

And they took us
away from our family
essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ And they took us from our family, took us away, they took us away, snatched from our mother’s breasts, said this was for the best. ” Good Morning/Good Afternoon. Tribalism plays a fundamental role in our society, from children having fun in the playground to colleagues in a professional office. While tribalism does have its unifying aspects, in our society acts as a barrier and provides people with more reasons to stay divided . It can fuel hatred, hegemony and xenophobia. Tribalism is vicious. Tribalism is evil.

Tribalism is, sometimes, lethal. Poems by Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the film ‘ The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’ directed by Mark Herman and the song ‘Took the Children Away’ by Archie Roach all contain expressions of these potent aspects of tribalism. Tribalism has the power to divide people and create a barrier between them. This often involves ideological struggles with the conscience that give rise to negative insights and understandings. As sub-tribes have been formed, hatred and unfair biases have been becoming more prominent.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s poem ‘ All Once Race’ uses repetition to portray the idea of different tribes being formed and how she is against it. “ Black tribe, yellow tribe, red, white or brown...”. The rhetorical question, “ all one family, so why make wars? ” makes it undeniably clear that we shouldn’t be split into sub-tribes, and also reinforces the fact that tribalism has a negative force. Furthermore, the title of another of Noonuccal’s poems, ‘ Last of His Tribe’, implies the feeling of alienation and disconnection that was the inevitable result of the differences in two tribes introduced in the poem.

These differences between the tribes and causes xenophobia| Xenophobia has the power to wipe tribes which is explored in ' Last of His Tribe'.

Tribalism has a monstrous amount of negativity embedded in it which is constantly explored throughout her poems. The notion of sub-tribes is also evident in ' The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' through the use of costume. The Jews are dressed, as the title says, in ' striped pyjamas' whereas the Nazis are dressed in army uniforms. This highlights a strong barrier between the two tribes, making it impossible to ever unite. Another concrete example is how the Jews are locked up behind an electric fence which prevents them from escaping. There is literally a wall separating the two tribes; however, this always has a deeper connotation relating to tribalism.

It connotes unfair biases as one tribe has superiority over the other due to their ethnic religion or background. The Nazis exterminate the Jews due to their culture and religion as they believe that it is building them a brighter future, and are willing to forget their past actions for it. Similarly, Oodgeroo Noonuccal's poem ' Let us not be bitter' uses inclusive terms such as " my own dark people", personification in the " bitter past", and the simile, " The past is gone like our childhood days of old, the future come like dawn after the dark" , to imply that their clan are willing to overlook the past in order to build a brighter future. Tribalism provokes one thoughtful introspection about how one tribe can have a hegemonic influence over another. In Oodgeroo Nonaccual's ' Last of His Tribe', the title itself implies the superiority of one tribe over another, as there is only one member left out of their clan.

The poet also uses first person “ I look at you and am back in the long ago”, which denotes a feeling of estrangement and loneliness. She uses repetition in “ All gone, all gone”, which also evokes the feelings of hostility and isolation. | The concept of a tribe having a supremacy over another tribe is evident in the song “ Took the Children Away” by Archie Roach. The white Australians considered themselves to be superior to the Aboriginal people and disregarded their culture because they perceived no social or cultural worth in having the children brought up by their families.

The lyricist uses repetition of the phrase “ took the children away” for emphasis and to reinforce what was happening. It uses “ They” and “ we” to set up the tribes, and the “ we” are not specifically described. “ And they took us from our family, took us away, they took us away, snatched from our mother’s breasts, said this was for the best”. This clearly shows hegemonic practice as it describes the invasion of the Aboriginal tribe by the British. This is related to Noonuccal’s poem “ Last of his Tribe” as it tells us how tribalism can be a destructive force leading to hegemonic practice. Tribalism is an extremely destructive force which drives hatred, xenophobia and hegemony. All these potent aspects of tribalism are crystal clear in Oodgeroo Noonuccal’s poems, the film “ The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas” and the song “ Took the Children Away”. All these texts show how tribalism is destructing our society by forcing us to split into sub-tribes From primitive tribes to our modern technological society, tribalism has also been a destructive force. If the word ‘ Tribalism’ ever had to be replaced, it should be changed to ‘ destruction’, don’t you agree?