

A summer life rhetoric analysis



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Jennie Le AP English 29 August 2010 A Summer Life rhetoric analysis In his autobiographical narrative A Summer Life, Gary Soto vividly recreates the guilt felt by a six-year-old boy who steals an apple pie. Through Soto's reminiscent he has taken us on a journey of his guilt, paranoia, and redemption through the usage of tone, allusions, and imagery. Since Soto knows stealing the pie is a sin his guilt is amplified when he ignores his knowledge.

Soto's guilt is emphasized through the tone of the story, " my sweet tooth gleaming and the juice of my guilt wetting my underarms... I nearly wept trying to decide which to steal. " By Soto's tone towards the pies over exaggerating on which one to steal shows that he is nervous and anxious. This reveals that Soto knew what he was doing however he was feeling bored so he disregarded his prior knowledge. Another example of how Soto feels guilty is when he was trying to rationalize what he has just done. After stealing the apple pie Soto says to himself, " No one saw". By saying, " No one saw" Soto reveals the guilt that he is feeling but tries to defend what he just did by rationalizing his actions.

It also shows that he is denying and that he is really feeling panic and anxiousness. Soto feeling guilty eventually made him feel paranoia. His paranoia is apparent with the religious allusion, " A squirrel nailed itself high on the trunk". By using this religious allusion illustrates that his guilt has developed into paranoia when the squirrel is being nailed somewhat exactly how Jesus got nailed onto the cross.

This reveals that his anxiousness and panic have turned into fear. Another example that shows Soto's guilt is the allusion of Adam and Eve. By referring to Adam and Eve, Soto reminisces on what Sister Marie showed him in the video when Adam and Eve were casted into the desert, " I knew an apple got Eve in trouble with the snakes because Sister Marie had shown us a film about Adam and Eve being cast into the desert, and what scared me more than falling from grace was being thirsty for the rest of my life. This reveals that Soto is afraid and nervous since he committed a sin. When Soto refers back to Adam and Eve tells the reader that Soto is aware of his wrong doing but ends up disregarding his prior knowledge and feels paranoid.

After stealing the apple pie and feeling guilty and paranoid Soto seeks redemption and shows that through imagery. Soto tries to redeem himself by helping his sister but later has to crawl underneath the house because the image of the kitchen swirling was too much, " the kitchen swirling with heat and flies" this image resembles Hell. This image reveals that the guilt was too much for Soto and that the crawling underneath the house resembles asking for forgiveness. During the time Soto goes underneath the house and stays there he gives the image that Soto is coming back alive and free of sin, " I lay until I was cold and then crawled back to the light, rising from one knew, then another".

This image religiously represents that Soto is coming back from the dead and rising into the light. This image shows that Soto is forgiven and that his sin for stealing the apple pie is gone. Throughout the story Soto feels guilty and seeks redemption because Soto steals the apple pie. His guilt is magnified when he thinks everyone knows of his sin, and starts to develop

paranoia. The author's attitude towards guilt affects how he is behaving. By using imagery and allusions Soto recreates the guilt felt by a young boy who has stolen an apple pie.