

Monday 20th March

Read the poem Living Space. Write about the ways in which Dharker presents a sense of place in this poem

Living Space by Dharker has a title that on first impression suggests there is some room and a sense of freedom through the connotations of 'space'. However, as you delve into the poem, this sense of space is immediately lost and you realise that it is taking about a place to exist in, not a house or a home.

focus on title analysis

focus on a question

tracking connectives

subject terminology

Initially, in the poem enjambment is used to emphasise the dangerous structures and place that people have become used to living in in Mumbai. The quote "That is the problem" in Stanza 1 reinforces the nature of the crooked buildings. This links to the quote "not enough

embedded quote

links to other parts of poem

personal + readers response

straight lines" which gives the imagery of a strange juxtaposition of shapes within the area. Our experience of housing in England is extremely different and the idea that structures are not straight seems odd. Buildings tend to be parallel but in the slums in India, this is not true as the quote "Nothing is flat or parallel" highlights. Dharker also uses the verbs "thrusts" and "clutches" to personify the way the buildings cling onto each other to avoid collapsing.

context

subject

tone

readers response

However, this is juxtaposed with the end of the stanza where there seems to be hope with the quote "lean dangerously towards the miraculous." The adjective "miraculous" has a religious tone to it as it shows that despite the danger, there is still hope. The poem creates sympathy in the reader as it makes us wonder how they can survive in such harsh conditions. Dharker's intention may have been to draw attention to how this is a normal way of life for some people and how poverty and injustice is rife across the world.

poets intention

Relatedly, Dharker presents the houses as tight, when she describes that it is like "someone... squeezed" the houses together. This is represented by the little stanza stuck between the two bigger stanzas. The verb "squeezed" could represent how there was no choice over where the "rough

frame" of a house was put. This could show how the "living spaces" were either just a building and not a home or the building is alive and willing to change but it can't. This creates a melancholic tone for readers and could make them more aware of the struggles these people faced.

Analogously, Dharker presents a sense of place as hopeful. She does this through the quote, "eggs in a wire basket", this the noun "eggs" could symbolise new life, this is showing that things may become better. ~~egg~~ However, eggs are a very fragile objects this could represent the fragility of the houses in the slums. In this stanza, the start and end link to hope as the "eggs" and "bright, thin walls" hold "faith which could represent hope, but in the middle of the stanza the hopeful tone changes. It becomes a more sinister tone as it describes the "edge" as "dark" and describes the "universe" as "slanted". This could represent the slanted houses or moonlight the irregularity in the world which is reflected Dharker's produced documents that raise awareness to the problems in other countries.

Furthermore, place is presented as irregular throughout the poem. This is represented through the varying stanza lengths and now the middle stanza is "squeezed"

between the other two stanzas.
There is also no rhyme scheme throughout
the entire poem. This could represent that
there is no normality in the slums,
and the way the houses are
arranged. Dharker may have done this
to raise awareness about the way
these people are forced to live.

Additionally, Dharker presents place as
unfair. This is shown through the
way the poem ~~exists~~ could be criticising
the people in power and those that
could help those living in slums but
don't. Readers could feel angry at
those in control as Mumbai is the
twelfth richest country in the world
yet it still has so many slums.

In ~~conclusion~~ conclusion, the sense of place
is highlighted in both positive and
negative ways throughout the poem. I
think this poem is written mainly to
raise awareness but also express the
differences in people's ~~lifestyles~~ lifestyles.