

FEMINISTIC APPROACH IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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Abstract

It throws light on some important things of life like how love is often associated with grief, how a person's childhood experiences affect his/her perspectives and whole life. It also presents the constant suffer from women against their incessant exploitation, torture, and struggle which they undergo because of the male-dominated conservative society.

Key Words: *Chauvinism, Exploitation, Indifferent Marriage, Patriarchal, and Relationship.*

The God of Small Things is the debut novel, Arundhati Roy. She had the advantage of being brought up with great freedom to develop her individual interests and strength. Her mother, a social activist, founded her own school and allowed her daughter to learn informally, which lead Roy to follow her inclinations and listen to her inner voice without being bound by restrictive rules. It is the unique voice of the author that lifts, The "God of Small Things" beyond the category of the mainstream novel to a work of art. The construction of the novel is also innovative and a semi-autobiographical. She was awarded the Booker Prize for the novel in 1977. She was the first Indian woman to get this award. Before winning the Booker Prize, "The God of Small things" received a great deal of media attention, both positive and negative. In January 2006 she was awarded Sahitya Academy Award. She is an Indian English writer and her writings penetrate contemporary social-political issues which is amply perceptible in the number of articles and books. In the opinion of many perceptive readers, the novel characterizes as an exterior art of imagination. This story is about the childhood experiences of fraternal twins whose lives are destroyed by the rules of love.

The novel explores how small things affect people's behavior and their lives. The important aspect of social discrimination that Roy deals with misogyny, mainly through the character of Ammu. She often draws attention to different opportunities that offer for both women and men in India and the fact that, since Ammu has been married and divorced, she sees her life as effectively over.

Roy in her novel confronts boldly the chauvinism. She retorts against the notion that women are a weaker sex and are inferior to men. They are possibly there to look after the needs and satisfy his basic instincts. She mocks at their attitude and registers her poignant protest that woman is not a mere toy to be manipulated by a man as and when he likes. Chacko, a hypocritical male, brother of Ammu truly represents this character. His selfish side and his false pride as a male are revealed many times in the story. He was sent to the Balliol College, Oxford to study by the virtue of the fact that he is the male member of the society. However Ammu was not sent to college because she was a girl and because of this fact she did not have access to higher studies, as it was the popular belief that college studies corrupt a woman. This chronic conservative problem is still prevalent in India whereby, a large number of people are against the education of woman. This hypocrisy and biased attitude are brought about poignantly by Anees Jung in her work 'Unveiling India'.

This sharp contrast between the behaviors meted out to a woman and man is shown in the behavior meted out to Chacko and Ammu. Chacko after his estrangement with his wife is greeted warmly by the Ipe household and is made in charge of it. He is seen asserting himself and throwing his weight around and in his sadistic and cynical tone he tells Ammu "what's yours is mine what's mine is also mine". This is because of the simple reason that Ammu as a daughter and she has no rights on the property. The irony is projected when Ammu estranged from her husband is not greeted well in her own home. She is ignored and her children also have to bear the brunt of the indifferent attitude of the Ipe household. The daughter divorced from her husband is tortured in her home, whereas the son divorced from his wife is gifted the whole house and becomes the rightful heir of the family's fortune. His flirtation advances towards a lowly woman, he is encouraged by Mammachi by saying it is only "Man's need" whereas when Ammu estranged by everybody goes in search of love and when she finds someone, it is termed as illicit, sinful and untraditional. She is locked and beaten up. The woman is considered benevolent and bestowed; a second is considered that the woman is aggressive, malevolent and a destroyer. Marchi's family although they are Syrian Christian, living in India, could not avoid being influenced by Hinduism. This is not the only case that shows the domination of a man as a husband on a woman, but domestic violence was also part of their life. Papachi often beats Mammachi with a brass flower vase. The other person dominated Mammchi's life was Chacko, her privileged and Oxford-educated son. Whatever her husband did, being a virtuous woman, she accepted it because of her parents' traditional beliefs, so it was allowed by society. Ammu was such tragic characters that even her last rite was not done properly with traditional rituals. Ammu was also tortured and abused by the police, her family and the politics of the society. It was not only the menfolk alone responsible for her tragic plight but even mostly the women characters

such as Mammachi and Baby Kochamma who could be considered as called the real culprits to engender sufferings in Ammu's life.

Ammu had divorced and lived with her parents and brother, Chacko who treated her and as well as her children in a terrible manner. She is divorced and a divorced woman has no respectable place in society. "Divorce is considered as a social stigma by the society only for women" While her brother is also divorced, but no one tells anything to him and he leads his life cheerfully. This portrays the inequality and injustice toward and woman in Indian society. The novel also exposes how both male or female are treated differently as Chacko, being a man lives happily even after a divorce but on the other hand, Ammu after divorce suffers through her life It shows the bias in social conditions of men and women in the society which is very indecisive. Thus the social structure of an average Indian woman is full of ups and downs, it is noticed be very clear in the character of women like Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Rahel and Margaret Kochamma. Arundhati Roy has clearly shown the untold miseries and the undeserved sufferings of women who have to bear the forces of male domination silently and submissively. Just to please their traditional family and society.

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