



DECODING THE LOUD ABSENCE OF SILENCE IN, “THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS” AND “THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS”

Geetanjali

Research Scholar

Department of English

Banaras Hindu University Varanasi

Contact number +917906629567

Email ID -ishellie92@gmail.com

JETIR

ABSTRACT

The paper shall attempt to note the undertones whose presence is so loud as to create a spacious room for the all the undercurrents of these stories to be on full display. ‘The God of Small Things’ and ‘The Ministry of Utmost Happiness’, both of the novels record their presence in the literary world with a bounding aftermath that enables the Novelist to put her sense of awareness in the light of dilapidated political scenario. The vivacious writing of the novelist explores into strenuous journey of the characters whose representation matters.

Keywords: Novels, Literature, Indian English Fiction

Arundhati Roy's overwhelming first novel, "The God of Small Things" opens with memories of a family grieving around a drowned child's coffin, there are plenty of other intimate horrors still to come, and they compete for the reader's sympathy with the furious energy of cats in a sack. Yet the quality of Ms. Roy's narration is so extraordinary -- at once so morally strenuous and so imaginatively supple -- that the reader remains enthralled all the way through to its agonizing finish.

This ambitious meditation on the decline and fall of an Indian family is part political fable, part psychological drama, part fairy tale, and it begins at its chronological end, in a landscape of extravagant ruin. When 31-year-old Rahel Kochamma returns to Ayemenem House, her former home in the south Indian state of Kerala, its elegant windows are coated with filth and its brass doorknobs dulled with grease; dead insects lie in the bottom of its empty vases. The only animated presence in the house seems to be great-aunt Baby

Kochamma's new television set -- in front of which she and her servant sit day after day, munching peanuts. Rahel has come back; to Ayemenem not to see her great-aunt, however, but because she has heard that her twin brother, Estha, has unexpectedly returned. Estha and Rahel were once inseparable, but now they have been apart for almost 25 years -- ever since the winter of 1969, when their English cousin, Sophie Mol, drowned in the river with their grandmother's silver thimble in her fist.

From the finest oeuvre of Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* has been proofreading the great and small ideas and discourse of society and individual specifically as we establish our footing on a brisker ground around us. From the voices of marginalised and the ones on the brink attempting to collect themselves to the ones who are navigating their way to themselves in the crowd of maddening huffs of political thrusts and societal clutches, Arundhati Roy maintains the relevance through her ideas and perspective. The vacancy of aesthetics thoughts is something that is not affordable by every human living on the contours of our society, when literacy of life teaches them only how to survive.

The opening scene of the novel finds itself towards the scorching end of the beginning of twins' un-lived lives witnessing the narrative of dominance in a world where various kinds of despair competed for primacy. The world as it unfolds in front of their eyes leaves a huge vacuum in their own. The leading forces fleeting along with untouched and timeless emotions struggling with the ideas of unsaid things when Ammu come to realize that Estha needs his father and decides that he should be with his father, when Rahel drifts into her marriage with a sliding consciousness or when the classification of society is numbingly sliced through the deep and shallow contours of small beings, while it only nibbles the big human beings only to be rested on the outlines of sphere of their survival spaces.

A society is a social group, while a culture is a society's system of common heritage. There can be no society without its culture and no culture without a society. Man is born as a social being; he attains sociality and becomes a cultured man by following certain rules made by the society. Prospect implies expectation of a particular event, condition, or development of definite interest or concern. Cultural discourse paves the way to rethinking of humanities as an encapsulating literature, history, anthropology, arts and other academics. Literature is the mirror that reflects our society. It limns the image of a society in a specific time and place. Literature is not born of inanity, it has some phenomena, worldviews and reasons that become the background of its present picture. India, with its painful experiences and traumas of colonization, is usually misconstrued as the country of uncritical faiths and unquestioned practices. Indian writers in English have written about its rich social, culture, and traditional values.

Culture and customs are at the centre of the social order in Indian communities. English fiction in India, from its very beginning has witnessed socio-cultural, economic, and political changes in the destiny of this nation. The development of the English novel in India lagged behind in comparison to poetry and drama. Before the 19th century, the Indian literatures had the romance, the tale, and the fable, but the novel as we understand it now is "the gift of the West". However, after Independence writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and others have written novels dealing with the ravages of caste system and the miserable plight of untouchables in the Indian society. India is undergoing incredible cultural transformation and reshaping itself from a homogeneous culture into a hybrid one. Arundhati Roy's work is intended to mean something to the disenfranchised constituency to

which she attempts to give a voice. "All these essays, they've been translated into every Indian language and sold, made into pamphlets. I've had people in villages telling me that they sleep with 'Walking with Comrades', Roy says.

Unlike most first novels, "The God of Small Things" is an anti-Bildungsroman, for Estha and Rahel have never properly grown up. Whatever the nature of their crimes, it is almost immediately apparent that they have never recovered from their punishments, and present-day Ayemenem -- with its toxic river fish and its breezes stinking of sewage -- seems to reflect their poisoned and blighted lives. The Ayemenem of the twins' aborted childhood, however, is a rich confusion of competing influences. Bearded Syrian priests swing their censers while kathakali dancers perform at the temple nearby; the Communists are splintering; the Untouchables are becoming politicized and "The Sound of Music" is wildly popular. Life has an edgy, unpredictable feel. The twins are only 7 years old in 1969, and -- affectionate, contentious, indefatigable -- they still live almost entirely in a world of their own making. They are at Ayemenem House because their proud and beautiful mother, Ammu, made the unforgivable mistake of marrying badly: when her husband began hitting the children as well as her, she returned, unwelcome, to her parents' home.

Ammu's status within the family is tenuous because of her marital disgrace, but a certain aura of eccentricity and defeat clings like a smell to all the residents of Ayemenem House, rendering them alternately comic, sympathetic and grotesque. There is the twins' elegant grandmother, Mammachi, with her skull permanently scarred from her dead husband's beatings and her bottle of Dior perfume carefully locked up in the safe. Then there is scheming Baby Kochamma, who once tried to become a nun but -- her faith inspired less by God than by a certain Father Mulligan -- lasted only a year in the convent. And there is the house servant, Kochu Maria, who thinks that Rahel is ridiculing her when she announces that Neil Armstrong has walked on the moon.

Finally, there is the twins' charming uncle, Chacko, the Oxford-educated Marxist who has returned from his failed marriage in England and taken over Mammachi's chutney business -- which, with cheerful ineptitude, he is running into the ground. Comrade Chacko means to organize a trade union for his workers, but he never quite gets around to it; instead, he philosophizes, flirts with his female employees and assembles tiny balsa airplanes that immediately plummet to the ground. Chacko commends his ex-wife, Margaret, for leaving him, but he pines for her and their little daughter, Sophie Mol, just the same.

It gradually becomes clear to the reader that only Velutha, an Untouchable who serves as the family carpenter, is competent enough to transform life rather than simply endure it -- but, of course, as he's an Untouchable, endurance is supposed to be all he's good for. Velutha fixes everything around Ayemenem House, from the factory's canning machine to the cherub fountain in Baby Kochamma's garden. He is both essential and taken for granted in the twins' existence, like breathing. He is "the God of Small Things."

Gender influx of the belligerent voices of twins and their inverted habitude in the focused and at the same time boundless edges of lifeless lives making a din in the afternoons and

nights of Ayemenem where Chacko resides as the man of the house after returning from England basking in inherited freedom of patriarchal legacy and engages himself into ego-preserving dominance over the female of the family and giving way to cruel time for almost every character. All of the female characters go under the psychological, societal torture born out of destructive implications of patriarchal setup of society consciously and unconsciously leaving the constraints making them crush and reducing themselves only to their tormented selves and eventually extracting the frustration and placing it on the other women of the family as a reconciliation to their self. The character of Baby Kochamma is a prime example of the oppressive and tattered folds of patriarchal set up of the society. The favorite daughter of reverend John Ipe The silent suffering is one thing that is shared by Ammu, Mammachi, Rahel. Ammu has been witnessing to beatings and thrashing upon her mother, Mammachi by Pappachi, her father. Subcutaneous inkling of issues running deep in our society revealing their neck-to-neck entanglement in the ongoing politics of gender, power, the harassment of Ammu in the police station. The open secret of trespassing the preestablished rules of society ingrained in us from the moment of realization of one's being in the relative scenario. Colonial repercussions embedded in the behaviours of the characters Pappachi, Chacko, mammachi, and the family's adoration of Margaret Kochamma, and Sophie Mol, Chacko's the English wife and daughter.

"Perhaps it's true that things can change in a day," Ms. Roy's narrator muses. "That a few dozen hours can affect the outcome of whole lifetimes. And that when they do, those few dozen hours, like the salvaged remains of a burned house -- the charred clock, the singed photograph, the scorched furniture -- must be resurrected from the ruins and examined. Preserved. Accounted for."⁽³⁾ And this is precisely Ms. Roy's undertaking as, throughout her book, she shuttles between the twins' past and present, continually angling in, crabwise, toward the night of Sophie Mol's death.

Nature's visibly rapid destructive turnout accentuates and takes back one into the past's comparatively better times when everything seemed easy and simple to get by. Though the gradual stimulation and acrid pattern of nature and melancholic setting of the novels gives way to an influx of constant hustle that the characters like Anjum, Ammu, Mammachi, Tilottma and Baby Kochamma find themselves in. The next underlining point is that the conscious awareness of being constantly looked at with implicit taunts and saving the space for survival becomes quite a struggle in the lives of the characters.

Refutations of love – Through story of ammu and velutha, and the brief interludes of children with their uncle Chacko also doesn't survive for a long period of time as the undertones of the novel attempt to snatch away few moments of love and affection lodged in the unwelcoming circumstances. There are several stories manifesting the turnout of each story in relation to society carrying out the imposed and lopsided rules whose application are rather unfair. Baby kochamma scribbles Father mulligan's name in her diary to vent her unfulfilled desire for him after losing the prospect of having it achieved. We along with Velutha and Ammu are very well aware of the consequences of transgressing the boundaries they are not supposed to.

Relationship of Ammu and Velutha's love to the bigger structure than the one they have no control over, comes under the light as seeping through intermittently and with a much

greater force every time. The societal positioning of caste inflicted human beings suffering the slow but inhuman rant bring forth the blotted body of the modern Indian society which flaunts and takes pride in its age long ritual of persecuting the souls who dare to cross their fringes they are not supposed to transgress. The construct of social hierarchy creates and demolishes the definitions of the rapport and intimacy they harbour towards each other and leads to the eventual un-loving situation that was building up and causing the gradual crumbling of the astringed space and all the familial closeness that comes by default of their being born in the family.

Shifting points of views of Estha and Rahel- As the novel is narrated through several points of views, this technique is rendered flawlessly delving into the layers of various issues and themes that unfolds strikingly each with more pressing emphasis. The themes of gender violence, caste violence, communist vogue of Kerala's political scenario, patriarchal folds of dominance relegating the big things into discernible eyes. The sexual assault with in the police station relegated to the reader through Rahel's view point and the whole situation of Sophie Mol's death pinned on the children of Ammu, domestic violence Mammachi bear all her married life by her husband all of these issues direct the and helm the narrative towards its eventual denouement. Estha and Rahel are accustomed to life under the umbrella of their elders' discontent; it is only after Chacko invites Margaret and Sophie Mol to come to India for Christmas that the twins gain a fresh appreciation for their second-class status. Baby Kochamma makes Estha and Rahel memorize a hymn and fines them whenever they speak in Malayalam instead of English. Kochu Maria bakes a great cake; Mammachi plays the violin and allows Sophie Mol to make off with her thimble. When Chacko angrily refers to the children as millstones around his neck, Rahel understands that her light-skinned cousin, on the other hand, has been "loved from the beginning." In the following weeks, the smouldering longings and resentments at Ayemenem House will be ignited by larger historical pressures -- the heady promises of Communism, the pieties of Christianity, the rigidities of India's caste system -- and combust with catastrophic results. And if the events surrounding the night of Sophie Mol's death form an intricate tale of crime and punishment, Ms. Roy's elaborate and circuitous reconstruction of those events is both a treasure hunt (for the story itself) and a court of appeals (perhaps all the witnesses were not heard; perhaps all the evidence was not considered).

Rendition of contemporary issues in the second novel of Arundhati Roy is as relevant as the need of our times. The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is a fiction with too many tales stacked with a relentless perseverance on their way to find a space to show their existence. The growing up of Aftab as a boy but the long haul of her life through attaining the self and realising her true being and living the way as she (Anjum) desires and eventually acquiring the state of distant aloofness where what people think or do doesn't bother her anymore. When she moves to the graveyard after she begins to feel out of the place and her long-standing stature at khwabgah loses its shine after a time and she experiences the disillusionment at many a turn of her life. When she finds herself on the receiving end of the rebukes and hate, tortuous beatings by the mob in Gujrat riots. Anjum finds herself at the margins of being the subject of more hate than being someone with God's favour. Though she has her own troubles, like everyone else in the novel and like all struggles these aren't mere their troubles. They are These characters are spokesperson for the people who

are left in the outskirts of the frame work of society. The ones inside the structural frame, consistently fighting for their survival, somewhere losing their own selves in an effort to live. As Anjum often muses and distances herself from the cascades of sorry state of affairs around her and as she finds her very existence being made fun of, ridiculed and derided before left along to herself as her mere entity was outside

Gender distress of Aftab/Anjum in ‘The Ministry of Utmost Happiness’ is quite emphatically visible in the rendering of the outlining and underlining of gender scenario through the characters novelist succeeds in accentuating the propounded belief and highlighting the set of psychologically imbued prescribed guide of instructions in the patriarchal society. Though the character of Anjum deviates from the troubling norms and while retaining her identity as she scorningly muses over the eccentricity of discriminatory laws that leaves a large amount of people on the margins enabling them to decapitate their own self. The dilemma of being stuck between the self and the other imposed identity and not able to measure out which is more discriminatory being the part of portions of society which is outside the structural forms of society, or being placed in a place where notional belief is having been endowed as the bringer of good luck and yet not finding oneself in the acceptable outlines. The anguish of Anjum comes from from her childhood to her being the queen of Khwabgah and adopting Zainab. Her parents’ settling the thoughts every day that God has deprived them of happiness they would have otherwise deserved. The constant turbulence in the valley and its consequences that are heavy and cruel for its people and their lives for they have witnessed the politically incorporated conspiracies and terroristic activities lending the Kashmiris a stage solely reserved for representational purposes albeit of cruel and gruesome examples that we are shown in news. The degradation of nature on the pretext of progress and the ingrained corruption in the bureaucracy hinged on the door of politics present the infiltrated system we have been contributing towards in various ways.

In the end, it is plausible to say that the defining factors into structuring the shape of underlying dysfunctional system enable the nurturing of the muted happiness and scarce representation of the people from marginalized spaces.

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