

analytic paragraph on "a devoted son" essay sample

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Analytic Paragraph on “ A Devoted Son” Essay Sample

Anita Desai uses elements of Psychoanalytic theory in her short story “ A Devoted son” to show the importance of respect in the lives of humans. Rakesh’s father loved his son during the earlier part of the story as Rakesh was not challenging his authority and instead contributed to making his father a respected man in society. When Rakesh grew up and became the new “ man of the house “ his father was no longer the alpha male in his home which meant that his respect in society lessened, and his love for his son diminished. This is seen in the way that the father held a party dedicated to his son’s achievements in school and proudly mentioned how the first action that Rakesh performed, after getting his report card was touching his father’s feet. The father loved his son at this point in the story because the latter had brought him respect and was alluding to the fact that his father had a big hand in all of his success.

The whole situation turned on its head once Rakesh became a doctor and started to emerge from the shadow of his father. He was apparently only concerned about his father’s health but his pater interpreted his actions as something far more devious. This caused the father to be displeased with his son and led him to discuss his sufferings with the neighbours. The father was devaluing his son’s efforts because Rakesh was no longer the young, obedient boy who would never go against his father’s wishes. He was now a famous, influential and rich doctor who was now the alpha-male of the household. The father was also dependent on his son financially, having

retired from his job at the kerosene dealer, which just added to his loss of respect in society.

His son's insistence on monitoring his diet was what really angered the father as evidenced by the following quote " A son who actually refused his father the food he craved? No, it was unheard of, it was incredible... while Veena slipped silently out of the room with a little smirk that only the old man saw, and hated"(para 13). This quote reveals the father's feelings when his son asked him to abstain from unhealthy food items. The father's self-esteem took a hit as he never imagined that his own son would ever speak to him like this especially since he had always been an obedient and loving boy. The importance of respect can also be seen from the perspective of Rakesh. A motive behind the treatment of his father was that Rakesh, being a doctor, did not want his family to be partaking in unhealthy foods as that would bring him shame since he would seem like a hypocrite in the eyes of society.

How could he ask his patients to abstain from unhealthy sweets when his own family was doing so? This concern for his own reputation and respect led him to scold his father when the latter bribed Rakesh's son into getting him some from a shop. Another motive behind Rakesh's treatment of his father relates to the Oedipus complex. Rakesh may not have wanted his father to pass away since he didn't want his pater to be with Rakesh's mother in the afterlife. Rakesh was not only very attached to his father but also his mother as well and might have sub-consciously wanted his father to stay away from his mother. This might also be why Rakesh decided to marry a woman from

his own village, he would have wanted to marry a woman similar to his mother. So in conclusion, Anita Desai's short story uses elements of Psychoanalytic theory in order to prove that respect is very important in the lives of humans.