

Stamp collecting



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Cathy Song's poem entitled "Stamp Collecting" is an illustration of culture of several countries. The narrator discussed the use of stamps – to sell tourism in a country. The narrator gave various examples to justify the claim. She shows that stamp collecting is a depiction of cultural heritage. Not just a simple part of the society but a representation of history and tradition. It became the author's way to unravel the details of the stamps not just as a simple picture that people used to have but a depiction of social, political, and cultural landscape of a country that should not be taken for granted.

It also shows metaphorical, ironical, and personifying elements to both hide and unleash the real meaning of the poem through the presentation of the narrator. This is the author's way of sharing and conveying her thoughts on her poem. She wanted to discuss the connection of culture and identity into the different societies through the help of the stamps that she analyzed and illustrated. In the first stanza of the poem, the narrator introduced the use of stamps as the people posted it along with the letters that they sent for their loved ones outside their country.

As the narrator looks at his collected stamps, she illustrated the pictures of the stamps depending on the country that she is describing. This stanza also revealed how a certain country used their stamps to publicize or advertise their society's richness. Even if they are poor or part of the third-world countries, they could provide the things of food that are rich within their culture as a depiction of the narrator in the stanza. In the second stanza, the narrator's illustration becomes more complex.

From simple images that she discussed in the first stanza, she also added human resources and tourism spots of the countries that she is referring to. She illustrated how the creator of the stamps combined simple profession into a cultural tradition – by adding up different ornaments or beautiful colors within the background or within the body of the person that exists in the stamp or postcard. The narrator stated in the third stanza that all the stamps and post cards that came from poor countries are simple; it is already a fulfillment for a third-world country to show their culture's indigenous or unique beauty.

Through this, they have the dignity and pride of being a significant country despite of economic circumstances. The last stanza became the narrator's conclusion. She has shown that despite of the beauty that these countries have portrayed, they still continue to be stagnant and hard to bear. This is the justification of the author as he used literary images such as statues, marbles, and monuments as significations of hardness and unjust situation of the countries. Based on how the narrator discussed his feelings, she is the stamp collector in the poem.

She showed what she perceived in those stamps that she already collected. However, she wanted to impose this perspectives and ideas to the tourists as well as the concerned countries that used their stamps to nurture their tourism institutions. Nevertheless, despite of the narrator's obtainment of the beauty of the countries she discussed, she pulled the string of these countries' dwelling-place. At the end of the poem, she stated that tourism is not the only way to acquire economic power.

It only shows that there is a taint of political justifications that exists in the whole poem. In terms of the construction of the poem, the author used the free-verse composition without rhythm and rhyme. It was not a regular meter because the author focused her attention to the content of the poem and not with the overall construction of the verse. Based on my own understanding of the whole poem, it encompasses transformation of mood from one stanza to the other that moulds the whole verse into a depiction of culture and identity of the countries.