NICE WORK

ANALYSIS OF THE EXTRACT FROM CHPATER TWO

We analysed this text because it provides a post modern interpretation of the study of the novel. At the same time it gives us an intelligent summary of the development of the novel as a narrative form of fiction. Nice Work is a parody of Chrales Dickens’ Hard Times, where is analysed utilatarism idea through the fiction.

Before starting to read the extract, it belongs to the postmodern novel Nice Work by David Lodge written in 1988. It has been classified as a campus novel, (a novel about university and his campus). The novel is about the collaboration project between Robyn Penrose, a temporary lecturer in English literature at University di Rummidge, and Vic (abbreviation of victory) Wilcox who is the director of a farm. The extract belongs to the second chapter and have the purpose to introduce the female character, we will now see how her characterization is developed. There is a third person omniscient narrator tells the reader that he is going to meet a new character: the very first piece information is that the character is very different from Vic, thus Robyn is introduced as the opposite of Vic. The second element is that she doesn’t believe in the concept of character, instead the third element is that she very often say “that is to say”, therefore she’s a teacher who is going to explain something. The additional element is her name and surname, then comes her profession: she’s a temporary lecturer of literature. She hasn’t got a female name, but it also reminds us Robin Hood, a man who fought the rich to help the poors, for this reason she may be an idealist. Instead the surname, Penrose, is more female than her first name, so their juxtaposition may alert the reader that she has been able to integrate male and female features. The word “temporary” underlines she hasn’t got a stable work: there’s nothing definite in her life, because everything is relative. There is no reference about her physical appearance, but the reader comes across her idea of character: Robyn states that “character is a bourgeois myth”. She says the rise of the novel in the 18th century coincided with the rise of capitalism, thus characters and capitalism are strictly linked to. Moreover, the triumph of capitalism coincided with the best development of novel. Finally, the deconstruction of the classical novel in the modernism and post modernism happened during 20th and 21st centuries, when capitalism meets his worst crisis. Indeed both are expression of the Protestant Ethic, because the novel deals with family and class, important elements of western society. Capitalism and novel are originated by the individualism, so the idea of someone who is able to rule his life in competition with others seeking fortune and happiness, capitalists in factories and novelists with a narrator. Indeed heroes and heroines have always to win a fight, so “the novelist is a capitalist of imagination”: the imagination is exploited to create a novel, who can be sold, moreover he creates a need who didn’t exist before the novel was created. So the novel has been the first cultural mass-producted artefact. The only reference to her physic is about the body language, which proves how she’s confident about what she’s saying.

The most important element of the extract is the development of novel, which coincides with capitalism evolution, to support her thesis she gives some examples: Defoe, Richardosn.

Robyn have a vision which depends on what she had read, so it is a postmodern idea.

1. “There is not a such thing as the self”: she doesn’t believe in the concept of identity, which was on the basis of traditional novel and capitalism. Thus there isn’t a ”unique soul” in the novel or in the capitalism, “*esiste solo una posizione soggetta in un’infinita rete di discorsi, discorsi di sesso, potere, famiglia, scienza, religione”* 🡪 The web of speeches which characterized the society is not determined by me, so I can’t completely build my own identity, because those “speeches” existed before me and influence me: everything depends on the world where I live and its ideas.

2. For this reason she rejects the idea of author, because no one originates nothing. Thus every text is a product of many texts who creates a web of signs: “every text is a product of intertextuality”.

3. “Not you are what you read” but “you are what you speak” or rather “you are what speaks you”: the others understand something we don’t know when I speak, because we are product of our unconscious, therefore humans beings are insecure.

THE MODERN AGE

HUMAN RIGHTS

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