

The Thirst For Familial Love In The Select Fictional Writing of Arundhati Roy's, *The God Of Small Things*

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Arundhati Roy, the Indian woman writer, has a vital role in defining and formulating contemporary consciousness through her novel “The God of Small Things” which has earned her The Booker Prize and proves that Roy is not only a well trained architect and screen play writer but also a brilliant architect of different patterns of evolving feminist consciousness. The book explores the fictional depiction of various repressive forces marginalizing Indian women. The 20th century was marked by the emancipation of women from political, economic social and personal subjugation. Centuries of patriarchal hegemony had ensured that she was kept tethered to a secondary role everywhere. But thanks to the efforts of the suffragettes and their sympathizers, progressive legislation was set on foot to liberate women from time-old shackles. But psychologically, women remained a shackled lot. In spite of political, economic and social rights, they could not break free from the psychological prison that had conditioned them to a traditional image as ever sacrificing ever forgiving, long-suffering ‘angels of the house.’

‘The God of Small Things’ is inextricably twined with gender biases and confrontation between haves and have-nots. The male chauvinism stultifies the spirit and wide stretches of the hope and endeavor of the female characters who struggle in their life to bring their family to a good position in the society. Their endeavor to quench their thirst for familial love is completely paralyzed by the male chauvinistic characters of the novel. It is pictured through the central character of Ammu in this novel. The politician and industrialist, the haves, exploit the working class people, the have-nots, for their self development. The influence and domination of the politician on the proletarians is portrayed through the character of K.N.M Pillai, the communist leader of Ayemenam, Kerala, does on Velutha, the consummate carpenter and untouchable, in this novel.

Ammu meets her future husband at her distant aunt’s wedding in Calcutta. Both fall in love and he conveys her love and her decision in selecting her life partner to her parents through letter.

She enters her married life with the thirst for familial love. Though Ammu's married life becomes pathetic and it depends on others later, she enjoyed her newly married life gladly with her husband in the beginning. But her dream becomes false and her happiness falls in the slippery slope of precarious life. Search for happiness becomes a wild goose chase for her because her husband become 'heavy drinker and a full-blown alcoholic with all of an alcoholic's deviousness and tragic charm'. When she confronts him about these trivial things, he does not explain anything, he just giggles, exasperating Ammu. He is summoned by Mr Hollick, his English manager, to his bungalow for a serious chat. Gathering his courage without any hesitation, he tells her that Mr Hollick wants her to meet in his bungalow.

Ammu and her children could not withstand themselves in their life with her husband. With great hope she comes back to her native place, Ayemenam with her children believing that she can nurture them. She hopes that she would get any clutch with the favour of her mother for her children but she could not get any positive climate to protect herself. Everybody in her family is trustful of protecting themselves. They heed their attention to their own subject. They are only pleasure seeking with maximum enjoyment of their life. Nobody is willing to share, at least consider, another one's burden.

Mammachi runs her pickle factory successfully with her independent endeavour. She runs it like a large kitchen with her own interest. Though the factory is a small one, it is a profitable enterprise. Ammu helps Mammachi and shares her work in it. She devotes herself for the progress of the factory having a thirst for familial welfare. Ammu's involvement is being gradually paralysed, But she never shows her discontent over his brother Chacko. She gently teases and inflicts his chauvinistic attitude.

"Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my factory, my pineapples, my pickles" Legally this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter had no claim to the property. Chacko told Rahel and Estha that Ammu had no Locusts stand I.

"Thanks to our wonderful male Chauvinist society", Ammu said. Chacko said, "What's yours is mine and What's mine is also mine". (57).

' In this novel, Roy shows the two extreme facets of Ammu, viz, aggressive and rebellious and struggling and sympathetic in the first and second part of her life. Roy proves herself that she is not only unique in portraying the agony and struggle of a motherhood through Ammu but also she appears unique in focusing child psychology. The reader is able to find the tenderness and greatness of child through the passage mentioned below which refers to Ammu who is travelling on bus along with her children in pensive mood with her guilt conscious in Velutha's cruel murder done by police with the appealing of her family members, deep-seated in her mind due to her love and sexual appetite in him. She expresses her feeling as:

He's dead 'Ammu whispered to him I've killed him.'

'Ayemenem,' Estha said quickly, before the conductor lost his temper. He took the money out Ammu's purse. The conductor gave him the tickets. Estha folded them carefully and put them in his pocket. Then he put his little arms around his rigid weeping mother.' (9)

The writer shows the character of Baby Kochamma the most villainous one. She is very careful about her own placement in the family. She does not only afford anyone to enter her own privacy but also utilizes the chief members of the family to enjoy her life in maximum level. She does not hesitate to dissuade anyone who remains an obstacle for her pleasure. Though she is an aged one, she still believes that she does not attain dotage, professing herself young. She does not feel for the destruction of a family. She is looking for every opportunity available in the family to suppress and bring them under her power. Her insulting proves herself that she has become perverted and malicious. She does not make up her mind healthy. Even in her very old age, her cruelty and sadism have only grown up well. It is envisioned apparently that Comrade Pillai does everything for his own family's progress particularly for his son Lenin. All his political spade work, his exploitation towards the working class people and dominating others particularly Chacko trying to paralyze the progress of his business are done for bringing his son to be an icon of political prodigy, becoming fermented politician, and grooming entrepreneur.

'He knows everything,' Comrade Pillai said. 'He is genius. Infront of visitors only he's quiet.'

'Comrade Pillai jiggled Lenin with his knees. 'Lenin Mon, tell Comrade Uncle the one Pappa taught you. Friends Romance Countrymen'

.....

Comrade Pillai tried to kickstart Shakespeare.

'Friends, Romance, Countrymen, lend me your - ?'

Lenin shouted from the yard, over the sound of a passing bus

I come to berry Caeser, not to praise him,

The evil that mendoo lives after them,

The goodisoft interred with their bones.(275)

The above said passage demonstrates not only an unabated thirst for political practice of Comrade Pillai but also Roy's literary handicraft in interpolating her literary ripeness in this novel. The reader is able to find his every approach in the society reflects only his **vested interest**. The writer uses the dream technique which witnesses Ammu's trepidation, panic, guilt conscious, disappointment and mental aberration. 'A thin red cow with a protruding pelvic bone appeared and swam straight out to sea without wetting her horns, without looking back.' She realizes that she would die very soon while the economic crisis is starving her hope. She has become too tired to live in the society since the bottom of her life is completely shattered by the male chauvinism. She has been psychologically affected. It has been done with the aftermath of Velutha's cruel death. The whole family as well as the society made mud-slinging on her although Chacko fulfils his 'needs' with the women labourers..

The ironical conditions in the novel bring women react against women. Baby Kochamma does not show any kind of sympathy towards them in the family. Even in at the time of Sophie mole's, Chacko's daughter's, funeral, She is searching for a better sari and a matching blouse for it in her room. Her perverted nature and merciless heart reveal then and there in the novel. 'Baby Kochamma looked flushed and excited. She loved not being the curse of ill feeling.' She wonders and encourages her car driver's challenge to kill a stray dog in her travelling. 'Every time a pye – dog strayed on to the road the driver made a sincere effort to kill it.' Ammu dies in a grimy room

in the Bharat lodge in Allepey where she had gone for a job interview as some one's secretary. She dies alone. Even the funeral ceremony is not conducted for her. Her body is disposed from the lodge covered with a cloth. Chacko takes her body. The priest is not willing to bury her with the religious custom. It is cremated in electric crematorium. In this novel the writer does not show any positive sign in Pappachi who spends his whole life for his scientific research, never heeds his attention to his family and is more ambitious for the success of his scientific study for getting popularity through this. He is very sensitive and beats Mammachi with a stool, a chair and the source which is available when he is in anger. Analyzing the two kinds of his manner, they could be found his **pansophia** and **schizophrenia** in him through his reaction.

The two tragic occurrences in the family, such as Velutha's cruel death owing to the affair with Ammu and Sophie Mole's death in the boat accident in the river make a serious attitudinal change among the family members. Mammachi as well as others get an unbearable shame through Ammu and earn a great loss of their family asset, Sophie Mole, considered by them, the paternal heiress. Even Margaret Kochamma's returning to her own country after her daughter's death makes a serious rupture in Chacko. He feels that he has earned emptiness in his life which has become meaningless one. Mammachi dies in such depressive state of masticating the great loss. Estha is doing a small business in Ayemenem numbly. Baby Kochamma is living in the big house, almost spending her days alone, in her very old age with longing for belongingness and familial affection. The ways of the family members in the family protecting themselves, heeding their attention to their own subject and seeking pleasure with maximum enjoyment in their lives blunt them to realize human value and the nobility of human life. It happens so owing to the lack of the quest for self so that their lives get mundering, dejection and great loss. Each character seems to be the personified entity of different attitudes. The writer has brought different dimensions of human feelings and their effects through the characters of this novel in a kaleidoscopic view to the readers such as love, lust, sincerity, honesty, sadism, malignity, outsmarting attitude, fancy, plutocracy, pansophia, antagonism, pride, selfishness, self-centered motive and vested interest. It can be understood that the characters of this novel do not victimize their own life due to their weakness but do it only by their own volunteer action. Though they are availed of the fecundity of opportunities in their fertile land to lead their life peacefully in all aspects, they spoil themselves as well as others due to the exceed of above said feelings. Ultimately their lives come to an end with thirst for familial love with tragic sentiment.

The readers are able to remember and realize the depth of Coleridge's great verses through their rich experience with reading this novel such as

*Water, water, everywhere
And all the boards did shrink
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink".*

Work Cited

Roy Arundhati, "The God Of Small Things", Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2002.
