

A COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW ON NOVELS BY ARUNDHATI ROY NOVELS

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ABSTRACT

Arundhati Roy won the 1997 Booker Prize for *The God of Small Things*. A semi-autobiographical novel. Arundhati Roy writes and speaks on environmental, nonviolent, and human rights issues. Her nonfiction books include *The Cost of Living*, *The Shape of the Beast: Conversations with Arundhati Roy*, *The Greater Common Good*, *A Ghost Story*, and others.

The God of Small Things follows a Kerala Christian family. Chapters blend past and current. The past and present are linked, influencing surprising and terrible events. *The God of Small Things* examines boundary-breaking violence. They all endure displacement and even violence. Ammu, Velutha, Chacko, Margaret, Sophie Mol, Rahel, and Estha.

The God of Small Things was Arundhati Roy's debut novel. The novel explores fraternal twins' childhoods utilizing Bildungsroman themes. It explores discrimination, economic disparities, cultural clashes, Indian politics and history, unrequited love, and treachery. The novel has a complex narrative structure. Roy's tale conveys Indian consciousness using traditional and cutting-edge methods. Authors utilize narrative style to tell stories. It works on particular language, punctuation, or exaggeration. Roy uses defamiliarization, similes and metaphors, repetition, epigrams and paradoxes, irony, oxymorons, metonymy, synecdoche, puns, saying instead of showing, and flashback storytelling to convey the story. She uses rhythm, alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance, dissonance, etc. Arundhati Roy writes on politics, literary tourism, post-colonial problems, feminist viewpoints, and Indianness.

Key words: Narrative pattern, God of small things, class relations, oxymoron, metonymy, Indian consciousness

INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy, a renowned novelist and recipient of the Man Booker Prize, published her first book, *The God of Small Things*. By using Bildungsroman principles as its primary narrative framework, the book examines the early experiences of fraternal twins. It examines issues including societal prejudice, economic differences and cultural conflicts, Indian politics and history, unrequited love, betrayal, etc. From the perspective of narrative pattern and its approaches, the book is rich. Roy uses both conventional and cutting-edge approaches to construct a narrative that captures Indian awareness. When the book was released in 1997, the literary devices she employs are still current and drew people in. This essay focuses on Roy's use of the storytelling style in her book *The God of Small Things*.

The methodology and tool used by authors to tell tales is known as the narrative technique. It operates on certain phrasing, punctuation, or exaggerated description. Although every storyteller employs a few basic tactics, a writer's unique style of telling the narrative may still be seen. Setting, story, viewpoint, style, topic, and character are the core elements of every narrative, despite the fact that there are numerous technical components of narrative technique. When a writer is as stylistically adept as Roy, she communicates a lot via her writing. Due to the fact that her writing style may hide a variety of meanings, her style of

writing lends itself very well to literary interpretation. A literary style cannot be definitively interpreted in any way. However, an effort must be made to go deeper than the writing's surface level. Her stylistic statements also make it clear that it is a female writer who is in discussion. Another area for inquiry that her style offers is the feminine sensibility, whether it is visible or not. Roy employs literary strategies such as defamiliarization, similes and metaphors, repetition of words and phrases, epigrams and paradoxes, irony, oxymorons, metonymy, synecdoche, puns, saying instead of showing in her writing, and the flashback narrative technique to tell the book. Additionally, she employs a number of sound-focused strategies, including rhythm, alliteration, internal rhyme, assonance, dissonance, etc. In general, Arundhati Roy's work focuses on politics, literary tourism, post-colonial issues, feminist perspectives, and her Indianness.

Arundhati Roy's work makes heavy use of repetition, which gives the writing more intensity and rhythm. Here are a few instances: 'I'm doing OK and enjoying serving our woman, dear Papa. Koh-i-noor, though, seems dissatisfied and lonesome. Papa, my beloved, After lunch today, Koh-i-noor vomited and now has a fever. Even if I like convent cuisine very well, Koh-i-noor doesn't seem to like it. Koh-i-noor, my darling papa, is disturbed because her family doesn't appear to care about or comprehend her situation or her well-being. (p. 25). 'My loving Papa' and 'Koh-i-noor' are repeated here. The phrase "my dearest papa" is repeated repeatedly, displaying Baby Kochamma's continual asking for favors and flattery. She wants her father to pick her up from the convent, in other words.

Objective:

This essay aims to critique the topics, language, and handling of Ms. Roy's book *God of Small Things*. Considering the protagonists' political aspirations

Plot Summary and motifs

The *God of Small Things* by Roy has a variety of crucial motifs and ideas, but none is more significant than Love, which serves as the book's core subject. Although love manifests itself in a variety of unanticipated ways, it remains a recurring topic throughout the novel due to its unwavering presence. There appears to be a love that is returned for every case of unrequited love. The most evident and commonly characterized love is perhaps the unusual, almost transcendental love between Estha and Rahel. Another kind of love is the affection between Chacko and his daughter, Sophie, and ex-wife, Margaret. Finally, the forbidden, mutual love between Ammu and Velutha is just as ruthless as it is potent. The love in *The God of Small Things* is a disobedient love that nearly always flouts societal conventions.

The protagonists and fraternal twins Estha and Rahel have a unique type of love. No other two characters in the novel had a relationship like theirs. When they were young, they "thought of themselves together as Me, and separately, individually, as We or Us." (Roy 4). It is obvious that their relationship is based on love rather than genetic compatibility. They exchange experiences that only one of them has truly had and seek to each other for approval (Roy 78). Rahel, for instance, remembers tasting the tomato sandwiches Estha ate in her dream and waking up laughing (Roy 5). They have a particular love connection that goes beyond a filial obligation because of their shared upbringing.

One of the oddest relationships is the one between Estha and Rahel. They lose the unique connection they formerly had as they become older. They still have a relationship, but it is of a different kind. Even as adults, Rahel and Estha feel comfortable being around each other

when they are nude, which practically serves as a prelude to the events that take place at the book's conclusion (88–89). Their connection develops into one that is incestuous in chapter 20, providing evidence of love that defies social norms. It's implied that their bond goes above the expected levels of affection that a brother and sister should have for one another. They do the ultimate act of love, and this extension comes to an end.

Major Themes

It is possible to understand Chacko's love for his kid and ex-wife as being limitless. He takes great effort to demonstrate his unwavering devotion for them both. When Sophie and Margaret arrive in India (131), and Chacko purchases flowers for them, this is extremely evident. Unfortunately, Margaret's second husband Joe and Sophie's affection for Chacko were not equal. As a result, Chacko experienced an unrequited love that is frequent in this novel. We discover that while Margaret was Chacko's first female friend and he sincerely loved her, their "love" was just a passing fling. In a way, she liked Chacko because she had never met anybody like him before. She was about to enter early adulthood and beginning the process of embracing who she was without the influence of her family. Now, Chacko is (in a way) violating another social love commandment by attempting to restore the love he once had with his daughter and ex-wife. He previously divorced Margaret, and he hasn't been around for the most of Sophie's existence. He finds it challenging to comprehend that he has lost something that cannot be recovered or recreated.

Another significant love case in the book is the one between Ammu and Velutha. Ammu and Velutha understand that their continued relationship would shorten their lives since they are from different castes in India. However, while knowing that there won't be anything more significant in their futures, they still meet in secret to discuss "the small things" in their lives. Due of his lesser social status, Ammu adores Velutha. No one else in Ammu's life have the humility and respect for "small things" that Velutha possesses. They may have the strongest relationship in the novel since they stay in love while knowing their destinies are about to be sealed. In a way, Velutha is the subject of the novel since, in Ammu's eyes, he is the "God of Small Things." He turns becomes her deity and frees her from her family's bigotry and racial preoccupation. They have a particular bond that is difficult to sever even in the face of peril and death because they both value the little things in life. Since making love to someone outside of your social class is seen as an abomination in India, this is the most blatant example of love that defies societal norms.

The God of Small Things by Roy has love as its main topic. The bulk of the love partnerships in the book violate India's societal norms, or the "Love Laws," even if they are not necessarily mutually beneficial. Estha and Rahel's relationship is unique in its own right and is marked by its intriguing love. A classic case of unrequited love is Chacko's attachment to Margaret and Sophie. Although Velutha and Ammu's relationship is the most socially inappropriate of all of them, it is seen to be the most justifiable due to their shared enjoyment of "small things." Most of The God of Small Things is a love tale.

Temper and tenor of the novel

A reflection on the types of violence that are imposed when boundaries are breached may be found in The God of Small Things. All of them experience at least a dislocation, and in some instances, internal or external violence. Examples include Baby Kochamma, Ammu, Velutha, Chacko, Margaret, Sophie Mol, Rahel, and Estha.

At the age of 27, Ammu "tampers with the laws" from the beginning of the book and her own life when she marries Pappachi, a lovely alcoholic who is a dreadful parent and husband. Ammu "didn't pretend to be in love with him," of course. She didn't even consider the chances before accepting. Anything, anybody, she reasoned, would be preferable than going back to Ayemenem. She informed her parents of her choice in a letter. They remained silent. Even worse, infant Kochamma, the "incumbent baby grandaunt," partly obscures Ammu's appearance with her gleaming, malignant eyes (44). She has religious differences with Ammu because of the two "Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" (44) but also because Kochamma publicly professes to be immune to Ammu's dispute with the "fate of the wretched Man-less woman" (45).

As the narrative picks up enormous pace, we learn that Ammu struggles against this destiny by dating an Untouchable (Velutha). However, Ammu's "biologically-designed dance" (317) with Velutha enmeshes her in the terrible institutional inequality that the book so vividly laments. He is, in many respects, the twins' silent surrogate father. Ammu dies completely alone after being banished from her children, herself, and her biological potential.

Baby Kochamma is reluctant to enter prohibited areas. She is a liminal character in the book who always hangs around on the outside of the action. She manipulates and coddles Velutha while Mammachi sends him into oblivion before spitting poison on him. She is well aware of the relationship between sexuality and religion and is also deeply afraid of it. The only reason she is delighted when Father Mulligan dies is because, "if anything, she owned him in death in a manner that she never had while she was living. At least she had her own memories of him. all hers. passionately, brutally, hers.

Her body practically bursts from the inside out as desire invades it. She most often tampers with the rules governing who and how to love. Because white Sophie Mol is "Other" to Ammu's kids, she "loves" her. Sophie, who is the offspring of a hybrid coupling, is used by Kochamma as a club to beat the twins, who were both erased, into alienation and an enhanced sense of otherness: one of them is "Quietness," while the other is "Emptiness" (311). According to Rahel, Sophie Mol is "more loved" than the twins, which is especially troubling since Rahel was previously informed (by way of a severe warning from her Ammu) that a kid may be loved a bit less anytime they annoy their parent.

In the book, a lot of people work to keep ancient memories and customs alive, but Roy also shows how change will inevitably advance via subtle changes in the way things are. The most evident representation of preservation (pickling items to preserve them) is Paradise Pickles & Preserves, while Mammachi and the residents of Ayemenem continue to uphold the outdated caste system and the gender binary. Things from the past, like the "Loss of Sophie Mol" or the spirit of Kari Saipu, remain in locations like Mammachi's home and the "History House" and are cared for and kept alive. In addition to its name, the History House also represents preservation since it is the last resting place of Rahel's painted-on plastic watch, which is a little illustration of physically stopping time.

Small things

The pickle jars continue to leak despite these efforts to preserve them, and one of the book's recurring themes is that "things can change in a day." The two days surrounding Sophie Mol's death and Rahel's reunion with Estha are when much of the action takes place, one in 1969 and the other in 1993. Tradition-preservation attempts are failing, and "small things" are

nevertheless used to bring about change in both people and the nation. The Marxist revolution takes power and overthrows the system of landowners and workers as a result of Ammu's divorce and subsequent love affair with an Untouchable, which defies gender norms and the caste system. Small occurrences like Ammu's remark that she loves Rahel "a little less" result in significant occasions like Rahel and Estha fleeing, which in turn causes Sophie Mol's death.

Roy stresses the minor events, things, and changes that serve as a metaphor for and eventually give rise to the "Big Things" in life, such as death, love, and political upheaval, in both the title of the book and her writing style. A significant portion of *The God of Small Things* is written in a form known as free indirect speech, where the third-person narrator partially sees the world through the eyes of children Estha and Rahel. This results in many words being written strangely (such as "Bar Nowl" or "Locusts Stand I"), but it also highlights the innocent perspective of a kid by emphasizing certain phrases and imagery. By adopting this perspective, Roy avoids giving a plain description of the story's storyline and instead focuses on details like Rahel's watch, Estha's "Two Thoughts," and the little Marxist flag.

Roy often makes the point throughout the story itself that tiny dialogue is a cover for big, buried sentiments. The bond between Ammu and Velutha towards the book's conclusion serves as the most significant illustration of this. Instead of discussing the enormous taboo they are breaking or the impossibility of their future, the two loves concentrate on the insects in the forest surrounding them and only consider "tomorrow." Even if the "Big Things" finally become apparent, Roy's writing style is so personal because of the minute details that make the tale so heartbreaking and relatable.

In *The God of Small Things*, love may take many different forms, but it is most significant when it transcends social and ethical boundaries. Estha and Rahel have the strongest friendship in the novel because they are so close that they nearly think of each other as one person. However, when the young Rahel names the individuals she loves, she omits Estha in favor of the ones she is "supposed" to love out of family obligation. Roy stresses the "Love Laws" early and often, indicating the significance she will place on love that transcends social and cultural borders. The bond between Ammu and Velutha, an Untouchable, serves as the main illustration of this. Although this connection is horrific to the neighborhood and results in Ammu's banishment and Velutha's death, it is also the most admirable illustration of romantic love in the book.

Unfortunately, love and sexuality often take on more repressive and brutal forms, as shown in Mammachi's husband beating her and the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man molestation of Estha. After they are reunited, Estha and Rahel form an incestuous relationship, and Roy closes the book with Ammu having his first intercourse with Velutha. Through his lyrical descriptions and juxtaposition of these images with acts of violence and death, Roy increases their power and demonstrates how love can transcend ideological and divisive differences. Despite the potential for disaster, such love is nevertheless tremendously valued.

In the story, the Ipe family members contend with a range of social and political factors that lead to a lot of internal and external conflict. Marxist principles have permeated Kerala, India's broader society (in the novel's section set in 1969), upending the landlord-laborer class structure. The personalities of Velutha, Chacko, and Comrade Pillai as well as Paradise

Pickles are all directly impacted by this. Another significant aspect is the old Hindu caste system, which was abolished informally years ago but is still deeply ingrained in people's psyche. The "Love Laws" of the caste system, in particular the distinction between Touchables and Untouchables (a caste regarded as far inferior), are especially significant.

The majority of the Ipe family is likewise a "Syrian Christian," and Mammachi and Baby Kochamma in particular often use their religion to excuse their behavior. Therefore, half-Hindu, half-Syrian Christian Estha and Rahel must contend with their competing identities. The gender double standard of Indian culture is another important element of the story, as Ammu is shunned and humiliated for being divorced yet Pappachi and Chacko's transgressions are often disregarded. Overall, while several political and social forces compete with one another and the nation tends toward violence and upheaval, the "small things" that happen amongst the novel's protagonists operate as a microcosm for the "big things" occurring across India.

Related themes icon Related Themes from Other Texts

The twins' uncle Chacko, who is (or was) a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, meets Margaret when she is waiting tables. The book makes a point of stating that Chacko is quite unhappy with his Ayemenem origins and prefers to identify with White, educated, English society despite having entered illegal white zone. Through his laughing, he connects with Margaret and persuades her to love herself more than she did before to meeting him. But like his sister, Chacko is a hybrid character who is "a tortured Marxist...at war with an impossible, incurable Romantic" (232) who enters the taboo of getting married without parental permission (or knowledge, in his case). Since the roots of its demise were sown from its origin, the marriage inevitably meets the final Marxist end. Margaret goes to Joe, an archetypal Englishman who is the antithesis of Chacko in that he is "Steady. Solvent. Thin" (although we actually only know him as a "Joe-shaped Hole in the Universe").

The forbiddenness felt in Ameyemenem was felt financially ("Margaret Kochamma broke her term deposit and bought two airline tickets, London-Bombay-Kochin" [238]) and medically (Margaret brings every preventative medicine possible, but she cannot immunize against drowning) as well as emotionally ("Margaret Kochamma broke her term deposit and bought two airline tickets, London-Bombay-Kochin" [238]).

The God of Small Things ends with two very forbidden love moments, one of which suggests incest and the other of which transcends highly stratified class (caste) lines. It is evident that "what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief" when the twins speak to one another at the conclusion. That final assertion is followed by the title quotation from this essay by Arundhati Roy. The remark about their breaching the Love Laws is now cruelly sarcastic (it is repeated many times throughout the book), and more importantly, it is heavily weighted with all the implications of how devastating class, sexual, and religious distinctions are. In this moment, Estha is referred to as "Quietness" and Rahel as "Emptiness." In a nutshell, Estha's silence is a result of his first entry into the sinister parlor of the OrangeLemonDrink Man at Abhilash Talkies. When Estha is "deported" by train at the novel's conclusion, Rahel experiences deep internal violation and experiences emptiness in her eyes as a married woman in Washington. She also experiences a fuzzy moth that flutters around her heart and nibbles away at its walls whenever the woman who is "Of one blood" (312) seems to love her a little less.

In the last scene, Velutha actually crosses the river to the riverside from the History House (a masterful postmodern and postcolonial cliché), breaking all the other rules of how someone should be loved for the first time in the book. There is just "Naaley": tomorrow, for the lovers. The estranged language of the lovers conveys a deep, moving, and profound sadness despite the fact that Chappu Thamburan (the Lord of Rubbish and the hidden spider) outlives Velutha. This is done through a verbal and physical dance that both suggests the tragedy's rootedness in its era and the imprint of its commerce with futurity.

Conclusion

This novel is intense to read because of the beautiful English language usage and the disturbing plot. The God of Small Things takes readers on a pulchritudinous but melancholy tour across the English-speaking region of India. This novel has the power to astound like none other, causing the reader to experience the agony and heartache of a mother, the sadness of a child, the suffering of lovers who were torn apart, the forced maturity that was imposed upon youngsters, and the division of families. Additionally, one will see the tricks used by the envious and the behaviors of the unforgiving.

The tale doesn't unfold in a linear fashion; instead, it does so in spurts. What occurs right now will effect what happens later, and what occurred previously will affect what happens now. Some readers may find some aspects of the novel to be wholly intolerable. However, one wonders what would have happened if untouchability had never existed and if everyone had been treated equally.

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