

Protest against socioeconomic in Arundhati Roy's "The God of small things"

Sushil Mor

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Government College for women, Jind, Haryana, India

Abstract: Through this novel, Roy offerings the subject of minority that questions about the system of caste itself and its double standards around the system. Roy admits that the unique mixture between modernism and backwardness, which are life-threatening in Kerala, stimulates her to reveal the most basic human natures. It also expresses the socio cultural reality that is sensitive in India. The God of Small Things is a postcolonial novel. The prospect of this unfinished redefinition (which is always a process anyway) is determined by a corruption of the independence morals, current social problems (Caste Society Problem), internal tensions and the clash between partial modernization and traditional mentalities. Self-consolidation is waiting on the way all these problems are managed. But, apart from internal complications, this self-consolidation process has global implications. According to events inside the nation, the still disconcerted place of the post-colonies in a new world order will be defined. It exposes the horrifying realities of rigid social classes and creed. Roy tries to find out the historical roots of these realities and develops profound insights into the ways in which human desperation and desire emerge from the confines of a firmly entrenched caste society.

Keywords: traditional mentalities, horrifying realities, untouchability, Caste Society, human desperation, social evil, etc.

Introduction

Literature is the reflection of the society. It reflects the happenings intentionally or unintentionally by any writer. The expressions of the authors can bring about consciousness, changes and transformations among the readers according to their reach Arundhati Roy's "*The God of Small Things*" which targets at the display of the protest of both the authors against the class and caste stratification prevalent in India. The main actions of the novel are traced back through the complex history of their causes, and memories are revealed as they relate to one another thematically and as they might appear in Rahel's mind. Although the narrative voice is well-informed, it is loosely grounded in Rahel's view, and all of the episodes of the novel progress toward the main moments in Rahel's life

Awareness of major problems

Ms. Arundhati Roy is one of the front-ranking novelists of India. She has established herself as a novelist par superiority. The God of Small Things is her historic work and at the top of best seller list in many European and Asian countries. Even before she won the Booker Prize Award this novel had appealed wide attention of the readers and reviewers all over the world. The theme was related in the Indian Social background as the basic issues related to the theme was one prevalent in the villages of all states. Though Hindi and other Indian language writers had taken up the Social issues in native languages, Arundhati's work internationally created an awareness regarding the major problems in India. The plot was given a strong political suggestion at a certain level. She is always protesting, essential, and unconventional. She draws a large canvas of characters that belong to five generations.

She has carved out a place of her own by presenting a social satire on existing society. As a novelist Arundhati Roy discusses issues like homeless and hungry, alcoholism, violence, caste system, untouchability, cultural decadence, marginalization of women and sexuality. The vote-bank politics is very active in the existing society which she tries to portray. In many ways the novel represents her thinking beyond the borders of Gandhi's idea of untouchables as harijans.

"The greatest national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall."

The identification of *The God of Small Things* as postcolonial and/or women's libber hinges on the psychoanalytical, socio-historical and political concepts or themes chosen to read the novel as a whole, to interpret its characters, their behaviour, attitudes and activities, and to attach a certain meaning to its descriptions and storyline comments. Such a focus is primarily a politically informed choice to see this and all other literary works of art as social-science cases:

produced of course by individuals addressing themselves to other individuals, but knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, in ways that are determined by nationality or postcolonial status, class, association within a caste system, ethnicity, and gender. Both writers and readers are recognised in all cases as *subjects*--as being under the control of the social forces that shape and determine them.

Set in Kerala, India, during the late 1960s when Communism rattled the age-old caste system, the story begins with the funeral of young Sophie Mol, the cousin of the novel's protagonists, Rahel and her fraternal twin brother, Estha. In a twisting and exciting narrative, Roy discloses the family tensions that led to the twins' behaviour on the fateful night that Sophie drowned. Beneath the drama of a family tragedy lies a background of local politics, social taboos and the tide of history all of which come together in a slip of fate, after which a family is shattered. Roy captures the children's candid observations but concerned understanding of adults' complex emotional survives. Rahel notices that "at times like these, only the Small Things are ever said. The Big Things lurk unspoken inside." Plangent with a sad wisdom, the children's view is never oversimplified, and the adult characters reveal their frailties and in one case, a repulsively evil power in subtle and complex ways.

Social stratification in the society

The novel depicts the problem that happened in India. One of the problems is social socioeconomics in the society. The picture of the events in society labelled complexity and its relation with others, so it forms a series of inoculations between one event and others. Issues about social stratification and the mixture of exotics, mysticism, and India local history, which is nationally discussed, are not very often found in a book, which successfully takes off all the clothes of nationally, castes, and religion to ultimately show what humanity is all about. On the other word, this novel represents Roy's protest against the system that put the value of humanity away. Socioeconomics can be defined in various ways, but most commonly refers to *institutionalized inequalities in power, wealth, and status* between *categories* of persons within a single social system (e.g., classes, castes, and ethnic groups). The word "protest" itself, according to Oxford (2007: 332), is a statement or action that shows strong disagreement. Protest (against) shows one's strong disapproval/ disagreement of somebody / something. Protest also declares firmly against resistance. For better and for worse, history is relevant, and one cannot ignore that participation in a centuries long process of foreign history makes the relatively recent process of independence an important reference to understand the temporary and provisional contradictions of a society that is living through important changes, consolidating and self-defining itself between what has been and what may become. This means that, for me, one of the things a postcolonial novel does is to pact with a current postcolonial society, reflecting on, among other things, its exploration for post-independence patterns of collective identity, the exorcism of traumatic memories from a colonial past, and the self-assertive remembering of local cultural references. All of these issues are articulated within the frame of local, material circumstances. They are firmlylinked to their postcolonial geography and time, and there is no uncertainty about these coordinates seen from within a located text, where they are the references to everyday life. At its most optimist tone, postcolonial literatures still show a willingness to change, fix, and "move on", licking one's wounds. But, after the post-independence euphoria, there is, in many of these same novels, this feeling that some of the old problems remain, the promised changes did not happen, and something has gone bad in the current political scene. From a postcolonial angle, the novel *The God of Small Things* is relevant for its conflict to Anglophile, its rejection of Western influences as a "solution" for the problems of India and its caustic examination of Indian patterns of collective identity, totally embedded in caste segregation and sexism.

The novel tells the story of the Kochammas, a wealthy Christian family in a small village in the southern Indian state of Kerala. Based loosely from the perspective of RahelKochamma, who has returned to her hometown to see her twin brother, it pieces together the story of the dramatic events of Rahel's childhood that drastically changed the lives of everyone in the family. *The God of Small Things* is an ambitious work that addresses universal themes ranging from religion to biology. Roy stresses throughout the novel that great and small themes are interconnected, and that historical events and seemingly unrelated details have far-reaching consequences throughout a community and country. The novel is therefore able to comment simultaneously on universal, abstract themes, and a wide variety of ideas relating to the personal and family history of the members of the Kochamma family as well as the wider concerns of the Kerala region of India.

The Sociological approach concerning the modern and still persistent social evils in India such as caste system and untouchability, highlights the human insights and the lack of concern for universal brotherhood.

Conclusion

"*The God of Small Things*" bring out the in depth analysis of the Indian Society and how the possible changes are expected by the author. The desire for changing human minds and the need for teaching broader views is linked in each and every plot, setting and depicting of characters. It also deals with Anglophilia and Anti-colonial Struggle in

the *God of Small Things* which debates the western influence on Indian Society bringing out the differences in the status due to colour and literacy as a category of social stratification. The political influence as that of British Government also defines the Social category. The ever existing caste segregation in India is another string which impasses along all these stratifications. It also portrays the indelible problem of Untouchability. The unpleasant realities of life as portrayed in the existing inhuman caste segregations and class stratifications are highlighted with reference to this novel, "The God of Small Things". The approaches of the novelists with an goal to protest against the social harms and a focus to create an consciousness regarding the awful consequences due to such unwanted segregations are brought to the forefront. If not for that period in which the novels was written, the author was sure that her writings would touch the readers' hearts and try to achieve success in reaching her goals. No doubt that Arundhati Roy was given the Booker Prize for her novel. The analysis in this paper will enable the readers to understand the purposes of the authors in eradicating the social evil of classism and promoting the respect to mutual human values necessary to enhance the living standards in an economy.

References

1. Dodiya, Jaydipsinh, Joyachakravarthi. The critical studies of Arundati Roy's *The God of small things*. -Atlantic publishers & Distributors-1999.
2. Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*, Random House, 1997.
3. Review of *the God of Small Things*, in Kirkus Reviews, 1997, 412.
4. Thornmann, Janet. The Ethical Subject of The God of Small Things, *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*. 2003; 8(2):299-307.