

# 1 | Timed close reading essay prep

## 1.1 | General Information

Due Date	Topic	Important Documents
In two days	God of Small Things	God of Small Things

**Copy and paste the passage to the top of the essay!!**

## 1.2 | Prompt

Select one of the following citations from Roy's *The God of Small Things* for your in-class close reading writing. Be sure to examine the specific denotation and connotations of Roy's language.

Chacko said:

- You don't \_go\_ to Oxford. You \_read\_ at Oxford.

And

- After \_reading\_ at Oxford, you \_come down.\_

"Down to earth, d'you mean?" Ammu would ask. "\_That\_ you definitely do. Like your famous airplanes."

Ammu said that the sad but entirely predictable fate of Chacko's airplanes was an impartial measure of his abilities. (55)

Reading, the double entendre. "Study (an academic subject) at a university." (OED, AA) However, in this passage, there's also "understand or interpret the nature or significance of." (OED, AB).

Come down — a sense of superiority — a sense of criticism w.r.t. Chacko has a sense of superiority. Chacko's aeromodeling kit kept crashing, shows dichotomy between reality and fiction.

Chacko's airplanes, kits — arranged — that he always messes up. Similar to his running of the factory. Prearranged systems that he messes up.

Effect of sarcasm: famous. *Is famous sarcasm??*

The sense of British superiority used against him. Infatuation with titles.

### 1. Infatuation with titles and male chauvinism

You don't go to Oxford, you "understand" at Oxford. And after you understand at Oxford, you rid yourself of your corrupt ways. One does not simply head to Oxford, one attempts to see and understand (Luke 19:5), and Come Down to rid of sins.

Inherent sense of superiority, for Chacko, Oxford is the tree that allows him to see Jesus. Marxist.

Ammu instead offers an alternate interpretation, instead of meeting a Jesus like figure, one actually meets a harsher figure: the ground. One actually comes down to earth, and, instead of seeing Jesus and achieving salvation, Chacko bites the dirt.... by destroying prebuilt systems.

Unexpected use of famous — well known, but not because they were good but instead because of they were expressly terrible — offers sharp dichotomy like that offered by Ammu before.

Highlights the contrasting nature of the sibling dynamic.

Sad — a powerless word — highlights Ammu's lack of control over Chacko's falling plane. Because male superiority. Because she does not have control, she could only observe and pity.

### 1.3 | Claim

So three things

1. Chacko derives a sense of superiority at Oxford — believing that it grants him access to a heightened understanding and be "saved"
  - He does not simply read at Harvard, he "reads" — attempting to "understand/interpret the nature" of things at Oxford.
  - Then, after he "understands", he "comes down". This is reminiscent as KJV Luke 19:4-5, when the greedy tax collector Zacchaeus of Jericho climbed up a tree to see Jesus — "to understand ... the nature", and then got asked to "come down" b/c Jesus wants to go to his house.
  - Chacko expected that Oxford the tree allowed him to "come down" and be "saved" perhaps from his current station (future land lord, not unlike Zacchaeus). However, his sister offers a different interpretation:
2. Instead, his sister contradicts him, stating that he instead comes "down to earth" and, instead of being saved by his Oxford education, simply bites the dirt
  - His family's pickle factory became unprofitable after Chacko took over — just like his fallen airplanes, which are boxed sets already setup for him only for him to incorrectly assemble and crash due to the discord that exists between his supposed newfound heightened understanding and his actual management ability.
  - Ammu remarks that the airplanes are "famous" — really infamous. Although not a strict verbal irony, Ammu uses the term because it is opposite the typical connotation. Chacko's airplanes are famous not for a positive quality but instead for its ease of failure. Elongating the previous metaphor, this foreshadows a potential, infamous failure for Paradise pickles
3. Remarking upon all of this, Ammu is "sad"
  - Sadness is quite a passive emotion — she is unhappy, and regretful, but due to the "male chauvinist nature" of society he is unable to act
  - Ammu slightly laments her station in life this way, hinting that she could actually see the problem clearer than Chacko as his failure is "predictable"

\*In the passage selected in the GOST, Roy leverages biblical allusions, creative word choices, and extended metaphors to highlight Ammu's conflict with the 'male chauvinist' superiority exhibited by Chacko and leverages this conflict to foreshadow the eventual downfall of their family business.\*

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