

A different history

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



In the poem 'A Different History' Sujata Bhatt expresses her emotions in many different ways on the sensitive topic on how India became a British colony. Bhatt starts with talking of the peaceful life as a god living in India with the example of saying " Great Pan is not dead; he simply emigrated to India. Here, the gods roam freely, " In this phrase Bhatt indirectly states that India is more peaceful for a god of nature (Pan) than it is in Greece which could refer to how the British came to the country and did what they want without thinking of the consequences.

In her next phrase she says gods are " disguised as snakes or monkeys;" which could be found contradictory to her original phrase stating that they roam freely as they have to be disguised as animals to do so. This phrase could also be linked to how when the British took over India how they acted friendly but also would cause great discomfort for the Indian beliefs and religions by doing all the things that Bhatt says are " sins" " It is a sin to shove a book aside with your foot, a sin to slam books down hard on a table, a sin to toss one carelessly across a room."

This possibly means that when the British took over they acted as gods as they were stronger than Indians and did whatever they wanted leaving the Indian culture in complete disbelief of the disrespect to their beliefs. All the acts categorized as " sins" according to Bhatt all had to do with being disrespectful to nature as books come from trees which the reader can think to mean two things, one could be that perhaps the British would do all these acts insulting the religious beliefs or that the gods of nature are so powerful that any disrespect to them could mean punishment for the " sinner".

" You must learn how to turn the pages gently without disturbing Sarasvati," in this sentence Bhatt commands the reader to not offend Sarasvati with a very strong language as if saying this is the law and all who oppose will suffer. " Which language has not been the oppressor's tongue? Which language truly meant to murder someone? " Here Bhatt is questioning the reader for their opinion in the subject of which community had the intention to kill other community's.

In that phrase Bhatt was properly asking herself if the British had the intention to kill and be disrespectful or was it a coincidence. In the last part of the poem Bhatt uses very strong Imagery to describe how she feels towards being forced in to this new culture and strange new language she says " And how does it happen that after the torture, after the soul has been cropped with the long scythe swooping out of the conqueror's face – the unborn grandchildren grow to love that strange language."

Here she says that her people have been tortured and that their souls have been cropped meaning that her very being is no longer full it has been chopped down by a weapon associated with death. Then to give a strong image in the reader's head she says that the " scythe" has come out of the conqueror's face possibly meaning that she could associate a British man or woman face as the face of death. Then here final statement leaves the reader with a lot of questions to think about as she says " the unborn grandchildren grow to love that strange language."

She is saying that her own grand children will never know the suffering she and possibly her children may have had and instead that her grandchildren grow up loving the foreign language that brought much pain and suffering. In

conclusion I believe that Sujata Bhatt has very strong hidden feelings about the time Britain conquered India and she also thinks very far ahead into the future about how her grandchildren will go on through life not knowing what had happened and instead become a part of the conquerors culture and leave their original culture behind.