

ARUNDHATI ROY'S  
"THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"  
THEME, NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE &  
CRITICAL APPRECIATION



## Literature

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## Abstract

Arundhati Roy is one such name in the field of Indian literature that is highly respected worldwide. She is so popular that many people from across the world have preordered her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) which was published almost twenty years later her first novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997). Her maiden novel was a massive success and has been sold over 6 million copies and has been translated into 40 languages. It was the second "Booker prize" winning novel from India after Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* which won in 1980. She was also awarded the Sydney Prize in the year 2004 for her notable work in societal campaigns and the promotion of non-violence. She was also honoured with Sahitya Academy by the Government of India for her collection of essays, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* but she didn't accept it. Her style is considered new and original, different from most of her contemporary novelists.

*The God of Small Thing* is basically about social consciousness which is the result of her thought-provoking attitude. There are many themes which she has explored in the novel, caste or class conflict, gender parity, the status of women in Indian society, conflict of regressive forces with liberals, Indian history and politics, short-lived relationships, betrayal, childhood traumatic experiences and love breaking norms and conventions. The narrative technique used by Roy in the novel is very unique. She has employed both traditional as well as innovative techniques to create a storyline that depicts Indian consciousness. She has connected the past and present narratives in the form of flashbacks.

In his famous critical article, "The Book of the Year", Ranga Rao describes, *The God of Small Things* in the following words:

Roy's book is the only one I can think of among Indian novels in English, which can be comprehensively described as a protest novel. It is all about atrocities against minorities, small things, children and fourth, woman and untouchable" (Rao: 17).

*The God of Small Things* received mixed reactions; it was appreciated as well as criticized because of its political themes. One of the reasons for its popularity is its political themes. Roy is a political activist and though her maiden novel was so successful she turned towards social and political consciousness based books including, and wrote her second novel almost two decades later. In these two decades, she wrote books on themes like universal threats, political and social issues including *New Nukes: India, Pakistan and Global Nuclear Development*, *War is Peace*, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *The End of Imagination* and *The Greater Common Good*. She is considered as the champion of subaltern and marginalized causes as she has devoted her life to uplifting Dalits, preserving the environment due to the Narmada Dam project. Even the

novel, *The God of Small Things* also deals with oppressed characters. The novel speaks about the sage of atrocity on one hand and protests on the other.

The novel is set in Ayemenem, a fictional town of Kerala and the novel opens by describing the landscape of this place. As Roy says:

May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still dust green trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute blue bottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun. (Roy: 1)

She has described the landscape of Ayemenem with richness along with the description of nature. In the novel, Roy has depicted Ayemenem as a real-life community which is situated in South Central Kerala and had set it near the fictional river, Meenachal which is quite similar to the river Minachil, near the town Kottayam.

Being an activist, Roy has shown that sometimes back Ayemenem was not polluted and it was a fresh and green river but now everything has changed and it has transformed into the unpolluted river and now instead of greenery and freshness one can see the latest freshly baked, glaring residences built by Indian masons, nurses, wire benders and bank clerks working in Gulf countries. From green pastures, it has turned to an urban locality. In the later part of the novel, Roy has described adult Estha walking around Ayemenem which is a reflection of Arundhati's stand on Sardar Sarovar Dam in the Narmada Valley and globalization. In this way, she has shown the exploitation of natural resources which in literature is termed ecocriticism. The destruction of the place has been described by the novelist in the following lines:

A slow, slugging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea... the banks of the river that smelled of shit and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that suffered from fin rot and had broken but in boils. (Roy: 2)

If we turn towards the story, then we find that the novel portrays the story of a Syrian Christian family living in the southern part of Kerala, India. The plot of *The God of Small Things* revolves around this family spanning three generations of s Syrian Christian Anglophone families. Pappachi Kochamma, the father of the family is a retired imperial entomologist. He was working in Delhi but after his retirement, he returned to his hometown with his wife, Mammachi Kochamma and two children, Ammu and Chacko.

Several years after their arrival, their daughter Ammu who married a Hindu man experiences an unhappy marriage which results in divorce. Ammu who is the protagonist of the novel is a divorced lady with her twin children naming Estha and Rachel. She being a divorcee is not welcome in her own parent's house. She with her two children start living in her parental house in Ayemenem with other family members, Mammaachi, Chacko and their aunt, Aunt Baby.

The family sends their son, Chacko to study in Oxford but this doesn't imply to their daughter as the novelist explains:

Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl; She should wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework. Since her father does not have enough money to raise a suitable dowry. (Roy: 38)

While studying there, Chacko meets Margaret whom he married later but their marriage doesn't last long and it ends in divorce after the birth of their daughter in the same year. Then Chacko leaves his daughter Sophie Mol with Margaret in England and comes back to his father's house in Ayemenem, Kerala.

After her divorce, Ammu tries to rebuild her life in Aynemen. She starts working in her father's factory where she meets Velutha, an untouchable character introduced by Roy in the novel. He is the servant of her family and is very much loved by her children, Estha and Rachel. She eventually falls in love with a man who is considered untouchable by her family and society. This forbidden love story is the heart of the novel. In this way, Roy has tried to raise her voice against the caste system existing in Indian society. This forbidden inter-caste romantic but tragic relationship ends disastrously. When Ammu's family came to know about the love affair of their touchable daughter with an untouchable family servant they were filled with rage and held Velutha responsible for it. They tried every means to punish him and send him to jail on fake charges of murder. In the prison, he was tortured so badly that he dies there. The policemen didn't have any mercy on Velutha because for them by punishing him they were trying to restore the lost dignity of the high caste and for them, an individual of low caste is just like an animal who is subjected to torture. Roy has presented the picture in the following way.

They were not arresting a man; they were exorcising fear... Touchable policemen acted with economy, not frenzy. Efficiency, not anarchy. Responsibility, not hysteria. They didn't tear out his hair or burn him alive... After the epidemic, they were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak. ( Roy: 307-309)

This incident badly affects Ammu as she was left with no one to console her and she was left with no hope to live. She being heartbroken sends her son, Estha to live with his father and leaves her parent's house to live alone. While her daughter, Rahel stayed within Ayemenem but Ammu came back to her house. She dies of illness with no one around her. In this way, their love affairs meet tragic ends with the disastrous end of two individuals who were trying to mend each other's lives by their love. Roy has depicted the adverse state of untouchables in the novel in many places. For example:

Mammachi told... Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sway their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint. In Mammachi's time, Paravans's like other

untouchables were not allowed to walk on public roads, or allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed. ( Roy: 73-74)

In the novel, *The God of Small Things* Roy has shown the utmost reality of the Indian society which beliefs in the caste system. The caste system is an integral part of Hindu society since ancient times. It is believed that Portuguese travellers were the first to use the word, “caste” in the 16th century. Earlier Indians have always used the word “jati” for the same. This “jati-pratha” is part of Varna-vyavastha based on occupation. This Varna-vyavastha implies Brahmins for the priest class, Kshatriyas for the warrior class, Vaishyas for traders and merchant class and Shudras for the lowest class means labours or untouchables. For ages, this class has been exploited by the upper three classes resulting in their subaltern status. In the novel, Roy has also discussed the large scale conversions of shudra or lower class Hindus to Christianity for achieving respect and dignity which they have been deprived of in their religion. She depicts in the following ways:

When the British came to Malabar, several Paravans... converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican church to escape the scourge of untouchability...it did not take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire they were made to have separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests. After independence, they found they were not titled to any Government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low-interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians, and therefore Castless. (Roy: 74)

This is a very strange notion to believe that Church, where everybody is considered as equal, differentiates between lower caste and upper caste people. By pointing this, she had tried to prove that conversion of lower-class people from Hinduism to Christianity didn't benefit them in any way rather they remained untouchable in their new community as well.

The caste system has dominated Indian society in terms of occupation and other social obligations. High caste individuals enjoyed all the facilities and opportunities while low caste people performed menial jobs in society. This resulted in the prosperity of the upper caste and the downfall of the lower caste. Moreover, they were not allowed to enter public places like Temples and social gatherings. As Arundhati has presented in the novel:

To keep the others happy, and since she knew that nobody else would hire him as a carpenter, Mammachi paid Velutha less than she would a Touchable carpenter but more than she would a Paravan. Mammachi didn't encourage him to enter the house (except when she needed something mended or installed) She thought he ought to be grateful that he was allowed on the factory premises at all and allowed to touch the Paravan (Roy: 77)

Though in the current times, the society has become more liberal and such things as “untouchability” doesn’t exist but still, the society is divided based on upper caste and lower caste. Still, in many places there is hostility among different castes and people of upper castes doesn’t like to mix up with people of lower castes. The best example is seen in terms of marriages because when it comes to marriage, families are firm in marrying in their caste. According to Shruti Gupta:

The novel is a modern masterpiece, truly telling a sad story in the most appealing and innovative narrative, conveying the feelings of the characters casually thereby increasing its effect. It is a deep study into rules which society has made and which we follow blindly. (Gupta: 2010)

The tumultuous relation of Ammu and Velutha is the essence of the novel and the turning point which creates havoc by spoiling many lives. Roy has also been bold enough to portray the relevant role of physical desire in individual life and how it affects an individual psyche. This biological need of the universe results in the tragic downfall of Ammu and Velutha who were earlier busy building their lives. The novelist has presented Ammu as a victim of circumstances because in the olden days a divorced woman was considered unwanted in society as well as in her own house. Ammu being a divorcee was leading an insignificant life in her familiar atmosphere. Leading a loveless life, she craved love which she got from Velutha so she didn’t care about his social and financial status. She just cared about love which a woman needs in life. But society didn’t accept it as the social status and financial position is more valued. This led to the catastrophe of claiming the lives of both lovers.

Ammu’s brother, Chacko whose story runs parallel with her also has a tragic life. He was sent to Oxford to study where he befriended Margaret. He later falls in love with her and also married her. But they were not able to be compatible with each other and after the birth of their daughter, Sophie they were separated. Chacko came back to India and started looking after his father’s business. Though he was separated from his wife and she married somebody else but he still loved her. His love for his ex-wife and daughter was selfless and unconditional. But it was unrequited because they both loved Joe, Margaret second husband. When Joe dies, they both come back to India and were welcomed by Chacko. Thus breaking the societal norms of Indian society which does not believe in any kind of relationship between the divorced couple but Chacko didn’t care about it. Here we see the hypocrisy of the Indian society in terms of dealing with males and females and also in terms of dealing with an individual of upper caste and lower caste. Society’s attitude towards Velutha is different because he is a person of lower caste so if he breaks norms he will be punished but Chacko being an upper-caste individual can get away with his debauchery or in other terms, we can say “man’s needs” as his mother terms it because he is a “touchable”. The novelist has highlighted this issue when she utters, “Change is one thing. Acceptance is another” (279).

Though Chacko finds happiness when Margaret and Sophie come back to live with him in India this happiness is short-lived. Sophie dies after the catastrophe breaks out leading to the discovery of Ammu and Velutha's relationship. Since it was forbidden love so both Ammu and Velutha were punished. Ammu's family locked her in her room and put fake charges on Velutha and as he was put behind the bars. Ammu was anguished and in the state frenzy she blamed her twin children for her adversity and claimed them to be "millstones around her neck". Being heartbroken, they left their house and ran away. Sophie, their cousin and friend also went with them. They sailed on a boat and reached an abandoned house which was across the river. Here a misfortune happened as Sophie was stuck in the boat which overturned leading to her ultimate demise. Her parents, Margaret and Chacko were not in Ayemenem, when they returned they were shocked to see her dead body lying on the sofa. Chacko was outraged seeing this and held the twins responsible for it.

Chacko loved Sophie a lot so when Margaret's second husband died in a car accident, he invited both Mother and daughter to stay with him to celebrate Christmas in Ayemenem. In this way, he was trying to heal his wounds which he got after the separation from his wife and daughter. The whole family went to receive them at the airport. On the route, they also visited a theatre. But in their way, a strange thing happened as they were stopped by the Communist protestors who were not allowing them to pass. They also forced Baby Kochamma, sitting in the car to wave their Communist red flag and chant the slogans which they were chanting. This was a humiliating experience for her which she never encountered before. Among the crowd, Rahel happened to see Velutha supporting the protestors. Being a critique of communist politics, Roy has presented communist protestors in grey shades.

There is another incident that is associated with it and that is the molestation of Estha. After the episode of the Communist mob, when the family was in the theatre an "Orange drink Lemon drink Man" who was a vendor working at the snack counter sexually molested Estha. It was a shocking experience which he encountered though being with the family. This tragic event is narrated in such a way by the novelist that it becomes the heart of the narrative. Not only this but Estha and Rahel both had encountered many traumatic experiences in their lives which has made their childhood traumatic.

Hope Jennings, one of the scholars has discerned the existence of nostalgia and has mentioned in her paper entitled, "The Ethics of Nostalgia in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*". In it, she has highlighted how the children experienced sufferings from their past. She elucidates:

Rahel and Estha are perpetually living with the ghosts of the past and due to the nature of their trauma, time for them has become frozen like Rahel's toy watch with the hands pointed out at ten to two. This is symbolic itself despite the text's fluid narrative movements between past and present. . . . (Jennings: 132)

Jennings believed that in the novel, Roy has recollected various traumas, loss and displacement of many individuals. Rahel and Estha both saw the complicated relationship of their parents leading towards their separation. When they tried to adjust themselves in their maternal grandparent's house then they lost their mother and both of them were separated from each other as Estha was sent to his father and Rahel was left behind in Ayemenem. They were not able to meet each other for many years and happened to meet when they grew up. They are the ones who have narrated most parts of the story from childhood till adult.

The twins, Estha and Rahel have been brought up in an Anglophone atmosphere by their mother Ammu so their perspective towards goodness and acceptability was Anglophonic. Maybe this is one of the reasons that Roy has shown a strange kind of relationship between Estha and Rahel in *The God of Small Things*. After many decades when they meet as adolescents then their relationship changes as there is no special bond of brother and sister between them. Though they feel connected towards each other differently; no boundations in terms of physical acts at the end of the novel. In Chapter 20, we see that their relationship transformed into an incestuous one, which is not imagined in a traditional society like India. It is a kind of relationship which breaks customary rules of society. They finally end in love-making which is beyond the pure relationship of brother and sister. As one of the scholars gives her opinion in the following lines:

The story is mainly narrated through the perspective of Ammu's twins, Rahel and Estha. The story culminates in ancestral lovemaking between Estha and Rahel, when the two adolescents meet after decades. Roy's story explores the themes of class and caste relations, social discrimination, gender-based power hierarchies in the South Asian context (Komalesha: 2008)

This is a very bold portrayal on the part of South Asian fiction because we live in a tradition-bound society where there are certain taboos irrespective of all communities and individuals are bound to follow them, breaking these norms means going against the society which is not acceptable to the masses.

The novel, *The God of Small Things* is set in some decades back in Kerala when it was not as educated, liberal as it is in the contemporary scenario rather it was purely patriarchal. But there are many strong women characters whose presence is of great significance in the novel. There are some women characters like Mammachi, Baby Koachamma and Kachi Maria, the cook who is a strong advocator of caste, race and gender. In comparison to them, we see Ammu and her twin children, Rahel and Estha who have tried to resist their dominance many times. Ammu had to suffer a lot because of being a woman and secondly because of loving and untouchable. Their family being Syrian Christian are firm in their faith particularly Mammachi and Baby Koachamma. Ammu has never been their favourite because she went against the family and married a Hindu man. Estha and Rahel always find themselves in a tough situations because of their conflicting identities. They are half-Syrian Christian and half-Hindu so sometimes they are confused about their culture and identity and this is also one of the reasons that paved their way to break all

conventions made by their family and society. The novelist describes Ammu, Rahel and Estha in the following words:

Perhaps Ammu, Estha and Rahel were the worst transgressors.  
They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory.  
They are all tempered with laws that lay down who should be loved how and how much. (Roy: 31)

Ammu has been the victim of the double standardness of the gender-biased society because her family and the society in which she lives had ignored the crime committed by Pappachi and Chacko but the same society humiliated Ammu for being divorced and loving a man of lower caste.

Roy has described many political social forces struggling against each other, affecting people and creating chaos and vehemence. This is very well portrayed in the social and political influences of the Ipe family which uses their power to create internal and external struggle from beginning till the end of the novel. In depicting the Keralite society of 1969, she tries to show how Marxist ideas were taking roots and beginning to affect society particularly in terms of the class system of landlords and labours. It has also its impact on the protagonist's family and characters like Velutha, Chacko and Comrade Pillai and most importantly their factory, Paradise Pickles. There are many other instances in the novel where Arundhati has openly criticized the communist group. For this and many other reasons, she has been criticized by many scholars.

Ahmed (2007) accused that Roy's story is marred by repetitiveness and overwriting. Parsad (2004) and Rofail (2008) argued that the novel is autobiographical as they quote incidents from Roy's life similar to the ones happening in the novel. Rofail (2008) gives many examples from the author's life- Like Ammu, Roy's mother was a Christian who married a Hindu and divorced him soon after, Rahel, like the author herself, possess a rebellious nature and married an American. Thus, in *The God of Small Things*, Roy wrote a personal narrative raising a powerful voice against many forms of injustice in Indian society.

She being a social and political activist is prone to hear all these allegations because when you criticized others you have to tolerate your criticism as well. Nevertheless, it is a controversial novel but still relevant in overall terms as it has fiercely criticised gender and caste discrimination in India.

In the novel, Roy has depicted the plight of Indian women in a family and society. They are badly treated and subjugated in their family no matter what position they hold. When we look at the Kochamma family, we find that they have a history of ill-treating female members. Ammu grew up seeing her mother being abused and beaten by her father. Her father always blamed his mother for all his failures and use to vent out anger whatever loss he experienced in his business and other matters. This traumatic experience had a great impact on Ammu as she never gained the confidence to become an independent strong individual. Later Ammu herself became a victim of



male subjugation after her marriage. Though she had a love marriage with a person of a different religion this also does not give her security and love which she craved since childhood. After sometimes from loving husband he became a dominating male counterpart who after experiencing failure in job asked her to sleep with his Boss. She turned down his malicious offer and divorced him. Returning to her family, she found a lack of comfort for herself which made her rebellious to go against the norms of the family which restrained her in achieving freedom and liberty. In the end, she was able to receive love which she craved from her childhood in the form of Velutha but this does not last long and they both were separated by their family and society.

Ammu's mother, Mammachi who is also one of the significant characters in the novel starts the factory, 'Paradise Pickles and Preservers' giving an indication of being a bourgeois woman but being a woman and belonging to a patriarchal society she becomes a subject of domination. Her husband completely dominates her and overtook her factory. In this way, from the beginning of the novel, we see women characters becoming marginalized in the Patriarchal system. Moreover, in the family, there are other women and people of low caste who becomes prey to the subject of marginalization either on a gender basis or on a caste. So from the very beginning of the chapter, we find a fine example of exploitation.

Critics and scholars believe that Roy has very realistically portrayed the status of Indian women with all its manifestations; silence, frustration, anguish, disillusionment, subjugation, family and societal pressure and most importantly identity crisis. Around the world in the conservative society, women face identity crises throughout their lives and there is the absence of belonging in their lives whether they live in their parent's house, or husband's or later even in their son's house. She is always made feel she doesn't own anything and everything belongs to her father, brother, husband or son. This idea of seclusion makes her isolated and throughout her life either she struggles for identity or lives in fear of being abandon. She is even not given the right to decide her life whether it is education, marriage or any other issue related to her life. This results in making her dependent on her and she is not able to gain confidence throughout her life. In the patriarchal construct, family and society always behave in a hostile manner with women. They demand that women should be meek, fragile and submissive. They don't like bold, daring, self-dependent and confident women. Rebellious women are rejected by these kinds of societies. The status of Indian women is changing now and everywhere we see examples of modern and strong women. But this was not the same some decades back. Earlier their status has been unsteady, insecure, unstable, uneasy and surrounded by problems. In the novel, *The God of Small Things* it is quite reflective in the female characters like Ammu, Rahel, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Margaret Kochamma who have been facing adverse situation throughout their lives. The irony is that though being a victim of a patriarchal set-up, some of them are even advocator of it. Baby Kochamma being the finest example of it. But things have drastically as now Kerala is the state which has the maximum percentage of women education.

In the novel, Roy has discussed four generations of women, though not much is described as the first generation of women. Baby Kochamma and Mammachi are the two significant figures

in the second generation of women. Baby Kochamma's role in the novel is pivotal as it is she who brings catastrophe to the lives of Ammu and Velutha. She is the daughter of Reverend E. John Ipe and was among two alive children of her parents. She was in deep love and dedicated her life for the love of her life but destroyed the love-life of Ammu and Velutha. When she was a teenager, she had fallen in love with Father Mulligan, an Irish monk. He captivated her heart with his charismatic and magnetic personality. He was a genial and enticing human being and people were easily attracted towards him. She was so desperate to be close to him that she even tried to convert into a Roman Catholic but her father destroyed all her plans. He tried every means to stop her he sent her abroad for further studies. So that she may forget him however it didn't work out and her feelings for Father Mulligan remained the same. There she devoted her life for the sake of her love; by taking care of herself, writing diaries every day. In the diary, she used to quote every day: "I love you, I love you" remembering Father Mulligan, who was though distance away but always in her thoughts. He too had the same feelings for her and was in contact with her always. After his death, though she was very depressed but didn't stop dressing up and other enjoyment instead she diverted her attention towards winning lotteries and watching television. As she was ageing so her enjoyment was increasing and she often used to behave like a kid. In this way, she competed with the grandkids of the house. As Roy quotes, "like a teenager at the age of eighty-three as Rahel observes that it's like Baby Kochamma is living her life backwards". (Roy, 136)

To sum up, we can say that *The God of Small Things* is a novel echoing the silent voice of subalterns whether it is women or lower caste individuals. Thus it has a universal appeal because, by showcasing the voice of the voiceless, their concealed and suppressed emotions. Highlighting the plight of women and untouchables, she has depicted their life-long struggle for happiness, identity and dignity in a society that is against their wishes. A society that is hostile towards them and always try to suppress their happiness. Even all the laws are made against them and so they always feel deserted and vulnerable. Being a panorama of the Indian social milieu it has highlighted some very relevant aspects related to life.

Roy has devoted her life to many social issues and being a social activist she questions the existentialism of marginalized classes whether it is women or lower class individuals in direct and indirect ways in our democratic and ambiguous world. She has presented the constant struggle of women for their identity through the character of Ammu and the struggle for survival with dignity in the form of characters like Velutha. These characters are facing the challenges of lives every day in various forms and inspire a writer like Arundhati to raise their concern in the form of writing. In her book, *The Cost of Living*, Roy has tried to justify her writing in the following words:

If you are a writer you tend to keep those achieving eyes open. Everyday your face is slammed up against the windowpane. Every day you bear witness to the Obscenity. Every day you are reminded that there is no such thing as innocence. And every day you have to think of new ways of saying old and obvious things, things about love and governance about power and powerlessness, about war and peace, about death and beauty. Things that must be said over and over again. (Roy: 1999, 65).

In addition to social issues, Roy has told the tale of a family as well as characters who have various needs which are unfulfilled due to the interference of society who have punished them in many ways. As we have discussed earlier, the novel is the story of Kochamma, a wealthy Syrian Christian family who are living in Ayemenem, a small fictional town situated in Kerala. The novel is mostly narrated by Rahel and we see the novel through her perspectives. She has narrated the trauma which she has experienced in her childhood then later she narrates the events related to her returning from America to see her twin brother, Estha who has settled in Aynemen now. All those events which have affected her childhood and have brought drastic changes in the lives of all her family members have been depicted by her from a child's perspective. These events address many

Throughout the novel, Roy has tried to emphasize that even minute things can be interconnected with great things and any event that happened in history has its consequences in the lives of individuals belonging to the same country or various communities associated with it.

The title of the novel, *The God of Small Things* signifies small things in life which create larger issues. The novel has shown all those small things in the family happening every day leading to savage beating, many deaths and other chaos & malice. It also means that people like Velutha are happy with small things but for wealthy people, happiness revolves around big achievements. Ammu's family values big things related to monetary gain, political affiliations, marriages with high profile family and being superior in terms of caste. But at the same time, the novelist has highlighted how "small things" can give us happiness in our day to day lives whether it is any act by small creatures, little pleasures, various emotions and sins accepted and rejected by society. Our society has certain taboos which is in the form of repression but sometimes this lead to very violent consequences. There are many examples of such consequences in the novel; the episode of Estha being molested in her childhood by the Orange Drink Lemon Drink Man in the theatre, the physical act of Ammu and Velutha as well as the ending scene of making love of the twins in their adulthood. The novel makes the readers realize the value of small things in the lives of every individual and that how small things can be so meaningful. Realizing this quest is also the answer hidden in the novel. This must be the motive of the novelist.

Roy has tried to make a microcosm which encircles many activities like unsuccessful relationships, domination of husband over wife, the superiority of male child over female, emotional insecurity, pride and death in a Keralite Christian family. She is an advocator of social realism has depicted various social evils like caste system, gender discrimination, corruption in government offices, cultural polarities affecting individuals and other evils present in our society. Caste taboos though not as strong as in the olden days but are still present in our society. She has dealt with various tragedies happenings in the lives of women like divorce, unhappy marriages, social disgrace through various characters like Ammu, Rahel, Baby Kochamma and Mammachi. How values are being eroded from society is also one of the facts she has presented in the novel. She has focussed on various complexes existing in the lives of individuals which affect their confidence and make them introverts in the form of characters like Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko and Ammu. These characters struggle throughout their lives to overcome their complexes.

Their struggle, frustration, confusion and self-exploration is very well depicted by her. This harsh reality makes them bitter person and they try to vent out on others in various forms like humiliating and dehumanizing people around them. By seeing various aspects, one can say that Roy has a true and deep sense of sociological imagination.

Weaving a love story of Ammu and Velutha and the unrequited love of Chacko, Roy has highlighted various issues like women's rights, inequality, duties and identity by the means of caste and class distinction and gender. Many critics have termed it as a political novel because of politics in the background. On *The God of Small Things*, Ahmad (2007) asserts that the focus on family relations and eroticism in the story "dismisses the constituted field of politics as either irrelevant or a zone of bad faith" (Roy: 11). Roy has tried to answer these allegations and justified her writing, in one of the interviews given to Terrence McNally, she has disclosed her intention as a writer that she doesn't find much difference between writing fiction and political essays since she has utilized both genres of writing to highlight same issues (Kearmey, 2009). Whatever critics and scholars say about Arundhati but one thing is clear the content of her writing focuses on feminist perspectives, caste and class difference, post-colonial dimensions, politics, cultural polarities, literary tourism as well as her Indian sensibility. Her novel is a veritable mirror of social realism.

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