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English 12

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10/01/13

Literary Techniques Used By Maxine Clair

How do you think most people would describe fifth-grade, if they could? Some people would vaguely recall an enthusiastic teacher whom they did science experiments with. Others would remember going to the playground with their friends and playing tag. All this sounds good, but what really adds affect is *how* someone reflects upon it. When someone writes about his or her prior experiences, they may use good-storytelling techniques. One may add humor. Maxine Clair, on the other hand, uses literary techniques in her story *Cherry Bomb*. Among these are diction, revelation, and tone.

Diction was used several times throughout *Cherry Bomb*. One of the words she chose was “Daddy-said-so”. This mirrored her character’s fifth-grade self because at that age, children simply took their parents’ words for truth. Also, she reinforced her childhood with the phrase “as fine as wine in the summer time”. This rhythmic phrase, full of assonance, is just the kind of things that little kids would like to say all the time. In addition to that, she used the punishment “God-is-whipping-you.” Most kids still received beatings from their parents in the fifth grade. The fact that she said God is whipping someone shows that she was going through that at that age.

Following that, indirect revelation was implemented in the story. She gave an indirect revelation of the main character. “I am in this world, but not of it,” is a phrase she liked but didn’t understand. In this, she made out her character to be one who doesn’t always think about or comprehend what she says. Following this, she has an interesting way of revealing the Hairy Man. She said that “at night the Hairy Man went anywhere he wanted to go” and stayed inside the house all day while she was in school. This shows that there is something wrong with this man. In fact, he was shell-shocked.

Lastly, she uses tone as a literary technique to describe her character’s childhood. She doesn’t write about her character’s life as a fifth grader in a positive tone in the beginning of her story. During her summer, she faced a “plague of locusts”. This is a disdainful tone towards her childhood. Another thing that she wrote about in a negative tone is her character’s father’s jacket. She implemented the words “putrid-colored jacket” to describe it. She certainly mustn’t have liked the childhood if her character saw her father wearing a jacket like that! However, at the end, she does say that she had a good childhood overall. In other words, the author had a positive tone towards the childhood.

In conclusion, literary techniques, such as diction, revelation, and tone, add more life to literature. The character’s fifth-grade nature wouldn’t permeate the story well if the author used plain diction. The assonance was also a nice touch. Not only that, but she didn’t reveal the characters in a plain way. For both herself and the hairy man, she used indirect revelation. This makes the reader think for him or herself what the character is like. Finally, she uses tone to put the childhood of the main character in both a positive light and a negative light. All these things made the story very well-written. Therefore, those who want to be exceptional writers should look up to Maxine Clair as a good example.