Freedom in Poem Exile by Julia Alvarez: Poetry Analysis Essay

The theme of a written work is known as the moral or lesson meant to be learned from that certain work. That varies from every written work to the next one, so themes often rely on the literary techniques that the author's use. Authors can use any literary techniques such as similes and onomatopoeia to convey their themes. In the poem "Exile", by Julia Alvarez, the theme of high risk, high reward is shown through connotation and denotations, comparative figurative language, and the author's use of imagery which all illuminate the theme during the family's fleeing of the Dominican Republic resulted due to strict dictatorship.

The author's use of connotations and denotations throughout the poem help illuminate the theme because these connotations help interpret the theme of high risk, high reward. The risk throughout the poem is escaping and fleeing a dictatorship country, but the reward for accomplishing that would be freedom and a new life. One word that Alvarez uses to render denotation is, "wonders" (l.46). The denotation of wonders is, "a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable" ("Wonders"). This definition states "wonders" are unknown, and items that the family has never seen. In the poem, the "wonders" are "elevators… genetic code…" (ll. 47-48). The family's life in the Dominican Republic allowed for only very few freedoms, so the items in the quote they have not gotten to witness. That aids in showing that fleeing the country would concede the family's ability to attend new sites, so they would have a high reward if successfully fleeing. One use of connotation to convey the theme was for, "genetic code" (l.48). The genetic code is implying that "blond hair, blue eyes" is the 'normal' for the U.S., which makes for difficulties in their new country because they are different and stand out more than others. This relates to the theme because as a result of being different, many problems can occur which means the trip has high

The theme of a written work is known as the moral or lesson meant to be learned from that certain work. That varies from every written work to the next one, so themes often rely on the literary techniques that the author's use. Authors can use any literary techniques such as similes and onomatopoeia to convey their themes. In the poem "Exile", by Julia Alvarez, the theme of high risk, high reward is shown through connotation and denotations, comparative figurative language, and the author's use of imagery which all illuminate the theme during the family's fleeing of the Dominican Republic resulted due to strict dictatorship.

The author's use of connotations and denotations throughout the poem help illuminate the theme because these connotations help interpret the theme of high risk, high reward. The risk throughout the poem is escaping and fleeing a dictatorship country, but the reward for accomplishing that would be freedom and a new life. One word that Alvarez uses to render denotation is, "wonders" (l.46). The denotation of wonders is, "a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable" ("Wonders"). This definition states "wonders" are unknown, and items that the family has never seen. In the poem, the "wonders" are "elevators… genetic code…" (ll. 47-48). The family's life in the Dominican Republic allowed for only very few freedoms, so the items in the quote they have not gotten to witness. That aids in showing that fleeing the country would concede the family's ability to attend new sites, so they would have a high reward if successfully fleeing. One use of

connotation to convey the theme was for, “genetic code” (l.48). The genetic code is implying that “blond hair, blue eyes” is the ‘normal’ for the U.S., which makes for difficulties in their new country because they are different and stand out more than others. This relates to the theme because as a result of being different, many problems can occur which means the trip has high risks. In the “Exile”, metaphors and allusions are also used to help portray the theme of the poem just like connotations, and denotations.

Alvarez uses a lot of figurative languages to draw in the reader and to help analyze the poem. One example she used was a metaphor, “some loss much larger than I understood,/ more danger than the deep end of the pool” (ll. 35-36). That’s a metaphor because it is comparing the risks of the escape to the deep end of a pool; therefore, that metaphor relates to the theme of high risks, high reward since the trip caused a possibility of losing more than just a life. Alvarez also used an allusion to convey the theme, “my arms out like Jesus’ on his cross” (l.22). This shows the theme because this alludes to when Jesus died on the cross to wash away the sins of every Christian person, so it is showing inclined risks for a very large reward. The use of figurative language in the “Exile” helps the reader get a valid idea of the theme, just like the imagery.

Imagery is used throughout poetry to help the readers visualize the many themes that are involved in the poems. Alvarez used imagery in many ways to describe the rewards and freedoms that fleeing families could face and/or gain. One use of imagery is, “in the black Ford, Papi grim at the wheel, winding through back roads, stroke by difficult stroke,/ out on the highway, heading toward the coast” (ll.26-28). This use of imagery is used to show that with departing the Dominican Republic, they would get the freedom of driving freely and enjoying the ocean. That relates to the theme because the risk of being killed leaving the country is worth the most immense reward of all, freedom. Alvarez used imagery again in the poem when she writes, “the beach pails, the shovels, the sandcastles” (l.60) to portray the mood of this poem. This imagery makes you think of the beach and playing which is a reward they are granted for escaping their prior country. This relates to the theme because to be able to get the reward of seeing “the beach pails, the shovels, the sandcastles” (l.60), they face the risk of being executed during the attempted fleeing. This use of imagery reflects the mood of the poem, which changes the mood from worried, to ecstatic. All the uses of imagery come together to convey the major theme of “Exile” which is high risk, high reward.

Julia Alvarez uses literary techniques very well in her poem “Exile”. Her ability to do so allows readers to better understand and analyze the poems she writes. This helps find themes, which for “Exile” is high risk, high reward. In the poem “Exile” by Julia Alvarez, the theme of high risk, high reward is shown through many literary techniques including imagery, connotations and denotations, and figurative language. Literary techniques are an important aspect of writing and can have multiple uses throughout poetry, novels, and any other forms of written works within literature.