

Reading Passage

If everyone thought the same, if everyone's form was alike, if everyone had no distinctions, then life would not be the same. Our thoughts and ideas differ, as we think in different levels, but even our ideas have similarities. The foundations of our ideas are connected through the various uses of language. The anecdotes as used by George Whitman and Jonathan Edwards, two writers of the eighteenth century, differ abundantly in theme and explanation, but yet their anecdotes have similarities in regard to tone, imagery, diction, poetic devices, and their reflections on human nature. However, the anecdotes that are used by the two authors also at times are in sharp contrast to each other. Both Edwards's and Whitman's anecdotes can be analyzed in the areas of tone, diction and syntax.

Anecdotes can be analyzed, as they are expressive of a mood or emotion. Tone is the style or manner of expression in writing that gives the passage a general character, quality, trend or frame of mind. In other words, the tone, itself, sets up a mood within the passage. Edwards centers himself on the main topic of damnation. The tone he uses is one of rage, pity and demand, which makes the reader feel downcast and unworthy of one's self. Whitman's tone is of hope. It channels through discovery, exploration and opportunity. The idea that salvation is reachable is expressed in his tone. As in the following: "And you O my soul where you stand, surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space, ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them, till the bridge you need be formed, till the ductile anchor hold, till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul." Jonathan, however, preaches on nothing other than damnation. He can not relate to the idea that life has significance. "He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire." Whitman, on the other hand, discusses how even a spider explores his surroundings.

Questions

1. Which of the following statements would the author NOT agree with?
 - a. Edwards uses a tone which alerts the reader to a character's evil and damned disposition.
 - b. Whitman portrays most of his literary characters are heroes or stereotypical adventurers who continually strive to discover themselves and their world.
 - c. Diction regards correctness, clearness and effectiveness.
 - d. According to Jonathan, life has significance and is enhanced by means of introspection.
 - e. Whitman believes that salvation is reachable.

2. Whitman is quoted as writing the following fragment: "...seeking the spheres to connect them..." How does this phrase relate to Whitman's ideology on salvation?
 - a. It is a direct use of diction to help relay Whitman's ideology.
 - b. The use of the metaphor reiterates the notion that life is an endless search and that the one's goal is to find a path of purpose within the scope of everyday life.
 - c. The literary technique is an example of using monosyllables to arrive at the desired effect.
 - d. It conveys a trend of mind which helps to elucidate Whitman's belief that all of mankind is damned.
 - e. It is an example of an anecdote which helps to solidify Whitman's belief that diction is an important literary technique.

Though the spider's surroundings may seem miniature to the human eye, to a spider they are vast and full of new activity. In this impression, Whitman illustrates the soul as a traveler and as an adventurer, who is given a mind to muse and explore in an attempt to reach some point in life when he, too, will be able to connect and awaken, realize and share with another what he has uncovered.

Diction regards correctness, clearness and effectiveness. Edwards presents his ideas in an abstract manner, by comparing man to a spider. Whitman uses abstract language, as well, in which he speaks of a spider and the universal soul. Both are connected, as the spider has a soul. Edwards uses monosyllables, while Whitman uses polysyllables. Both Edwards and Whitman use connotations to signify interesting connections from one unrelated concept to another. Edwards speaks of a God that holds one over a pit of hell. He compares this to a man holding an insect, such as a spider, over fire.

3. The relationship between the first and second paragraphs can be described as which of the following?
 - a. The first paragraph introduces how various elements of language can be leveraged to depict emotional states and the second paragraph discusses how two authors utilize anecdotes differently to help convey central philosophies.
 - b. The first paragraph introduces two authors, and the second discusses how their use of diction is used to convey meaning.
 - c. The first paragraph discusses how anecdotes can be unique, and the second paragraph focuses on Edward's fixation on damnation.
 - d. The first paragraph gives a brief overview of a belief system; the second paragraph provides examples of two authors' use of anecdotes.
 - e. Theme is discussed in the first paragraph, and the second paragraph focuses on the use of monosyllabic diction.

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4. Which of the following statements would the author not agree with?
 - a. Anecdotes can be analyzed to give insight about mood and emotion.
 - b. Jonathan portrays his philosophies through the use of abstract comparisons.
 - c. Edwards focuses on the concept of starvation and ultimate self discovery.
 - d. Diction is used to portray a sense of correctness, clearness, and effectiveness.
 - e. George Whitman and Jonathan Edwards cleverly utilize tone to help set the mood.