

Look at the different
dramatic techniques
which essay



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Cream cracker under the settee is another one of Alan Bennett's famous monologues known collectively as talking heads. These monologues feature everyday people living ordinary, monotonous lives.

His characters usually undergo some kind of crisis or life episode where they learn something. Cream cracker under the settee was first televised in 1988. Throughout the play Bennett uses a variety of techniques to evoke a lot of sympathy for Doris, who is the main character in Cream Cracker. In the monologue there is only one actor that is Doris. This means the audience have to have an active imagination; she is an artless narrator and tells the truth as she sees.

Because it is a single character, we see her just on her own; this shows the audience her isolation and evokes sympathy for Doris. Monologues are mainly one side of the story, so in cream cracker we don't get Zulema's view on things. If we did get her view it probably wouldn't evoke sympathy for Doris. So Bennett has been clever just to include Doris's points of view as this will evoke more sympathy.

We see Doris as a moaning bitter character; this is portrayed as she feels that Zulema is constantly bossing her around. "I was glad when she'd gone, dictating." The word dictating conveys the impression that Doris is inferior to Zulema. In a way, Zulema has power over Doris because she could report her and Doris could end up in a home, the thing that she fears most. Very early on in the monologue the audience feels pity for Doris, it is almost like she has lost her dignity as someone younger than her is giving the orders.

The audience see that Doris also seems to admire her as she is the only human being she has contact with.

The other people Doris has admired in her life were Wilfred her late husband. Doris loved her husband very much, but when she is in her monologue we see a completely different side, as she says nothing he does ever get finished “ it was the growing mushrooms in the cellar saga all over again. He never got round to it. ” This quotation shows us that Wilfred was forever putting things off, Doris always felt that a kid would have solved everything. “ A kiddy`d’ve solved all that.

The one other person was the baby. Doris feels upset about her stillborn baby and was disgraced when the midwife said “ it wasn’t fit to be called anything” It is suggested that Doris has suffered tragedy in her life and we come to understand one of the reasons that Doris is on her own is because she has no children to look after her. This means that the audience sympathise with Doris wishing that she had kids. The language that Bennett uses to portray Doris is he uses colloquial language and features of Lancashire dialect; this is used to remind the audience of our own grandmothers. Using this technique helps to create sympathy towards Doris, and also adds more humour to the monologue. Another technique that creates sympathy for Doris is her isolation as she feels physically trapped in her own home with the occasional appearance of dictating Zulema.

Doris feels that she isn’t allowed to do anything, and so feels incapable. She isn’t even allowed to use the carpet sweeper which all the audience know

she admires. ' Doris. I don't want to hear you have been touching the Ewbank.

The Ewbank is out of bounds. ' The phrase ' out of bounds' immediately remind the audience of the types of rules used in schools. The impression we get is that Zulema is setting rules for Doris to follow in her own home. Not only is this patronising but it shows us just how much control Zulema has over Doris, making her feel incapable. We know that Doris doesn't want to be incapable shown by her individuality, as she denies the help she is offered towards the end of the play, this also shows her courage.

She would rather die in her own home being individual rather than go to Stafford House or get help. " No I'm alright. " We know that Doris is clearly not alright and this reinforces the fact that she is denying the help she is offered. Doris's lack of freedom has been for a long time and she is a stranger in her own community. ' Don't know anybody round here know more' This quotation suggests that Doris used to live a pleasant life where everybody knew everyone. Know that society has moved on and she doesn't know any one she feels trapped.

The significance of the title " A cream cracker under the settee" has a very important role in the monologue. The cream cracker plays an important role as once she has found it is the first time she feels she has power over Zulema where in fact the social services would just laugh at Doris if she tried to gain revenge by reported it. Under the settee suggests out of sight, out of mind this shows the position of the elderly in society, and this is how Doris is seen. As if she is unnoticed and grown old like the cracker. The cracker

signifies `crackers` - not all there this relates to Doris's state of mind. A cracker also snaps easily this shows the fragility of Doris.

Another point is that crackers are quite boring and bland which represents Doris's current life.