Your Name

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Orientation

Introduction

 ‘Orientation' is a short story written by Daniel Orozco, which satires the unnecessary regulations and undesirable norms imposed within an organizational environment, as they cause employees to behave absurdly.

Discussion

 The story is an unusual orientation to a new employee who has just joined the company. The narrator and the audience of the story have not been mentioned. The beginning lines set the tone of the story and convey the intentions of the writer at the first step, “Those are the offices and these are the cubicles. That’s my cubicle there, and this is your cubicle. This is your phone. Never answer your phone. Let the Voicemail System answer it. This is your Voicemail System Manual.” The narrator points out even the trivial details that are usually understood by people by default. The writer deliberately uses this style to create his desired effect of an absurd feeling on the reader’s mind. The narrator assumes the newbie to be a plain, innocent, and ignorant person who does not know about the workplace culture. At the very beginning of the orientation, he forbids his listener to answer the phone calls leaving him with the impression that there might be many other things of caution in this environment.

The narrator goes on explaining different dos and don’ts related to the acceptable work behavior in the company and provide the listener with a comprehensive list of instructions, mainly absurd ones. He wants the new-comer to adopt the same behavior as do the other employees display at the workplace. He advises him, “Feel free to ask questions. Ask too many questions, however, and you may be let go (Orozco, 6).” The workplace environment suggests that the people who work there do not have common sense, rationality, and self-confidence.

The narrator inflicts a sense of job insecurity in his listener. He introduces him to the receptionist and confers on him a piece of ridiculous advice of how to behave with the receptionists. He exclaims that a receptionist’s job is always at risk, “… don’t get close to them … they always leave … be sure of that.”

The narrator describes very personal details of the different characters involved in his orientation. These details usually do not need to be discussed, especially with a newcomer. He talks about men’s flirting behaviors, women’s indifference to these initiatives, and the weird things that should remain unmentioned. His narration of Mr. Russell Nash is a clear evidence, as he carelessly tells about him, “gorging himself at home on cold pizza and ice cream while watching adult videos on TV.”

The writer successfully depicts the adverse effects of excessive regulations implemented within organizations. He gives an account of various employees and informs the listener about their unreasonable attitudes and behaviors. All the characters shown in the workplace prove that employees cannot naturally tolerate the excessive burden of unnecessary and superficial norms and restrictions imposed by the management. The manager is also not an exception, as he has been depicted as, “We have never seen him, and you will never see him. But he is there. You can be sure of that. He is all around us.” The unit manager has such an unusual behavior, which indicates the system has flaws all across the hierarchy of the employees.

The writer uses subtle techniques in deploying humor in the story. The incidents have been described in a light-hearted manner. However, they provoke thinking about serious issues prevailing in the corporate environments. The narrative style gradually develops the themes involved in the story. The writer does not hit the issues under consideration directly. He has utilized an indirect technique to express his ideas. The last paragraph is the epitome of the writer’s success in using this particular style. “If you have any questions, ask your supervisor. If you can’t find your supervisor, ask Phillip Spiers. He sits over there. He’ll check with Clarissa Nicks. She sits over there. If you can’t find them, feel free to ask me. That’s my cubicle. I sit in there.” The narrator is confused, and he also makes the listener confused. The writer has created this atmosphere of conversation to create his desired impression.

Conclusion

The story is a successful literary attempt to demonstrate the complications of behaviors displayed in the workplaces, through a light-hearted description of unreasonable characters, weird stories, and absurd remarks.

References

Orozco, D. *Orientation: And Other Stories*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.