**The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy**

**Literary and linguistic techniques examples**

**NARRATIVE**

**Third person narrator**, yet the reader ‘sees’ things through the characters’ eyes – especially Rahel’s.

**Non-chronological sequence of events** – narrative shifts between past and present and between characters, although Rahel’s perspectives as a child (past) and adult (present) predominate.

Some events are hinted at but not explained, so that the reader’s attention focuses on what is said and what is not said – information that is given and withheld.


**DESCRIPTIVE WRITING**

**Alliteration**  
e.g. ‘Slanting silver ropes slammed into the loose earth’ p. 1

**Metaphor**  
e.g. ‘her [Baby Kochamma’s] roll of sadness’ p. 6 – emphasises her sadness at not becoming a mother

**Personification**  
e.g. ‘The old house on the hill wore its gabled roof pulled over its ears like a low hat’ p. 1

**Pre-modification**  
Use of more than one modifier to describe something, e.g. ‘crushed red carcasses’

**Rhyme**  
e.g. internal rhyme ‘The red had bled away’ p. 13

**Simile**  
e.g. ‘the yellow church swelled like a throat’ p. 4

**RECURRING AND STRIKING IMAGES, SYMBOLS AND METAPHORS**

- **Fish**
- **The river**
- **Water**
- **Secrets**
- **Rahel’s plastic toy wristwatch**

Consider the effects of these and what you think they represent. For example, Rahel’s plastic toy wristwatch is mentioned several times. This, since it’s a plastic toy and therefore displays the same time, might indicate that her and Estha ‘stopped living’ at the time of Sophie Mol’s death. Their lives certainly become fractured after the traumatic events of Sophie Mol and Velutha’s deaths, which led to the twins being separated.
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**Literary and linguistic techniques examples**

**Synesthetic imagery**
Synesthesia is a psychological term used to describe the effect of experiencing two or more kinds of sensation when only one is being stimulated. For example, feelings of relief after a traumatic event can lead one to experience happiness together with simultaneous feelings of sadness.

e.g. ‘it made him [Estha] smile out loud’ p. 12 – ‘smile’ = visual, ‘out loud’ = auditory – the synesthetic effect of the line quoted emphasises dramatically that because Estha does not speak he smiles broadly instead of laughing out loud. Also, there is an indication that he is experiencing sadness because his beloved dog is dying and happiness at the sight of the reflection (you’ll need to read the lines preceding the quotation in order to appreciate this).

**Vivid, sensuous imagery** e.g. ‘May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun.’ (opening paragraph p. 1)

**LANGUAGE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand names and slogans</th>
<th>e.g. ‘Things go better with Coca-Cola’. p. 62</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capitalisation of nouns</td>
<td>e.g. ‘A Twin Revolution with a Puff’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s language</td>
<td>e.g. Estha and Rahel read backwards – pp. 58-60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insertion of spaces and use of capital letters</td>
<td>‘A Wake / A Live / A Lert’ (p. 238) for when Sophie Mol wakes up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coined compound words</td>
<td>e.g. ‘map-breathed ancestors’</td>
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<td>Indian words interspersed with English</td>
<td>e.g. ‘Sophie Mol’ (‘Mol’ means ‘girl’)</td>
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<td>‘Thanks, keto!’ he said. ‘Valarey thanks!’ ‘ p. 70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play on words (linguistic play):</td>
<td>Repeated word elements e.g. ‘A viable die-able age’ pp. 3 and 92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repetition and end rhymes</td>
<td>e.g. ‘Little Man. He lived in a caravan. Dum dum’</td>
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<td>Running words together to coin new words</td>
<td>e.g. ‘The singing stopped for a ‘Whatisit? Whatapppened?’ and for a flurrywhirring and a sarriflapping.’ p. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sentences and paragraphs</td>
<td>One line paragraphs of minor or simple sentences for emphasis / impact e.g. ‘Satin lined. / Brass handle shined.’ p. 4</td>
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<td>‘Or was he?’ p. 21</td>
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