



THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VIEW OF REALITY

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ABSTRACT—This paper is an attempt to have a close scrutiny on the multi-dimensional view of reality depicted in the novel. Arundhati Roy in an interview rightly holds that “Fiction for me has been a way of trying to make sense of the world as I know it. It is located very close to me – the book. It is located in the village I grew up in. If I had to put it very simply, it is about trying to make the connections between the smallest of things and the biggest ones and to see how they fit together.”³

INTRODUCTION

The God of small things deals with the universal theme of social consciousness in terms of exposure of the tyranny and injustice to the untouchable, the insult and tribulations to the deserted and the defenseless in the police custody, and the class “discrimination prevalent in the society.

Rahel and Estha, the twins, have to pass through many ups and downs in the big Ayemenem house. Rahel develops a sense of isolation, suffocation and frigidity in the conservative family.

The novelist flings a harsh irony on the man’s domination over women. She seems to say that a woman is not a mere toy or an object of pleasure, a means of gratifying the men’s baser passion but the richest part of a man’s life. She also lashes out at the hypocritical moral code of society, which makes a great difference between men and women.

The glorification of childhood is not a new factor in literature. Rahel was nearly eleven years old when her loving mother died. As a child, she had seen almost all those things of the grown-up people which a child is not supposed to see e.g. the sufferings of her mother, the insults and abuses that were inflicted on her, the tortures she had been subjected to , her betrayal of Velutha in the police custody, the cold and indifferent attitude of the family members, etc. Perhaps this is why, all

through her life, these nightmarish experiences which she gathered in her childhood, haunt her like a ghost. She also remembers know she along with Estha was made instrumental by Baby Kochamma in doing wrong Velutha and to their mother. It is that memory, which Rahel is unable to root out from her mind.

Rahel is a child of broken home and a daughter of a divorcee-mother. She is devoid of love and affection that a child is supposed to get during her childhood. Though her mother has a great love for her but she is so helpless due to the cold and indifferent attitude of the family that she pays a little attention to Rahel. It is the psychology of a child that he always wants to get tender love and care from the grown-up people. But Rahel is devoid of all those childhood affections, she is seen haunted by all those unfulfilled desires.

Another important factor of the novel is portrayal of class antagonism and class exploitation; exposure of the tyranny and injustice to the deserted and defenceless, a forbidden relationship between the touchable and untouchable in the class-ridden society. The novelist is of the opinion that the society can achieve its goal successfully only when there is no gap between the poor and the rich, between the *dalit* and the possessed.

The most striking aspect of the novel is the treatment of details in the novel. Velutha, the



titanic figure, stands out as the representative of the untouchables in the novel. Velutha, just at the beginning of the novel is shown “bare bodied and shining sitting on a plank, swinging from the scaffolding in the high dome of the church, paintaing silver jets in a blue church sky”, The intention of the novelist to show ‘bare bodied’ gives us enough hints to indicate that the character she has introduced is certainly an untouchable.

In the second chapter of the novel, we know a little more about Velutha. The Marxist Labour Union had organized a march as part of a secretariat march to be organized, by their colleagues in Trivandrum to be followed by a presentation of the charter of people’s Demand to ‘Comrade EMS’. The main demand was to have an hour’s lunch break for the paddy workers. There was another demand to increase the women labourers ‘wages from Rs.1.25 to Rs.3 and the men laboureres’ from Rs.2.50 to Rs. 4.50 a day. A third demand was that the ‘untouchables’ should not be addressed by their caste names. This is the first time in the novel where a reference is made to the untouchables. They did not want “to be addressed as Achoolparavan, or Kelan Paravan, or Kutta, but just as Achool, or Kelan, or Kuttan.” Velutha emerges as the daring trade unionist as an untouchable fighting for the rights of the oppressed and the deserted and defenceless people.

Velutha, the untouchable boy used to go to the Ayemenem House (Ammu’s ancestral home) with his father to deliver coconuts plucked from the trees in the compound. These paravans were not allowed to enter the house. They were not allowed to anything that the “touchables” touched, Mammachi, Rahel’s grandmother even remembered time in her girlhood “when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom sweeping away the footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a paravan’s footprint.”

The novelist has heralded a revolutionary attitude” against the maltreatment of the untouchables. Velutha stands out as a very tall figure in the novel, it was his desire to “relieve” as a touchable that triggered the tragedy. But he could never a coward when he knew that his life was in danger. When he knew that his end was imminent, he cfointinude to remain a Gandhian, an apostle of non-violence. His loyalty to the party was

unquestionable and as a trade unionist he was committed to protect the rights of his fellow workers at any cost. On the whole we can very well say that velutha is certainly a creation unparalleled like a Shakespearean tragic hero.

Marxism, which upholds the cause of the deserted and defenceless, is now seen doing just the orthewise for what is meant for? Baby Kochamma rushed to the police station to explain the circumstances that had led to to the sudden dismissal of Velutha, the factory worker. “A few days aga he had tried to, force himself of her niece, she said. A divorcee with two childer.” It was to contain the scandal and salvage the family reputation that misrepresented the relationship between Ammu and Velutha. She never knew at that point of time that Ammu would go to the police station and try to set the record, straight. Police

Inspector Thomas Mathew was deeply concerned when the eat story that “what the Paravan had taken from the touchable kingdom had not seen snatched but given.” It seems Velutha had asserted that they could no longer kick them around like dogs.

The novelist has a unique gift of being able to see even the smallest, apparently meaning less details and create a complex, significant and aesthetically satisfying mosaic of life. She has structured her novel *The God Small Things* around sorts of small things. She focalizes on a whole world of small things, tiny creatures, small children, small happenings and small lives. She knows it well as to how the narrative found its form.

Little events, ordinary things, smashed. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of the story.

II.CONCLUSION

The world of *The God of Small Things* is a world in which ancient and modern, nature and culture, small and big appear against each other. As a matter of fact, the novel is not just a novel; it is a fundamental mode of social enquiry as well.

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