

Literary analysis on gary soto's "the pie" essay sample

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Prominent American authors such as Mark Twain, Jonathan Edwards, and Nathan Hawthorne extensively emphasize in their works the role guilt plays in a person's conscience and society. In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain builds up the plot by thoroughly describing the guilt Huck feels after he helps Jim, the slave, to run away. As a young boy, Huck disregards the society's values and chooses his own path, whether it be right or wrong. Much like his literary predecessors, Gary Soto deals with his own confrontation with the inner conscience after committing an act that he considers sinful. In his memoir "The Pie", Soto achieves to warn his audience of obtaining sinful temporary pleasures at the expense of eternal torture of the conscience by employing the use of literary devices such as metaphor, allusion, and motif.

To begin with, Soto thoroughly describes his feelings before and during the process of stealing the pie through metaphors and allusion. He states that he steals the pie out of boredom and quotes that "I stood before a rack of pies...and the juice of guilt wetting my underarms". This metaphor indicates that deep within his conscience, Soto struggles between his strict morals and his wild impulse to steal. Through the clever use of the metaphor, Soto compares the sweat from his nervousness to the "juice of guilt", thus implying that even after he has confirmed his decision he still feels morally unjustified. Soto emphasizes his guilty conscience by commenting on the biblical allusion of Eve and the snake. He comments "what scared me...was being thirsty for the rest of my life". Soto draws a connection between the

apple the snake offers to Eve and the stolen apple pie. The allusion dramatizes the event from a petty theft to a sin that changed the fate of mankind. This comparison reflects the seriousness with which Soto views his crime and the consequences that can result from it.

Furthermore, Soto employs the full use of motifs throughout the passage in order to stress his mentality after committing the crime. One such example is the repeated description of the deliciousness of the apple pie, which sharply contrasts with the sinful means with which the author obtained it. He continues to stress that the pie "...was about the best thing I had ever tasted" and that "...the best things in life came stolen". Soto enjoys delicious taste of the pie and floats in a cloud of delight that will soon disperse.

Another motif is the repetition of the word "bored". The importance of the word defines the cause of the whole event because "boredom made me sin", as Soto quotes it at the beginning of the passage. As a result of the sin, Soto fears Adam and Eve's punishment of thirst and mentions it over and over again. As seen in the quotes "I flung it again until I was bored and tired" and "I returned home to drink water", Soto attempts to escape the torture of the conscience through physical means.

Soto demonstrates his superior writing techniques in achieving his purpose by the utilization of metaphor, allusion, and motif. In teaching a valuable lesson, the passage also serves as a guide to all those who lose their way on the path to the perfection of the soul. Through the incident, the author learns that pleasure obtained through sinful means remains short-lived and comes at the price of one's moral and soul.