
again, and it holds true for my own writing” (228). Noting that she does not seek to transform the works she has read into mere cries for political and social action, she leaves the reader with the assertion that “[r]eading is not enough, it does not complete the work of justice but it does *matter*” (167).

Carter Wilson. *Revelation: A Thriller*. Longboat Key, FL: Oceanview Publishing, 2016. 352p.

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Held captive in conditions beyond horrific, Harden finds a typewriter along with a stack of blank paper. The words “Tell me a Story” signal the chilling beginning to his predicament. Under normal conditions, being faced with a writing deadline is enough to freeze many in their tracks, yet when faced with said deadline, there is still the option to stall, to let life get in the way, to convince oneself of the need for more incubation time, more time to let the subconscious work out the details. However, this is not the case for Harden; there is no deadline extension available for him. His survival depends not only on his ability to write on command, but also on his ability to write what his captor wants to read. As a result, Carter Wilson’s *Revelation* presents its audience with an unreliable narrator.

While unreliable narrators are common, they are rarely manipulating another character in the story to the extent that the audience must parse out what they believe Harden wants them to hear versus what they feel to be the truth that he must tell. Over time, his captors are revealed to him. One of the Babyface captors admits that Coyote chose Harden because he was so unpredictable. Coyote is a psychopath, who is obsessed with power dynamics and who has the need to consume another’s energy, and a former friend of Harden’s who provokes those he encounters in an effort to gain insight into how modern-day cult leaders find their following. Although the fractured structure allows for some immediacy in the moment with his thoughts, it is Harden’s fear of death that forces him to carefully craft what his captor wants to read.

Shifting back and forth between Harden’s current confinement written in the third person, where the audience is privy to his thoughts, and the story that he is being forced to write in the first person, Wilson steadily controls the flow of Harden’s writing. Short, choppy chapters evolve into longer, more detailed and engaging parallel narratives, which, when combined, form a larger picture of the whole story, albeit not a completely reliable one, leaving the audience to ponder Coyote’s role.

Interpretations for Coyote's character could span from topics of political commentary to religious zealousness. What is important to take away from his character, though, is how he manipulates not only Harden, but also what the audience is allowed to know about Coyote. He has power over how we perceive Harden's story; therefore, we never truly know the depths of Coyote's depravity since Harden's instinct for self-preservation prohibits this. The situational meta-awareness aspect to this approach is fascinating. Is Coyote's character meant to be a cautionary example of how psychopaths come into positions of power? Is Coyote's obsession with newly formed, modern-day religious cults and how others perceive religion and fain loyalty meant to spark discussion of how such blind faith can lead to violence? The diabolical situation that the characters find themselves in certainly nods toward these issues.

The characters in *Revelation* are well-developed, although it would be a stretch to call any of them likeable. Each has his or her own flaw that renders the character either flat or somewhat untrustworthy, making it difficult to embark on this journey with anyone other than Harden, with whom we obviously cannot empathize due to his unreliable narration. It is not his physical strength that will allow him to regain freedom without further injury; instead, it is his mental strength, intellect, and aptitude for manipulation that lends him a chance at survival. Outsmarting a brilliant psychopath by writing the story that he wants to hear is certainly not the position that any of us would like to find ourselves in; however, is that not often what we do when we sit down to write? Of course there is (presumably) no psychopath in our audience. As scholars, we write for ourselves foremost to get our ideas out there, to contribute to a larger discussion, yet we must appeal to an audience and take into account how best to engage them, how to get them to believe us. In this sense, I would call this novel a must-read for anyone who struggles with writer's block. It COULD be worse.