

Hullabaloo in the guava orchid essay



**ASSIGN
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Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard Kiran Desai, author of 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard' is an excellent writer with a flexible style of writing that can alternate between a invading, noisy tone mimicking the dirty cities full of loud inconsiderate people and a beautiful, dreamlike tone mimicking the heavens. Her novel is full of vivid imagery and precision which allows the reader to truly connect with her characters. Not only that, but this book is bursting with symbolism which leaves the reader with goosebumps and a sense of admiration for her talent.

Her many metaphors and Buddhist like passages inspire rebellion against the unsatisfying nature of modern societies and a longing for freedom and peace in big, open spaces under the stars. What seems at first like a The novel takes off with the birth of a child, Sampath, whose oneness with nature is evident since birth. The mother of this child, Kulfi, has always been considered an eccentric and been looked down upon by her peers only for her odd nature; however, she is too preoccupied with her own mysterious thoughts to notice and has always remained detached from society, content with allowing her life to unroll as it pleases while observing it with unaffected, distant eyes that seem to see something beyond her peers. The novel divides the characters into two sides. The joined forces of Sampath and his mother, two outcasts with eyes high above Earth and roots deep below respectively, and the general 'hullabaloo' of everyone else. The setting is in a typical abrasive, individualist, and unthoughtful city called Shahkot.

The residents of the city are motivated only by personal gain and value tradition and the 'proper way of life' over emotion, thought, or

consideration. This is not the fault of the people however; it is the way that society evolved. Indian tradition has always been one where a toe out of line would mean immediate shame for entire families. Also, the people of the city embrace holiness, but don't listen.

They only hear what they want to and never stop talking long enough to see Sampath's true teachings through his actions. At one point when the city is at its most chaotic with idiotic shouting and an unwillingness to open their eyes, the people begin repeating Sampath's words. But they don't know the right phrases, only phrases that sound clever but are positively meaningless such as: " look up quote about cheese". The people aren't learning anything at all, they are only fooling themselves.

I think this symbolizes society's unwillingness to change even if it is acknowledged that change is necessary. It doesn't seem like Desai was writing only of Indian society, but as a symbol of the general hullabaloo and oppression most of the modern world lives in. My interpretation of Sampath , with his strong connections to the sky (his birth came with an extreme monsoon) and the heavens, is that he represents more than just the underdog, but the inner freedom that comes with embracing the spiritual side of we all possess but has been suffocated by an oppressive way of life. He is the part which of every human that longs to escape the bonds of modern society and run until they get lost deep within the Earth and never look back (I think many people have ignored this part until it is completely forgotten).

I think Desai is saying that humans should be leading much more spiritually satisfying and meaningful lives but simply cannot seem to escape the trap they were born into. Sampath is not a holy man, he is not something the rest of society could not achieve, he is simply more in tune with the natural way humans should live: respecting and co-existing with nature instead of abusing it. Desai uses nature to symbolize freedom for it is the freest, wildest thing we know of. Kulfi is a very interesting and important character though it is not evident for most of the book.

Even her name is amusing for it matches her insatiable obsession with intricate foods. Kulfi is a very popular desert in the Middle East consisting of frozen yogurt on a stick; it is much like ice cream in Western culture. Kulfi, with roots digging deep into the origin of the Earth, symbolizes ancient knowledge. It only makes sense that the Buddha-like protagonist should be born from knowledge. While Sampath is the freedom of the oneness with the universe, Kulfi is the inner knowledge embedded in the veins of humanity and the branches of trees and the magic spirals of snails and galaxies that allows the oneness. There is the matter of Kulfi wanting to cook a monkey.

To me, why she longed to cook something so dear to her son and feed it to him is a confusing matter. At first, I reasoned I might be just to show the extent of her adventurous and open-minded nature; however, reflecting upon it I feel there must be a better explanation. Kulfi and Sampath clearly have a strong connection: the heavens and the Earth, wisdom and true peace. They have an understanding between them that does not need to be spoken out loud. They see each other as the only people they can relate to in the mad city they live in.

This is why I find it frustrating that she would choose to act this way. Near the beginning of the novel, Sampath is very irritated by the invading noises his family makes in their sleep, breaking the holy silence of sleep and he hints at the division that separates him from his mother despite their understanding. “ Even his mother, who he loved most of all, had forgotten him in her sleep. ” (Desai, Kiran 14).

Throughout the novel, Kulfi seems lost. She is detached from everything and the “ look in her eye makes her a stranger to even herself” (Desai, Kiran). Her passion for food comes from visions of exotic foods that drive her to explore the world of cooking but she is never able to create a dish that satisfies her passion. This shows that she is forever trying to chase something she realizes deep within herself that is beautiful and magical but she can never seem to achieve it. I think the monkey represents her spiritual potential because at the end, she never had a chance to follow through with her plan. I think she was confused because she had simply drifted all her life not knowing how to fill the void inside her and had never had conscious connections with her spirituality the way Sampath had.

I think Desai is trying to say enlightenment is impossible with only knowledge; one must consciously realize the oneness and synchronize with the world around to achieve higher consciousness. In this way I think Kulfi also represents all those who have great potential to achieve higher consciousness but have never had the opportunity to due to the oppression of their surroundings. Her inability to reach her full potential leaves her confused and near the end begins to cause her to betray her true self. Finally, the clearest form of symbolism is the guava. At the end of the novel

when Sampath undergoes his transformation, he mentions the guava's resemblance to Buddha.

I think the guava represents Buddha and enlightenment. The first time Sampath realizes his oneness with the Earth is when the guava explodes in his hand. Sampath felt " something entirely unlike blood coursing through his veins. " (Find uote) He felt the awesome, terrifying power of the lightning veins and arteries of the Earth synchronizing with his own and he understood the importance of this connection.

From then on he chased after a true oneness with the Earth, wishing he " could swallow the entire orchard whole so it would become a part of him forever" (find quote). When the time finally came, he realized it is the Earth he must become part of, not the other way around. The final state of Sampath as a guava represents the final, much sought-after state of nirvana, the state of ultimate peace through not being. In conclusion, Kiran Desai's novel ' Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard' may seem like a simple story, but the message goes much deeper into ancient philosophy and the path to enlightenment.

Desai is making a statement of the oppressive nature of modern society and how it can be so destructive it will render an entire population's lives meaningless and devoid of any freedom through spiritual satisfaction. I loved this book and I recommend it to all who seek a beautifully written story with a deep message.