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**AN APPRECIATION TO ARUNDHATI ROY'S ‘THE  
GODOF SMALL THINGS’ IN THE PROSPECT OF SUBALTERN  
LITERATURE**

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Indian writers in English have played most significant role in the field of novel. The impact of westernization and industrialization are predominant in the Indian English literature during the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The novelist not only intensely felt Indian sensibility and a new consciousness. Indian authors concentrates mainly on social awareness, east west confrontation and search for roots. The passionate self exploration and burning quest for self – discovery lie at Indian fiction in English. The real challenge the writers of today face is the enforced homogenization and standardization of culture due to globalization. ‘Modernism’ in Indian writing takes the Indian women writers like Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Kamala Das and Shoba De across the globe.

Suzanna Arundhati Roy is one of front ranking novelist and a famous Indian English Fiction writer of India. She was awarded Booker prize for her first novel The God of small things. Arundhati Roy is an architect of building language and mouldings it in all shapes and sizes. She has given a strong political under – current or political satire at a certain level, Untouchability is her career. She describes certain people who come across our day to day life with their private worries and concerns.

Her linguistic uses are remarkable and rare. Roy uses words and sentences from regional languages and plenty Indian pronunciation of English in her novels and stories. Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of small things’ tells not one story but many stories encompassing three generations. Ammu is the central character around which the main story of the novel revolves. She possesses all the humanly quality. She is chaste virtuous, kind and merciful, obedient and pain staking. She suffocates in ayemenem house when she sees her pappachi beating her mother mammachi. Ammu thinks of an escape from such an atmosphere.

All day she dreamed of escaping from Aye Menem and the clutches of her ill – tempered father and bitter, long suffering mother. She hatched several wretched little plants. Eventually one worked pappachi agreed to let her spend the summer with distant aunt who lived in Calcutta (38-39).

During a wedding reception in Calcutta, she meets her future husband; he is an assistant manager in a Tea estate in Assam. Ammu does not like to go back to native place and she wrote to her parents. Ammu married Baba. After few months of her marriage she came to know that her husband was an acute alcoholic and she was suppressed on realizing the reality. For his secured service in the Tea – estate he taught to offer his boss bribery. Her husband agreed to his boss to offer Ammu for sexual relation. Ammu refused to oblige him. This creates hatred for her husband. She left for Aye Menem with her twin children. The novel projects the writers own life through Ammu's character. Ammu had a divine love for Velutha. He is an excellent carpenter. She came back to Ayemenam for her livelihood and education for her children. "A married daughter had no position in her parents' home. As for as divorced, daughter she had no position anywhere at all" (151).

Bad days take her to the final blow when Ammu relates her Velutha, a paravan. Untouchable velutha appears to be a symbol of protest. The protest in Ammu attracts the protest in Velutha. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the novel is the Dalit and their sufferings. Velutha is the representative of Dalit in the novel. Dalit's were a class of people who were not allowed to walk on the public roads and they were not allowed to carry umbrellas. "Mammachi also often said that if only he hadn't been a paravan, he might have become an engineer (75)". His relation with Ammu ultimately led to his tragic end. Velutha is a victim to his caste system. "Even a Dalit can become a Doctor or an Engineer if he is given an opportunity to take education and facilities" (109). Velutha, a Dalit youth had been in the habit of going to the Aye Menem house with his father to deliver coconuts. Paravan were never allowed to enter the house. They were not allowed to touch anything. Mammachi, Rahel's grandmother remembered a period in her childhood: "When paravan Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping in to a paravan's foot print (73-74).

Velutha does not sweep off his foot prints as his fore father's used to follow which was the command of their masters. In democratic country Dalit foot prints are erased by the established community. Dalit were required to discharge their duties and occupation within limitations of untouchability. The caste system was an outcome of religious belief. Caste system has given birth to bonded labour in India. Velutha feels Indian society consists of

varna, classes, castes, sub castes and sections etc. It is a mixed union of various faiths and beliefs, customs and traditions. Caste system encourages suppression of Dalit and enslaves them from one generation to another. One of the central themes of the novel revolves around the love law. The love of Ammu and Velutha violates these laws. Ammu did not surrender to her fate. In her divorced conditions, she declared her open love for Velutha. In this critical situation nobody supports Velutha when he was taken to the police custody and was severely beaten by the police. Ultimately he dies in the police custody. The sufferings of Velutha is very miserable.

Blood spilled from his skull like a secret. His face swollen and his head looked like pumpkin, too large and heavy for the slender stem. It grew from.....police boots stepped back from the rim of a pool of urine spreading from him, the bright bare of electric bulb reflected in it (319-320).

Velutha knew that not only their touch but even their shadow would cause pollution to their upper caste. His love for Ammu has no bound as a result he become the victim of her love. The commands and duties for Dalit's still continue from generation to generation. For centuries together, they were not allowed to enter into village during day time and for them use of roads, wells and such utilities of common use were entirely prohibited. In the novel Kochamma's dislike for lower caste people reveals when she plots a plan against Velutha to dismiss him from the factory. He was imprisoned by kottayam police charged and blamed in a rape case when Ammu register a complaint in police station, police refuse to lodge complaint. The caste system in India is so strong that Dalit's complaint are not registered in police station.

Paravan's like other untouchables were not allowed to walk on the public roads not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to put their mouths when they spoke divert their polluted breathe away from those whom their addressed. They were expected to crawl backwards with broom sweeping away their foot prints so that the Brahmins are Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping in to a Paravan footprint (74).

The mentality of upper cast people towards Dalit continues still even after the 65 years of independence, the social attitude or mentality never changed. Kochamma said: "How could you stand the smell? Haven't you noticed?. They have a particular smell, these paravans (190)". Velutha organises party to interact with the working classes of Ayemenem to make them conscious of their rights. He challenges: "People of the world.....be courageous dare to fight, defy difficulties and advance wave upon wave then the world will belong to the

people. Monster of all kinds shall be destroyed. you must demand what is yours (120).” The novel shows a patriarchal domination of a caste ridden structure where upper caste dominates over the dalit. Here Roy criticizes the social attitude of the society. “ It was not entirely his fault that he lived in the society where man’s death could be more profitable than his life had ever been (281)”.

Arundhati Roy has projected the Indian Dalit as a whole class in her novel. The presentation of caste consciousness in her novel is authentic, credible and realistic. It is an attempt to read closely Roy’s point of view regarding class and caste which are stated and implied in her works. Arundhati Roy has succeeded in representing a realistic picture of the Dalit. She also criticizes the urban and middle class for its hypocrisy and selfishness.

Roy commends how Velutha was not socially supposed to love Ammu – an upper caste lady and describes the situation in following words:

Ammu saw that he saw. She looked away – he did to. History fiends returned to claim them. To rewrap them in its old, scared pelt and drag them back to where the love away down who should be loved. And how much..... (177)”. Velutha died in the night – he whom the novelists calls, “The God of loss, The God of small things. He left no foot prints in sand no ripples in water, and no images in mirror (265)”. Ammu and Velutha violate the social order stick to the small things and reject the big things. Velutha dies and it is not death for the rest of them ‘just the end of the living’.

Untouchability today outlines the context in which untouchability practiced in the current scenario. It is an ancient form of discrimination based on caste which is complex and pervasive problem in all over India. This discrimination is pervasive that many Dalits came to believe that they are responsible for their own suffering and exclusion. Thus believing it to be there faith and in turn perpetuate the practice of untouchability. Like shameful secret a “hidden apartheid”. Untouchability remains an extremely sensitive issue in India. Its practice is never fully exported and, thus never fully understood.

Arundhati Roy deals with the lower class that represents the majority and covers a wider area in modern Indian society. Her novels deals with Indian Dalit turmoil’s, predicaments and frustrations and their pregnant silence. Roy reflects a convincing picture of the contemporary Dalit claws and their community. She implies that in spite of education and opportunities; dalits are the victims of the domestic injustice and customs of our society. She also feels that the writers of the contemporary world have to move away from historical romance and mythical stories. They were not criminals but they were treated as murderers and finally smashed and finished forever. Roy presents both the miserable plight of

untouchables and also the women trying to have fulfilment in life in patriarchal society. It is a novel and it is an instruction to the higher class or ruling class for the dalits voice.

God is no more in control of small things rather the small things have an ultimate power over God turning him to ‘‘The God of loss’’ (265). The idea of untouchability is explored at two levels in the novel. Firstly, we have socially untouchables or Paravan, who are never allowed basic human rights. Secondly, we have metaphoric untouchables in high castes. Here discrimination express itself in marginalizing the women in their personal and public life. Thus untouchability is still being practiced in Indian society. There has to some proper implementation of laws to curb this social discrimination. Arundhati Roy needs to be congratulated for exposing this foul play of postcolonial India to the entire world.

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