

Your task in this writing assignment is to analyze this story in terms of its satire. Choose three episodes or issues in the story that are presented in a satirical manner, and explain how the language used by the author is meant to be a scathing critique. Make sure your examples cover a range of different concerns, and come from across the story (not just the first few pages). Make sure to focus on the language of the story, such as irony, sarcasm, understatement, humor, pathos, and so forth.

1. Page 156 (policeman wants to buy saddle)
2. Page 157 (Chinese themed house, everyone loves the Party)
3. Page 158 (toilets, no pipe connected to toilet, gratuitous description, manually cleaning, no stove either)
4. Page 158 (first time forgotten to feed the dog, disappears)
5. Page 159 ("getting food on the table without having to do work for it")
6. Page 160 (Jamyang lost his nerve because he couldn't read, and spoke less and less)
7. Page 161 (removing the toilet is a big no)
8. Page 162 (Yangdzom idles, and watches TV even though she doesn't understand)
9. Page 163 (kind and gentle shicha)
10. Page 163 (rained, house leaks, becomes unlivable and falls apart, stuck together with clay instead of cement, "this posed a threat to the Party leaders on the wall")
11. Page 165 ("no matter how heavily it rained, not a drop of water leaked in, but in the spring, the very same thing happened again."
 - a. Party takes this seriously but does the same thing again. "Spreading mud on shit"
12. Page 166 (coal is fake and nonflammable, food is bad, milk is fake)
13. Page 168 (school crushed and children died, teacher beaten up, Lhari Kyi doesn't go to school)
14. Page 170 (motorbike stolen)
15. 170 - 171 (Jamyang dies, he couldn't eat enough)
16. Page 172 (We buy your used gods, best offer guaranteed)
17. Page 172 (Sangye doesn't recognize 10,000)
18. Page 172 (Alak Drong is "busy" and "barks orders", not heartfelt, everything is scheduled, he doesn't ask anything other than why they haven't removed prayer wheel from his hands)

Things to talk about

1. Talks about the party like it's holy, and the toilet, stove and house don't work (uses devotional language to satirize the level of obedience the party expects)
- 2.

Nithin Raghavan

Jann Ronis

Tibetan 115

20 February 2018

Tsering Dondrup's Black Fox Valley is a great example of satire being used to paint a vivid image of all the problems that nowadays plague nomads. The language in each chapter subtly changes tone, going from bitter to sarcastic to prosaic, giving excellent indication as to the current state of affairs of many Tibetans.

Perhaps the most glaring use of satire is the repeated use of devotional language as sarcasm in order to mock the CCP's expectations that every Chinese citizen recognize it as a superior power to God or to the Buddha. Through his use of such phrases as "you must never forget the benevolence of the Communist Party...whether you're in tent or in temple" (Tsering 159), Dondrup forces us to realize that the initial reactions of Tibetans to the Party was wholly inaccurate, and they had yet to realize the potential for destruction that it had to offer (this is reminiscent of Nulo's experiences, where their initial benevolences served to mislead his tribe). While not concentrated in a single chapter (although mostly located in Chapter 5), Tsering's use of overly devotional text additionally serves as a constant reminder of the intrusion of the Party into everyday life, and also reflects the fact that with the penetration of CCP ideology into everyday Tibetan life, many young Tibetans are becoming increasingly atheist, and anti-tradition, a problem which leads to the degradation of Tibetan culture.

Yet another use of satire falls within his use of irony to praise Communist Party officials and their work. While most of the work undertaken by *gongchan gongren* serve to lead to disaster, whether it be the flooding of Sangye's house, the destruction of Black Fox Valley or the

gruesome death of Lhari Kyi, it is done this way because the only purpose of these ‘improvements’ is to propagate the illusion that the CCP are benevolent; even now, the Party only cares about its image, not about functionality. Tsering’s constant praise of the CCP officials, which included alluding to the “kind and gentle *shicha*” (Tsering 163), as well as the committee of *shicha* that deemed the faulty house repair “very good” (Tsering 165), ironically juxtapose the pitiful condition of the residents of the village with the utopian ideation of the Party. Dondrup eloquently describes the feelings of the Tibetans with bitter, coarse dialogue, referring to the house repairs as “spreading mud on shit” (Tsering 165), and harshly critiquing the dichotomy between the reality of the situation and the expectations of the CCP.

Another method Tsering uses to critique the problems Tibetans are facing in Chinese society is the use of satirical invectives to jeer at the departure of modern-day monks from their traditional role as preservers of Tibetan culture and experts of tradition and religion. For example, as opposed to when Nulo’s mother died, and the alaks gave her a traditional burial replete with hymns, Alak Drong is in such a hurry that he can barely spare time for the dead (“I’m going to Xining tomorrow!”), refuses to acknowledge traditional auspices (“why on earth...hadn’t [they] removed these things in his hands”), and personally owns a mansion, rather than living in a monastery (“Not even Alak Drong’s mansion is better than this”), which all serve to critique the departure of traditional alakism from what it historically meant, i.e. in Nulo’s time (Tsering 173, 174, 157). While more direct than his usual literary devices, Tsering nevertheless illustrates, through invectives and inversion, yet another issue (the commoditization of traditional asceticism) which, in addition to the previously addressed problems of deterioration of Tibetan culture and the invasion of the Party into personal life, serve to plague Tibetans to this very day.