



## Examine Roy's depiction of patriarchal society and the complexities of gender relations

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15756558>

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### Abstract

Roy deftly investigates gender dynamics, cultural hybridity, socioeconomic inequality, and social hierarchies. Roy reflects society's struggle with its colonial past via the microcosm of individuals' lives. Roy weaves a tale that mirrors Indian awareness by using both conventional and unconventional methods. Women in India were considered second class citizens for a long time. Some readers may find some elements of the narrative very inappropriate. On the other hand, if untouchability hadn't existed and everyone had been treated equally, one can only speculate as to the result. It was a normal occurrence, men told themselves, and that was the rationale for partner bashing.

**Keywords:** Roy's, Patriarchal, Society, Gender and colonial

### Introduction

As far as narrative patterns and tactics are concerned, the book is rich. Roy weaves a tale that mirrors Indian awareness by using both conventional and unconventional methods. Even though the work was out in 1997, the literary devices she used captivated readers and are still relevant today. The narrative approach that Roy used in her book *The God of Small Things* is the central subject of the study. Writers' methods and devices for telling tales are referred to as narrative technique. It relies on certain expressions, punctuation, or exaggerations in description to operate. While it's true that all storytellers rely on a small set of standard tools, each writer brings his or her own voice to bear when telling a tale. The core elements of any narration include setting, story, character, style, topic, and viewpoint, while there are several technical components of narrative method.

When a writer has Roy's level of style, her writing conveys a lot. There are several hidden connotations in her work that make her style ideal for literary interpretation. It is impossible to arrive at a definitive reading of this literary style. But it's important to try to go deeper than what her writing first suggests. It is also clear from her style statements that this is a female writer. Whether it's immediately apparent or not, her style offers a window into

a feminine sensibility.

While serving our woman, I am healthy and happy, my beloved Papa. However, it seems that Koh-inoor is sad and lonesome. To my beloved Papa, after lunch today, Koh-inoor threw up and is now feverish. Even if I like convent cuisine, it does not seem to be to Koh-i-noor's liking, my darling Papa. My beloved Papa Koh-I-Noor is distressed since her loved ones don't appear to care about or comprehend her condition. 'My loving Papa' and 'Koh-I-Noor' appear here twice. Baby Kochamma's repeated use of the phrase "my dearest papa" reveals her persistent gravelling and flattery in her voice. In other words, she is pleading with her father to remove her from the convent.

Love, the novel's core topic, is more significant than any of the other motifs or ideas that run through Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Love manifests itself in a myriad of surprising interactions, but its unwavering presence serves as a recurring motif throughout the novel. There seems to be a love that is returned for every case of unrequited love. There seems to be a love that is returned for every case of unrequited love. Probably the most well-known and widely-described love story is the one between Rahel and Estha, a love that is both peculiar and transcendental. Beyond romantic love, there is the family affection shared by Chacko, his daughter Sophie, and his ex-wife Margaret.

Lastly, Ammu and Velutha's forbidden love for one another is intense and terrible. Love in *God of Small Things* is defiant and, in almost every instance, breaks societal norms.

### Literature Review

Choi Youngsuk (2015) <sup>[1]</sup>. In her critique of the maldevelopment in postcolonial India, Roy gained recognition as a political and environmental activist. Her skepticism of state-sponsored development programs stems from a hierarchy of dualisms that justifies the exploitation of nature by humans, women by males, and the downtrodden by the strong. Rather than criticizing development itself, her critique is directed at this hierarchy. *The God of Small Things* challenges patriarchal ideology and seemingly logical economic reasoning as mechanisms that sustain such systems. Environmental degradation and gender, class, and race-based oppression are interrelated, as Roy's criticism of environmental exploitation in postcolonial India shows.

A., Hariharasudan & Gnanamony, S. (2017) <sup>[2]</sup>. The researcher intends to methodically examine the text in order to discover feminist principles. Prior research is surveyed in the study. Some of the important topics that postmodernists have investigated include sexism and feminism. Through her female characters spanning three generations, Arundhati Roy depicts the plight of women in this book. The book depicts a generational divide among the female characters, which is fueled by animosity and resentment. It also draws a divide between generations that are at odds with one another. One major factor that works against women is the influence of political and family norms.

Azamsher, Bayar Mohammed Saeed Othman (2021) <sup>[3]</sup>. This research mainly examines Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* with an emphasis on the ways in which gender and caste play out in the oppressed minds of the book's female and juvenile protagonists. Arundhati Roy, an Indian woman novelist, centered her work on the existential psychological crises and struggles of oppressed Indian women, who were subjected to mental and physical abuse in a patriarchal culture that was governed by strict religious and social norms. Put another way, Roy aimed to evaluate the abnormal psyches of men and women within the traditional social milieu of India. She zeroed emphasis on the awful things that happened to her female characters as a result of prejudice and classism.

Suleman, D., & Mohamed, A. H. (2018) <sup>[4]</sup>. In the context of a highly stratified society, "*The God of Small Things*" by Arundhati Roy compassionately tackles important societal concerns, with a focus on children and women. The events of the book take place in the Indian state of Kerala, where severe caste systems and the aftereffects of colonialism have created an environment where children and women are often ostracized and abused. Roy examines the painful truths of sexism and child abuse via Ammu and her twin daughters, Rahel and Estha. Traditional gender norms prohibit Ammu from achieving her goals and dreams, and she faces social stigma and structural constraints as a divorced woman. Her unconventional romance with Velutha—a guy from a lower caste—shows the harsh repercussions women endure when they stand up to patriarchal systems.

Birgani, S., & Moosavinia, S. R. (2019) <sup>[5]</sup>. By deftly combining the battle against patriarchal systems with the

fight against colonial legacies, Arundhati Roy's "*The God of Small Things*" provides fertile ground for a feminist critique within the context of postcolonial philosophy. The story delves into the complex dynamics of gender and power in a postcolonial Indian setting, where the effects of colonization have muddled long-established gender norms and expectations, via its strong female protagonists. This examination revolves upon Ammu's character. Ammu defies the limitations imposed by a patriarchal culture that tries to keep her in her subservient position as a divorced woman in search of independence and love. By having an intimate connection with Velutha, a man of lower caste, she is not only challenging the patriarchal order's attempts to regulate female sexuality, but she is also asserting her sexual autonomy.

### Caste and gender in Arundhati Roy's *the god of small things*

It was clear that the lady was not fortunate enough because of her unique abilities and physical conditions, such as her menstrual cycle and childbirth. The patriarchal society, on the other hand, paid little attention to gender equality or women's standing. A nation's condition may be discerned by examining the situation of its women, according to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

Women in India were considered second class citizens for a long time. There was a lot of violence against women; 'dowry-burnings' were particularly horrible examples. An old practice in India known as the dowry included the transfer of a portion of the bride's family's money to the groom's family upon marriage. Violence against women occurred as a consequence of this on occasion, particularly in cases when the husband was unhappy with the dowry.

It was a normal occurrence, men told themselves, and that was the rationale for partner bashing. They see beating their partners as a means to better themselves. As a result, women began to accept physical abuse as inevitable. But the oppressive paternal ethos primarily functioned as a kind of gender discrimination, with the father's control over the family's private resources giving him the power to harm his daughters.

One of the Indian women authors who primarily dealt with the mental health of female characters who endured emotional trauma at the hands of patriarchal society was Arundhati Roy. She skillfully projected the troubled thoughts of oppressed Indian women using their abilities. She was a passionate feminist, and her novel's portrayal of female characters mirrored that.

### Roy's style in *God of small things*

Literary works written by Indians in English did not attempt to mimic English style but rather were highly archetypal and profoundly Indian in subject and attitude. In the same manner that Americans and Australians shaped their writing in their own nations, Indian authors like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Mulk Raj, Salman Rushdie, and Raja Rao brought their own distinct patterns and spirits to English literature via their works.

Her background as an architecture student is the inspiration for the book's architectural elements. So, she used architectural approach as a guide instead of writing her book from start to finish. As an example, similar to building a

structure, Roy meticulously visualized the complete structure in her head, then proceeded to cement the walls and add the finishing touches. In a similar vein, the novel's prologue succinctly revealed all major events and the chronological symbols for them.

The God of Small Things, by Arundhati Roy, was a classically structured book that aimed to bridge the gap between the past and the present via the lens of the future. Everything about it, from the substance to the manner, was intriguing. A new, contemporary concept was brought into the realm of traditional thinking by it. Her work, with its innovative vocabulary, architectural approach, similes, symbols, imagery, and poetic structure, certainly contributed to the growth of the English language and will live on in literary annals for all time. In terms of style and technique, it delighted readers by delving into the world of architectural design.

These words basically expressed the aroma and richness of Indianness. The novel's style is characterized by an abundance of potent symbols and imagery that make use of many literary elements including puns, personification, irony, and so on. However, Roy's most endearing quality was the abundance and beauty of the metaphors and similes she used. Roy used the potent metaphors of the Laltain, The Big Man, and the Mombatti, Small Man, to symbolize two forces in The God of Small Things: the governed and the ruler. Recurring pictures like this echoed Shakespeare's most striking metaphors in Macbeth.

#### **Arundhati Roy as a writer intellectual**

Roy has done her job by being the voice of the voiceless all across the world, hence the following remark from Said is quite fitting for her. In addition to her work as a writer, she has a reputation as a public intellectual, political activist, and activist. She deftly sidesteps the criteria put out by modern culture. Both her literary work and her activism in politics have brought her great renown. Early in 2003, when speaking at the World Social Forum, she made the following comment:

I am inherently political, so I don't even give it any thought when I write. Fairy tales, even if I were to write them, would always have a political undertone.

Roy, in an Edward Said-esque way, poses the subject of literature and art's social responsibility—a question that modern intellectuals all too often avoid. "Writers and artists, what do you think their place is in this world?" Can it be defined, described, or settled definitively? How about this? Royal Edward Said had poignantly posed this subject in his Reith lectures, which were later published as Representations of the Intellectual. Said was well-known for his writings when he gave his lectures, but many people also suspected him of being a political activist. I was barred from any serious or reputable platform at all because

I was suspected of being engaged in the struggle for Palestinian rights, as Said in his Introduction.

In his talks, he emphasized the intellectual's place in society. If intellectuals were really "outsiders," they could hide out in an ivory tower or use it as an alibi, but if they were truly

"insiders," they'd end up betraying the ruling class and compromising its moral compass. Intellectuals, not "insiders," should be challenging patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking, and a perception of gender, race, or class advantage.

He describes the intellectual "as exile and marginal, as amateur, and as the author of a language that tries to speak the truth to power" and he argues that this pursuit of "relative independence" from societal pressures is the primary intellectual responsibility of writers, artists, and intellectuals.

Roy, without suggesting any direct influence, agrees with Said's views on the matter. She puts forth two guidelines for authors in Power Politics: first, "there are no rules" and second, "there are no excuses for bad art" with the second rule making the first one much more complicated. Everything is not left to random chance just because there is no official, externally set regulations.

#### **The social evils of the caste system**

An ancient Christian couple named Pappachi and Mammachi had a business called Paradise Pickles & Preserves, and their family tree was told in The God of Small Things. Ayemenem was the site of most of the 1969 events, and the cultural life of Kerala mirrored that of the people who lived there at the time. These people had experienced various forms of social exclusion and injustice, including but not limited to: male-female relationships, male chauvinism, taboos, brutal discrimination, double standards of morality stemming from religious and political prejudice, and wrongful marriage. In her 2003 essay, Chhote Lal Khatri, "Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things:

Narrative Discourse and Linguistic Experiment", pointed out "Ayemenem may be regarded as a sample to project Kerala's natural beauty and the ugliness of the life of the people and failure of the system-social and governmental-to provide a healthy life to its people"

Religion, society, and politics all worked together like an octopus to ensnare Ayemenem's inhabitants. Hegemonic brutality oppressed the characters, particularly the women (Ammu, Mammachi, Rahel, and Baby Kochamma) for no good reason. In Ayemenem, these women suffered from torment and felt their lives had no purpose. As a result, they were grieving and felt incomplete.

A strong condemnation of the societal ills associated with the caste system, which had been more harshly and coarsely enforced in southern India than in the rest of India, The God of Small Things. Two distinct ethnic groups existed in Indian society: the Touchable and the untouchables. Family fortunes and levels of education were the Touchable. The Pappachi family was one such group in the book; they represented a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and chances. In contrast, India's lowest caste, the untouchables, were illiterate, impoverished, and social outcasts. Velutha, a member of India's lowest caste, the Paravan, was one of the untouchable characters in the book. Because of their social status, untouchables were barred from public employment and prevented from rising to positions of power.

When Velutha was a little child, he and Vellya Pappen would bring the coconuts they had picked from the trees on the property to the shadowy entrance of the Ayemenem House. No Paravans would be allowed entry to the residence by Pappachi. Not a single one would. Nothing that Touchables touched might be touched by them. Like other untouchables during Mammachi's time, Paravan were not permitted to wear head coverings, carry umbrellas, or even walk on public roadways.

### **Gender Discrimination**

A Deity of Motifs and Detailing accurately portrayed the predicament women face inside a traditional, male-dominated framework, as they seek to establish their place in society. There were a lot of ifs and buts and flip-flops in India's social construction of women. Observing the lives of three generations, Roy delved into the predicament faced by the female characters representing each generation in an Ayemenem family:

Mammachi, Ammu, Margret, and Rahel. She raised attention to the crisis these wives were facing as they struggled to establish meaningful relationships with their husbands. Ammu, Rahel, and Margret missed out on the chance to forge their own identities while they were married, even if they did not give in to male counterparts and instead just split up. Ammu, our heroine, was an abandoned lady who longed for love, freedom, and fulfilment. From her early years as a kid and adolescent until her marriage, marriage itself, and her roles as a caring mother and revolutionary wife who challenged male chauvinism and the caste system in India, the narrator painted a vivid picture of Ammu's development.

He obviously intended to humiliate his submissive, obedient, generous, and persistent wife by hurling insults and abuse at her. After Mammachi's instructor praised her remarkable violin skills, Pappachi's envy and resentment manifested in his conduct towards Mammachi. He stopped her painting courses suddenly and beat her every night because he didn't want to see his wife succeed.

Mammachi sobbed uncontrollably and her contact lenses slipped out of her eyes as she mourned Pappachi's passing. The reason Mammachi was sobbing, according to Ammu, was less affection and more habituation. He explained this to the twins. She was used to his slouched posture and occasional beatings at the pickle plant. According to Ammu, people are creatures of habit, and the things to which they may get used are quite remarkable.

### **The attitude of family and society towards a divorced woman**

Roy highlighted the plight of women who had gone through a divorce. Margret, the ex-wife of Mammachi's son, was considered nothing more than a whore in her views. Ammu was singled out by Baby Kochamma and doomed to endure Mammachi's callousness as well. In her own house, her parents' house, and society at large, she became almost untouchable. Baby Kochamma's attitude towards Ammu, who was divorced, was typical of Indian women: "She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents' home." There was silence from her father. A sense of deepening

dissatisfaction was certainly conveyed in Baby Kochamma's letter. She eventually stopped caring for Ammu and her twins, which was a direct outcome of the disappointment that had been building up within her. We had established that Ammu's father Pappachi ignored her after she secretly wed. Due to their father's lack of knowledge, Ammu and Kochamma were both harmed. No amount of time or distance from Ammu's parents' brutality or her divorce could ever alter her amiable character.

Because her parents and society didn't care about her or her twins, Ammu abandoned them and found love with Velutha, an untouchable of the lowest caste and a different faith. The only one who gives them the affection, attention, and companionship they want is Velutha, according to Ashwin in Kumar Vishnu's 2004 article "The God of Small Things: A Note on Roy's Sociological Imagination".

### **Transgression of love laws and its results**

For a long time, religious norms dictated how society operated. "For social conduct and Love laws whom to love and how much to love and they have to be followed as one follows the rules of making jam and jelly" were enforced by Indian society and the Hindu orthodox faith in particular. According to the love rules, it was forbidden to have a relationship with someone from a different religion or from a different caste. That is to say, it was criminalized to love someone from a different social class or caste. In her 2004 article "Dalit in The God of Small Things," M.B.

The love rules were broken and 'The God of Big Things' was disobeyed by Velutha and Ammu, to their ruin. The little Kochamma continued by asking, "Wasn't it a small price to pay?" Duo existences. The formative years of two kids. "And in the case of future criminals, a lesson from history". Roy exposed the gender prejudice that was causing societal injustice to downtrodden and exploited persons like Ammu. Chacko was still "the rightful inheritor of the family fortune", enjoyed continuing to enjoy the dominance of family, and was revered by everyone around him. Roy brought to the readers' notice the lack of equality between men and women in terms of the opportunities available to them.

Furthermore, Roy portrayed hate as a common feeling felt by the upper class against the lower class. She played Mammachi, a character whose unwavering animosity against Ammu and Velutha's romance was fueled by society, with great conviction. She, too, was hypocritical and despised the illicit romance between the two, much as Baby Kochamma. Feelings of shame and contempt started to linger with her. However, she knew full well that Chacko had an affair with one of the Pickle Factory's female employees and said, "he cannot help having a man's Needs" It is true that she set up a meeting between her son and some naughty ladies. She acts hypocritically by being defiant when it comes to Ammu's "Women's Needs" but tolerant when it comes to her son's "Men's Needs," as seen in the aforementioned quote.

### **Conclusion**

A pulchritudinous and tragically symbolic tour across the English-speaking environment of India is depicted in *The God of Small Things*. Many issues plaguing Indian society were addressed in postcolonial literature. The Sati, the caste

system, widow remarriage, and social, religious, and other forms of hegemony are examples of societal ills that persist in today's society. Some readers may find some elements of the narrative very inappropriate. On the other hand, if untouchability hadn't existed and everyone had been treated equally, one can only speculate as to the result. The work of renowned feminist author Arundhati Roy was also emphasized, particularly her examination of the abnormal mindsets of both men and women in Indian culture.

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