
Representation Of Females In Arundhanti Roy's God Of Small Things: A Review

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Abstract

Right from the Vedic age, women have been the subject of vitriolic comments, though a bit eulogistic too. In Vedas, most of the hymns are attributed to only sons-never to daughters. Atharva Veda says The birth of a girl grant elsewhere, here grant a son. This led to the age-long disparity between man and woman. But as a matter of fact, both men and women are the essential parts of creation. Both are the two sides of the same coin. A man's life without a woman is just like a flower without fragrance a ship without a rudder or a body without spirit.

Keywords:- Representation Of Females, Arundhanti Roy's, God Of Small Things, A Review.

Introduction

Today a woman is not a doll in the hands of man. She is being seen establishing her identity in almost every walk of life. In the last decade of the century some remarkably young women writers in Indian subcontinent appear to have registered theft realization that tradition could but prove a dubious heritage for the oppressed; which it seemed sustaining in some way an ancient tradition with its entrenched orthodoxies might as well prove crippling and even dangerous for the backward and the downtrodden. Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*, and Tasleema Nasreen's fiercely indignant exposure and condemnation of the hypocrisy and oppression nurtured by the patriarchal ideology of this culture are among others, worth mentioning. While the main focus of both, Tasleema Nasreen and Geeta Hariharan has been the woman's subordination under traditional laws. Arundathi Roy in her first and instantly famous novel *The God of Small Things* has also included with her focii the oppression of the marginalized group i.e. female.

Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize winner novel deals with the ravages of caste system in South Indian State, Kerala. Roy presents both the miserable plight of untouchable and also the struggle of a woman trying to have fulfillment in life in a patriarchal society. Velutha, the god of Small Things, transgresses the established norms of society by having an affair with a woman of high caste. The ultimate outcome of this love affair is the tragic death of an 'Untouchable' by the 'Touchable Boots' of the state police, an event that makes a travesty of the idea of God. God is no more in control of small things", rather the small things have an ultimate power over God, turning him to "The God of Loss". Roy tries to sensitize the society to the cruelty of some of its tradition by artistically challenging certain common age-old complacently held but dehumanizing social taboos. She also shows how the women and the untouchables are both treated as impersonal and subjugative objects (not decisive subjects) in this social structure; how things of an ancient culture which also cultivates the hierarchical snobbery and violence

of the 'Touchables' towards the "Untouchables". This present paper explores the ideas at two levels in the novel. Firstly, we have socially untouchables, or Parvan, who are never allowed basic human rights. Secondly, we have metaphoric untouchables in high castes. Here discrimination expresses itself in marginalizing the women in their personal and public life. In this paper, I would like to analyze the ways and means that a system adopts to depersonalize a woman.

The society presented in the novel is Patriarchal. Roy exposes the ugliness of the society by bringing women's exploitation and indifference to them. It is within the social, political and religious context that we read tragedy of the Koachamans. Roy deals with the classical material of tragedy in the modern context. The members of this family are introverts. Baby Kochanama, Ammu and Chako are unable to come to terms with their complexes. They struggle against the outer world, and the defeat renders them confused and frustrated. The sense of failure expressed itself in dehumanizing other around them. Female in this family is always humiliated and tortured by males. The Kochamma family history of poor relations between its male and female members. Ammu's mother, Mammachi, for example, is severely beaten and abused by her husband, and she becomes the victim by her husband, and becomes the victim of his anger and frustration whenever he faces a failure in the outside world. He leaves a little room for Ammu to grow as an independent and confident individual. Her only objective in life is to find a 'reasonable husband', depending upon him for the rest of her life. Her attitude also corresponds to the idea of a 'good daughter'. Shared both by Hindu and Muslims. Chako, the elder brother saves Mammachi, from his father's abusive attitude.

Roy has justly put the issue when she says "change is one thing. Acceptance in another" (279). The Society presented in the novel is patriarchal. On the one hand we have a group of characters, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and Kochu Maria, the cook, who perpetuate the division of caste, race and gender. On the other hand, Ammu and the twins, Rachel and Estha, consciously and unconsciously resist these hierarchy. Ammu the biggest victim of the system is an archetypal image of a daughter marginalized in a patriarchal society. "Perhaps Ammu, Estha and Rahel were the worst transgressors. They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much." (31) Ammu the central character of the novel, has only marginal existence in the family structure. A traditional patriarchal society places little importance on women's education Ammu's father Pappachi, does not like the idea of spending money on her daughter and she is never encouraged to find her place in life. Marriage is the only justification of her survival.

Ammu finished her schooling the same year that her father retired from the job in Delhi and moved to Aymenem. Pappachi insisted that a college education was unnecessary expense for a girl so Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi and move with him. There was little for a young girl to do in Aymenem other than to wait for marriage proposal. (38)

Ammu accepts the very first proposal after five days of courtship. In fact, Ammu had no choice other than accepting whatsoever life offer her. Unfortunately, her husband turns out to be a drunkard unable to support the family. He tries to force Ammu to "please the boss" but she refuses and the marriage ends in divorce. As a divorce, she has to face ostracism by her society and family. Her female relatives sympathize with her in a way, making her conscious of the gravity of her crime she has committed in living separated from her husband.

Within first few months of her return to her parent's home; Ammu quickly learning to recognize and despise the ugly face of sympathy. Old female relations with their incipient beards and several wobbling chins made overnight trips to Aymenem to commiserate her about divorce. She fought off the urge to slap them. (43)

A divorcee has no right to pursue for happiness in life. The only course open to her is to spend a static life, waiting for death. Any attempt on her part to see life independently. threatens the existing order. She is at Loggerheads with the society at large because she married outside her community and a divorcee too. It is visible at Sophie Mols funeral "Hough Ammu, Estha and Rahel were allowed to attend the funeral, they were mnade to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Nobody would look at them." (5) Estha's conflict within himself turn him into a silent creature. But inside "there is an uneasy octopus that lived and squirted its inky tranquiliza on his past." (12) This injustice is perpetrated by a group of the characters who are themselves the victims of injustice. Mammachi, Ammu's mother who endured her husband's abusive attitude, ignores Chako's sexual exploitation of the female workers, but she cannot tolerate her daughter's love affair with a Parvan. Baby Kochamma, the defender of the system would go to any limit to save the so called family honour. The novel shows the process of creating and labeling Parwans within the high class families the people who go beyond the unwritten laws of society in pursuit of happiness. Velutha offers what is denied to Ammu, Estha and Rahel in society and family. In the day light, he is the best companion of the children, who feel suffocated in Aymenem because of their divorced mother.

The only world is hostile, and only the few moments they spend with Velutha afford real happiness. Ammu meets him in darkness, and the river bank — a symbol of division between the two classes. Baby Kochamma, spending a frozen life in her past, appears on the guardian of system. Velutha, "the Untouchable" is killed by the "Touchable Boots", of the state police Ammu is banished and dies alone, only thirty one "a very viable diable age". (161) The system also has a fatal influence on the twins, who cannot relate to anybody other than each-other. Estha's marriage proved a failure, and she feels satisfied only with the twin brother Rahel, as it were coming back to the prenatal world of pure innocence. Shulan observes Rahel and Estha, caught in the entanglement of adult corruption are punished for the sins of a world out of their control. They are struggling to secure a safe environment the unconditional love of a parent and promise of a livable future. Their struggle to safeguard themselves and the childhood ends one day, a day after which futures are abandoning and recovery is impossible. (Shulan Nishant). At last Roy presents a pessimistic picture of society. She expresses her disillusionment with the social condition of the postcolonial world in which the women are still hostile considered the commodity in the hand of man. The society is still and behaves them the outcast who cannot pursue happiness, because doing, so threatens the existing order and the society takes every possible step to stop change.

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