

In the novel *The All of It*, Jeannette Haien utilizes various literary devices, namely imagery, symbolism, and selection of details, to convey Father Declan's isolation and solitude, while illustrating his desire for companionship against the restrictions by his status, ultimately revealing humanity's natural longing for deep, personal relationships, and the will to make a change in life.

Haien starts by portraying the way home of Father Declan as one that is dark and filled with silence, through the use of imagery and diction, illustrating Father Declan's disconnection from others in life. The drive home is deliberately described as "a long night drive through thrashing rain and dense, culprit fog" that "exaggerates a sense of lonely solitude." Haien's choice to describe the fog as "dense" and "culprit" highlights how Father Declan is isolated by the world around him. A fog blinds a person from their surroundings, while also hiding them from the view of the world; whereas the word "dense" implies a thick barrier between one person and what is beyond their reach, which is the very scenario Father Declan is living: a life of solitude and isolation. Father Declan's solitude does not just appeal to the sense of vision; it can also be heard in "the only sound sidelong loping strokes of the windshield wipers," which is ironic because a "sound" in this situation only highlights the silence of loneliness. A silence represents the lack of noise, and in the case of Father Declan, it represents the lack of life around him, and inside of him. The stillness of Father Declan's life is further illustrated as he arrives home, where his splendid excitement vanishes as he is met with "the bulk emptiness of the bleak parish-house." A house has always been the symbol of a place where one person would feel welcomed and loved, but for Father Declan, it is nothing more than "emptiness;" the emptiness that makes a person's mood vanish. The house is obviously portrayed as a house, but it appears nothing like a *home*: "its windows [are] dark, its high, cold rooms [are] devoid of life." The deliberately selected details stack over the "bleak parish-house" to emphasize the solitude and unwelcomeness that Father Declan has to encounter in his life, against his anticipation. If the dark way home renders Father Declan's isolation that can be perceived from the outside, the nothingness of the house exemplifies *the blanknesses of solitude* Father Declan feels from deep inside his heart. Haien has set up the context of Father Declan's loneliness and provided a platform to later explain Father Declan's desire for companionship.

Father Declan's isolation and solitude then give place to his desire for companionship, portraying him as a human with natural longing for connections. Father Declan's yearning for relationships is seen in how he dreams of having a dog, a "warm, affectionate, entertaining little dog" that would "sleep next to his bed and wag him awake of a morning." The specific diction clearly illustrates that the fantasy of having companionship has always been in the mind of Father Declan, (ironically) a person with a deep feeling of loneliness. In a greater sense, the dog in this scenario is not just simply a dog; it can be interpreted as an actual companion, the one who would be side by side with Father Declan, who would care for him and make him feel the emotions of love, because descriptives such as "warm" and "affectionate" connote the significance of *the other half* of Father Declan's life. And there should not be anything wrong with a person desiring for companionship, except Father Declan's role in society makes his life a more complex one. For Father Declan, his desire for a dog is simply "[i]nnocent, the mere wishing of a mere wish." Oh what a melancholy life Father Declan is living, in which the

“innocent” longing for love and belonging is just “a mere wish” that is impossible to turn into reality. His isolation and solitude are real, his desire for companionship is real, but the restrictions that society placed on him, or it appears that he placed them on himself, are also real. After all, if Father Patrick Joyce could own himself a cat, why then Father Declan could not have himself a dog? It all comes down to the decisions he makes in his life, and how they represent his way of life. If Father Declan gets to feel the sensational emotions of having companionship, then he is not “innocent;” but if he refrains from everything that is against his virtuous way of life, if he persists to be “innocent,” then the mere wish will always be the mere wish. *To be or not to be*, and Father Declan, who is surrounded by solitude, whose mind is filled with deep yearning for belonging, has ultimately let fate determine the will, taking away his courage to make a change in his life. Haien writes just one single line, but the complexity seen in the word choice unveils a deeper layer of Father Declan’s character beyond the solitude and yearning for relationships. It leaves an unsatisfying ending that Father Declan’s desire for companionship might never become true, and his solitude might just keep going on, like the dark, silent, foggy road that captures his isolation.

All in all, Jeannette Haien has sent a clear message about humanity’s natural longing for companionship, and the courage to make a change in life, through the complex portrayal of Father Declan using multiple effective literary devices in the novel *The All of It*.