

The god of small things by arundhati roy essay



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The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy is a novel about the twin protagonists Estha and Rahel and the relationship between the two that develops from their childhood into their adulthood.

In this essay, I will be closely analysing Roy's use of language, structure and how intertextual references convey the innocence of youth in pages 193-198. In this extract, Roy utilizes a multitude of linguistic devices in order to illustrate the idea of childhood. Roy immediately begins to use various techniques at the start of this chapter so that the readers understand Estha and Rahel; "Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol"- Ammu had originally introduced this title to make the twins understand the importance of Sophie Mol's arrival so that they'd act to behave well. This clearly conveys the notion of youth because often when children are told stories by adults, they take it to be the literal truth and act as though the thing that they've been told is a reality. Therefore, it was essential that Roy placed this section in the novel to make us aware of the twins' innocence in that they believe virtually anything. The fact that the title has been placed in italics represents Rahel and Estha's thoughts in the sense that they actually consider themselves to be in a real life play as play titles are also presented in this manner.

This conveys the siblings' innocence as they believe everything told to them by adults. This also foreshadows what will happen later on in the novel - after being manipulated by adults throughout their life, they eventually break free, and incest occurs between the pair. Roy also employs phonetic spelling as another device to portray the youth of Estha's mind. This is shown in the extract where instead of being spelt as Barn Owl, Roy chooses

to spell it out as “ Bar Nowl” and later on instead of spelling it as “ An Owl”, Roy phrases it as “ A Nowl”.

She has done this in order to effectively present that the twins are young-children often speak combining two words together and when they’re Estha and Rahel’s age, they often mispronounce words and mimic the way they hear words from their seniors. By using this method, we are constantly exposed to and reminded of the siblings’ youth. Roy has chosen to use this method for the novel so that we can empathise with the twins’ positions and see their perspective on the ongoing situations which they’ve had to deal with at such a young age. Furthermore, Roy employs several forms of short, simplistic sentences which are conspicuously used by children to emphasize Estha’s youth:” Past the glue.

Past the glue – brush.” In this quotation, instead of sentences being connected via connectives, they have been placed in two different lines and the starting words are also the same. Both these methods help to accentuate that Estha has a simple mind; however he’s sharp in the sense that he notices everything. This foretells what happens later on in the novel, when he goes through a period of silence which occurs due to the fact that he perhaps discovers and faces truths that nobody else has had to face. However, the reason for his quietness is essentially due to all of the tragedies that have occurred throughout his childhood and scarred him for the remainder of his lifetime (e. g.

Velutha’s death). When looking at other sections of the novel, it is noticeable that Roy also makes use of alliterations and metaphors in order to highlight

the feelings of Estha throughout the extract. For example by analysing “ A sadly swirl” we can see Roy is attempting to mirror Estha’s thoughts and feelings, which she does successfully. The soft “ s” sounds of the consonants helps to stress Estha’s misery and the theme of hopelessness that seems to be running throughout this extract. In this given section, Roy also uses references from Shakespeare’s Macbeth, although she has moulded it to suit what is currently occurring in the novel.

“...Witches of Macbeth. Fire burn, banana bubble” The play, Macbeth, is often introduced to children when they are young and the most common sentence that they refer to when asked about the play is ‘ Fire burn, cauldron bubble’. Roy has exercised this from Macbeth and combined it with what Estha was doing to portray who the Witches of Macbeth are in the context of this novel.

Intertextuality has been exploited to show the creativity of Estha’s mind and the fact that he’s used this specific quote shows that he is distraught. However, In Estha’s mind, both Baby Kochamma and the “ Orange-drink Lemon-drink” man could represent the three witches who are destroying his life and manipulating him and his situation, making him act in specific ways which also indicates what would happen later on in the play (Estha and Rahel are forced to lie, resulting in Velutha’s death). Intertextual reference to Macbeth, as mentioned before, is used because it is a play that most children are familiar with and so therefore can be associated with innocence as children mostly turn to stories and popular characters to express themselves. Moving on, throughout the extract, Roy uses short and simplistic sentences to portray different ideas and messages.” GirlboyGirlboy. Twins <https://assignbuster.com/the-god-of-small-things-by-arundhati-roy-essay/>

were not allowed” Here, Roy is referring to Noah’s Ark, where the animals are all placed in pairs of the same species.

However, in this context, Roy modifies this story and instead of being placed in the same species, she places the different human genders in pairs (“Girlboy”). This already breaks the norm of the story as the two genders are not the same. Roy also isolates the next line to emphasize and foreshadow the incest that may occur between Estha and Rahel. The fact that she lists “Girlboy” in this extract and then suddenly mentions that twins aren’t allowed makes us question why Roy has done this; which we find out later on.

The whole extract has been structured as a list depicting what is allowed in society and what it is stigmatic. Looking at the next paragraph, Roy also uses lists to show Estha’s thoughts. In this extract she mentions three of them, with the last being mentioned later. These points are:“(a) Anything can happen to Anyone..

..(b) It’s best to be prepared...

.(c) A boat” This gets the audience ready for what will occur later on in the novel – to expect what is unexpected and not to be shocked by whatever happens. The fact that Roy refers to a boat makes us realise that something controversial is going to occur in the novel regarding the boat that will shock us. It makes us question who is going to be involved: Estha and Rahel or perhaps Ammu and Velutha? This makes us explore all the possible outcomes of the hint which Roy has laid out for us. Roy’s employed several devices, such as metaphors and structural methods, to convey the message of innocence and youth as well as to prefigure the plot of the novel. For

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example, the quote “ Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol” was used to present innocence of childhood; however, it was also used to foreshadow the incest that was to occur.

Also the intertextual references used by Roy were very effective as Macbeth and Noah’s Ark are both stories/plays associated with children who are usually familiar with them. Also the context in which they were used was particularly effective as the novel and reference were both relevant to each other.