

figurative language in tangerine

Figurative language in "Tangerine" is a crucial element that enriches the narrative and deepens the reader's understanding of the characters and themes. Edward Bloor's novel, aimed primarily at middle-grade readers, employs various forms of figurative language, including metaphors, similes, personification, and symbolism, to paint a vivid picture of the protagonist's experiences. The story follows Paul Fisher, a visually impaired boy who navigates the complexities of family dynamics, friendship, and personal identity in the backdrop of his new home in Tangerine, Florida. Through an exploration of figurative language, this article will illuminate how Bloor's stylistic choices enhance the narrative and contribute to its emotional impact.

Understanding Figurative Language

Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions that deviate from their literal meaning to convey complex ideas, create imagery, or evoke emotions in the reader. In literature, figurative language serves several purposes:

1. Enhancing Imagery: Helps readers visualize scenes and emotions.
2. Deepening Themes: Conveys underlying themes and messages.
3. Character Development: Reveals character traits and dynamics.
4. Creating Emotion: Evokes feelings in the reader.

In "Tangerine," Bloor employs various types of figurative language to achieve these purposes, creating a rich tapestry that engages and resonates with readers.

Metaphors and Similes

Metaphors and similes are two common forms of figurative language that create comparisons to enhance meaning. Bloor skillfully uses these devices throughout "Tangerine" to illustrate Paul's internal struggles and external conflicts.

Metaphors

Metaphors are direct comparisons that do not use "like" or "as." They help to create vivid images and convey complex ideas succinctly. For example, Paul's journey can be seen as a metaphor for the search for his identity and place in the world. His experiences in Tangerine serve as a reflection of his growth and resilience, as he learns to embrace his differences and confront challenges.

- Example: Paul often refers to himself as a "ghost," suggesting his feelings of invisibility and isolation within his family and social circles. This metaphor highlights his struggle for recognition and belonging.

Similes

Similes, on the other hand, make comparisons using "like" or "as," providing clarity and vivid imagery. Bloor employs similes to illustrate emotions and settings, making them relatable to readers.

- Example: Paul describes the oppressive heat of Tangerine as "like a blanket smothering me." This simile not only evokes the physical discomfort of the climate but also symbolizes the emotional weight he feels as he grapples with his identity and family issues.

Personification

Personification attributes human qualities to non-human entities, allowing readers to connect with the setting or objects on a deeper level. In "Tangerine," Bloor uses personification to bring the environment to life, reflecting the characters' emotions and experiences.

- Example: The landscape of Tangerine is depicted as alive and vibrant, with descriptions of the trees and the sun that seem to echo Paul's feelings. The "golden light" and "whispering winds" serve as companions in his journey, suggesting that nature itself is a participant in his story.

Symbolism

Symbolism is another significant aspect of figurative language in "Tangerine." Objects, characters, and events symbolize larger concepts, enhancing the narrative's thematic depth.

The Tangerine Itself

The tangerine, as a recurring motif, symbolizes Paul's growth and transformation. The fruit represents not only the new beginning he seeks in Tangerine, Florida, but also the sweetness of life that can emerge from adversity.

- Example: The tangerine tree in the neighborhood serves as a symbol of resilience and hope. Just as the tree bears fruit despite its harsh surroundings, so too does Paul learn to thrive amidst his challenges.

Sports as a Symbol

Sports play a pivotal role in the novel, symbolizing competition, teamwork, and self-discovery. Paul's passion for soccer becomes a means of escape and empowerment.

- Example: The soccer games serve as a metaphor for Paul's struggle for acceptance and identity. His success on the field allows him to break free from his family's expectations and societal limitations, illustrating the theme of personal triumph.

Imagery and Descriptive Language

Imagery is the use of vivid and descriptive language to create mental images for the reader. Bloor's use of imagery throughout "Tangerine" enhances the reader's experience by immersing them in the story's setting and emotions.

Visual Imagery

Visual imagery is prevalent in Bloor's descriptions of the Tangerine landscape and the characters' experiences.

- Example: The descriptions of the lush orange groves and the vibrant sunsets create a picturesque setting that contrasts with the darker themes of the story, such as family dysfunction and bullying. This juxtaposition enhances the emotional complexity of the narrative.

Emotional Imagery

Bloor also employs emotional imagery to convey the characters' internal struggles and triumphs.

- Example: Paul's feelings of loneliness and frustration are captured through imagery that evokes isolation, such as "being trapped in a glass box." This imagery helps readers empathize with his struggles and root for his journey toward self-acceptance.

Dialogue and Colloquial Language

The dialogue in "Tangerine" is infused with colloquial language and regional dialect, adding authenticity to the characters and their interactions. Figurative language often appears in the characters' speech, reflecting their personalities and backgrounds.

- Example: Paul's friends use slang and idiomatic expressions that resonate with the youth culture, making their interactions relatable and genuine. This use of figurative language in dialogue enhances the characters' voices and immerses the reader in their world.

Conclusion

Figurative language in "Tangerine" serves as a powerful tool that enriches Edward Bloor's narrative, allowing readers to connect with the characters and themes on a deeper level. Through the use of metaphors, similes, personification, symbolism, and vivid imagery, Bloor paints a complex picture of Paul Fisher's journey toward self-discovery and acceptance. The figurative language not only enhances the emotional impact of the story but also invites readers to reflect on their own experiences of resilience and identity. Ultimately, "Tangerine" stands as a testament to the importance of embracing one's uniqueness and finding strength in adversity, all conveyed through

the beauty of figurative language.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is figurative language and how is it used in 'Tangerine'?

Figurative language refers to the use of words or expressions that convey meanings beyond their literal interpretation. In 'Tangerine', the author uses similes, metaphors, and personification to enhance the narrative, create vivid imagery, and express the emotional landscape of the characters.

Can you give an example of a metaphor used in 'Tangerine'?

One metaphor in 'Tangerine' is when the protagonist, Paul, describes his vision issues as a 'darkness' that envelops him, symbolizing not just his physical blindness but also his emotional struggles and feelings of isolation.

How does the author use similes to develop characters in 'Tangerine'?

The author employs similes to draw comparisons that reveal character traits. For instance, comparing Paul's determination to a 'bulldog' illustrates his tenacity and refusal to give up despite challenges.

What role does personification play in the setting of 'Tangerine'?

Personification in 'Tangerine' brings the setting to life, especially the natural elements. For example, describing the tangerine trees as 'whispering secrets' enhances the connection between the characters and their environment, making it feel alive and integral to the story.

How is irony used in the context of figurative language in 'Tangerine'?

Irony in 'Tangerine' often emerges through the use of figurative language to highlight contrasts between characters' perceptions and reality. For instance, characters may boast about their strength while their actions reveal vulnerability, creating a poignant commentary on self-image.

What is the significance of imagery in the use of figurative language in 'Tangerine'?

Imagery in 'Tangerine' enriches the reader's experience by painting vivid pictures of the landscapes and emotions. Descriptions of the bright tangerine fields evoke a sense of hope and vitality, contrasting with the darker themes of conflict and personal struggle.

How does the use of hyperbole enhance themes in 'Tangerine'?

Hyperbole in 'Tangerine' accentuates the intensity of characters' experiences, such as exaggerating the challenges faced by Paul in soccer. This exaggeration underscores themes of perseverance and resilience, making the struggles feel monumental.

In what ways does symbolism intersect with figurative language in 'Tangerine'?

Symbolism in 'Tangerine' often overlaps with figurative language, such as using the tangerine trees as symbols of growth and resilience. This duality enriches the narrative, showing how figurative expressions can convey deeper meanings tied to the characters' journeys.

How does figurative language contribute to the overall tone of 'Tangerine'?

Figurative language in 'Tangerine' contributes to a tone that shifts between hopeful and somber. The use of vivid imagery and expressive metaphors helps convey the complexities of adolescence, family dynamics, and personal growth, shaping the reader's emotional response.

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