



## TREATMENT OF SEX AND LOVE IN ARUNDHATI ROY' S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

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### ABSTRACT

The word "SEX" has a charming significance. Everybody wants to feel the pleasure of sex but feels shy to talk openly about it. It is also a fact that sex is not merely a necessity ;it is the way of life. The desire for sex does not come outwardly but it is nature' call ,a basic need. It is as original and natural as hunger and sleeping. When I visited the most famous temples of south India ,The Konark Sun temple and caves of Ajanta –Ellora ,Khajuraho, I was surprised to see that the different gesture of sexual intercourse have been carved out on the entrance and walls. I meditated and accepted that our forefathers were more frank and dynamic to accept the essence of sex more than us. So present paper will try to establish the fact that sex is medium of **LIFE-FORCE** and divine order for regeneration and basic need of our body and mind. It also is the way to come closer ,first body to body, and then it brings soul to soul together. Therefore it is was not the sex but moral policing of society and gender discrimination that brought tragedy in lives of characters of "**The God Of Small Things**"

**KEYWORDS:** Schopenhaur, Sigmund Freud ,Circumstantial ,Sexuality, Fascinating ,Urge, Erotic, Paravan, Pornographic etc.

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Perhaps no other single work of fiction has made such a momentous impact in Indian English Literature in recent years as Arundhati Roy's " The God of Small Things." This novel won Britain Book Prize THE BOOKER MC. CONNELL in 1997. In her maiden novel ,Roy has presented many faces of sex directly or indirectly that influenced the lives of the most characters.

The novel is about love and hate ,marriage and divorce, conflict and struggle, men and women relationship and above all ,it is about sex and its impact on major characters.

Abu Abraham has remarked , "Respectable Syrian must feel that the book however ,maligns the community and particularly its women would make

love to an untouchable youth is clearly obscene." (BREAKING THE LOVE LAWS ,P-3)

Apart from this ,in the chorus of protesting voices, the relationship between Ammu and Velutha , and Estha and Rahel have produced elements of obscenity and vulgarity .Roy' treatment of sexuality is no more than an imitation of Euro-American fiction. The treatment of sexual experience and increasing frankness about normal and abnormal sex are presented as the final of both pleasure and truth.

Roy has been severely criticized for her portrayal of sexual aspects which look absurd and they could have been easily done away with. Their detailed description drew a lot of flak for her.

"Never before in Indian fiction in English has any novelist dealt so daringly and ingenuously with the theme of love and sex .For Roy ,sex ceases to be a "private matter" .She seems to have proclivity for the publicization of sexuality. All her references to sex in the novel which often degenerates to gentle and soft vulgarity is on her past a need to probe the reason for one' behaviour ,moods and attitudes. Through such sexual descriptions she probably tells herself :

"Every thing that might concern the interplay of innumerable pleasures ,sensations and thoughts which through the body and the soul had some affinity with sex." -S.P.SWAIN (ARUURDHATI ROY-THE-NOVELIST EXTRAORDINARY", PRESTIGE PVT.LTD .1999.)

Even Roy has to face obscenity charges in Kerala .A lawyer,Sabu Thomas, of the same state filed a case against Arundhati Roy' erotic pornography and sexual content in " The God Of Small Things." She defended herself by saying ;

"It is more important for me to argue that....on my territory. To state. My case for literature , and freedom of speech ....And that is my territory ,no matter what he is trying to do and what he is trying to say against my book. And I am not afraid , I'm capable of dealing with this and doing myself justice I am going to stake my claim.....It's so unfair ,the person who is accusing of obscenity only photocopied the last three pages of my books and presented them to the court."

Romantic love came in far sharp attacks.New investigations into the meaning of sex ;which gave to the nineteenth century, the philosophy of Schopenhauer and to the twentieth that of Freud, brought men to believe no more in love as it was expressed by their forefathers; but is what Mr. Bernard Shaw has styled THE LIFE FORCE. Shaw' theory of life –force goes a long way to explain his anti-romanticism. This LIFE FORCE is the only realty ,all else is merely circumstantial and unreal. The only fundamental reality is life force which operates as an upward drive as a basic instinct for betterment . Many of our social institutions and tradition are

unreal for they ignore the fundamental truth , rather they impede the working of the life force. Hence ,they must go. (A.C.WARD-PYGMALION ,THE ART OF BERNARD SHAW,PRINT.1999)

"I went to Catholic school and they basically just said don't have sex , but would never explain anything".-Khloe Kardashia (Hollywood actress)

Ammu ,one of tragic character,is a young widow who is neglected and cared less by everybody even by family members . Nobody cared about her. She has none with whom she can share her feelings and problems. She has her emotional and physical instincts unquenched and when she meets Velutha who unquestionably offers himself to her.

Velutha is an untouchable,a Paravan ,a dalit, gifted with many talents. He faced tragedy in his life when he gets attracted to Ammu which makes him sort of a trespasser into a touchable woman's world and a victim of a touchable woman's heart . Ammu and Velutha are both attracted to each other and indulge into sex on the bank of the river-Meenanchal beside the History House. Both Ammu and Velutha in their amorous advances into an uncertain destination . Their past was dark. Their future is uncertain . So ,they are living in the present forgetting doldrums of their lives.

"The life is here and now." -OSHO (MY FAVOURITE STORIES,SADHANA PUBLICATION,2015)

Sex is a fascinating subject because of the strong feeling involved because of its potential for pleasure , and because of the deeply held cultural beliefs surrounding. Sexual feelings may be defined as feelings with a very strong localized physical pleasure component ,or feeling that are closely connected with reproduction ;however the connection is not ordinarily a part of the feeling. Sexual feelings are closely connected towards love and attraction but these are not necessary for feelings to be sexual. As with all feelings ,the essence and identity of sexual feelings lies in the undertaking and perception of the feelings . As such sexual pleasure can not exist without an appropriate mental context.

Sexual conduct refers to conduct with a sufficient nexus to sexual feelings . Sex will be used to mean touching with intense sexual feelings

,especially touching by another person. This differs somewhat from the standard usage. The term "sexual intercourse" is used in the conventional way. The sexual experience will be the dominant feelings, and the physical world may appear less real. Sexual feelings are an average pleasurable, but even then, they are not just pleasure. Sexual feelings contain other components and may even include significant pain.

Sexual urges are generally caused by sex related thoughts and feelings and can be quite strong. Although sexual urges involve suffering or something closely related to suffering, they may have pleasurable aspects as well sex is generally enjoyable to both or all participants. Sex can be a source of happiness. In addition to directly causing happiness, sex can enrich ones' experience and promote human bonds. Sexual relationship with love and commitment are likely to be more fulfilling than anonymous purely sexual encounters. (DMYTRO, AN ESSAY ON SEX, web.mit.edu)

Arundhati Roy' description of sexual love can be compared with SHOURI DANIELS. But she does not deal much "Foreplay in Sex" which is the stuff of DANIELS' novels. Roy presentation of love scene is vivid, minutely and exaggerating. It was the passion of sex that Ammu crossed the Meenanchal river and went to other side near The History House to meet her admirer, Velutha.

On the other hand, Velutha, a Paravan and untouchable, knows very well about his position in the society. Even he knows his relation with Ammu will not bring any future or result. But it was the sexual desire or feeling towards Ammu, Velutha forgets his ownself, social fabrication, and moral policing and its fear.

"Sex is a problem because there it would seem that in that act there is complete absence of the self. In that moment you are happy because there is the cessation of self-consciousness, of the "me"; and desiring more of it—more of the abnegation of the self in which there is complete happiness, without the past or the future, demanding that complete happiness through full fusion, integration—naturally it becomes all important. Isn't that so?

Because it is something that gives me unadulterated joy, complete self-forgetfulness, I want more and more of it. Now, why do I want more of it? Because, everywhere else I am in conflict, everywhere else, at all the different levels of existence, there is the strengthening of the self. Economically, socially, religiously, there is the constant thickening of self-consciousness, which is conflict. After all you are self-conscious only when there is conflict. So, everywhere else we are in conflict. In all our relationships with property, with people, and with ideas there is conflict, pain, struggle, misery; but in this one act there is complete cessation of all that. Naturally you want more of it because it gives you happiness, while all the rest leads you to misery, turmoil, conflict, confusion, antagonism, worry, destruction; therefore, the sexual act becomes all-important." . -JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI (69 GREAT QUOTES ON SEX, www.clapurdue.edu, 2016)

The sexual portrayal or the scenes in the book are no doubt in abundance and have been criticized. The sexual love between Velutha and Ammu happens as follows:

"She went to him and laid the length of her body against his. He just stood there. He didn't touch her. He was shivering. Partly with cold. Partly terror. Partly aching desire. Despite his fear his body was prepared to take the bait. It wanted her. Urgently. His wetness wet her. She put her arms around him.

He tried to be rational. What's the worst thing that can happen?

I could lose everything. My job. My family. My livelihood. Everything.

She could hear the wild hammering of his heart.

She held him till it calmed down. Somewhat. She unbuttoned her shirt. They stood there. Skin to skin. Her brownness against his blackness. Her softness against his hardness. Her nut-brown breasts (that

wouldn't support a toothbrush ) against his smooth ebony chest. She smelled the river on him. His particular Paravan smell that so disgusted Baby Kochamma . Ammu put out her and tasted it in the hollow of his throat. On the lobe of his ear. She pulled his head down toward her and kissed his mouth. A cloudy kiss. A kiss that demanded a kiss-back. He kissed her back. First cautiously. Then urgently. Slowly his arms came up behind her. He stroked her back. Very gently. She could feel the skin on his palm. Rough . Callused. Sandpaper. He was careful not to hurt her. She could feel how soft she felt to him. She could feel herself through him. Her skin. The way her body existed only where he touched . The rest of her was smoke. She felt him shudder against her. His hands were on her haunches (that could support a whole array of toothbrush ), pulling her hips against his, to let her know how much he wanted her. Biology designed the dance. Terror timed it. Dictated the rhythm with which their bodies answered each other. As though they knew already that for each tremor of pleasure they would pay with an equal measure of pain. As though they knew that how far they went would be measured against how far they would be taken. So they held back. Tormented each other. Gave of each other slowly. But that only made it worse. It only raised the stakes. It only cost them more. Because it smoothed the wrinkles, the fumble and rush of unfamiliar love and roused them to fever pitch." (TGOST-67)

AGAIN,

".....An hour later Ammu disengaged herself gently.  
"I have to go."  
He said nothing, didn't move. He watched her dress. Only one thing mattered now. They knew that it was all they could ask of each other. The only thing. Ever." (TGOST-52)

Roy presentation of love scene between Velutha and Ammu can be compared with SAMUEL BECKETT as stated below:

"It was she made me acquainted with love. She went by peaceful name of Ruth I think, but I can't say for certain .Perhaps the name was Edith. She had a hole between her legs , oh not the bunghole I had always imagined , but a slit , and in this I put , or rather she put , my so-called virile member, not without difficulty, and I toiled and moiled until I discharged or gave up trying or was begged by her to stop. A mug's game in my opinion and tiring on top of that , in the long run. But I lent myself to it with a good enough grace , knowing it was love, she had told me so. She bent over the couch , because of her rheumatism, and in I went from behind . It was the only position hat she could bear , because of her lumbago. It seemed all right to me, for I had seen dogs and I was astonished when she confined that you could go about it differently. I wonder what she meant exactly . Perhaps after all she put me in her rectum. A matter of complete indifference to me, I needn't tell you. But is it true ,in the rectum."- Samuel Beckett (69 great quotes on Sex, [www.clapurdue.edu](http://www.clapurdue.edu), 2016)

The society has erroneous belief about the morality of sex , specifically the general opposition to sex .In part because of the apparently special and highly emotional nature of sex , many people hold with near-certainty belief about sex on flimsy ground and also suspend rational deliberation about sex. Societal misconceptions about sex are often self-persistent. A number of societies , including many in western civilization hold that sex-expect reproductive sex between married persons-is evil .In such belief individual tend to follow the society around them. Human Nature and romantic love, in particular has a tendency towards monogamy. This may cause sexual monogamy to be viewed as the best state. Moreover , human nature has a tendency towards disapproval of sex between a marriage partner and a third person . This may cause the

society to consider such relationship immoral .Treating sex outside marriage as evil may help to channel sexual energy towards families. Because of the strength of sexual feelings , people continue to have sex in the face of social opposition . Such defiance can increase the harshness of the societal intolerance as the society tries to take stronger measures.

Arundhati Roy does not portray sex nakedly but she insinuates and suggests more than what she literary describe . lets see the example how she presents Ammu's inner parts :

"He kissed her eyes. Her ears. Her breasts. Her belly. Her seven silver stretchmarks from her twins. The line of down that led from her navel to her dark triangle , that told him where she wanted him to go. The inside of her legs , where her skin was softest .The Carpenter's hands lifted her hips and an untouchable tongue touched the innermost part of her. Drank long and deep from the bowl of her."(TGOST-337)

Having the sexual relationship with Velutha , Ammu experiences the pleasured of being looked at ,of being it fondled and screwed , growing whole and complete .Velutha's attraction to her leads her to believe that she has not at length achieved the ecstasy of her essential femininity , of her growth and maturity into a full-fledged women . Without sex femininity is not complete , it has no meaning . Ammu feels that whatever the turmoil which was inside her, she is able to release it. As the author has put it:

"Ammu grew tired of their proprietary handling oh her . She wanted her body back she shrugged her children off the way a bitch shrugs off her pups when she had enough of them . She sat up and twisted her heir into a knot at the nape of her neck .Then she swung her legs off the bed, walked to the window and drew back the curtains." (TGOST-62)

It is a very surprising to read so much use of erotic descriptions in the novel. Probably Roy is dealing gender socialization , a process in which "women come to identify themselves as sexual beings , as beings that exist for men."; as being who wants to

satiate their feminine sexual urges by masculine force , even at times of oral sex.

"Ammu, naked now ,crouched over Velutha ,her mouth ....She slid further down , introducing herself to the rest of him. His neck .His nipples. His chocolate stomach. She sipped the last of the river from the hollow of his navel. She pressed the heat of erection against her eyelids. She tasted him, salty , in her mouth . He sat up and drew her back to him.She felt his belly tighten under her , hard as a board . She felt her wetness slipping on his skin. He took her nipple in his mouth and cradled her other breast in his calloused palm....she guided him into her."(TGOST-336)

Again the theme continued:

"She was as wide and deep as a river in spate. He sailed on her waters . She could feel him moving deeper and deeper into her. Frantic. Asking to be let in further. Further . Stopped only by the shape of her. The shape of him ...with a sobbing ,shuddering sigh, he drowned .. She lay against him. Their bodies slick with sweat"(TGOST-337)

Ammu's relationship with Velutha grew beyond boundaries .She loved him and crossed all limits. Their relationship exceeded to an extent that it came to be labeled as illicit.

"Even later ,on the thirteen nights that followed this one ,instinctively they stuck to the Small Things. The Big Things lurked inside . They knew that there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing . No future. So they stuck to the small things."(TGOST-338)

Again ,Roy gives more emphasis to portray the erotic scene. She wants to present Ammu's concupiscence , her sexual tryst and consummation with Velutha , an untouchable Parawan . Roy usage of insinuations, innuendoes and similes are superb and perfectly crafted as stated above .

A touch of sexuality and mind set-up of male dominating society can be seen when Ammu is called for investigation to inquire about the fabricated murder of Velutha, *The God Of Small*

Things in lock up. Inspector Matthew inquires to Ammu. Look at these delightful lines which are immediately followed by sexual frolic and instinct:

“Inspector Thomas Mathew’s moustaches bustled like the friendly AIR INDIA MAHARAJAH’S, but his eyes sly and greedy. “It’s little too late for all this, don’t you think?” he said.....

He stared at Ammu’s breasts as he spoke.... Then he tapped her breasts with his baton. Tap, Tap, Tap.

As, though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the ones that he wanted packed and delivered “(TGOST-7-8) MARXISM is based on social equality, brotherhood, biased free state. The cadres of Marxist party seem to maintain these ideology. But comrade K.N.M.Pillai is totally opposite what he is thought. The novelist also attacked on him for her fun and sexual fantasy:

“Comrade Pillai himself came out in the morning in a greying Artex vest, his balls silhouetted against his soft white mundu. He oiled himself with warm, peppered coconut oil, kneading his old, loose flesh, that stretched willingly off his bones, like chewing gum....Comrade Pillai would slap himself all over to get his circulation going. “(TGOST-13-14)

Rahel’s waywardness and almost fierce lack of ambition left her alone. She was also not invited to nice homes or noisy parties. Even her professors were a little wary of her—her bizarre, impractical building plans, presented on cheap brown paper, her indifference to their passionate critics. (TGOST-18)

“Six months later she was expelled after repeated complaints from senior girls. She was accused (quite rightly) of hiding behind doors and deliberately colliding with her behaviour (cajoled, caned, starved), she eventually admitted that she had done it to find out whether breasts hurt. In that Christian institution, breasts were not acknowledged. They weren’t supposed to exist, and if they didn’t could they hurt?” (TGOST-16)

Her behaviour can be explained with educational psychology of SIGMUND FREUD. Freud was one of the most influential psychiatrists of all time, and his work is among the most referred in the field of educational psychology. His most well-known work was his theory of unconscious mind and his theory that the primary motivation for all things in life is “SEX”

FREUD studies sexuality and psychosexual development very closely. His theory was that children go through five stages of sexual development: ORAL PHASE (fixation on the mouth due to nursing), ANAL STAGE (bowel and bladder elimination), PHALLIC STAGE (discovery of genitals, development of Oedipus complex explained below), LATENCY STAGE (Dormant sexual feelings) and GENITAL STAGE (Matured stage). During each of these stages of sexual development, children will acquire the necessary to become a well-adjusted adult. If a child stalls during a particular stage, called a FIXATION, it may cause problem in their adult life in terms of love, dating, marriage and study.

According to FREUD, from early childhood people repress (force out of conscious awareness) any desires or needs that are unacceptable to themselves or to society. The repressed feelings can cause personality disturbances, self-destructive behaviour or even physical symptoms. Mind has only a fixed amount of psychic energy or libido. This energy fuels the thought processes, perception, imagination, memory, and sexual urges, and it transfers from one form or function to another. This Libido develops through stages from birth to maturity.

We can see the example of homosexuality also in *The God Of Small Things*. In the novel a male (The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man) entices another male (Estha) into the act of self-abuse. There are no instances of forced sex or pornography. Roy depicts sex or pornography as a trivia, as a sport, as a pleasure. The meeting between Orangedrink Lemondrink man and Estha happens the incident of self-abuse /masturbation as follows-

“Now if you’ll kindly hold this for me,” the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said, handing Estha his penis through his soft white

muslin dhoti, "I'll get you your drink.  
Orange? Lemon?

Estha held it because he had to.

"Orange ? Lemon ?" the Man said,

"Lemonorange?"

"lemon, please," Estha said politely.

He got a cold bottle and a straw . So he held a bottle in one hand and a penis in the other. Hard , hot, veiny. Not a moonbeam.

The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man' hand closed over Estha's. His thumbnail was long like a woman's. He moved Estha's hand up and down. Firstly slowly. Then fastly.

The Lemondrink was cold and sweet. The penis hot and hard.

The piano keys were watching....

His hand closed tighter over Estha's.

Tight and sweaty .

And faster still.

Until the fast is faster

And the faster' fest. " (TGOST-103-104)

Therefore we can say that "Arundhati Roy has artistically carried off the socially banned sexual expressions into the realm of fun, frolic, and romance through her poetic prose. She depicts good sex, "vanilla sex-that is gentle," "touchyflye," side-by-side. In this sense it won't be wrong to call Arundhati Roy' The God Of Small Things as an effective feminist writing that offers a powerful expression of sexual experience in a social framework .Through such sexual writings Arundhati Roy ventilates her self-reflexive concern with the body since "a woman must continually watch herself....She has to survey everything she is and everything she does ....Women watch themselves being looked at....The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female....She turns herself into an object" (JOHN BERJER-46-47).....an object of beauty, a beautiful creation .

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. " -John Keats (History of English literature,Oxford university press.2008)

#### CONCLUSION

Therefore , we can say that Roy, Booker Prize Winner, is deeply involved with India's social problems and her fabrication. She has beautifully presented and focused on the great Indian

melodrama-sex and love (vice-versa).If we go through the novel , we can see that all the major characters are victims of love and sex and their impact on their lives. Lastly, the love relationship between Ammu and Velutha is the key factor in the novel, that brings about catastrophe and misfortune on all. Their sexual attraction and love is beautifully woven that represents a union that openly defies all socially constructed restrictions and leads to a sense of fulfillments and contentments. Amid the murderous terror of being captured and destroyed for ever , both Ammu and Velutha find momentary relief when they meet on the banks of the Meenachal for sexual passion and love forgetting the past and future . "...They knew that there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing. No future. So they stuck to the small things." (TGOST-338)

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