

## MAJOR THEMES IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

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### Abstract

*This paper examines Major themes which exist in The God of Small Things written by Arundhati Roy. Her literature is neither a means of absconding reality nor a vehicle for showing off political, social, religious, and moral ideas. What differentiates Arundhati Roy from the other Indo-Anglican novelists is her capacity to transform the alienation experiences into the monument of living art.*

**Keywords:** *Childhood, Desire, love, Grotesque, Homecoming, Scandal, untouchability, Caste Society, human desperation, social evil, etc.*

### Introduction

Roy's father was a Hindu tea plantation manager and her mother was a Syrian Christian women's rights activist. Her parents divorced when she was two, and Roy moved with her mother and to Kerala, the setting of *The God of Small Things*. Roy studied architecture in Delhi, India and then acted in several independent films, and later married filmmaker Pradip Krishen. *The God of Small Things* is her first novel, but it immediately became an international success and won the Booker Prize in 1997. Since her first novel has written many nonfiction essays and has become an outspoken critic of the Indian government, the United States, and global policies of imperialism, capitalism, and nuclear war. She currently lives in Delhi and is working on a second novel.

The theme of painful childhood occurs much of the time in both the books. The word childhood, its related motifs and events happen over and over to reflect the suffering of childhood as the fundamental theme of the books. Roy presents the childhood of numerous characters in the novel; however, spotlight is on the twins, Estha and Rahel.

*Childhood tiptoed out. Silence slid in like a bolt.* (Roy, *the God of Small Things* 320).

In a society troubled with "Big things" such as the caste system, political relationship, and marriage, Roy straight expressed the reader to the "Small Things", These can be small creatures and their activities the "soft voice and rush of small lives" as well as secrets, promises, sins, and other emotional 'creatures' that people do not want to recognize. All of these things seem to have no place in the lives of characters like Baby Kochamma and Comrade Pillai. They want to struggle for culturally important such as honourable family and righteous political life. Because

"Small Things" are avoided, they must find refuge in a dark, secret place like the river and the History House, or the hearts of those willing to look after and defend them. It can be a good or bad thing to keep watch over "Small Things", Velutha, "*The God of Small Things*", slips from place invisible, and enjoying life's small happiness without giving attention to the "Big" fact that he is an Untouchable and should not be playing with the twins or sleeping with their mother. Velutha is also calls The God of Loss: a sad title that references the isolation that accompanies living along with the "Small Things". At the same time, identifying the great presence of "Small Things" means knowing that we are never alone; there is always someone watching, even if it is a flea or even a microbe. Rahel and Estha are the disciples of "*The God of Small Things*". They discover the world of the river and History House, where no one else challenge go. Because they are children and not s fixed world of "Big Things" as the adults. Yet they also bear the substance of the weight of the sad and dangerous "Small Things" that go on in their family's life: Estha's molestation, Rahel's fear that Ammu loves her a little less, the secret of what really happened to Sophie Mol, and the defeating Velutha, which they see with their own eyes. When Rahel and Estha make love as adults, they are finally letting go of their throughout action and set themselves free from the burden of their "Small Things".

### Untouchable

In this novel, *The God of Small Things*, the laws of India's caste system are conked out by the characters of Ammu and Velutha, an Untouchable or Paravan. Velutha works at the Paradise Pickles and preserves factory owned by Ammu's family. Because he is an Untouchable, the other workers rail against him, and he is rewarded less money for his work. Velutha's occurrence is disquieting to

many who believe to proceeds above his station. His father comments on this problem:

"Perhaps it was just a lack of hesitation. an unwarranted assurance. In the way, he walked. The way he held his head. The quiet way he offered suggestions without being asked. Or the quiet way in which he disregarded suggestions without appearing to rebel" (Roy, 73).

### The Grotesque

The ugly fills the story of *The God Small Things* from the very beginning. When Rahel imagines the ceiling – painter dying on the floor, “blood spilling figure his skill like a secret”. We learn later that this is Velutha, disappearing alone and wrongfully blamed in the police to do so by the characters. It is the sign of the ugly secrets that the family refuses to acknowledge, and since they are illegal from being acknowledged openly, they are forced to ooze into the world of “Small Things” through language, dreams, and daydreams. Two repeating grotesque images are of Velutha’s broken down body and Sophie Mol’s go down body. They are proverbial skeletons in the family’s closet, resolved to be imaginary but unable to be forgotten. Therefore they become horrid images that trouble the characters, especially Rahel and Estha, also sex and violence are connected grotesque way in the novel. The first instance of this amalgamation is in Estha’s molestation; his first sexual experience is a horrifying violation. And when it is safe on the riverbank, Ammu’s and Velutha’s affair is beautiful, but once it is discover, it quickly becomes associates with violent death. Finally, when Estha and Rahel make love, their incest is grotesque. Roy portrays the act of lovemaking as beautiful, but is made strange by the fact that Rahel and Estha are siblings – twins, no less – and that they are doing so out “hideous grief”. It is as to overcome all their grotesque secrets. Rahel and Estha must perform an act.

### Homecoming

The family members’ lives spin around Ayemenem even though practically all of them journey away from it and then make a homecoming trip. The most important homecomings are those of Estha and Rahel. Estha comes home because he has nowhere else to go, and deepest come up to home to be with him. They arrive home to the place of their childhood and their deepest uncertainties and pains, as well as to one another – they have not seen each other in thirty – one year. Throughout the story, we find the adult Rahel and Estha sharing space but not linking the

gap in their communication. When they finally break the rules and make love. They can finally feel as though and backing home even as they violate a community mean. For them, the location of Ayemenem is not home so much as the safe heaven inside Ayemenem that they represent for one another. Other characters such as Baby Kochamma and Chacko leave India study, but they too always end up back in Ayemenem. When Sophie and Margaret Kochamm arrive in Ayermnem, they are treats as though they are returning home. A cake is festoons with “Welcome Home Our Sophie Mol”, and legal return. Roy uses the theme of homecoming to explain that we cannot break out history and our roots. We can overlook it and consign it forbidden places like they are and what we have done in our lives. Nevertheless two characters who do not get to come home before their deaths are Ammu and Velutha. They die outside their worlds in foreign although they pay for their actions with their lives. They do escape the bounds of their roots, namely their castes.

### Scandal

Although they do their utmost to hide it, the family member’s lives are filling with scandals. The primary of these is Sophie Mol’s death. Somehow the shame of the incident is intensifying by the fact that Sophie is not native to Ayemenem, so her death there is far off out of the ordinary. Connected immediately to Sophie’s death are Ammu and Velutha’s affair. From the moment it is discovered, the issue goes from a secret experience of pleasure to an act punished by death. Even before the police all but kill Velutha, Vellya Papen suggests killing him with his bare hands and Mammachi banishes from her property on pain of death. Estha’s molestation by the Orange drink Lemondrink man is scandal acknowledged only by Rahel and Estha. There are also smaller scandals spraying the story, such as Velutha’s affiliation with the Communist Party and the question of whether Sophie Mol is Chacko’s legitimate childe. The characters almost rely on the scandal to make their lives interesting, but they continually banish scandals to the world of “Small Things” to the extent that remerge in unexpected, often grotesque ways.

### Mutability

One of the refrains Roy uses in *The God Small Things* is, “Things can change in a day”, and this phrase encapsulates the tumultuousness of the characters’ lives; when change happens to them. It is usually on a large and enduring scale. Specifically, the story’s three major deaths

– Sophie's Velutha's and Ammu's – mark major points of change in the novel is Estha's leaving Ayemenem to live with Babu, Estha's molestation by the Orange drink Lemon drink man, the first time that Ammu realizes her attraction to Velutha, and the first time they gather by the river and make love.

### Preservation

In contrast to her declaration that "Things can change in a day", Roy also uses *The God Small Things* to focus on the way that actions and facts are preserved. The world of "Small Things" is a quiet depot for those things that the world of "Big Things" finds unacceptable. These include small secrets and pains, like Ammu's knowledge that Ammu loves her a little less, bigger things like Estha's molestation by the orange drink lemon drink man, or things so huge that they hardly containable, like Ammu's and Velutha's issue and the story's three major deaths. Small things can change, but to look at the flip side of variability, they also can be preserved. Instead of being acknowledged and worked through, these types of socially – painful topics thereby being bottled up. The family's business, Paradise Pickles & Preserves represents the family's desire to keep the secrets and scandals out of sight. As long as these things are kept under glass as the preserves and pickles are, they pose no threat. It is worth that the family does not own a cleaning or finances operation – their business is not in crackdown or the miserable, but it also keeps their lives interesting. We see this especially with Baby Kochamma, who expose in moving up scandal under the false simulation of trying to eliminate it. It would be as hard pressed to reverse any of the family's scandals as turn a pickle back into an illegal jam back into a banana. Once the time has passed, and a secret or scandal has pickled secrets allow the character's lives to be fascinating but not wholly incriminating, painful, or understood. Unlike pickles though, pickled scandals have a way of gaining in pressure until they break open out from their containers.

### Cultural Loyalty

Roy has said that one of the things that brought her back to her childhood home of Ayemenem as the setting for her novel was the cultural variety she remembers successful amidst in her own life. When religions, cultures, and castes clash in the result, it cans variety from minor disturbances major acts of violence, as with Velutha's death. But there is also a assured beauty to such a kaleidoscopic range of people, which Roy suggests is

worth the struggle for overall cultural unity. To a certain extent, all of the family members are anglophiles; Chacko, Baby Kochamma, and Rahel all get their educations in the eastern tradition. None of them refuse their own culture; they are return to Ayemenem. When Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma arrive in India, the family goes to lengths to anticipate what western things might make them feel home. The tins are encouraged to symbol English songs, and a cake says "Welcome Home, our Sophie Mol" in English. In the same way, Comrade Pillai tries to electrify Chacko by having his children narrate English poetry. Another cultural aspect in Ayemenem is Communist movement, which involves Comrade Pillai, Chacko, and Velutha. Even though they are politically associated, the caste system trumps any sense of brotherhood that Comrade Pillai would have with Velutha. He refuses to help him because he is an Untouchable; although later he is happy to used Velutha's death as an apology to work up the workers of paradise Pickles & Preserves. In her imagery of the Cochin hotel and Kathakali dancers in the temple, Roy seems to mourn a certain cultural purity that is lose in Kerala's becoming a tourist location, "God's own Country". Historical building is turns into lounges and dining halls, and the beautiful and drawn – out the art of Kathakali is abridge suit tourists; taste and patience. Luckily, cultural realism is one of the "Small Things" preserved in heavens of Ayemenem such as the History House and the river.

### Conclusion

We can conclude that in *The Good of Small Things*, Roy presents an altercation between the big and the small as compared with the Laltain and Mombatti. Both 'Laltain' and 'Mombati' give us light, but the former is well fed and well protected and can bravely face the blowing winds while 'Mombati' has no glass, no protection and no support and it can easily be carry out by a rush of wind. Untouchables severely suffer the impact of castes, favouritism, social unfairness and insensitive police administration. This novel shows maladjustment between the God of Big things in terms of Pappachi, Kochamma, Chacto and Conrad Pillai and The God of small things in expressions of Ammu, Veplutha and Estha. Thus we see that untouchability is still being practice in Indian society. Arundhati Roy needs to be congratulated for exposing this foul play of postcolonial India to the entire world.

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