

English 12: Stand-Alone Text

Scale: 5

Comment:

As it addressed the task utilizing a range of examples to support a solid discussion. A thorough analysis.

In Fairchild's "The Dumka", the author uses several different techniques and contrasting images in order to display the successes and tragedies of life.

The poem starts off fairly neatly, with an aged couple sitting together and listening to the music of a phonograph, as the light illuminates dust particles floating around them. But this peaceful image is suddenly contrasted, as the dust reminds them of the brutal dust storms they faced at their farm in the 1930's. They recall the pain and the suffering these storms caused, as they began by "smearing the sky green with doom" and "leaving profiles of children on pillows." Though they may now consider these events calmly, you are given a sense of the changes it caused them. As well, after being reminded of the dust storms, the couple continues to reflect on their past, as they discuss "the farm in twilight with piano music spiraling out..." While the author gives you this seemingly happy image, he then seamlessly transitions into one of great unhappiness: "bread lines in the city, women and men lining the main street like mannequins, and then the war." This method of contrasting two strong images throughout the poem (one of calm and one of turmoil) has a very good effect on the reader. It is much easier to appreciate true suffering when it is reflected in the light of true happiness, and the author uses this technique to masterfully write his Dumka.