

Literacy features when i whistle by endo shusaku



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Literary Features in the novel "When I Whistle" Outline: The theme of the novel is the changes in the thought of the two generations as depicted by Ozu and Eiichi. The author uses the third person narrative to give us a detailed analysis of the situation. Father and son symbolize the pre and post war generation. Endo uses various literary features such as flashback and foreshadowing to add depth in his work. Eiichi is ironic in the sense that he considers his father a failure. The characters stand as a foil to each other. The author of the novel Shusaku Endo has added depth in his work with the use of various literary features. Literary features are the tools that the writer uses to help the reader understand what he is trying to say. The basic theme of the novel is about the generation gap between a nostalgic World War II veteran and his ambitious son Eiichi, a doctor by profession. Endo has used his two characters to highlight the difference between the pre and post war generations. Eiichi is the representative of the modern world, which is more materialistic, morally, ethically and socially corrupt. It is evident through his relationship with his father, patients and friends. Ozu, on the other hand represents the past or the pre world war generation, which values life, friendship, morality and ethics. Endo introduces the characters of Aiko and Flatfish to reveal the purity and simplicity of Ozu's time.

Narrative Technique: Endo has used simple prose, which keeps on shifting back and forth into the past and the present. His narrative technique helps him in disclosing the past and at the same time keeping the readers well informed about the present situation. The narrative keeps on shifting between Ozu and Eiichi. As Ozu's reminiscences moves towards the past, the two narratives come in contact with each other with devastating effects. The third person narrative gives us a detailed analysis of the rift between the

father and the son.

Symbolism: The characters along with different objects in the novel are highly symbolic. Ozu, Flatfish and Aiko symbolize the past. The simplicity and purity of their relationship symbolizes the simplicity of their time. Eiichi symbolizes the modern materialistic man who is more interested in his own success. Nature is not mentioned when Eiichi's life is described, but when the narrator talks about Ozu's memories, nature is all around, the beach, the rivers and the pines.

Edno has used the father and the son as a metaphor to describe the change of values of the post and pre war generations. Eiichi's generation is quickly eliminating the older generation. The ocean sealed with concrete, Aiko dying fast because of the new drug and Ozu's fading memory all symbolize the fast elimination of the older generation. Towards the end of the novel Ozu goes to find Aiko's old house, the old train that he used with his friend and the beach he used to visit. He finds them all bleakly replaced by the modern houses. This symbolizes the fast vanishing of the old values of respect, honor and loyalty associated with the old age.

Flashback technique: Ozu's past is introduced to us through the technique of flashback. This technique makes it easy for the reader to understand the difference between the values of the father and son. The flashbacks symbolize the simplicity of Ozu's time, which is represented by a small thing such as the pen. The pen meant the world to Flatfish. Another noticeable thing in the flashback scenes is the use of white color. Every thing around Ozu's life could be connected to the color white. Aiko wears the white color a lot and the houses of the rich people were also white. The color white becomes the symbol of innocence and purity, which was dominant in Ozu's

life. On the other hand, with Eiichi, there is a lot of discussion about disease. Illness is used as an extended metaphor. Endo repeatedly refers to hospital, patients and diseases. The disease such as cancer shows the image of Eiichi's society. Eiichi is more concerned about his advancement in the society rather than curing his patients. The repeated use of cancer becomes symbolic of Eiichi's society, which helps the reader to understand the problems of the modern world.

Irony: The ironic portrayal of Eiichi's character worth noticing. Eiichi's views about his father are deplorable. He considers him as a failure and himself as a big success. Eiichi wants to reach the top at whatever cost. Eiichi's relationship with his patients is ironic. He would experiment on his patients with new medicines and would not care for the consequences. He is more interested in his own success than in curing his patients. Ironically Eiichi's desire to reach the top is taking him down towards his own degeneration.

Foil technique: The characters stand as a foil to each other. Ozu stands as a foil to Eiichi. His relationship with Flatfish stands as a foil to Eiichi's relationship with his colleagues. The foil technique helps the reader to understand the difference that Endo wants them to feel.

Foreshadowing: Foreshadowing is another feature that adds to the beauty of the novel. In chapter four we are informed about the incident of Flatfish drowning at the beach. The scene is tragic but it foreshadows Flatfish's death later in the novel. Ozu remembers the scene in chapter ten a little before Endo mentions that Flatfish has died. The repetition of the scenes, once in the past and then in Ozu's memories forms an important aspect of the novel.

The novel can be compared to *The Great Gatsby* in the sense that both the novels discuss the decay of morals and values and the obsession with the

American dream of success at whatever cost. The literary features that Endo has used do help the reader understand the novel properly.

Reference

Endo, Shusaku. *When I Whistle*, translated by Van. C. Gessel ISBN: 0-800-8824-4X