

An Analysis of Class Struggles in “The God of Small Things” by Arundhati Roy

***Dr. Vinod Kumar**

Abstract

Arundhati Roy's 1997 book "The God of Small Things" brought her international renown. As the first Indian woman to receive a Booker Award credit for her renowned novel "The God of Small Things," it is her first literary achievement. Arundhati Roy concentrated on her goals of social justice and women's misery. Her book mostly addresses the caste disputes in contemporary Indian society. Class problems in Indian society are reflected in this book, which also demonstrates the author's profound awareness of these issues. The narrative of "The God of Small Things" bears numerous similarities to Arundhati Roy's own life. Because of her love for the downtrodden individual, the woman in this play broke the caste system. People who are oppressed are always the ones who suffer and are neglected by others.

The others' actions, which include disparaging and degrading those who are truly like them, demonstrate their belief that they belong to the upper class. Arundhati Roy bravely and unblemishedly depicts her experience of casteism in her book "The God of Small Things." The way that the oppressed people are driven to take on important activities is examined in this story. Here, humanity is defeated by evil. The novel gains a lot of pleasure from Arundhati Roy's Candor as a narrator.

In the book, Arundhati Roy explains the relationships between the tiniest and largest things. The issue of human identity and the mistreatment of women in our Indian society are also central to The God of Small Things.

Overview

The novel "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy straightforwardly discusses compound levels. The political satire policy, casteism, and patriarchy are all examined in this book. Arundhati Roy investigates how societal structures and behavior reflect caste, gender, and class distinctions. These have an impact on interpersonal relationships, kinship, and personal preferences. Roy illustrates the caste system's discriminatory practices by describing the untouchables' wretched living conditions and how they were viewed as less than human. The work sheds light on the author's early years. One of the autobiographical novels is "The God of Small Things." The character of Ammu in the novel represents the author Arundhati Roy's mother is a South Indian woman.

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Conflicts between classes

The main theme of this book is the battle between classes. The group of people is oppressed, ostracized, and passed over based on culture, politics, society, and religion because of the caste conflict. In Indian society, caste is very significant. It examines how members of the higher caste dehumanize them on two different levels. Through this book, the author has portrayed extremely delicate topics about untouchables and underprivileged groups. Caste inequality and class strife are a very shameful aspect of Indian society. Arundhati Roy, the author, closely studies our culture and encounters reality, which awakens them to the social ill of untouchability. The Paravan is an untouchable caste. She also demonstrates how, in this social system, women and untouchables are both viewed as undesirable and oppressed things. Because they are women and untouchables, they frequently endure such humiliation. Women have thus been denied equality in the social, cultural, and economic spheres. Mammachi's husband had mistreated her in the past. In patriarchal societies, women's problems as wives and daughters are addressed by the God of little things. The upper caste always looked for ways to eradicate untouchability because they saw it as effluence or contamination. They are not permitted to enter their home or handle higher caste property. Roy highlights the state of the discouraged.

The primary focus of "The God of Small Things" is class conflict. The caste system is ingrained in the culture. India's societal issues are closely linked to Arundhati Roy. She has articulated every issue that the average person faces. She has made an effort to draw attention to the pressing issues facing society. One method for studying literature that emphasizes the voices of those who are disadvantaged in society is class conflict. In every aspect of life and society, marginalized persons are denied their "rights" as human beings on a social, political, economic, and legal level. Women and untouchables are viewed as minor members of society. The caste system, which has strong roots in India, and the so-called upper class are both represented in the story. The book "The God of Small Things" is a metaphor for life, and life is simply society as it truly is. Writers are greatly influenced by the society in which they live. Every society has several groups that people can belong to. Certain societal segments are perceived as class conflicts. People in class conflicts are those who are denied socioeconomic possibilities for their upbringing and who suffer from social, cultural, and political marginalization. People who are poor and demoralized are seen as class enemies.

There are several classes in Indian society, including the upper class, the non-upper class, and the depressed class. There are various castes and sub-castes among these classes, and each one is startlingly distinct in its myriad customs and usages. Class conflict sectors of society are impacted by the higher caste in their socio-religious and cultural lives.

Arundhati Roy in her novel "The God of Small Things" depicts the house of Velutha, the Paravan as it

'...Was dark and clean. It smelled of fish curry and wood smoke. Heat cleaved to things like a low fever... Velutha and Vellya Paapen's bedding was rolled up and propped against the wall... a

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grown man could stand up straight in the center of the room, but not along its sides.(p 208)

Arundhati Roy factually describes the helplessness of Vellyan Paapen, the father of Velutha. He has to crawl backward and he takes the social disabilities that are imposed on the marginalized section by worn-out tradition. Arundhati Roy says,

“By the time he understood his part in History’s plans, it was too late. To retrace his steps he had swept his footprints away himself crawling backward with a broom”. (p 200)

Arundhati Roy depicts the pitiful conditions of the downtrodden and how they were treated as secondary. There was a time when;

“Paravans were expected to crawl backward with a broom sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christmas would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into Paravan’s footprints... they had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed” (p 73-74)

Ammu's life, which is centered in the little Keralan town of Ayemenem, which is close to Kottayam, is clear to see. Ammu, the main character, was raised in a household where her father, Pappachi, believed that an education was a waste of money for a female. The same endeavor, however, is in advance resources for his son's education. The family's financial situation is at its lowest point. Her retired father starts to feel burdened by Ammu's marriage. Ammu takes a vacation to Calcutta, where she meets her future husband, an agent of a tea estate, who asks Ammu to marry him. With her consent, she is married. The only stable and reliable place to escape one's own parental home with social support and safety is marriage.

Human Identity

Human identity is one of the main themes in this book, and it is the central idea. The destruction of human identity by tyrannical forces is frequently represented by a higher God who forbids the existence of lesser Gods and their habitation in places of structure. For her special attention to the predicament of women in terms of social justice under constitutional provisions, Arundhati Roy has merited a unique and admirable place.

Ammu got divorced and has two kids, Rahel and Estha. Velutha works at the "Paradise Pickle Factory," owned by Ammu's parents. It is implied that Ammu and Velutha's relationship is a protest against the social norms that are now in place. It targets the institutions of public administration, politics, religion, and the family. The narrative highlights important aspects of existence that arise from consciousness. Velutha and Ammu are building a romantic relationship and having sex. Their love affair causes them to suffer because of things that society finds intolerable because of the various castes and creeds that dominate Indian culture. They're not brand-new. Since the dawn of recorded history, they have been a part of the way of life.

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Due to inadequate facilities, Ammu does not receive an adequate education. Her brother is Chacko. Her mother's name is Mammachi. Her father, Pappachi, has bad qualities. His wife suffers silently as a result of his abuse. Ammu's spouse asks her to live with his English boss after they get married, but she declines. Disappointed, she brings her babies back to Ayemenem to live with her parents. Her existence is filled with misery. She lives in her own home as a subordinate to everyone else's desires. Her parents are unable to comprehend her wants and demands. Additionally, they act callously toward her and her kids.

“Within the first few months of her return to her parent's home, Ammu quickly learned to recognize and despise the ugly face of sympathy” (p 43)

For Rahel, a flashback happens. She was quite ill. Estha never saw her when she was sick. Ammu's last visit to Ayemenem. At the age of eleven, Rahel had recently been expelled from school. After missing many days of work owing to illness, Ammu lost her position as a receptionist. The narrator claims that Ammu appeared to think that time had not passed.

She and her kids were left orphaned. They were isolated, socially shunned, and physically present in the village. Likewise, Velutha's status as an untouchable caused him to constantly isolate himself. However, he is a playmate of Ammu's kids. Ammu and Velutha's romance blossomed in a brief period. She fell in love with him and eventually became engrossed in Velutha's world. However, there are certain important love laws in our culture. It was broken. Velutha and Ammu perished as a result of their unpleasant and important social love laws. Baby Kochamma was aware of Ammu and Velutha's romance. She vehemently opposed the affair with Comrade Pillai, a Communist party member.

The narrator also tells us that we can't blame Comrade Pillai for his role in these events – it's not his fault that he

“Lived in a society where a man's death could be more profitable than his life had ever been”.

Velutha was brutally and violently beaten by the cops. According to the narrator, his lungs were punctured by shattered ribs and his skull cracked. Velutha is no longer being beaten by the cops. We find out that he has three fractures in his head. His face was mushy and featureless as the bones shattered again. There are six fractured teeth. Four of his ribs are puncturing his lungs, causing him to hemorrhage from his mouth. He has injury to his spine. He has a ruptured intestine. His kneecaps are broken on both sides. Velutha killed. After learning of Velutha's murder, she lives a life of misery and ends her own life. At the age of twenty-seven, she passes away. She dies at Bharat Lodge in Alleppey while preparing for an interview. The church refuses to bury her. Wrapped up in a dusty bed sheet, she is disposed of in the electric crematorium in the presence of Chacko and Rahel. Dual tendencies are commonly found in the life of man. They find out the course of his life, always remaining in conflict with each other. In the life of Arundhati Roy, readers may find such conflicts in abundance which are indirectly expressed in the novel at several places. These conflicting forces add up to the contrasting forces in the structure of the sequence of events. Pappachi is found torturing his wife

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always quite viciously. To escape from these tortures, Ammachi starts scribbling cooking tips which later provoked her to establish a pickle factory. The story ends with the ruins of the pickle factory. Ammu fell in love with a Bengali drunkard betraying and antagonizing her parents. Deserted by the drunkard, she experienced the torture of remaining husbandless. Her relationship with Velutha quenches her sexual thrust which then gets converted into a sensitive romantic affair. Ammu fights back struggling inside her to cross the limits that block Indian women.

Due to her illegitimate romance with Velutha, Ammu has to pay a high price for breaking the laws of love. She is eventually shunned by society, cruelly torn from her children, and faces death. The hegemonic forces of a male-oriented society, its harsh code of beliefs, and Ammu's past make her the most unbeatable character in the book. Rahel shares many traits with her mother, Ammu. Additionally, Ammu refused to accept the life that was given to her; instead, she set out on a voyage with a guy she loved, an untouchable who demanded more trouble than could have been predicted.

Ammu selected the path he had been led to to be with her sweetheart, who was already from an oppressed caste, and as a result, she was fired. At a young age, the strong-willed mother set an example for her self-reliant daughter. Rahel could look beyond the confines of fate, circumstance, and death. His twin sister dared to dream and let herself go, but Rahel, who had lived a life very similar to Estha's, walked about noisily and energetically in a closed-off environment. She believed what she couldn't see; she pictured what she couldn't send for. Like her mother, Rahel's willingness to imagine what she's on reflects this. Her acts demonstrated her resolve to not let the environment to mold her, and in doing so, she defined the entire universe.

An oppressor and an oppressed are always present. The symbolism of the lantern and the lamp is related to this universal paradigm, which is generalized in terms of both large and little things. This would essentially mean the same thing as Karl Marx's critique of the wealthy class and the poor on this conceptual level. Because of the efforts made by the poor, the former have grown wealthy. The inability to share the abundance they produced has made the poor even destitute. Another way to think about this would be in terms of matriarchal and patriarchal structures. There are also implicit binaries.

Women do not now have the means to organize into a unit that can confront the corresponding unit head-on. They don't have the same goals and interests as the working class, and they don't have a post, history, or religion. Because of their living arrangements, household chores, financial situation, and social status, they are more attached to some spouses or fathers than to other women.

“Pappachi would not allow Paravans into the house. Nobody would. They were not allowed to touch anything that touchables touched. Caste Hindus and Caste Christians. Mammachi told Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, when paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints”. (p 73-74)

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“The God of Small Things” is an ancient drama played out against an unmistakably modern backdrop. It turns the clash of tongues and histories in Kerala. The novel has it all: the echoes, calls, and cries of the Earth. It is an uncoiling spring of human foreboding and inevitability.

Conclusion

Thus, Arundhati Roy's esteemed book "The God of Small Things" turns out to be a continuous chronicle of the low-mimetic form of humanity's ongoing suffering at the hands of forces that have long benefited from position, power, and language. Following the creation of the binary, which the novel masterfully does, the implications and suggestive places continue to grow. Thus, the book destroys large swaths of social experience into several strata. Roy depicts her female characters as being torn between contemporary open spaces and conventional constraints. Arundhati Roy undoubtedly moved the discussion of women's rights in the modern era to the periphery.

***Department of English
Baba Bhagwan Das Govt. College
Chimanpura, Shahpura, Jaipur (Raj.)**

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