

A barred owl and the history teacher essay

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



“ A Barred Owl” vs. “ The HistoryTeacher” Essay and analysis

“ A Barred Owl” by Richard Wilbur and “ The History Teacher” by Billy Collins both have adults lying to children. A childish tone is given off in “ A Barred Owl” that helps the reader relate to the child’s fear while an ironic and sarcastic tone is given off in “ The History Teacher” to show how the teacher’s attempt to keep the kids innocent quickly turns the kids’ thoughts from innocent to ignorance. Literary devices used by the authors guide the reader into seeing the effects of the adults’ lies, despite their good intentions.

The childish tone of “ A Barred Owl” is kept through the constant rhyming in the poem like “ boom...room” and “ heard...bird”. The rhyming combined with the childish tone helps put the reader in the frame of mind of the child and how the child thinks. When the owl makes noise, the parents say it’s the owl asking “ Who cooks for you? ” The child will think of her parents each time the owl makes noise, hereby deterring the child’s immense fear of the owl outside her window. The lies given off accommodate with the childish tone and help the reader look at the fear from the child’s point of view. The History Teacher” has the ironic and sarcastic tone that shows the teacher’s lack of an actual lesson. Each lesson the teacher gives, he wants to “ protect his students’ innocence”. The lessons, which are presented as metaphors, contribute to the ironic and sarcastic due to the fact that the serious lessons are compared to trivial things that in no way relate to the actual topic. Even the teacher is affected by the irony and sarcasm as he walks home and sees the “ flower beds and white picket fences” as confirmation that everything is perfect in the world.

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Again, the teacher compares something small to something bigger that he assumes. Danger presents itself in “ A Barred Owl” and adds a darker/dangerous tone. The combination of the dangerous tone and the childish tone, which is continued through the rhyming, shows the child’s point of view of the outside night. Although the child was comforted by her parents, she is still frightened she is and shows that she needs to be protected. In “ The History Teacher”, after the lessons taught by the teacher, the children “ leave his classroom for the playground to torment the weak and the smart”.

This shows how the teacher isn’t teaching any real lessons for the children to learn from and use in life and shows the continuity of the ironic and sarcastic tone. The poems “ A Barred Owl” by Richard Wilbur and “ The History Teacher” by Billy Collins each show adults lying to children. Using different literary devices in each poem, both authors demonstrate the effects of the children being lied to. “ A Barred Owl” relates the author to the child’s fear in the childish tone given off while “ The History Teacher” gives an ironic and sarcastic tone to show the children’s innocence turn to ignorance.