

## A Critical Probe into Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

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**Abstract:** The current literary study is a critical analysis of the novel *The God of Small Things* from various perspectives like the mystery of the word 'God', post-colonial impacts and author's attitude to the family bonding among the characters. The research was conducted with a descriptive approach. Data were collected from secondary sources. The researchers depicted the postcolonial attitude of the novelist through thematic analyses of the novel. The article is a critical probe into the characters of the novel *The God of Small Things* and their bonding. The authors have not chosen a topic centered on a particular character; instead, it dealt with the characters and the postcolonial theme of the entire novel. One character cannot express its importance in the novel without another character. Each character is responsible for turning another character's life, and this particular issue inspired the study's progression.

**Keywords:** Mystery, post-colonialism, family bonding, postcolonial impact

### INTRODUCTION

*The God of Small Things* evokes several ideas and thoughts about small things and the concept of the 'God' of small things. Roy's novel shows how history and culture affect individuals and society. A "Big God" controls the world's key events in the novel, including "vast, violent, circling, driving, ludicrous, insane, impossible, public sorrow". A "Small God" oversees the lives of people stuck in situations they can't control. This Small God is "cozy and contained, private and limited", watching over "Worst Things". Small God-dominated individuals withdraw from mass movements, but their abuse makes them "resilient and truly uncaring" (Dondero, 2006).

The novel discusses something significant about small things and ties them to God of small things' plan in a postcolonial framework with multiple facets. The novel makes the author famous, and it was awarded the Booker Prize due to its incredible plot and the skill with which the author Arundhati Roy displays her words with inventive structures. In this story, the authors explore how minor events occur in human existence, how they impact lives, and how humans are responsible for the happiness and suffering of others, acting as God of small things.

The representation of *The God of Small Things* story, which, if not for the perspective from which it is told, would be comparable to the plot of a classic formula novel, makes it a book with a distinct distinction from other works in its category and continuing popularity (Talwar, 2021).

The author aimed to highlight the characters with distinct personalities; the author also focused on the intellect, teaching, and caring about what children and family members learn from their environment in the novel and how they are interrelated.

## METHODOLOGY

Secondary data sources, journal articles, and critical essays were analyzed for the progression of the present study. The authors included personal reflections with the logic. The thematic analysis with a descriptive approach and conceptual analysis were supportive for this research work. The researchers collected different literature articles and critical compositions, visited websites to find related study materials to be acknowledged in the related topics, and managed essential journals to have technical information on the novel and the novelist and compose the paper more credibly.

## THE MYSTERY OF GOD OF SMALL THINGS IN THE NOVEL

*The God of Small Things* is a novel that narrates the narrative of an Indian family in a place in India named Aymanam and the various episodes and experiences that occurred inside the family. Several people throughout the work, but just a few receive the author's attention and are explored at length. Estha and Rahel, two key characters, are siblings. Here, many things in the story occurred throughout their childhood, and in some way, they were allowed to be responsible for those incidents, which might sound either cool or cruel.

First and foremost, the actual meaning of God and God's authority and responsibility must be understood. Islam's holy book, Al-Quran, makes it abundantly apparent that only one Almighty God named Allah (SWT); has all the powers and controls over everything; everything, no matter how large or tiny, is subject to his control. For instance, In the holy book Al-Quran, a Surah named Ikhlas offers descriptions of God's abilities. However, humans cannot blame Him for their evil deeds and thoughts because Almighty God has provided them with the same intellect and psychological powers (those who are not mentally disabled). Therefore, the responsibility for their deeds and thoughts rests entirely with individuals. There is no room for the fault on his part. In this tale, the family is the setting for all the events. The novel's author is perhaps (as we are not sure about her religious faith in personal life) a devotee of the Hindu faith. So, in the story, the article's writers believe the author of the book uses Hindu religious concepts to describe God. According to the author's knowledge of Hinduism, Hindus believe in multiple Gods and compare humans to God based on their good deeds and actions. After reading the work, the authors had difficulty identifying a specific God within the text. Therefore, the authors conducted extensive research on the novel from various viewpoints and points of view, ultimately concluding that only a few characters claim the title of God of small things throughout the novel. Few characters, such as Orangedrink-LemonDrink guy, Velutha, Estha, and Baby Kochamma, carry various rules. Regardless of how much time they spend in the novel's scenes, their rules and deeds are reflected throughout the novel's entire work.

In the novel, the molesting of Estha by the OrangeDrink-LemonDrink man at the movie theatre does not take a long time to occur, but the reflection lasts for a long time. As a result, the readers experience a change in Estha's perspective, Estha becomes scared psychologically; and he thinks OrangeDrink-LemonDrink man will come to kidnap him; that's why Estha searches for a safe place, and he finds and selects an abundant house as a safe place, and when the family crisis arises in another scene for another incident; Estha again choose that abundant house as a safe place; and when Estha and Rahel try to go to that place; Sophie Mol comes and engaged with them; and by the river, she was drowned. So, somehow OrangeDrink-LemonDrink man is involved indirectly with the death of Sophie Mol, even though the authors know it was an accident; but the source plan of that journey to that house begins as the result of his fear from molesting incident; Estha's psychology again choose the same place to keep himself safe in another different incident. So, somehow, OrangeDrink-LemonDrink man is the God of small things.

Velutha is not only an employee of the factory owned by Ammu's family but he is also involved in numerous issues, including an affair with Ammu, which is forbidden for a married lady. According to the writers, Velutha is the man who continues changing his masks randomly and sequentially. In different perspectives, he possesses distinct features. Regarding his relationship with Ammu, from

Ammu's perspective, he is not a negative-minded man. However, for Baby Kochamma, he is a highly dangerous and negative character, although Rahel views him as a pleasant individual.

Consequently, Velutha's character carries and reflects several distinct traits. Numerous occurrences around him and his actions make him the God of minor things. Here comes the post-colonialism context, such as, in the novel, during the time all the incidents take place, the post-colonialism winds have entered India. People are feeling refreshed by the winds, which creates a lite version of the heavily weighted Hindu caste system in the society, causing Ammu to consider moving forward with Velutha, who is the lowest in the lower class and is known as an "untouchable man." In another scene, an Orange Drink vendor has the opportunity to molest Estha due to the free movement of individuals of various classes in a single location. In the context of molestation, it is risky to have a single location where all people can spend their time.

Baby Kochamma is a typical follower of the caste system; she has no interest in forming relationships with those of a lower social class, and she has a rigid view of the bounds of a married lady. Therefore, she cannot accept the relationship between Ammu and Velutha. She is responsible for the drastic reversal in the lives of Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, and Estha due to her use of both fiction and reality in constructing a case. Therefore, according to the author, she is a God of minor things.

One of the novel's central characters, Estha, who claims the title of God of Small Things by his activities and actions, in the novel; unfortunately, Estha relates himself to the molesting episode by developing a dread of Orange Drink guy he unwittingly paves the way for Sophie Mol's murder. He unintentionally and indirectly assists Baby Kochamma in bringing fake charges against Velutha for the rape of his mother, kidnapping, and murder of Sophie Mol. His actions profoundly alter his life, his sister's life, Velutha's life, and Ammu's life.

### **IMPACT OF POST-COLONIALISM**

Roy's writing sensitizes us to the selective nature of narrative perspectives and 'ways of seeing' based on their personalities (Tickell, 2003). The novel's primary characters exhibit various qualities. Here, the authors discussed them briefly to determine what they gained and comment on whether they concur. It is a very intricate and crucial component of the research paper. Essential aspects of the story were discussed, and the authors attempted to illustrate postcolonial notions and pictures.

The focus should initially be on post-colonialism, its history, and how scholars define it from various perspectives. Said (1978) conducted extensive historical research to discuss post-colonialism. Therefore, he explained in his essay that what he wrote about Orientalism was influenced by images of post-colonialism. In his article, he argues that the orient is an entirely European construct after the colonial era. In this section, British rulers arrived and concentrated on changing the system to include their systems, cultures, and the general cultures and systems of the orient. They were successful in their aim, which is reflected in the novel. Numerous characters in the story are inspired by the thoughts and cultures of other characters.

Various issues and characteristics can be observed in colonizing regions, such as India, where numerous problems and characteristics are recognized as colonial outcomes. Numerous scholars have studied and commented on these characteristics. Spivak (1985-1988) is one of these individuals. As a woman who understands women psychologically and based her essay on her own experiences, thoughts, and experiments, she receives a slight advantage in writing essays about women. She attempts to focus on the background of women's subjugation in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak." Based on her experiences as orient, she presents it through the lens of economic and gender prejudice cast. She seeks a change in the current issue, urging East-West cooperation. She is fatigued by the distinction between English and Native American. She argues for altering the educational system in colonies, particularly the British educational system. She discusses labour recognition based on socialized capital. Gramsci's preoccupation with hegemony through politics and culture is reflected in her writing. She discusses the denial of the growth of Indian nationalism. She is also concerned about

gender bias. She discusses language issues in the orient as well as other topics. In the novel, the author states numerous things that parallel the plot of her fictional work. The author writes eloquently on postcolonial circumstances using fake people and fictitious plots in work. The author also says similar things about the orient. The article's authors also investigated where and how the author of the novel agrees with Edward Said and G.C. Spivak.

Roy contrasts western civilization with the Indian caste structure in his story. Similar to how Velutha is referred to as "untouchable" in the novel; it is typical for the Indian caste system to refer to a lower-class guy as "untouchable." However, because of the affair between Ammu and Velutha, Roy emphasizes the western culture of the characters. For example, the cultural disparities among Estha, Rahel, and Sophie. Although they are cousins, their outward behavior and choices are distinct due to their upbringing in different cultures.

Velutha and Ammu, as characters, have both lost their so-called identities and are experiencing an Identity crisis. Ammu was obliged to adhere to tradition in the novel (Prakash & Sujata, 2014).

whereas Velutha was forced to act against his will. Not only Velutha and Ammu but also Estha and Rahel have experienced an identity issue since childhood. They believe that they are one individual based on spiritual aspects, despite the fact that tradition suggests otherwise. In her novel, Roy discusses hybridity regarding issues with language, religion, racism, etc. Ammu and Velutha are both unaware of their religious limitations regarding the religious notion. At the same time, Estha and Rahel are also not devoted to their religion, as evidenced by their adult-aged thinking control. Language issues arise from the characters' natural and social settings; how and where they spend their time and live. Thus, discrepancies and issues occur in the framework of language; in the story, Velutha, Estha, Sophie Mol, and Baby Kochamma speak languages that are vastly dissimilar from one another, and these occasionally convey their thoughts and opposing concepts. The relationship between Estha, Rahel, Sofia, Margaret, and Chacko is profoundly racial. Sometimes, this racial idea causes problems, and occasionally it does not. Here, the winds of postcolonial theories, such as the bond between Margaret and Chacko, oppose racism entirely, and they fall in love. Not just them but also Rahel, who is sometimes opposed to postcolonial ideals and sometimes supportive of post-colonialism.

In the narrative, feminism crisis themes emerge in the different characters' many occurrences. The novel's author incorporates the themes of feminism crisis and the subjugation of women by male characters into her work, as evidenced by the scenes of women being treated as lesser worth and subjugated by male characters. In the narrative, a few female characters, including Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, and Ammu, are victimized by male figures. In the novel, female characters, such as Kochamma, sometimes become family heads and make family decisions; this reflects the feminist aim. But they cannot speak out against the harsh laws of Indian traditional society, which state that women cannot speak out against men and those men are the only decision-makers in the community, regardless of whether their actions are lawful or illegal (Prakash & Sujata, 2014).

Authors believe that Roy constructs her plot in this manner to convey the significance of feminism to the readership. Even though Arundhati Roy discusses female oppression and suppression in this novel with these female characters, her storylines and concepts demonstrate the dire consequences of not allowing women the freedom to do their deeds as they please. She intends to use her writing to illustrate the significance of promoting feminism. In *The God of Small Things*, the author writes for a Marxist concept, attempting to portray Marxism throughout the story. Social class raises are based on economics and how individuals maintain a quality of living.

In the narrative, there are two classes of individuals. Pappachi, Mammachi, Chacko, and Baby Kochamma were raised with upper-class traits; based on their way of life and thoughts. Ammu, Velutha, Rahel, and Estha, on the other hand, exemplify qualities of a lower social class due to their simple beliefs and approach to life. Although most of them are from the same family, the differences in their actions reflect the Marxist doctrine. In the novel, politics is introduced and given a position. The private life of the individual becomes political. The novelist depicts the characters in terms of their conduct within and outside the house and their relationships and perceptions based on their beliefs.

In the novel, love is reflected through the lens of post-colonialism; these reflections differ from character to character, relationship to relationship, and circumstance to circumstance. Few love interactions in the story, including romantic, family, and incest relationships, support postcolonial western conceptions, while others support Indian traditional concepts. Similarly, the love relationship between Velutha and Ammu is utterly contrary to Indian cultural norms (Maghsoudlou, 2014). It supports Western cultural norms, and the same is true for the love relationship between Rahel and Estha. They, despite being twins, fall for an incestuous relationship, which is entirely forbidden by Indian cultural norms (Maghsoudlou, 2014). Still, they do not care about this and instead focus on their desire to be happy and support western culture. In the drama of the case against Velutha, Baby Kochamma forces Velutha to lie about kidnapping the twins, raping Ammu, and murdering Sophie Mol, to capture Ammu from going far ahead with the relationship with Velutha, to keep safe Estha and Rahel from murdering issue of Sophie Mol.

### **ROY'S ATTITUDE TO FAMILY BONDING**

At this point, the authors compiled a few episodes from the novel to illustrate the significance of family bonds among the family members. This novel has significant familial interactions, conflicts, and warm, caring family scenes. For instance, the connection between Chacko and Margaret is characterized by a high degree of diversity; in one sense, it promotes western cultural views and rejects Indian traditional ideas. Chacko is an original Indian, and Margaret is an original Western; they fall in love and marry; this is the positive result of supporting western ideas; however, when Margaret becomes pregnant, she falls in love with another man and leaves Chacko; however, their relationship is not destroyed; when Margaret's lover dies, Chacko proposes that Margaret and Sophie Mol move to India to live with him. Here, the affectionate, emotional actions of Chacko are referred to as familial love. Perhaps he displays such devotion since his daughter is always in front of him. Or maybe he felt sadness for being separated from her, which is why, when the opportunity arises, he seizes it instantly and invites her to live with him. Again, the relationship between Mammachi and Pappachi, Ammu and Baba, and the relationship between Baby Kochamma and her boyfriend, Father Mulligan, are nearly identical from various angles and points of view (Maghsoudlou, 2014).

The author depicts a postcolonial society where male characters oppress female characters. None of the female characters enjoys pleasant times with their male companions (Maghsoudlou, 2014); their relationships do not develop or turn positive as Chacko and Margaret did before writing the novel. The researchers believe that Roy researched the customs of Indian communities. Because, as an Indian woman, she knows Indian women and their past from numerous perspectives like history, culture, and economy. However, the study depicted a history of colonization, patriarchy, and religious instability responsible for establishing various postcolonial attitudes, most notably the hybridization of disputed social groups like Ammu and Velutha.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study focused on the different characters with diverse personalities. The researchers concentrated on mind, teaching, and caring about what children and family members usually learn from their surroundings and how they are related. The novel involves human beings and does not exist for a specific class but all. It helps analyze various types of attributes and is necessary to appreciate the significance of humanity. Though the authors have chosen the topic based on the context of post-colonialism to discuss how post-colonialism is reflected in the novel through the characters' life stories, a variety of other issues related to post-colonialism and human psychology are yet to be explored.

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