



THE DIRTY POT WITH BRIMMING LOVE IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S
THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

P.BENSI JANI

Research Scholar, Department of English, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli,
Tamil Nadu



P.BENSI JANI

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the concepts related to caste and society as depicted in *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy. As identified, the novel evaluates the Indian the social order and its estrangement from the culture and spirit of certain sections within it. It scrutinises on the unwarranted judgement casted on the dynamic hero of the novel Velutha. It also interrogates the bump of caste disaster that counteracts the society to value Velutha in spite of his understanding and aptitudes. However, the book also observes the chronological origins of these certainties and widens its thoughtful perceptions into the ways in which human anxiety and aspiration emerge from the limitations of a firmly embedded caste society.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

Only the depth could measure the ocean, only the valley could enhance majesty to the mountain, and fair as it is constantly Velutha, the pariah in the novel *The God of Small Things* could impress the entire narrative much brimmed with enormity, suggestion and corollaries. *The God of Small Things* is a novel that silently and unspeaking investigations out the 'Pariah romanticism' of Velutha and the undeserved reprimand of death on Roy's protagonist for the first account that he fits to the Dalit (considered as the lowest social group) community. However, there are copious novels that conveyance about love and affair among high and low, tamed and untamed, wealthy and poor, the novel on antithesis has said an untold tale conveying a productive note about Velutha within it. The plot of the novel continues with the depiction of Velutha as an Untouchable, a Dalit. His family has been waged for the Ipe family for generations. Velutha is an tremendously gifted and skilful carpenter and mechanic. His talent with refurbishing

the machinery makes him vital at the pickle factory, but results in bitterness and hatred from the other "touchable workers". Moreover the novel gives a vibrant account of why Velutha is being hated and on what basis?

This punishing form of discrimination and dogmatism was intensely rooted over eras in the Indian society preliminary from the time of Portuguese Colonialism during which Christianity; Roman Catholicism developed as a major faith in Kerala. The Additional verdict of Synod of Diamper controlled by Portuguese Cardinal of Goa, Aleixo de Menezes, permitted Untouchability to be performed by Christians of Kerala. The Portuguese soldiers who married Indian ladies and their descendants were held at high regard. In this period, fellows of the Untouchable Paravan or Paryan were not allowed to finger the members of upper castes or enter their households. *The God of Small Things* in this manner refers to the school for "Untouchables" constructed by the great-grandfather of the twins, Estha and

Rahel. However, as Roy points out, even though a numeral of Paravas and members of other low castes transformed to Christianity, they were made to have separate churches and thus sustained to be treated as "Untouchables". After Independence, they were deprived of government benefits created for "Untouchables" because legitimately, on document they were Christians and therefore casteless (Roy 71).

The word 'caste' is derivative from the Portuguese 'casta', which signifies class, community, or category. Castes are hierarchical, termed, endogamous people, and involvement in a specific caste originates through genetic. Corresponding to the Hindu revered scripts of the Rig Veda, there were four chief castes and each caste performed a role in sustaining communal life. "Brahmins were the priests; Kshatriyas, were warriors and rulers; Vaisyas were landowners and merchants; and Sudras were artisans and servants (Heitzman 267)". According to the data of Manu a nuptial between a Brahmin female and a Sudra male would result in a "Candala", who is described as "the lowest of men" and shares many of the attributes of the contemporary "Untouchable" (Moffit 34). Michael Moffit inscribes that earliest documented bases from the South propose the survival of equally categorised human relations and strains the traits of existing South Indian "Untouchables" were apparently 1500 years ago in the Sangam period (37). "Untouchables are generally associated with professions such as leather workers, butchers, launderers, and latrine cleaners (Heitzman 267)".

Arundhati Roy's novel displays how awfully painful such a classification can be as the authoritarians were settlers from Persia and Iraq throughout the rule of Dravidian-Tamil king Ayyanadikal Thiruvadikal in the ninth century as stated in the Tharisapalli plates. Along with the caste structure, readers understand an economic status struggle. The Ipes are believed to be the upper class. They are factory proprietors, the governing class. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma would not debase themselves to mingle with those of an inferior class. Even Kochu Maria, who has been with them for years, will permanently be a servant of an inferior class. However, Roy spectacles that it

is not Velutha alone is hated but his people too. In spite of his intellect, tremendously skilled character the novel exclaims on the absence of appreciation and sarcastically interrogates on how the admiration can be expected or poured out on a 'dirty pot' brimming with knowledge and love. The response is always 'never' for all except Rahel, Estha and Ammu who respected Velutha all over in the novel.

Despite his Outcast position it is Rahel and Estha form an improbable tie with Velutha. It is her children's affection for Velutha that grounds Ammu to recognise her fascination towards him and in due course, she approaches him to "love by night the man her children love by day". They instigate a short-lived issue that concludes in catastrophe for the family. It is problematical to name a part of Velutha's life that is moulded by his community status or radical beliefs. His affair with Ammu is possibly the most significant instance. As a kid, Velutha used to craft little wooden toys for Ammu, though he would have to leave them in her stretched hand so he wouldn't lay a hand on her. In time she stopped flattening her hand out, and by letting him to touch her, Ammu shattered down the social barricades that boundary them. Even though Ammu comes to understand that she is in love with Velutha, yet she cautions Estha and Rahel not to get occupied too much with him, because she is aware that it can only direct to difficulty. She has a tough time telling herself the same thing though, she takes in just how, well, zealous and vigorous he is:

She saw the ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach grow taught and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed – so quietly, from a flat-muscled boy's body into a man's body. Contoured and hard. A swimmer's body. A swimmer-carpenter's body. Polished with a high-wax body polish. He had high cheekbones and a white, sudden smile. (Roy 80-81)

Velutha collects the fury of society and account because he dares the communal beliefs vis-à-vis the caste system. Even though he is an Outcast, Velutha has not only gained an tutelage but is qualified as an "accomplished carpenter" which provokes the envy

of other touchable workers in the pickle factory (75). In turn of his devotion and astuteness, he is paid less than all other workers by Mammachi even as she remarks that his "remarkable facility with his hands" could have made him "an engineer" had he not been a "Paravan" (75). Not only does Velutha insurgent in the private scope against the upcoming that history and society have in stock for him, but he is also a cardholder of the Communist party, "a Naxalite"(77). Velutha's intellects and intelligence cross the restrictions laid dejected by Indian history and society where Untouchables are considered as unessential, inexpert labourers like Velutha's father Vellya Paapen, who are born to only attend the touchable. Not only does Velutha contravene social limitations by his "lack of hesitation" and "unwarranted assurance" considered "insolence" in a Paravan, it is this "sureness" that leads to his friendship with Estha and Rahel and later forbidden relationship he has with Ammu (78).

Velutha bears a resemblance to a tragic hero. He transmits the characteristic of a catastrophic hero. But his only flaw is his unavoidable belonging of Pariah community which is deceived, miserable and forbidden by his own social people. But earnestly, Velutha's relationship with Ammu shows us the means he chooses to neglect communal systems in prefer of love, and by what means this decision made his crucial catastrophe. Velutha, by the readers norm, does not do anything erroneous by loving Ammu, and vice versa. Yet, the readers perceive how his downcast social status tolerates him to become an stooge. The police regret a little for inhumanly thrashing him. The narrator does not just show us, but also tells us that Velutha does not deserve what he gets. His end is formed by his social class, just as his life was.

Ammu and Velutha exemplify the passionate version in the book. Ammu and Velutha despite extreme caste variance engage in love and affair. Ammu and Velutha's sensual craving delivers a perfect spot for drawing panoptic setups in Indian society. The affection of Velutha and Ammu typifies how "the value scales which serve to classify the world be modified so that the family boundaries which organise people into societies, caste and families have to be questioned, moved or even

removed (Cabaret 75)". The only way to contain their love is to literally separate Ammu and Velutha by locking Ammu in her room (Roy 239). Essentially the two are secluded, Velutha physically leaving town until proper punishment can be melted out, where Ammu gets locked up in the room. When Velutha and Ammu die, the scourge is gone and will not be nor spread neither bothered. As Brinda Bose contends, the Ammu- Velutha relationship must end in death because while the affair is conducted secretly, it is also done so in full visibility (67). While Ammu's death is grounded on her expulsion, isolation and the dropped love, Velutha's death is a disastrous consequence of his caste restrictions. The caste system builds recognising causes of supremacy effortless because the Outcasts "were not allowed to walk on public roads, not allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas," and "They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke (Roy 71)."

Velutha's steady assimilation of incomplete privileges of Outcasts terrorises the supremacy recognised by the love verdict and the caste structure. So Velutha must be eliminated and he is. Ammu and Velutha's vibrant yearning to be with each other "challenges monolithic social norms and becomes a matter of life and death" (Lanone 130). Although their love cannot be seen, the individual watchers make their presence known to Ammu and Velutha: "If I find you on my property tomorrow I'll have you castrated like the Pariah dog that you are! I'll have you killed!" (Roy 269). Mammach and Baby Kochamma are the spectators of Ammu and Velutha. Mammach not only obviously lets Velutha recognises that he is in observance by her (captivating since she is nearly blind) but it is the power she has to make quick castigation due to his caste. And Velutha's death speaks to how "change is one thing. Acceptance is another" (269). Velutha is "highly intelligent", an outstanding carpenter with an engineer's mind, but he is also "The God of loss", he loses Ammu, his love and the twins. *The God of Small Things* "He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no images in mirrors" (265).

The narrative declares that the recognition is constantly refused when it come in terms with the Untouchable community, the betrayed community.

It also examines the historic roots of these realities and develops profound insight into the ways in which human desperation and desire emerge from the precincts of firmly entrenched society. Arundati Roy finds the greatest amount of importance within topics that are in the grittiest of forms within human nature and society. Roy's characters are inundated by the "big things" of the world which society feels possesses the most importance. Within Ammu's guilty love for Velutha to the incestuous love making between Rahel and Estha, Roy focuses on the things in life which are shunned by society. If such things were not forbidden as they are Roy feels that they will not be diminished. This being the case, what is often rejected by those blind standards set for them is most important for those who represent the "small things." similarly, what is most important to some is not even considered by the rest essentially having a source of great beauty be entwined within a network of ugliness. Starting with the dream Ammu has of the one armed man, it was quite obvious that Roy's intent was to touch upon just how outlawed sex is within the Kerala society.

The want for a sexual connection is barely considered when pairing two well-off families of outstanding prowess in society. Even though the marriage between Ammu and Babu was not an arranged one the pairing of their families resulted in a small social climb for both. Going back to Ammu's dream the scenes between herself and the one armed man was almost beautiful. Water has always been a symbol of purity and when something as forbidden as sex is placed within this purity, or what is perceived as purity, the beauty becomes spoiled, ruined. For those who live in the world of "big things" the love affair between Ammu and Velutha is a great shame, for an Untouchable cannot possibly be worthy of one of a higher class. Yet for those who reside in the world of "small things" the true love felt between Ammu and Velutha is what makes the world beautiful. When looking upon Velutha, he is an Untouchable, a minority. Yet his love for Rahel and Estha was one of the higher virtues a man can own. Again the premise of love in the form of ugliness is identical. The love affair set on the shore of a river is almost magical. Yet when the affair is discovered the river becomes a place of

pain and death. Sophie Mol drowns within the same waters Velutha finds peace in and is also the setting where the police savagely beat Velutha.

A interrelated subservience development is palpable in the interactions amid the Outcast and Upper class in Ayemenen. Vellya Paapen is an instance of an Untouchable so obliged to the touchable class that he is ready to kill his son when he learns that his son has shattered the most significant instruction of caste division – that there be no inter-class carnal relations. In this measure Untouchable replicates how Untouchables have adopted class dissection. In spite of the most firm and brutal endeavours to sustain the communal convention, the prohibited love is such an influential and overwhelming strength that it cannot be limited by any conventional social code. And the love in the novel is reliably linked to damage, death and grief. Also because all the quixotic love in the novel transmits carefully to political beliefs and history, it is substantial that Roy is emphasising the interconnectedness of individual aspiration to a great themes of history and social environments.

Velutha, the virtuous of every one and is the one who is the most betrayed by the communal circumstances. Estha agonises guiltiness for years later, possibly since his betrayal was unintended. Roy stages both the depressed predicament of Outcasts and also the struggle of a woman straining to own completion in existence in a patriarchal high society. Velutha, the God of small Things, the pariah and the recluse can never coexist subtle with the "touchable" societies for as long as the dishonour of untouchability is devoted to him and innumerable others like him. Ammu, another "Untouchable" within the "touchable" cannot follow happiness because undertaking so terrorizes the surviving order, and the society takes every potential pace to halt the transformation.

However Ammu be short of a college edification or every ceremonial acquaintance to the intellectual world, she is "just that sort of animal" who fights against the injustice she perceives in the world (180). It is Ammu's "lofty sense of injustice and the mulish reckless streak that develops in someone small who has been bullied all their lives by someone Big"(Rao 180), that guided her to

contravene on social customs and traditions by plunging in love with Velutha, an Untouchable, thus contravening both ethical and caste restrictions indicated by society and history (40). Roy depicts a cynical portrait of the upper classes. With the death of Velutha, the ultimate spark of optimism vanishes. He is alleged of abducting the twins, and Estha falsely witnesses it. Estha turn out to be a mute being whose unintelligible "Yes" served to confirm a blameless man guilty. Roy states her disappointment with the social circumstances of the postcolonial domain in which the Untouchables of the past still challenge an aggressive society that does not let them survive as unrestricted and liberated individuals.

To encapsulate it would be best said that Roy exposed One of the major issues that is awarded in this outstanding novel is that of caste and social stratification. Velutha is an "untouchable", a Dalit who inhabits the bottommost social layer of Indian society. Though Velutha is a man with most potential abilities and calibre, he is marginalised and made a stooge on motivation for being a Dalit, an outcast. In spite of being erased from the society, Velutha has devoted himself to be a vibrant and significant protagonist and can never be wiped out in the mind of the readers of all time.

WORK CONSULTED

Primary source

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New York: Harper Perennials, 1997. Print.

Secondary sources

Bose, Brinda. "In Desire and in Death: Eroticism as Politics in Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things." *ARIEL* 29.2 (April 1998): 59-71. Print.

Cabaret, Florence. "Classification in *The God of Small Things*." *Reading Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*. Ed. Carole and Jean-Pierre Durix. Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2002. 75-90. Print.

Lanone, Catherine. "Seeing the World Through Red-Coloured Glasses." *Reading Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*. Ed. Carole and Jean-Pierre Durix. Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2002. 125-143. Print.

Heitzman, James. *Federal Research Division India: A Country Study*. Eds. Robert L. Warden. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton UP, 1995.

Moffit, Michael. *An Untouchable Community in South India*. Princeton, N. J. :Princeton UP, 1979. 34-37. Print.

Rao, Jaya Lakshmi. "Bapsi Sidhwa's Ice-Candy-Man and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*: Some Interesting Parallels." *The Postcolonial Web*. 180. Web. 2005.

Alam, Khurshid. "Untouchables in *The God of Small Things*".
<<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/india/roy/alum1.html>>. N.p. 17 Jan.2005. Web. 20 Mar. 2016.