Name of Student

Name of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

Compare and contrast essay

***Introduction***

***Battle Royal*** is a short story by Ralph Ellison in which he highlights the incidents of racial inequality. In this story, Ralph mainly spots light on a black boy who is struggling to fit in a society that is dominated by the whites. The boy struggles to achieve his set goals by following the last words of his grandfather as his grandfather advises him, "live with your head in the lion’s mouth”. On the other hand, there comes a short story ***The Lesson*** which is written by Toni Cade Bambara in which she has used a young black girl Sylvia as a narrator who lives in Harlem. In this short story, a teacher Miss Moore arranges a field trip for her students and takes them to FAO Schwarz (an expensive toy store in Manhattan). Miss Moore takes her students purposely there to teach them a lesson regarding the economic and social inequality between the whites and blacks as some toys cost more than the household yearly income of black families. Both the short stories "Battle Royal" and “The Lesson” are spotting a light on the struggle of African Americans but still, there could be seen obvious differences as well.

***Discussion***

Analysis of both the above-mentioned stories shows that though the central idea is the same in both but still there is a considerable difference in its character, setting, style and tone. Taking a look at the characters, it could be seen that in "Battle Royal" the major character is a back boy but in "The Lesson" the main character is a young girl named Sylvia. In story A (Battle Royal) main characters are the narrator, his grandfather, a superintendent, a dancer, Jackson, Tatlock and Mr. Colcord, and other minor characters are also there in the story. It would be interesting to note that the majority of the characters in story A are mature males (Harris et al.). Comparing story A with B, it could be observed that most characters in story B (The Lesson) are young school-going children. Characters include a teacher, Miss Moore and her young students (Sylvia, Sugar, Flyboy, Fat butt, Junebug, Rosie, and few others).

Setting of both these short stories is another thing that could be taken into consideration as far as the contrast between A and B is concerned. “Battle Royal” is being set up in a ballroom of a hotel where the narrator with his schoolmates goes for a boxing match. In the setting, there could be observed an erected ring surrounded by seats. On the other hand, story B (The Lesson) takes place on an ordinary day in Harlem in around 1960s. The main scene of this story was set in a toy store known as F.A.O Schwartz that is in the neighboring part of the city (Johnson et al, pp. 85-98). There are various other places or the locations where some other scenes of “The Lesson” have been performed but the toy shop is the place where main scene of the story has been set up.

Another important difference between the two short stories is that of the style and tone. The overall tone of "Battle Royal" is tragic, full of struggle, hopeful and optimistic in which the narrator of the story is trying hard for getting acceptance in the white society. On the other hand, taking a look at the "The Lesson" it could be said that the tone of this short story is full of sarcasm, hope, and bitterness. At the begging of this story, Sylvia uses sarcasm for reflecting upon her experiences with Miss Moore. Narration style of both these stories is also different as in “Battle Royal” Ralph has used diction and well-structured sentences along with some literary devices so that he could grasp attention of his readers but contrary in “The Lesson” Toni Bambara has used rhythm and simple sentences so that her readers would grasp the main idea quite easily. Another thing that could be noticed is the style of narration. In story A, the narrative style of the boy is more enthusiastic while in story B style of the narrator is saddened when reality is revealed about the difference of social and economic identities between blacks and whites.

***Conclusion***

Considering both the short stories “The Lesson” and “Battle Royal” it could be asserted that though both are pointing towards the same theme yet there are some evident differences that draw a line between them. Both stories spot a light on harsh realities that separate black from whites. In both the stories, there could be seen that characters are different, in story A, narrator is a male who is at the boxing ring while in story B the narrator of the story is a young girl who is at a toy shop when she comes to know one of the saddening reality of her life that blacks and whites have a huge social and economic difference between them. Analysis shows that not only there is a difference in the characters rather there are other things as well that are contrasting such as the setting. Setting is the other main factor that makes these stories different from each other. Tone and style of the stories could be looked upon as another factor that makes the two stories different. So as a whole, it could be concluded that there are various factors (characters, setting, style, and tone) in both the stories A and B that make them different from each other.

Works Cited

Harris, Cindelle. "Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, and Toni Cade Bambara; The Literary Representation of Foucault’s Genealogy Between Black Women Authors and Their Black Women Protagonists." (2019).

Johnson, Ikea M. "Buddhist Recognition in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man." *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics* 42.2 (2019): 85-98.