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English 101 section 3022

4/15/2013

EXPLORING OTHER CHARACTERS

There are some books that have multiple points of view, while most have only one. For example Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins, was written from the view of a girl named Katniss Everdeen. Then, there are the other books such as Rant by Chuck Palahniuk, which was written from every character’s point of view except the main. The Storyteller by Jodi Picoult allowed multiple characters to share the spot of “main character”. While offering points of view and based on written preference multiple points of view allow the reader to see from various perspectives, much like in The Storyteller.

In the Hunger Games, there were mixed impressions of the main character that may or may not have affected the reading of the book. Since the entire book is taken from the eyes of a family driven young woman, it’s hard to see other aspects that might stand out differently in the book. Although there can be benefits to having a story only be told from one character. Such as it helps the reader stay on track as the story progress and doesn’t give too much confusion. You are also put into a sort of tunnel vision that keeps you focused on the one main character so you can start to imagine how you would be if you were them. Though many might like that idea, others could find that it’s too narrow and limits the book, as opposed to letting the reader explore other characters and letting them settle into something more suited for them. Let’s say you are a twenty six year old man, reading from the point of view of a sixteen year old girl. It can make it difficult to connect with the main character. That’s why having a book with multiple points sounds like a better option.

But more isn’t always better. The book Rantis from fifty six character’s points of view. Despite the fact that the book was written in an ever moving puzzle manner it was a phenomenal read. That said it was always hard to keep track of who was who and what did they say about who and why. Since the main character was Buster Casey, nicknamed Rant, you knew who they, most of the time, referred to, but it was hard to maintain the connections. Twelve characters talking at once is manageable. Fifty six is just daring for your brain to explode. With that many opinions flying across the page you have to reread the last ten sentences a few times if you made the mistake of spacing out while reading or trying to skim. Only very established authors who make that their trade mark are able to pull it off because you as the reader are not used to that kind of insanity.

That’s exactly what Jodi Picoult did. Made the readings of multiple points of view something people expect and demand from her. In her most recent book, The Storyteller, Picoult gave four people for you to be able to identify with. It’s made obvious that the main character is Sage Singer, but you can then later connect with: Josef Weber, Leo Stein, and Minka Singer the grandmother of Sage. Like all of Picoult’s books you start off with the main character, and later sink into meeting the rest of the voices. Every time I begin one of her books, I’m always joyfully anxious to see who she chose as the next character to narrate. It’s a great concept to bring others into the story and have them alternate between each other. In a way it’s almost like a play, one character steps away and says their piece then we move on to the next and set of cycles through that scene until everything is said and explained. With this method, it allows the reader to stay on track easily because each character is given a chapter to fully implant them into your mind and from there, grow until their chapter is over. With that you never wonder what another character thinks or feel like you’re missing some puzzle piece you think you need.

Being aware of what other characters think or feel can become distracting though, that’s why some people prefer a book that is only one sided. It comes down to personal preference; whether you like reading and taking on the role of a single person or an entire cluster of people that may or may not even be connected until the end of the book. The entire point of books is to allow your imagination take over without having to think about it. For some just having two main characters may be too hard, but for others it’s very enjoyable. Nevertheless the option of reading a book with multiple people’s points of view should be seen as a positive challenge for your brain as well as imagination.

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