

Airo National Research Journal

Volume XIII, ISSN: 2320-3714

March, 2018

63014

Impact Factor 0.75 to 3.19



UGC Approval Number

airo

NATIONAL JOURNAL

ISSN: 2321-3914

Impact Factor: 0.75 to 3.19

Journal No 63014

Volume XIII

A Multidisciplinary Indexed National Research Journal

WRITING STYLE OF ARUNDHATI ROY

Pallavi Parte

Research scholar swami Vivekananda University Sagar

Dr Sharda Singh

Associate professor

Declaration of Author: I hereby declare that the content of this research paper has been truly made by me including the title of the research paper/research article, and no serial sequence of any sentence has been copied through internet or any other source except references or some unavoidable essential or technical terms. In case of finding any patent or copy right content of any source or other author in my paper/article, I shall always be responsible for further clarification or any legal issues. For sole right content of different author or different source, which was unintentionally or intentionally used in this research paper shall immediately be removed from this journal and I shall be accountable for any further legal issues, and there will be no responsibility of Journal in any matter. If anyone has some issue related to the content of this research paper's copied or plagiarism content he/she may contact on my above mentioned email ID.

ABSTRACT

One of the dominant socio-political concerns in Arundhati's novel is the rigid caste-structure to be seen in India. This caste-oriented rigidity sometimes plays havoc with the innumerable innocent lives. The 'bigness' of 'big things' and 'big people' should be read in their generous and compassionate understanding of 'small things' and 'small people'. Unfortunately, in the present-day Indian society, this is not to be, and the inevitable consequence is tragic and claustrophobic. The weaker sections of our society - like the paravans. The scheduled castes and the have-nots - inescapably suffer a good deal in the process of caste-stratifications. Typical themes in Indian fiction are said to be "the caste system, social attitude, social and religious taboos, superstitions, notions superiority and inferiority".

Keywords: Women, Novel, Roy

1. INTRODUCTION

This is how Arundhati Roy begins to unfold the narrative of *The God of Small Things*. Typical though the description of the weather is of Kerala, in the novel, it serves the function of a metaphor of overgrowth, of over-ripeness which leads to decay and degeneration. Moreover, the description also serves as a reflection of the degeneration that has seeped into the Ayemenem House both with regard to its physical structure as well as the norms and values by which its members have lived. Rahel has come back to Ayemenem to see her brother Estha. She is thirty now-as old as her mother Ammu was when she died. With economy of words and concentration

of meaning so characteristic of her narrative style, Roy evokes a picture of tragic loss at the heart of the House.

The narrative focuses mainly on the happenings in Ayemenem House which, when the novel begins, is in a state of desolation and emptiness. The symbolic significance of the degeneration that has crept into the House can hardly be missed. The world of Nature reflects the decay that has overtaken the House. The *humid* days of the month of May, the *shrinking* over-ripe fruit, the *dissolute* blue-bottles humming vacuously in the fruity air are all part of that *over-ripeness* and rot which

descends on the old *empty* house on the hill with its *moss* and *dampness* and its wild *overgrown* garden, (emphasis added) Significantly, the eighty-three years old Baby Kochamma whose viciousness has been the cause of a great deal of the torment and oppression of Ammu-Estha-Rahel and Velutha is still alive.

Instead Roy writes with a linguistic stylistic exuberance which lends a flavour and colour, though artificial, of its own to the entire novel. She writes different to a great extent and in doing so breaks many of the accepted rules of language. The novel abounds in single word sentences, and paragraphs, mis-spellings, verbless sentences, capital at will etc.

Ideas come to Arundhati Roy like insects in the rains. Similes jostle each other, in measureless numbers and hustle her into making them talk loudly. Metaphors issue forth from her pen like incessant nectar drops from heaven. It is a whirlpool of Similes, Metaphors repetitions, parenthesis, Idylls, Rhyme and Rhythm, Music and Dance. , Mythology and Modernity, Poverty and Riches; poetry and prose, Monologues and soliloquies, pleasure and pain, sex and sensations, Love and Hate; past, present and future.

Arundhati's mind flashes forwards and backwards, jumps into the future and falls back into the past, which in fact pictures the present Heaven and Hell; Past; Present and Future all become one. Keats, in his odes, has given a Feast of colours' a Feast of sound, a Feast of Seasons- separate feasts. Arundhati out –Keats Keats and feeds us with sumptuous.



Feasts of all kinds on the same table simultaneously, like a Victorian Hostess serving different dishes but on the same platter- sweet, salty and Coconuts, It is all delicious. Roy writes in a Faulknerian style which is a combination of both a stream of consciousness novel and traditional or narrative style as it is used in *The Sound and Fury*.

By presenting two innocent children as responders to the tragedy resulting from the rigidity of petrified social mores nurtured by the patriarchal ideology of a caste-based culture that cultivates snobbery and violence to maintain social order, Arundhati Roy condemns and rejects the tyranny of this tradition for a story of her own. The anguish of the guilt stricken and grief-crazed children who are traumatized by the 'Terror' perpetuated by the adult world serves as a powerful language of rejection of this authoritarian system that has no place in it for dissent and for self-asserting individuals.

Arundhati Roy through the means of storytelling questions the system of powers and attempts to change it through the power embodied in literature. Kate Millet has pointed out: 'when a system of power is thoroughly in command, it has scarcely a need to speak itself aloud when its working is exposed and questioned it becomes not only subjected to discussion, but even to change'. It is very interesting to note that in the text Roy has carried out covertly the emasculation of men by women and also emasculation of woman but not in the conventional derogatory sense. Her women learn to think and act

independently and take on the role of protector but in the process do not sacrifice their feminine qualities.

Another dominant theme that gets focus in the novel is environmental problems. E.M. Forster who is often referred to as a reluctant traditionalist has admitted “oh dear, yes – the novel tells a story”. But felt that it’s most fundamental aspect “could be something different – melody, or perception of the truth...” (Forster). What is attempted in the present novel is a truthful account of the ills of the society.

The first reference to environmental problems we get in the very first chapter of the novel. Estha used to walk “along the river that smelled of shit and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils”. The novelist is here critical of the hands behind polluting the river and the policy of the government buying pesticides with World Bank, both of which will ultimately contribute in making the life of the people miserable.

As is well known, the patriarchal structure with its resulting class and gender hierarchy is a more or less universal phenomenon, which cuts across all nations, religions and races. However, in India, a further dimension was added to it with the origination of the caste system about 2,500 years ago. This system which is an integral part of Hinduism, divides the population into four major groups. The Brahmins, (Priestly caste) at the top, followed by the Kshatriya (warrior caste), then the Vaishya (commoners, usually



known as trading and artisan castes), and at the bottom the Sudra (agricultural labourers). Some of whom are beyond the pale of caste and are known as untouchables.

2. WRITING STYLE

The caste system is not only structural, but has a cultural dimension as well. At the structural level it consists of a hierarchy of in-marrying groups, organized into hereditary occupations. As a cultural system it comprises belief in karma (that the circumstances of birth depend on action in one’s previous life), “commitment to caste occupation and lifestyle, belief in the hereditary transmission of psychological traits associated with occupation, tolerance of distinct lifestyles for other castes, and a belief in a hierarchy of value along a scale of purity and pollution. In the scale of purity and pollutions, Brahmins are generally, but not always, the purest and Sudras the most polluted”. Thus, as against a “class” society which is characterized by personal and familial mobility, in a social structure based on the caste system, birth has a lethal effect on the life chances of an individual as it determines everything. Jason Cowley has pointed out: In his write up why we chose Arundhati, Jason Cowley has pointed out: a basic difference between Arundhati Roy and Salman Rushdie. While Salman Rushdie regards India as an exotic and fabulous land, Arundhati Roy lays stress on the fact that the life that is recreated so vividly and perhaps flamboyantly in *The God of Small Things* is, at bottom, the ordinary life of men,

women and children living in a village where everyone seems to know everyone and consequently no one can be ignored. What Arundhati Roy has created in *The God of Small Things* is the flux of life in a small community in Kerala where personal relations are intense and the anonymity and facelessness of a megapolis is just not possible. Her mode of writing is closer to Joyce Carol Oates's neo-realism rather than Salman Rushdie's magic realism (Singh).

It is a geographical fact that Ayemenem, Kottayam and its surrounding regions are inhabited by Syrian Christians in large numbers. The community adapts to English Language in a natural manner even while taking pride in its moral standards. The Ayemenem family of the novel too testifies to this fact. Having been a part and parcel of the milieu, culture and ethos of this area, Arundhati Roy is the most qualified person to probe into the human predicament of this region.

The narrative unravels through the eyes of the seven-years-old Rahel, one of the twins of Ammu, the central character. Obviously, this particular technique has been employed for two reasons. Firstly, it adds credibility to the details as Rahel, along with her twin brother, Estha, has been an active participant in the fictional drama. Secondly, since most of the story relates to her childhood, she presents an honest and uncorrupt view of the events.

The primary concern of the book is human relationship, particularly man-woman relationship. Arundhati Roy presents a tragic vision of life. A close study of the



love life of the characters belonging to the three generations of the Ayemenem House shows that love which is the founding stone of all other relationships, remains only an unfulfilled dream or just a fleeting experience for most of them. Familial ethic remains in conflict with the emotional urges of the individual. Marriage which seals the bond of love turns out to be a social obligation which has to be lived through for the generation which vows by the family code. However, the succeeding generation is governed by no such rigid ethical code and finds a loveless marriage a burden fit to be shrugged off. The trend continues in the third generation when marriage breaks off even before it develops into a family.

The novelist draws special attention to the fact that family which swears by male supremacy and which entrenches its familial code in the past is bound to come to woe sooner or later. The sacred façade of marriage either lacks harmony or comes crumbling down in such an imbalanced familial set-up. The inhuman treatment meted out to Ammu testified to the truth that inflexible ethical values which deprive the self of its autonomy, its longing for happiness result in tragedy. The Ayemenem House is a unique house. It has "Love Laws lay down who should be loved.

It's unique character reflects in the very structure: It was a grand old house, the Ayemenem House, but *aloof-looking*. As though it had little to do with the people that lived in it. Like an old man with rheumy eyes watching children play,

seeing only *transience* in their shrill elation and their whole-hearted commitment of life. We are given only a brief glimpse into the marital life of John Ipe. The focus shifts to Baby Kochamma and Pappachi, the two out of the seven children of John Ipe.

These two comprise the first generation which finds elaborate reference in the novel. The book can be a fertile ground for feminist critics as it amply demonstrates that women did not merit much freedom in the family code of the Ayemenem House. Male dominance in family matters stifled their voice even in personal matters like marriage. This is the reason why Baby Kochamma had to live the life of a spinster even though she secretly doted on Father Mulligan. Her clandestine love for the priest continues even after she achieves the status of a grandmother. Perhaps it is her spinsterhood or unfulfilled yearning for love that accounts for her treacherous nature.

Arundhati Roy clearly points out in her only novel the fatal effects of massive industrialization. The novel is a quest for truth in a corrupted, degenerated world where capitalism has taken shape in the form of globalization. The author overtly criticizes how hypocrisy and longing for power destroy the people who do not submit to the established and dominant norms and, instead, live in accordance with nature. Roy, by telling personal stories, questions the power structures and attempts to charge them through the power embodied in literature.



Patriarchy is the way that, power best functions and works on women children and the powerless. To begin with the family tree Rev. Fr. John Ipe had two children, Baby Kochamma and Pappachi, a “jealous Man”. Baby Kochamma decides to remain unmarried; remaining faithful to her love for father Mulligan and Pappachi marries Mammachi. Pappachi was an extremely jealous husband and couldn't tolerate the success of his wife, be it with the violin or the pickle factory.

3. DISCUSSION

When Mammachi's violinteacher Launsky Tieffenthal, made the mistake of telling him that his wife was exceptionally talented and had great potential for a concert, her lessons were abruptly discontinued. He used to beat his wife regularly and when Ammu grew up she became a witness and also a target of such beatings. She even started disregarding the father bear mother bear stories, she was given to read for, in her version, father Bear beat mother Bear with brass vases. Mother Bear suffered those beatings with mute resignation.

Roy examines how the power of money operates in the House and in the factory and how far it was responsible for the family's degeneration. She builds up a chain of cause and effect skillfully from the point when she traces Chacko's conversion to the communist movement during his undergraduate days when Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad, 'the flamboyant Brahmin high priest of Marxism' became Chacko's hero. Though not a card-holding member of the party,

Chacko had remained a committed supporter of its ideology, during the days when he was running the factory this self-proclaimed Marxist would first with the pretty women who worked in the factory and on the pretext of lecturing them on labour rights and trade union law, flirt with them shamelessly thus showing what Ammu rightly called “an Oxford avatar of the old zamindar mentality – a landlord forcing his attentions on women who depended on him for their livelihood”. Both Mammachi and the self-righteous Baby Kochamma did not see any contradiction between ‘Chacko’s Marxist mind and feudal libido.’

Mammachi went to the extent of building a separate entrance for objects of Chacko’s ‘Needs’ so that the factory women workers could enter Chacko’s room easily. The irony is that high caste people don’t have any untouchability in having sex with low caste women. She secretly gave them money which they accepted because they had young children and old parents to feed. The arrangement suited Mammachi because “a fee clarified things. Disjuncted sex from love, needs from Feelings

The feminist in Arundhati Roy takes stock of the situation by partially dwelling upon the theme of gender bias by referring to Mammachi’s discriminatory attitude towards Ammu. A daughter estranged from her husband is made to feel unwanted in her parent’s home whereas an estranged son not only receives warm welcome, he remains the rightful inheritor of the family fortune. Profligacy in him is encouraged in the name of “Man’s Needs” (268),



whereas identical behaviour in a girl decrees torture of being locked up in a room. What is desired and facilitated in case of a man is branded blasphemous and sinful in case of a girl as evident from Ammu – Velutha relationship. In fact, this is the only relationship which germinates from the innermost core of two human hearts.

Arundhati Roy powerfully portrays the miserable condition of the Paravans (Untouchables) in *The God of Small Things*. Velutha and Vellya Paapen, his father, underwent the most inhuman treatment; one can imagine a human being receiving at the hands of another human being. Though untouchables are more talented than others, they are being ill-treated because of their social background. For Velutha however, things were a little better. Unlike his elders, Velutha went to a school, albeit to a school for ‘Untouchables’ which Mammachi’s father-in-law had founded. Every afternoon after School Velutha worked with Johann Klein, a carpenter from a Carpenter’s Guild in Bavaria and learnt carpentry at which he became adept. Apart from carpentry skills, Velutha had a way with machines. He is also a good mechanic who mends radios, and water pumps and has a natural skill in handicraft. With all his talents and skills, Velutha is sneered upon by the touchable - both poor and rich - and kept at arm’s length by his Christian employers. If only he had not been a Paravan, he would have become an engineer. He was indispensable both in the House and in the “Paradise Pickles & Preserves” factory. All this gave

Velutha, so his father felt, an ‘unwarranted assurance’.

Velutha was hired as the factory carpenter and allowed to enter the factory premises and touch things that Touchables touched - a big step for a Paravan. Arundhati Roy vividly portrays the acute suffering and deep frustration of Dalits and Weaker sections in her novel. Kelan, Vellya Paapen, and Velutha are the representatives of such sections, precisely of the untouchables. The paravan Velutha, which means “White” in Malayalam, He is a carpenter who can create wonderful things with perfect craftsmanship. He is introduced in the very first chapter when he is shown sitting on a plank “bare-bodied and shining” whom we may call the male protagonist of the novel, is looked down upon and maltreated herein almost at every stage in his life. As a small boy, when he visits the Ayemenem House in the company of his father to deliver the coconuts plucked from the trees in the compound, they come from the back entrance; as a young man, he is suspiciously treated by Comrade K.N.M. Pillai for being a cardholder of the Communist Party; and later as a matured man, he is falsely implicated in a case of attempted rape of Ammukutty who actually loves him from the core of her heart and is beaten badly and dragged to the police station by the Touchable Policemen where he eventually breathes his last.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Along with gender-oppression, Roy comments on the colonization of the mind



which many Indians suffer from. The week that Sophie Mol, the blonde daughter of Chacko was to arrive, had been the “*What will Sophie Mol think?*” week”. Baby Kochamma makes it a rule to speak in English. So whenever the twins are caught speaking in Malayalam they are given written impositions: “*I will always speak in English. I will always speak in English. A hundred times each*”.

Skin-colour and race are seen to create a different power structure. A white skin is an ideal of beauty which leaves anyone with dark skin in a lower bracket. The impression that Sophie Mol leaves of herself is: “Hatted, bell-bottomed and Loved from the beginning” (186). This glorification of the West is seen in the whole family’s behaviour, especially in Baby Kochamma’s. The ‘Foreign Returnees’ are imagined to be looking scornfully at the visitors at the airport. “Look at the way they dressed! Surely they had more suitable airport wear! Why did Malayalees have such awful teeth?... Oho! Going to dogs India is”.

5. CONCLUSION

Roy portrays Velutha’s participation in communist party’s procession. Velutha, the communist worker, comes from the ranks as he belongs to the section of communists who are muscle power of the party and takes part in demonstrations. “Marching with a Red Flag... with angry veins in his neck” (71). The Second Chapter shows Velutha as an activist of the Travancore-Cochin Marxist Labour Union, which has three demands – an hour’s lunch-break in between a non-stop eleven

and a half hours' work, increase in the labourers' wages, and the removal of caste names showing the labourers' untouchability.

It is here for the first time we have an overt reference to the untouchables who do not want "to be addressed as Achoo Parayan, or Kelan Paravan, or Kuttan Pulayan, but just as Achoo, or Kelan, or Kuttan" (69). The untouchables cannot enter the house of the touchables. Living together in close proximity with each other, there is hardly any worthwhile human interaction between them: "Vellya Paapen feared for his younger son. He couldn't say what it was that frightened him. It was nothing that he had said, or done. It was not what he said but the way he said it. Not what he did, but the way he did it" (76).

Out of his love and concern for his son, Vellya Paapen continuously cautions him to mend his ways which results in a general air of unpleasantness between the father and the son. And one day he disappears and does not come back for four years. The rumour was that he was working on a building site for the Department of Welfare and Housing in Trivandrum. Another rumour was that he had become a Naxalite.

REFERENCES

- [1].Allot, Miriam. *Novelists on the Novel*, London: Routledge, 1957. 260.
- [2].Balvannanadhan, Aida. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, A



Study in the Multiple Narratives,
Published by Prestige Books, 2007.
57.

- [3].Bharat, Urbashi. *History Community and Forbidden Relationships in The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy the Novelist extraordinary. Edited by R.K. Dhawan, Published by Prestige Books 1999. 91.
- [4].Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1961.
- [5].Cowley, Jason. *Why We Chose Arundhati*. India Today Oct-27, 1997. 28.
- [6].Forster, E.M. *Aspects of The Novel*, Newyork : Hercourt, 1927. 45.