Corn when Mrs. Mortimer discovered that Elsie was pregnant she was at first

upset but later realised what a blessing the whole situation was, she had been longing for a

child for so long and was hoping that Elsie would give the baby to her. Mrs. Mortimer was not

overly upset with Mr. Mortimer because she felt that because she was in a depressed state

concerning her infertility that she pushed him away and also the fact that if she didn't forgive

her husband she would be left stranded with no-money, no possessions and not knowing

anybody because of her isolated circumstances. Mrs. Marroner on the other hand reacted to Gerta's pregnancy very differently. At first she

was devastated, overly emotional and in denial that something like this could

happen after all that they had been through and because Gerta was almost like a daughter to the Marroner's.

After she had thought about the previous event she realised that what Mr. Marroner had done

was appalling, a crime against women and unforgivable. She also realised that Gerta was not

to blame for her pregnancy, so in turn she decided to leave Mr. Marroner and take Gerta with

her. She had no use for her husband anymore, she was independent, educated and didn't

need Mr. Marroner to support her, Gerta or the baby.

Not only do the women act differently because of their cultural differences but so do the men.

Mr. Mortimer when confronted about the pregnancy immediately apologised and told his wife

that Elsie meant nothing to him and neither did their short affair. This reaction was influenced

by the fact that he needed his wife more than he realised, she cooked for him and did the

household chores, things he couldn't do and it was most likely that if she left him so would

Elsie. Also the Mortimers marriage seemed to be more loving and passionate even though it

was rarely shown, this maybe because of their isolation from the rest of society and that their

only company was each other.

In Turned Mr. Marroner tried to hide the fact that he had slept with Gerta, he went away and

pretended he was on a business trip. He hid the truth because he was intimidated by his wife,

she had power and he feared her in a way because of her independence and wealth and he

realised that she really didn't need him. When he returned to Boston he searched in desperation for her, in a way it seemed like he needed her for support, he was unconfident

and if their marriage broke up then it would damage his public image or status.

A persons cultural circumstance greatly effects how a person will behave in certain situations, The Marroners and Mortimers went through basically the same situation and yet

how the men and women reacted were entirely different.

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