Petrified Man By Eudora Welty Essay, Research Paper

Petrified Man by Eudora Welty One of Eudora Welty?s criticisms is that she

occasionally possibly misrepresents the culture and influence of the south. Do

you think that is the case in The Petrified Man? When I think of the south, I

think of southern hospitality. I picture people always talking to each other,

whether it?s just small talk or gossip, which is the case in The Petrified

Man. The dialogue itself appears to be pretty accurate (from what I can imagine

anyway, since I?ve never been down south). The south definitely has a certain

way of talking and Eudora Welty does a great job showing us, not just telling

us, this dialect. From the very first sentence of the story, you know where you

are, and the type of people involved in the story. ?Reach in my purse and git

me a cigarette without no powder in it if you kin, Mrs. Fletcher, honey ? I

don?t like no perfumed cigarettes.? As for the events themselves, they

appear to be reasonably honest. If you allow yourself to just listen to the

story as it?s being told, instead of trying to analyze it?s validity (it is

fiction after all) you will believe you?re sitting in Leota?s beauty parlor

with Mrs. Fletcher and Leota talking about anything or anybody. It doesn?t

matter exactly what you?re talking about, as long as it takes the attention

away from your own lives, if just for an hour or two. Although some people might

be offended at the gesture that all the women in the south sit around and just

talk about everyone else, I think it?s accurate. Not just in the south, and

not just with women. For some reason, people find comfort in talking about other

people?s lives and forgetting about theirs for a little while. How do the

major characters react to the story that Leota is telling? Do they change or

learn anything? I know when I hear a story, I don?t look for a moral to

incorporate into my life. I just listen to the story and allow myself to be

entertained. I believe that?s the same with the characters in this story. I

don?t think they learned anything. Even at the very end of the story when Mrs.

Pike?s son, Billy Boy, runs out of the beauty parlor and yells ?If you?re

so smart, why ain?t you rich?? I don?t think either Leota or Mrs. Fletcher

even understood his point. I think Mrs. Fletcher did change however. At the

beginning of the story it seemed that she was irate when she found out her

pregnancy was the topic of discussion at the beauty parlor. ??Who was it??

demanded Mrs. Fletcher.? By the end of the story, once they had talked about

everything that had happened to Mrs. Pike and her husband, Mrs. Fletcher felt

fine about talking about the pregnancy. ?I guess I better learn how to spank

little old bad boys,? as if once the attention was on someone else, she no

longer cared about people talking about her pregnancy. Now, in fact, she was

talking about it. Do you think the on going theme of the story is? I thought the

theme of the story was jealousy. I started thinking about it as soon as Mrs.

Fletcher started getting defensive once Leota told her about Mrs. Pike. The more

Leota talked about her, the more defensive Mrs. Fletcher got. ?Does she know

everything about you already?? Then all of the sudden, once she found out that

Leota and Mrs. Pike had had a falling out, everything was fine. As mentioned

before, when Mrs. Fletcher found out Mrs. Pike was the one that told Leota Mrs.

Fletcher was pregnant, she was outraged. Mrs. Pike was the one Leota talked to

all the time now. She was the one who heard all the stories about everyone in

town. She was Leota?s new confidant if you will. To prevent from slipping too

far down on Leota?s friend list, Mrs. Fletcher kept asking questions about

Mrs. Pike pretending to be interested. The whole time just waiting for the time

when she would mess up. Once she knew that their friendship was over, everything

was great. She no longer cared about people talking about her pregnancy. As for

Leota, her jealousy seems to be the only reason for her hatred of Mrs. Pike.

Jealous of the fact that it was her magazine that Mrs. Pike had seen the reward

poster in, jealous that she had seen the very same man Mrs. Pike did, and

jealous that Mrs. Pike was getting the $500. She was so jealous, she ended the

friendship. Now everything is back to the way it was before.