

God of small things and identity essay



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Cultural shifts, women, and history in The god of small things Arundhati Roy's God of Small things delves into experience of post-colonial India, exploring the lives of experiencing the cultural shifts.

Using multi-narration to offer authentic insights into the worlds of characters, she plays with language intelligently to portray differing points of view Linguistic devices and techniques to delve into a number of themes but focusing on the loss of identity touching on familial relationships, history former colonisation and The God of Small Things, The passage follows on from a description discussing the unhappiness of former marriages within the Ayemenem house.

We are given an account of Ammu's abusive marriage followed by the jealousy and malicious behaviour Pappachi displays towards Mammachi, His harsh nature is also communicated through the immediacy of this opening paragraph, direct and rapid . There is also a deep irony to Pappachi's legacy as his former belongings are soon to become ' unmarried daughter's dowries', assets brought by into a marriage by the bride, as she is forced to prove her worth to the male. Interestingly, dowries were outlawed in 1961 due to their problematical and establishing the inferiority of women within the relationship.

This is fitting to Pappachi's derogatory and abusive behaviour and treatment of women, thus creating an image of a vicious cycle never ending as the idea of subjugating women is passed on to generations, bleeding into the wider community. Fittingly, his death enables more uneven marriages to occur, therefore mention of ' taxi drivers' provokes image of this disruption

travelling, having exponential effect, preserving this tradition, embedding into more lives.

Within the Roys Ammu's frank and impassive tone of voice when answering 'to link cuffs together' emphasises her emotional detachment from her children, Rahel and Estha; her response is extracted of feeling. This is further emphasised through resemblance to the dictionary definitions later found by the children associating her emotion to that of a dictionary direct and precise, but without of which Roys technique of Reader's digest great encyclopaedic dictionary to look up definition of anglophile is extremely fitting as , also whilst intriguing that roy acknowledges the post-colonial contempt towards those that colonised the country her conscious decision to write in English, 'rea She uses Chacko as a means to express her contempt at the as he hates to admit the Anglophilic nature sense of her Benefits from as the majority of the book is ' real affection for the english language' written in the English language emphasising ' real affection for the English language' fact that the book is written in the English language. ' hated to admit it' , oxford Rhodes scholar, marriage to English woman and insists on children reason for this could be.

This is highly contradictory as Chacko, who shows the greatest adversity towards the family's embracement of English culture stating he ' hated to admit it' is in fact the most involved, having prior been an oxford Rhodes scholar, marriage to English woman which roys view that it is embedded in their lives. The extract demonstrates the breaking down of Indian culture due to the damaging affects of anglophilia and the familiys willingness to

identity with the British. This is shown through the use of congruence to British culture and similarly through structural technique.

Rather than flowing, the extract consists of short choppy paragraphs; the structure is metaphorical of the content as irregular paragraphing is representational of the culture break down; a loss of identity is clear as losing sight of unique identity shown through weakened structure. Especially further down when Chack explicitly mentions, 'I lines are less complex, sense of losing sight of their unique identity as the structure weakens, it seems almost nonsensical which too is unclear due to their removal. Contrasted with 'The Black Sahib' Asian or British, family same. Within the extract Chacko uses The History House allegorically to represent the family unit's personal history.

He also creates a sense of history being tangible, the house becoming a physical manifestation. He describes it figuratively as being 'like an old house' which brings a sense of familial comfort and physicality to the abstract essence of 'history'; this allows the audience; being reader, Rahel and Estha, to picture it as an actual concrete place.

However, the fact that there are 'ancestors whispering inside' creates a sense of their historical and cultural significance diminishing as whispers are heard but they cannot be communicated with, also forming a ghostly presence and atmosphere. A supernatural feel imagery of the family history dying out gives body to the past thus making it more significant yet ancestors are deceased and therefore exist but are out of reach, like history out of reach.

This is further emphasised through Chacko's reason for being 'trapped outside their own history', which creates imagery of the family being prisoners OUTSIDE, which further disconnects the family from their origin, isolating them from their identifiable Indian history and therefore simultaneously highlights their Anglophilic nature. No history= no identity transgressing the caste system The use of the word 'trapped' creates being imprisoned and not belonging to their past.

In comparison, the idea of history being existant, but not in their reach, is similarly explored as the history house is used metaphorically as a symbol of identity and the past, but is in fact non-existent; it is a figment of imagination, creating an sense of intangibility which makes the family appear even further detached from their Indian roots' The History House is also expressed as being a 'Heart of Darkness' – this reference suggests that the metaphor of their past is mysterious and unexplored.

They are strangers to their ancestry and how they came to be today, it is unknown to them, which place the family in a parallel position to Marlow in that they too become outsiders within their own culture.