CHAPTER – IV
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THE TYRANNICAL FORCES: VICTIMS TURN VICTIMISERS

Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) is a journey into secret places. The secret places burrow deeper into the recess with only terror as a possible end. It is a book of secrets, of secreting away. In *The God of Small Things* two prominent motifs recur, that of the crypt, and of secrets. There is an intimate link between the two. Each constitutes, and in turn is constituted by the other. It is simultaneously both inside and outside, and neither inside nor outside. It does not present itself. There may be certain external signs or marks suggesting its presence. But that is not a rule. A secret is entombed, concealed and, like the crypt, does not present itself. A secret is hence encrypted.

A woman is generally more emotional, sensitive and tender though she is also endowed with a greater power of endurance and patience. She can be viewed in numerous ways, but none of her facets is as overwhelming as the physical attraction she arouses for herself in the heart of the male sex. In this field of love and mating, she plays a role so exceedingly significant but for which the very basis of creation and procreation will come to a stand still. It is here we find in her the role of a beloved, a wife and a mother. She forms the pivotal or nucleus of family life. Without the presence of a woman, home is not home but a dreary wilderness.

This chapter will study the oppression of women, keeping not only the patriarchy in view, but most importantly the women characters in focus. It will highlight the silence of the women subjected to violence not only by the male
dominated society, but also their own clan and will trace the reasons from the
tutoring made available to them. It will also study the effect of caste and class
hierarchy in isolating women who transgress such boundaries laid out by
patriarchy. It presents the constant struggle of the women against their incessant
exploitation, torture and struggle which they undergo because of the male
dominated conservative framework. The instinct to violate the limits, to cross the
boundaries and to travel into the forbidden area is to be found in the Kochamma
family, that is, in the issues of father John Ipe, both not excluded: in Chacko, in
Ammu and also indirectly in Ammu’s children.

The story has a complex pattern. It is the story of a Syrian Christian family
headed by Shri Bennan John Ipe, the imperial entomologist, an Anglophile
popularly known as Pappachi, his wife Soshamma (Mammachi) and their two
children Chacko and Ammu, his sister Baby Kochamma, and Ammu’s "Two-egg
twins" Rahel and Estha.

The novel is a sad tale of a helpless woman seen through the eyes of her
daughter. As Luce Irigaray, an eminent exponent of French feminism, remarks:

... relationship of women to their mothers and to other women – thus
toward themselves- are subject to total narcissistic ‘black out’; these
relationships are completely devalued. Indeed, I have never come
across a woman who does not suffer from the problem afoot being
able to resolve in harmony, in the present system, her relationship
with her mother and with other women. Psychoanalysis has totally
The novel presents different generations of women- Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Ammu, and Rahel- all of them unhappy in their own ways. The opening sentence of Anna Karenina reminds us, "All happy families are alike, but an unhappy family is unhappy after its own fashion" (1). Baby Kochamma "lived her life backwards. As a young woman she had renounced the material world, and now, as an old one, she seemed to embrace it" (22). In her youth, she had fallen in love with a handsome young Irish monk, Father Mulligan, and tried hard to seduce the Father by public exhibitions of her charity. Every Thursday morning she forcibly bathed a poor child just to impress the Father. She also became a Roman Catholic against the wishes of her father so that she could be near Father Mulligan. But as her family came to see through her plans, they withdrew her and all her plans came to nothing. Her father decided that since she could not have a husband, she could be given education.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is the truthful portrayal of some of the past memorable moments of the author herself. The plot of the novel is very interesting. The story is based on the matter of bringing up children which is a challenging task. The novel throws light on the early life of the novelist. Her early life was full of struggle. She is a lady whose life has passed through various ups and downs.

Lalit Kumar Christopher Roy was the brother of Arundhati Roy who has been portrayed as Estha in the novel. The entire story and the group of the
characters revolve around one central character called Ammu. Her name links her to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and indeed she is Mother first, woman later. Like Mary, she gives birth to innocence and love. The story of the novel is not easy to narrate, with too many characters, too many incidents and too many under-currents of emotions and feelings. The story has a complex pattern.

The story which encompasses three generations is seen through the stream of consciousness of Rahel who has witnessed the tragedy which overtook the Ayemenem house. Several years later, she returns to the house because her twin brother Estha is "re-returned". The story is narrated at two levels of time, and the novelist moves smoothly backward and forward intervening the present and the past.

Baby Kochamma, the villain of the novel has her own love story. She, in her youth, fell in love with a handsome young Irish monk, Father Mulligan, who was in Kerala for a year on deputation from his seminary in Madras. Father Mulligan was studying Hindu scriptures in order to be able to denounce them intelligently.

Baby Kochamma was so wild with the love of Father Mulligan that in the beginning she tried hard to seduce the father. By public exhibition of her charity, she tried to woo him: “Every Thursday, undaunted by the merciless midday sun, they would stand there by the well. The young girl and the intrepid Jesuit, both quaking with unchristian passion. Using the bible as a ruse to be with each other” (24).

But when all her desperate efforts fell flat on father Mulligan, she even converted to the Roman Catholic Church against the wishes of her father so that
she could be near the Father. She took her vows and entered a convent in Madras as a trainee Novice with a strong hope that this act would provide her a legitimate occasion to be with Father Mulligan. The author says: “That was all she wanted. All she ever dared to hope for, just to be near him, close enough to smell his beard. To see the coarse weave of his cassock. To love him just by looking at him...” (24).

But all these desires did not lead to any positive results. Very soon she realized her futility of love with Father Mulligan. She grew restless in the convent. This resulted in her stubborn nature. She began to write puzzling letters to her parents. She wrote: ... My dearest Papa, I am well and happy in the service of Our Lady. But Koh-i-noor appears to be unhappy and homesick. My dearest Papa, Today Koh-i-noor vomited after lunch and is running a temperature. My dearest Papa, convent food does not seem to suit Koh-i-noor though I like it well enough” (25).

This letter very well expresses a sense of frustration in the mind of Baby Kochamma. The seed of this frustration in love begins to grow and is vented out on the twins and their mother, Ammu. Also it is this very same frustration that assumes an active role in destroying the sweet love between Ammu and Velutha. In the love story between Chacko and Margaret also, Kochamma plays a very important role. Margaret was working as waitress in a cafe in London when at first she met Chacko. Like Ammu, she left the house of her parents for no greater reason than a youthful assertion of independence. She had an ardent desire to be a good and gentle lady with enough money. The author points out: “she clung
nervously to old remembered rules and had no one but herself to rebel against” (241).

Baby Kochamma was sent to a university in America to do a course and after two years she came back with a diploma in Ornamental Gardening. But her love for Mulligan did not die. Two things stand out. First, the decision of her father makes clear the society's priorities. A girl can be given education only if she cannot be given in marriage. Marriage, in the eye of the society, is the summum bonum of a woman's life. Secondly, the fact that her physical separation from Father Mulligan due to her stint in America could not kill her love for him largely accounts for her growing narcissism and eventual sadism. In other words, it is her frustration in love and the unspent force of repressed desire that makes her instrumental in making the life of Ammu miserable. She poisons the minds of Ammu's mother and brother against her. She is also responsible to a large extent for the children's unending suffering. She never liked the children and "eves dropped relentlessly on their conversations and whenever she caught them speaking in Malayalam, she levied a small fine which was deducted at source. From their pocket money" (36). A narcissist in complete disregard of the sad occasion, she wears an "expensive sari" at the funeral of Sophie Mol without an iota of empathy with Margaret.

Baby Kochamma is a study in meanness and perversion that may result from unnatural self-repression and the consequent frustration. When the novel opens, Father Mulligan is already dead for four years. His death did not affect the attitude of Baby Kochamma. On the contrary, she felt that she could possess him
more now than she had ever done when he was alive. She felt that "her memory of him was hers, wholly hers savagely fiercely hers. Not to be shared with Faith far less with competing co-nuns and co-sadhus or whatever it was they called themselves" (298). All her life everyday she made a fresh entry in her diary. She wrote: "I love you I love you" (297). At eighty-three she had a new hair-cut. Rahel notices:

Her hair, dyed jet black was arranged across her scalp like unspooled thread. The dye had stained the skin of her forehead a pale grey, giving her the shadowy second hairline.” She had started wearing makeup. Lipstick. Khol. A sly touch of rouge.... She was wearing a lot of jewellery. Rahel’s dead grandmother's jewellery. All of it. Winking earrings. Diamond rings. Gold bangles and a beautifully crafted flat gold chain that she touched from time to time reassuring herself that it was there and that it was hers. Like a young bride who couldn't believe her good fortune. (21-22)

Her frustration in love and lack of understanding of her feelings on the part of her parents made her a neurotic, and particularly after Rahel's return, she lives more in the past than in the present.

Baby Kochamma’s romantic dreams of a union with Father Mulligan are cast in the language of the crypt. Roy writes: "She [Baby Kochamma] pictured them [herself and Father Mulligan] together, in dark sepulchral rooms with heavy velvet drapes, discussing Theology" (24). To fulfil this dream, Baby Kochamma enters a convent (another shut-in situation).
When Baby Kochamma joined the convent she had hoped to "gain" Father Mulligan. Her attempts thwarted, Baby Kochamma begins to hate the cloistered existence. She is unable to write of her sorrow to her father. Baby Kochamma, therefore, invents a name, Koh-i-noor, and begins to dwell on the suffering of this mythical girl, in her letters home. This puzzles her father. The secret name invests a non-being with certain attributes, in this case, suffering. Baby Kochamma buries her true self in the cryptonym. Her desire for Father Mulligan had led to the crypt-convent, where she is forced to bury this very desire.

Mammachi's case is different. Hers is a different tale of woe. Although her husband was a high up in the society - a noted entomologist - and was seventeen years older than her, he had always been a jealous man. In Vienna when she took her first lessons in violin and her teacher told Pappachi that his wife was exceptionally talented, her lessons were abruptly discontinued. A sadist, he would beat her every night with a brass flower vase. She regularly suffered this ignominy with increasing frequency till one day Chacko, on vacation, "strode into the room, caught Pappachi's vase-hand and twisted it around his back" (48) and sternly warned his papa no more of this.

The result, ironically, was that even the thin bond that was there between Mammachi and her husband completely snapped. He never touched her again and never spoke to her. And if he needed something, he used either Kochu Maria or Baby Kochamma as intermediaries. He had also other ways of insulting his wife. He never allowed Mammachi, or anybody of the family for that matter, to sit in his car. And when some visitors were expected, he would sit on the verandah and
publicly sew buttons which were not really broken only to show that his wife did not care for his needs.

Mammachi accepted her rejection by her husband passively and submissively playing the female role model imposed on her by the society - that of a docile and unresisting wife. It is possibly because of her 'conditioned' sensibility that she could never appreciate the plight of Ammu. When Ammu and her husband moved to Assam: “Her husband turned out to be not just a heavy drinker but a full-blown alcoholic with all of an alcoholic’s deviousness and tragic charm. There were things about him and Ammu never understood” (40). She was perhaps secretly jealous of Ammu's courage and happiness in love and her fulfilment, however brief it was. Although Mammachi-Ammu relationship is mother-daughter relationship and both are women, their relationship, as the incidents after Ammu's return to Ayemenem as a divorcee clearly reveal, is only functional in the dominantly patriarchal society.

Mammachi's attitude to Margaret is also a function of the same patriarchal society and shows her feminine jealousy for the woman whom her son had loved and married. Mammachi never met Margaret, but she hated her: "Shopkeeper's daughter was how Margaret Kochamma was filed away in Mammachi's mind. Mammachi's world was arranged that way" (167-168).

Roy further tells us: “Of course Mammachi would have despised Margaret Kochamma even if she had been heir to the throne of England. It wasn't just her working-class background Mammachi resented. She hated Margaret Kochamma for being Chacko's wife. She hated her for leaving him. But would have hated her
even more had she stayed” (168). Mammachi even looked upon Margaret as "just another whore" (169). Thus, it could be understood that Roy is portraying women as mysterious and enigmatic, not understood by themselves nor by others. There is no logic behind the way they behave except that the patriarchal society has made them not only victims but also victimizers in turn when they get the upper hand. The point is that in their role as victimizers, they turn their accumulated ire and wrath more on their own gender than on the other.

Roy shows how within this dominant group of women, there are some who, in spite of having been themselves victims, turn ruthless, brutal victimizers of other women who are none other than their own kith. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma, both of them have themselves been victims of an oppressive patriarchal system under which women like Mammachi are not only subjugated, but even brutalized, victimize Ammu and her children by virtue of their status in their family.

The novelist portrays a very detailed picture of the central character, Ammu, who is the daughter of Pappachi and Mammachi. She is also the sister of Chacko. When she was a child, she saw the cruelty of her father who used to beat her and her mother with a brass vase. Once it so happened that her father tore a part of the shoes she had bought for herself. She was also deprived of higher education because, according to Pappachi, college education is not useful for girls. Pappachi has been suffering from the streak of schizophrenia. He behaved like a decent man in public gaze, but demonstrated his male ego when he tyrannized his wife and children.
Ammu paid a visit to one of her relatives in Calcutta where at someone's wedding reception she met her future husband, who was on a vacation from his job in Assam. He was an Assistant Manager of a tea estate. Ammu was in a hurry to marry him, because she knew that in Ayemenem people were quite dead against her wishes. "She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem. She wrote to her parents informing them of her decision. They didn't reply" (39). But after the marriage, Ammu discovered that she had jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Her husband proved to be an alcoholic who went to the extent of asking her to satisfy the sexual desire of Mr. Hollick, his boss, so that his job could be saved. This extreme humiliation created a sense of hatred in the heart of Ammu for her husband. In a scuffle, she hit her husband with a heavy book and left the place with her twins Rahel and Estha. She returned to her Ayemenem House, her parental home.

But in Ayemenem House, she found her parents and brother quite indifferent to her and her children. Her eyes welled up when she saw the miserable condition of her two children. She imagined her twins: "... like a pair of small bewildered frogs engrossed in each other's company, lolling arm in arm down a highway full of hurtling traffic" (43). Her father did not believe that an English man could covet another man's wife and he started, at best, to ignore Ammu and her children as entities in his household.

Thus at the age of twenty four, at an age of enjoyment and merriment, Ammu's life came to a standstill. She spoke to none. She spent hours on the riverbank and had midnight swim. Baby Kochamma, the old spinster, always
taunted her. According to her, a married woman has no position in her parent's home. As for a divorced daughter, she has no position anywhere at all.

In course of time, Ammu came in contact with Velutha, an untouchable of the village, Ayemenem. Velutha is a talented craftsman. She loved Velutha heart and soul for his indomitable spirit of protest which she also nursed in her hearts. She even went to the extent of making an illicit relationship with him. But this happy movement did not last long. One day, Vellya Pappen, the father of Velutha, saw their illicit love making and broke the news to Baby Kochamma. As a result, Ammu was locked up in a room. Velutha was sent to the police custody where he was mercilessly tortured. The Ayemenem leader, Comrade Pillai, in his heart of hearts did not help Velutha in the police station. Velutha was a member of his party. But Comrade Pillai did not help him.

The police administration is also not happy to see this illicit relationship between Velutha and Ammu. Perhaps this is why when Ammu goes to the police station, she is called a "Vesya" by the inspector. Velutha is wrongly charged with the alleged murder of Sophy mol, though she is naturally drowned in the river while playing on the boat. The police beat Velutha so mercilessly that he dies in the police custody. Even the twins do not help Velutha. They are taught and warned by Baby Kochamma to conceal the truth.

Ammu, the central character of the novel, is a tragic figure insulted by her father, ill treated by her husband, horrifically humiliated by the police, and finally deserted and rendered destitute by her brother. Her tragic story, right from the beginning to the end, arouses our sense of pity and catharsis. Though she has
harboured in the core of her heart almost all the important virtues of a great character, there is one fatal flaw in her nature. She did not follow the age old rigid tradition of patriarchal love laws that laid down unequivocally "who should be loved" (31).

The tragic tale of Ammu begins with her very childhood. A child is supposed to lead a life free from the encroachments of experience because a child's world is the world of innocence, ignorance and simplicity. She must not be tortured by the tormenting experience of the grown-up people. But the case of Ammu is a different one. In Roy's terminology, she is a 'Mombatti' (candle) of the big house, which is unable to face the surge of wind. As a little girl, Ammu had to endure some unbearable nightmarish experiences. She saw with her open eyes the cruelty of her father Pappachi who used to beat her mother Mammachi. Once it so happened that her father tore apart her shoes she had brought for herself. She was also deprived of higher education because according to Pappachi, college education is not at all useful for a girl. This shows the truthful portrayal of the women of the society who find nothing but a step-motherly treatment in a male dominated family. Even her fundamental right the right to take education is deprived. Roy depicts the cruelty and the schizophrenia of Pappachi. We can understand his masculine fury in the following lines: “Not content with having beaten his wife and daughter, he tore down curtains kicked furniture and smashed a table lamp” (181).

In an atmosphere entirely different she began to feel like a captive in the big Ayemenem House. She had to help her mother in household chores. So, she
became a victim of frustration. Due to the sudden disruption of education, uncongenial atmosphere and antipathy of the family members, she wanted to fly freely in the sky of liberty. Her wings fluttered:

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

And what in Calcutta is another story of misery, i.e., meeting and marrying a worthless scum.

What Ammu has to see both in her husband's house and in her own house in Ayemenem is not based on the fair principle of equality. In this way the author sharply focuses on man's domination over woman. In Ayemenem, we see Chacko who is a male member of the house sent to Oxford to get education while Ammu is deprived of higher education even in India. The reason is that she is a woman and so she has no right to study further. Because the college studies, as described by Pappachi, corrupts a lady. To crown the perpetuation of gender discrimination Chacko, on his assuming the charge of the Ipe-household after Pappachi passes away, denies any legal right to Ammu to stay on in Ayemenem. He tells Rahel and Estha that ‘Ammu had no locusts stand I.’ It is a great irony that a daughter estranged from the husband is tortured and tyrannized in the parents' house.

It is to be noted that through the character of Ammu, Arundhati Roy, a great champion of the cause of the women, here raises a number of questions on our age
old myths and traditions, history and legends. She shows that right from the beginning of creation, women have been the subject of many insults and abuses. As a matter of fact a woman is allegedly charged with so many evils mostly imaginary. It is said that she is temptation symbolized, more a fury than a fairy. Her charms are irresistible, but they invariably spell ruin and disaster. In fact, most of the charges are concocted. This exactly is what Arundhati Roy wants to make us feel, see and change our attitude and behaviour towards women. But what Ammu has to see both in her husband's house and in her own house in Ayemenem is not based on principles of fairness and equality.

In *The God of Small Things* Ammu, the mother of Rahel, and Mammachi, the mother of Ammu, have been portrayed very distinctly. Ammu became a victim of male-dominated patriarchal society first when she was not allowed to pursue her studies. She finished her school education the year her father retired from his job in Delhi and settled in Ayemenem. Ammu's father considered the education of women an "unnecessary expense" (38). Ammu had no choice but to come with her father to Ayemenem and wait for marriage. When no suitable marriage proposal came in a reasonable time Ammu began to grow desperate. At Ayemenem she felt like a captive lady, fettered to household chores and a dull, mechanical routine. Her frustration originated chiefly from a sudden disruption of education. Uncongenial atmosphere at home and lack of a viable alternative through marriage add to her misery:

All day she dreamed of escaping from Ayemenem and the clutches of her ill-tempered father and long-suffering mother. She hatches
several wretched little plans. Eventually one worked. Pappachi agreed to let her spend the summer with a distant aunt who lived in Calcutta (38-39).

In Calcutta, she met a man and married him in a hurry not because she had really fallen in love with him, but simply because "she thought that anything, anyone at all would be better than returning to Ayemenem" (39). But she soon realised that she had actually fallen from the frying pan into the fire. Her husband was suspended from job for alcoholism, and his boss, Mr. Hollick, the English manager of the tea estate, suggested that he go on leave and Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be 'looked after' (42). Ammu’s refusal only aggravated her physical and mental torture. Her husband "grew uncomfortable and then infuriated by her silence. Suddenly he lunged at her, grabbed her hair punched her and then passed out from the effort" (42). When "his bouts of violence began to include the children" (42), she had no alternative but to break off and come back with her twins, Estha and Rahel, to the very place from where she tried to run away. "Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem. To everything that she had fled from only a few years ago. Except that now she had two young children. And no more dreams" (42). Now she was burdened with the liability of the two children who were not really loved by anybody, and all her dreams had shattered. Although she loved them, they were nevertheless like millstones round her neck.

It is but natural that Ammu with her trodden youth, oppressed existence and frustrated dreams should drift towards Velutha, a representative of the oppressed
and marginalized, and the two tried to seek solace in each other's warmth. Both realized this in a moment of epiphany: "Centuries telescoped into one evanescent moment" (176) when they realized that both of them had gifts to offer each other. But even when she was virtually destroyed, her tenderness and solicitations for the children knew no bounds. During her last visit she spent the morning with Rahel in her room. "With the last of her meagre salary she had brought her daughter small presents wrapped in brown paper with coloured paper hearts pasted on" (159). The presents were suitable for a child of seven, but Rahel was nearly eleven. Possibly she "refused to acknowledge the passage of time" (159). And wanted her children to remain children till she could get a suitable job and earn enough for all the three to live separately, independently. The way she rattled on and her hysterical behaviour, her wistful thinking, her battle with destiny, her frantic and frenzied effort to live and love make her a most pathetic figure in literature. Her feminine sensibility was on razor's edge whenever Rahel tried to say something. "She seemed terrified of what adult thing her daughter might say and thaw Frozen Time. Fear made her garrulous. She kept it at bay with her babble" (160). She had to play hide and seek. But the fact that she could go out of herself and intensely love an untouchable shows her moral courage in accepting a man not as a member of any particular class of the society but just as a human being, free from the trappings of the society and capable of authentic human feelings. So mercilessly was she persecuted by her own people that she often had nightmares in which "policemen approached her with snicking scissors wanting to hack off her hair" (161).
A child of broken home and a daughter of a divorcee-mother staying in her ancestral house, Rahel did not get the love and affection from her elders that a child so badly needs. Her emotional needs remained unfulfilled. Of course, her mother had all the concern for her, but in a hostile atmosphere she was utterly helpless. When Ammu died at the age of thirty-one, Rahel was nearly eleven. As a child she had seen the sufferings of her mother, the insults and ignominies inflicted on her all the year round, and the tortures she had been subjected to when her affair with Velutha was detected. The children were also very fond of Velutha but, ironically, they were deceived into giving false evidence when Velutha was arrested and brutally tortured to death. Rahel, after all these years of her return to Ayemenem, still remembers how they were made instrumental by Baby Kochamma in doing wrong to their mother. It is a memory that Rahel could never put out of her mind and in a way, it is this memory that practically ruined her conjugal life. Anyway, after the death of Ammu, Rahel was more neglected than ever. With the death of her mother, Rahel had lost the last moorings that she had and she began to drift, from school to school, spent eight years in a college without getting a degree and, finally "drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge" (18).

It was at this time that Velutha, son of Vellya Paapen, returned to Ayemenem after his years away from home. Ammu knew him since her childhood when Velutha used to come with his father to the back entrance of their house to deliver the coconuts that they had plucked from the trees in the compound.
Velutha, however, was a talented boy. At sixteen he was "an accomplished carpenter" and developed "a distinctly German design sensibility" (75). He built quite a few beautiful furniture for Mammachi, and for Baby Kochamma's annual Nativity plays also he made some beautiful things. When her garden cherub's sliver dried up inexplicably it was Velutha who "fixed its bladder for her" (75). But Ammu had loved Velutha as her childhood companion not so much for his exceptional talents as for his fiery spirit of protest which she herself wanted to articulate but could not. Arundhati Roy remarks:

As she grew older, Ammu learned to live with cold calculating cruelty. She developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in Someone Small who had been bullied all their lives by Someone Big. She did exactly nothing to avoid quarrels and confrontations. In fact, it could be argued that she sought them out, perhaps even enjoyed them.

On his return to Ayemenem, Velutha secretly joined the communist party which promised salvation for the underdogs. One day, by chance, Ammu saw him "marching with a red flag. In a white shirt and mundu with angry veins in his neck" (71). Years later Rahel, who witnessed this scene with her mother, still remembers Ammu's expression-- "Like a rogue piece in a puzzle. Like a question mark that drifted through the pages of a book and never settled at the end of a sentence" (72). This view sums up the ill-fated relationship that blossoms between them sooner thereafter. Ammu loved Velutha ardently for his indomitable spirit of protest; “She hoped that under his careful cloak of cheerfulness he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world that she so raged against" (176).
Their love, short-lived as it was, it went on just for about a fortnight, and then Velutha was arrested and tortured to death on a false charge. As soon as Ammu came to know about it she rushed to the police station to tell the truth, but the treatment she received at the police station shows how pitiable is the condition of women in the society, particularly when a woman is a divorcee and has transgressed social limits by loving an untouchable.

Rahel's husband looked upon her as something very precious. "But when they made love he was offended by her eyes. They behaved as though they belonged to someone else. ... He was exasperated because he didn't know what that look meant. He put it somewhere between indifference and despair" (19). It was certainly not his fault that he did not know that "in some places, like the country that Rahel came from, various kinds of despair competed for primacy. And that personal despair could never be desperate enough" (19). When Rahel returns to Ayemenem she is a divorcee like her mother had been. But, luckily, she is not encumbered with a child. She develops a casual attitude to life and does not suffer from the various restrictions imposed by the society. Instead of feeling any kind of shame or moral weakness for her divorce, she shocks Comrade Pillai by informing him about it: "'We're divorced.' Rahel hoped to shock him into silence. 'Divorced' His voice rose to such a high register that it cracked on the question mark. He even pronounced the word as though it were a form of death (130).

To a great extent, Rahel is an emancipated woman. In terms of mother daughter relationship also we notice that Rahel understands her mother much better than Ammu ever could her mother. There is enough evidence in the novel to
show that she shares the agony of her mother, realizes the great injustice and cruelty done to her mother, and is filled with profound compassion for her. Her mother has always remained a living presence in her memory. Seen from the feminist perspective the novel records a progress, although somewhat slow, in feminism, offering some rays of hope and a distinct possibility of redemption.

Other women that appear in the novel are, more or less, conventional types. They participate in and even contribute to the patriarchal society where women are marginalized. Pillai’s mother staring "vacantly at the wall opposite her, rocking herself gently, grunting regular rhythmic little grunts" is "like a bored passenger on a long bus journey" (269). Kalyani, Pillai’s wife, looks upon her husband not as an equal but as a master, her lord. The nature of the power-relationship is evident in the following situation: “Comrade Piilai took off his shirt, rolled into a ball and wiped his armpits with it. When he finished, Kalyani took it from him and held it as though it was a gift” (272).

Latha, Pillai’s niece, although a "combative looking young girl of about twelve or thirteen" (270), does her part most mechanically in reciting a poem, but when interrupted by the appearance of Chacko, waits for the permission of Pillai to continue with the poem. The authority of patriarch is accepted and honoured.

Like the spider who resides in the History House where Velutha and Ammu make love camouflages himself in a shell of garbage, the History House is also a crypt. About the House Chacko has this to say: "But we can't go in ... because we've been locked out. And when we look in through the windows all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering" (53). The
House is "recessed, buried in shadow" (307). The History House has a tragic history of sexual perversion, guilt, deception and suicide. This crypt contains the secret of death (the Englishman's suicide). Years later Velutha is located on the premises of this house when he is brutally assaulted by the policemen. The House becomes a crypt-in-advance for Velutha. Here the twins see the true horror of police cruelty. It is the scene of the death of their childhood. However, the horror the twins chance upon is also a secret unto death since the twins cannot reveal it to the world. Velutha's murder, cloaked as an 'encounter death', is a secret within a dual crypt - of the twins and the History House. Once more the secret - crypt - death link is established.

Ammu's clandestine affair with Velutha proceeds after she awakens, as if from the dead, to her body's compelling needs in terms of suppressed sexual feelings. This consciousness of her body and youth occurs in the closed confines of the bathroom. Ammu had viewed her marriage as death. Divorced, Ammu becomes a dark secret, to be hidden away, perhaps permanently, to save the family reputation. She is thus "locked away like the family lunatic in a medieval household" (252). Ammu is figuratively entombed while still alive. When she is locked up, and when she locks herself up, Ayemenem House becomes her crypt.

Velutha, as noted before, is beaten up in the History House. He is then thrown into a dark cell where he eventually dies. The crypt-jail is Velutha's final crypt-but-one. His body is thrown into the pauper's pit, a desecration of the proper grave.
Baby Kochamma resented Ammu and probably she took sadistic pleasure in her sufferings. She became crueler and resentful towards Ammu. Ammu did not surrender to her fate but combated with it. In her divorced state, she even declared her love for Velutha - an Untouchable carpenter. Arundhati Roy has described their coital acts in bold, erotic manner. Ammu violated 'the love laws' and this could not be tolerated in these days. Kochamma got Velutha dismissed from the factory and imprisoned. He was charged with the rape of Ammu. When Ammu went to the police station with her children Rahel and Estha, the police officer's behaviour was very brutal and callous. The rudeness and obscene behaviour of the police officer shocked little Rahel very much. Ammu felt helpless and utterly humiliated. She only muttered to herself: "He's dead. I've killed him" (8). She knew that she would be responsible for the death of her lover Velutha - an untouchable paravan.

The caste system in India was so strong that the lower-caste untouchables were not allowed to enter the houses of upper caste people. Let alone physical or sexual relations. Kochamma told Rahel's grand mother, Mammachi, "How could she stand the smell? Haven't you noticed? They have a particular smell, these paravans" (257). This remark reveals how the upper caste Hindus or Christians felt about the lower caste untouchables and how strong the prejudices against such people were. As Arundhati Roy says, "In those days, love laws were made. The laws that laid down who should be loved, and how and how much" (328). Rahel does not suffer as much as Ammu did. She has the most rebellious spirit that makes her resort to incest which is a taboo all over the world in all civilized
societies. As a student at Nazareth convent, she behaved with a revolting spirit and
the nuns thought that she did not know how to be a nice decent girl.

Velutha and his father Vellya Paapen underwent the most inhuman
treatment which one can only imagine. The humiliation a human being receives at
the hands of another human being is the worst form of all humiliations. To quote
Roy again, “Pappachi would not allow Paravans into the house. Nobody would.
They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchables touched” (73). In
Mammachi’s time the Untouchables were not allowed to walk on public roads, not
allowed to cover their upper bodies, not allowed to carry umbrellas. They had to
put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath
away from those whom they addressed. However, for Velutha, things were a little
better.

Unlike his elders, Velutha went to a school, albeit to a school for
Untouchables’ which Mammachi’s father-in-law had founded. Every afternoon
after school, Velutha worked with Johann Klein, a carpenter from a Carpenter’s
Guild in Bavaria and learnt carpentry at which he became adept. Apart from
carpentry skills, Velutha had a way with machines. If only he had not been a
Paravan, he would have become an engineer. He was indispensable both in the
House and in the "Paradise Pickles & Preserves" factory. All this gave Velutha, so
his father felt, an 'unwarranted assurance' (76). “In the way he walked. The way he
held his head. The quiet way in which he offered suggestions without being asked.
Or the quiet way in which he disregarded suggestions without appearing to rebel”
(76). In an Untouchable these qualities would be construed by the Touchables ‘as
insolence’. Velutha was hired as the factory carpenter, allowed to enter the factory premises and touch things that Touchables touched- a big step for a Paravan.

Significantly both Rahel and Estha interact with Velutha without the consciousness of the barrier of caste or class. In the months since Velutha returned to Ayemenem after he had suddenly disappeared, they grew to be the best of friends. Although they were forbidden to visit his house, they secretly would. They would sit with him for hours and watch him soften the wood into smooth shapes. Estha thought Velutha cooked the best fish curry in the whole world. It was Velutha who made Rahel her 'luckiest ever fishing rod' and taught both of them to fish. As for Velutha himself his low caste did not cast a shadow over his interaction with the children. As a boy he had called Ammu "Little Ammu" endearingly. She had been the recipient of his “Little Gifts” which he offered on the palms of his hands so that 'she could take them without touching him. Ammu wondered at the extent of Rahel's physical ease with Velutha and was envious that Rahel had a subworld from which she was excluded. It was “a tactile world of smiles and laughter that she her mother had no part in” (176).

On the day of Welcome Home, ‘Our Sophie Mol' play is performed by the members of the Ayemenem household excluding Ammu and Rahel. Ammu feels further excluded from another play in which Rahel and Estha, on spotting Velutha in the driveway, run to join him. Perhaps it is the humiliating neglect which Ammu and her children undergo that draws her to Velutha who treats her children with such spontaneous paternal indulgence. No wonder it is on that same day that seeing the other play outside the Ayemenem house in which the central character
is Velutha that Ammu hopes that it had been him that Rahel saw in the march.

“She hoped it had been him that had raised his flag and knotted arm in anger. She hoped that under his careful cloak of cheerfulness, he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world that she so raged against” (175-176).

However, marriage, motherhood and divorcehood did not kill the woman in Ammu. “She harboured an air of unpredictability and 'Unsafe Edge', an 'Unmixable Mix' which drove her to set aside 'the morality of motherhood and divorcehood'” (44). The ‘infinite tenderness of motherhood' lived in her side by side with the 'reckless rage of a suicide bomber.' Was it this unsafe edge which grew inside her and led her “to love by night the man her children loved by day?” (44). Roy leaves it for the reader to decide whether this unmixable mix refers to her sensuality which Velutha arouses or to her urge to overthrow norms of propriety which a smug and hidebound society has made for women.

Incidentally, Chacko enjoyed the very freedom that is denied to Ammu. The self proclaimed Marxist had the liberty to call the pretty women who worked in the factory to his room and flirt with them outrageously. Mammachi was fully aware of Chacko's libertine relationships with the women in the factory. Even Baby Kochamma could not see any contradiction between Chacko's 'Marxist mind and (his) feudal libido,' (168) because a man had 'Needs'.

Roy's portrayal of the way authority operates in the life of Rahel and Estha is equally fascinating. Deprived of a father, from a very tender age. The only defence these vulnerable and defenceless twins had was the fierce love of their mother. Their tragic flaw is their vulnerability and their ill-luck to be born and
grown up in an environment of psychological violence. To quote Roy: 'they seemed like a pair of small bewildered frogs, engrossed in each others company, lollipping arm in arm down a highway full of hurtling traffic. Entirely oblivious of what trucks can do to frogs' (43). That they have no claim to the Ayemenem House is made clear to them not only by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma and later by Chacko, but even by the 'vinegar-hearted, short tempered' Kochu Maria who takes every opportunity to remind them that they lived on sufferance in the House. As for Baby Kochamma, she disliked the twins the same way that the 'unfortunates' sometimes dislike the 'co-unfortunates'. She considered them 'doomed, fatherless, waifs.' ‘Worse still, they were Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry’ (45).

Rahel's experience at Nazareth Convent shows how far authority can work to demoralize a child. Blacklisted for offences which in a child's world are no offences - for decorating dung and slamming into seniors to find out whether breasts hurt - she is branded as 'depraved' by the stem-mouthed nuns of the school and made to read the meaning of the word in public view of others. An otherwise 'extremely polite' child is driven to acts of defiance like 'smoking' and 'setting fire to her House Mistresses false hair bun'. Neglected both at home and in her school, Rahel grew up without a brief. She remained free to make her own inquiries into life and how it ought to be lived.

Till Estha is returned to his father after Sophie Mol's death by drowning, the twins are subjected to the vagaries of an adult world. They become objects of sufferance, contemptuous pity and even hatred of the household. Outside the house
Estha becomes an object of sexual lust also. That Roy has portrayed Estha's experience at Abhilash Talkies so graphically shows how a man's uncontrollable lust can stun and nauseate a defenceless child. Roy brings out the depravity of the Orange drink Lemon drink Man by showing in contrast the 'sexless' relationship which the children developed with Velutha. And yet adults brand the children as 'sly', 'uncouth' and 'deceitful' with 'Satan in their eyes.' The children have their own way of reacting against the restriction imposed on them. They hurt the elders sometimes consciously, sometimes innocently by being rude to them. For example, by calling Kochu Maria a 'stupid dwarf or by exasperating Miss Mitten by reading sentences in the book she has gifted them in reverse; even by hurting Ammu who they love so much and whose love they would scarce forfeit.

But it is when they are emotionally blackmailed into deposing against their beloved Velutha that their world is completely shattered. Sophie Mol's death and the events that follow not only become the cause of their separation but also leave an indelible psychic scar on them for Estha and Rahel had always thought of themselves 'together as Me and separately, individually as We or Us, “As though they were a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities” (2). After Estha is returned to his father their lives take a different shape and size. “Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits' appear like 'a team of trolls on their separate horizons” (3). However, it was on Estha that the betrayal of Velutha seems to have had the greater shock. Although nobody knew for sure when he had stopped talking, the fact remained that there had been a gradual winding down and closing shop after this event. A time came when he stopped
talking altogether as if he had nothing left to say. The quietness arrived, and stayed and spread in Estha and slowly over the years, he withdrew from the world. He harboured his guilt like an 'uneasy octopus'. “Gradually the reason for his silence was hidden away, entombed somewhere deep in the soothing folds of the fact of it” (12).

The Women's Movement, though it has not radically changed the lives of women in the patriarchal set-up, has given them a certain degree of economic independence at least. For better or for worse it has given them the right to exercise their choice. Ammu asserts her right to marry outside her community against the wishes of her family. It is not because of her that her marriage fails. Rahel leaves home, goes abroad for higher studies, lives there, marries and takes a divorce from her husband, though Comrade Pillai considers it to be most unfortunate thing to happen to a woman and a punishment to this generation for “its forefathers' bourgeois decadence” (130).

The impact of the savagery with which Velutha is destroyed leaves the reader stunned with anger and pain. What is more painful is the way in which the 'defenceless' twins are compelled through black-mailing to depose against their beloved friend. Ammu's fate is no less tragic. Holding her responsible for the misery she has brought to the household she is asked to pack up and leave the Ayemenem house. She takes up a succession of jobs, and dies a lonely death in a grimy room in a lodge in Allepey where she is found by the sweepers. The Church refuses to bury Ammu. So she has to be cremated in a crematorium where
“beggars, derelicts and the police-custody dead” (162) were cremated. No one from the family is present for the cremation except Chacko and Rahel.

The ideological vision that Roy offers in the novel is ambivalent. On the one hand she projects a rigidly stratified, conservative, capitalist bourgeois social set-up which succeeds in perpetuating itself by exercising power over the non-dominant elements of that set-up, be they women, children or the disadvantaged. Roy shows how these non-dominant elements interact with the dominant ones, how sometimes they try to challenge them or subvert their values but most often are destroyed by them. Roy's aim seems to be to explore the role of individual autonomy and the possibility of asserting or constructing 'identity' in such a rigidly stratified society. In this respect Ammu's radicalism or Velutha's upwardly mobile self-assurance may be seen as steps to assert and maintain their individuality in their social set-up which however ends in tragedy for both of them. But through the gradual decay of the Ayemenem House which Roy reiterates piece by piece in chapter after chapter she also seems to suggest that an oppressive monolithic social system of which the Ayemenem House is an emblem and which offers no scope for individual autonomy or self fulfillment becomes the cause of its own degeneration. It would not be too far off the mark to suggest that the unnatural union of Estha and Rahel which at one level can be seen as an assertion of individual choice is at another level a sign of perversity.

No feminism can be effective without financial self-sufficiency is an equally strong and right argument. However, Ammu overlooks this aspect which is surprising. But let us remember that it is not a proclaimed feminist novel. When
Ammu falls in love and dreams of her untouchable lover Velutha, her twins disturb her by hanging to her body. She shrugs them off and recovers her body back. "She wanted her body back. It was hers" (222). And that night Ammu visits the haunted house on the river bank to see her lover - unafraid. Her body is her estate. When the lovers' escapades are discovered by her family, she is punished severely for defiling "generations breeding" (258).

Mammachi's tolerance of 'Man's Needs' (mentioned six times in the book on pages 26, 168, 169, 238, 258, 295) as far as her son was concerned becomes "the fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter" (258). Ammu is locked up heartlessly while false charges against her untouchable lover Velutha take him to the police station where he dies due to inhuman beating.

As soon as Ammu gets a chance to go out after Sophie Mol's funeral, she goes to Kottayam police station with her twins and gives a statement to the effect that Velutha was not a rapist. In other words, she admits that whatever happened between them had happened with mutual consent. In return she has to face insults and humiliation from Inspector Mathew who takes it as his holy duty to protect Touchable wombs for the purity of future generations.

Her son is sent away to his father. The daughter Rahel is allowed to be with the family. "They provided the care (food, clothes, fees), but withdrew the concern" (15). Ammu commits suicide in an unknown strange village inn. Her body was not allowed to be buried in the Ayemenem graveyard. Chacko had to take it to an electric crematorium. How contended was Patriarchy! It had
inoculated "a community against an outbreak" (309) comments the narrator. It had punished a woman who looked upon her body as her own.

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* is all about atrocities against the small things - children, youth, women - young and old, and the untouchables. Roy places Velutha at the centre-stage who is crushed to death: "(Velutha), abandoned by God and History, by Marx, by Man, by Woman and (in the hours to come) by Children, lay folded on the floor. He was semi-conscious, but wasn't moving" (310). Next to him, Roy places the children who are sinned against and not sinners: "A pair of actors trapped in a recondite play with no hint of plot or narrative" with no one to tell them "You were only children. You had no control. You are the victims, not the perpetrators" (191). Not even their mother explains this.

A deep examination of various groups over generations shows how all the small ones - the children, the women and the untouchables- have been victimized and how they in their small ways, consciously or unconsciously victimize each other. The novel opens with Rahel's return from the States. She is one of the two-egg children, who is eighteen minutes younger than her brother Estha. It is the story of some twenty-four hours in her life at thirty-one, unfolding some thirteen or fourteen days of her childhood when she was just seven years old. The story is narrated at two levels of time and the novelist moves smoothly backward and forward, interweaving the present and the past wonderfully well. The narrative zooms from one picture to another in a cinematographic manner highlighting certain aspects of life in the novel. Rahel is called back from the States by her
grand-aunt Baby Kochamma to look after her brother Estha who is returned by their father.

Twenty-three years have separated them; from each other and from Ayemenem in Kerala, the place of their childhood and togetherness. Journeying through the memory-lane of the Pickle-factory where Estha had stirred the thick jam, she remembers how he had become “a Stirring Wizard with a spoiled puff and uneven teeth, and then the Witches of Macbeth singing ‘Fire burn, bannana bubble’” (195). This sets the tone of the novel and prepares us for the mix-up of air and foul, good and evil. It also has the echoes of Rushdie's Pickle-factory in *Midnight's Children*, with the similar purpose of preserving the memories of perpetuated wrongs and History's black-holes.

Introducing the Kathakali dance in a temple, Roy hits two targets: one is the exploitation of the Western-world's love for Indian mythology and the other is the reversal of roles in present-day India where the innocent is crushed to death. The stories from one of the two great epics of India, Mahabharat and the art form of Kerala, the Kathakali dance, hold an undying fascination to the westerners. If Kathakali is about the great stories that have no secrets, so is the story of the novel. Roy explains:

The Great-Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again. The ones you can enter anywhere and inhabit comfortably. They don't deceive you with thrills and trick endings. They don't surprise you with the unforeseen. They are as familiar as the house you live in. Or the smell of your lover's skin. You know how they
end, yet you listen as though you don't. In the way that although you know that one day you will die, you live as though you won't. (229)

It is the story of "Karna the abandoned child, Karna the Generous, Karna the Melancholy son of Surya, God of Day" (231), and of Kunti who with the imprudence of youth decided to test the secret-mantra granted to her. The unwed mother Kunti who had cast away Karna in a river, now wants to secure the safety of her five other more beloved sons - the Pandavas. It is the mother who implores Karna to save her sons-- the Pandavas, and receives the promise that Karna wouldn't kill four of her sons, only Arjuna would be killed. Karna would not make any promise about Arjuna. The novelist links up this story with Ammu and Estha's story reversing the roles. On this stage Ammu the mother is saved by her son Estha, with his deposition before the Police that Velutha had killed Sophie Mol.

The novelist reminds us and Rahel of "another morning, another stage, another kind of frenzy" (235), when Velutha the untouchable was crushed to death by the Police for having molested (so the Police were made to believe) Ammu the young woman from the higher caste. In fact it was Ammu who had taken the initiative and begun an affair with Velutha. Neither had he committed murder of Sophie Mol nor had he molested Ammu. In the great mythological story evil is punished and destroyed, whereas here it is the innocent who is destroyed. Roy skillfully uses the reversal of roles to sharply focus on the plight of Velutha and Ammu. If in the great stories the end is known, so in this small story of Ammu's desires and love the end is obvious and can be easily anticipated. Both know that
they had no future, nowhere to go and that they would be doomed sooner rather than later.

They are the victims not only of Mammachi and Baby-Kochamma, but also of the societal norms: "To rewrap them in its old, scarred pelt and drag them back to where they really lived. Where the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much" (177). Even the western cultured Syrian Christian family is no exception. Baby-Kochamma fabricates the story of Ammu's molestation and murder of Sophie Mol in such convincing language that the touchable Police Inspector Mathews believes her. For him it is an unpardonable sin. How dare an untouchable cross his limits? He who had to walk backward, who had to wipe his footprints, who had to keep away from the touchables, makes love to the young divorcee of the Big House. Even the communist God of Velutha, Comrade Pillai, refuses to help him. In fact Pillai wants to remove Velutha from the pickle-factory since the touchable labourers hate to work under the untouchable supervisor Veluthu. He is provided with a good excuse. Comrade Pillai said: "But Comrade, you should know that Party was not constituted to support workers' indiscipline in their private life.... And there it was again. Another religion turned against itself. Another edifice constructed by the human mind, decimated by human nature" (287).

Both the religious God and the communist-God fail Velutha. Ammu is locked up by Baby Kochamma and couldn't help Velutha. On the contrary when she goes to the Police station to rectify the wrong done to Velutha, she is insulted, humiliated and is called a Veshya by the Police-Inspector. She is condemned by
her brother, mother and grandaunt and is forced to send away Estha to his father. She herself has to leave home and seek a job in the outer world, where she is conveniently (for the novelist) found dead in a room of a lodge. Victimized by the outer world of the Police, and even by her own near ones, condemned for bringing down the reputation of the family for generations to come she kills herself, she dies young.

Ammu knows well the consequences of her thirteen day-affair with Velutha. The arrival of Margaret and her daughter Sophie triggers off her desires and she loses control over herself. Stepping into darkness of the night she unwittingly victimizes Velutha. Ammu is portrayed as a tragic figure, a woman struggling against her family and her motherhood and society. As Ranga Rao puts it: "In Ammu, the novelist has presented with compassion a woman, a feminist locked in a struggle with her family, its 'hidden morality' with society and tragically with herself" (The Hindu, Sept 23, '97).

Her broken marriage, her being unwanted in her parental family, her love for her children and her womanly desires lead her to her untimely death. These are not small things. These are terribly tyrannical forces against which she tries to rebel and thereby meets her tragic end. It is the helplessness of the Power-less against the Powerful ones. Seen through Rahel's eyes, the pitiable plight of Ammu is accentuated in detail, but it does not fully bring alive Ammu's agonising dilemma.

Mammachi is a portrayal of a typical traditional wife of a foreign educated officer who has two standards, two rules of behaviour. To the outer world he is a
generous, loving husband and father. To his wife and children Ammu and Chacko, he is a tyrant, humiliating and beating them for no reason whatsoever. Mammachi is the victim of the patriarchic family where the husband can be as brutal and cruel as he wants to be:

He was charming and urbane with visitors and stopped just short of fawning on them if they happened to be white. He donated money to orphanages and leprosy clinics. He worked hard on his public profile as a sophisticated, generous, moral man. But alone with his wife and children he turned into a monstrous, suspicious bully, with a streak of vicious cunning. They were beaten, humiliated and then made to suffer the envy of friends and relations for having such a wonderful husband and father. (180)

If Pappachi has two sides to his personality, his son Chacko is no exception. His room has an extra special entrance to enable him to satisfy his Man's Needs. Mammachi is aware of his libertine relationships with the women in the factory; and Baby Kochamma "accepted this explanation and the enigmatic, secretly thrilling notion of Men's Needs gained implicit sanction in the Ayemenem House" (168).

The novelist has portrayed the double set of rules for the brother and the sister both of whom are divorced. She hints at the injustice to Ammu from the same mother who sanctions and facilitates Chacko's affairs with the lowly women of the factory. This too is presented through descriptions and Jacks in-depth dimension.
Baby Kochamma too is deprived of her love for the white man, Father Mulligan, who loves her (so we are told), but doesn't marry her. Even after his death, she continues to write every night in her notebook, "I love you I Love You" (298) ever and ever. It is a perverse and pathetic-picture of the old woman deprived of the fulfillment of her desires. Such a woman could hardly understand Ammu's affair with Velutha and wouldn't allow her to rescue him. It is she who makes Estha condemn Velutha, explaining that thereby he would be saving his mother. Estha and Rahel are made to feel guilty for Sophie's and Velutha's death. They know that Sophie died accidentally but feel responsible for her drowning in the Meenachal River in the dark of the night. Hardly understanding Velutha's relationship with Ammu, goaded by Baby Kochamma, Estha points an accusing finger at Velutha, and feels guilty all his life since no one tells him or Rahel that they were really not guilty.

They are the victims in the hands of Baby Kochamma. Earlier Estha was abused by the Orange drink Lemon drink Man at the Abhilash Talkies. He is offered a Free Cold drink and asked to hold the Orange drink Lemon drink Man's penis: "Now if you'll kindly hold this for me", the Orange drink Lemon drink Man said, handing Estha his penis, through his soft white muslin dhoti, I'll get you your drink" (103). Not realizing what he was asked to do, Estha held it because he had to (103). And Estha's hand was wet and hot and sticky. It had egg white on it. “White egg white Quarter-boiled" (104). The incident leaves frightening impression on little Estha's mind and he feels that it was something he ought not to
have done. He is frightened and dreads the Orange drink Lemon drink Man's visit to Ayemenem house or factory.

The encounter of Estha with the Orange drink Lemon drink Man no doubt at first revulses and shocks us. A deeper analyses reveals that this is written with a purpose: to bring to the fore the question of child abuse. It is unquestionably objectionable. It serves no purpose in the text. The episode is smelly, slinky and un-aesthetic – Roy should have avoided it. But through this highly unethical and unnatural episode, Roy succeeds in raising the issue of not only child abuse, but also neglect by parents. Hence the criticism that this is completely useless and purposeless is a vain argument.

The madman Murlidharan "had no home, no doors to lock"(63), yet he is crypt-like. His mind, writes Roy, "was full of cupboards, cluttered with secret pleasures" (63). He keeps a bunch of keys because "he was never sure which cupboard he might have to open or when" (63). This is Murlidharan's madness, where every past event is locked away, entombed out of sight of the world. The madman Murlidharan with his mind "full of cupboards" (63) is Estha's shadowy double. Murlidharan too has fragmented memories of war, a wife, and trivialities like “a red mug for the bathroom"(63). Like in the case of Estha, a certain violence is buried in the crypts of Murlidharan's memory. Estha has Velutha's murder and Murlidharan, the war. The language of Murlidharan's madness, his use of numbers alone, and Estha's silence are both equally incomprehensible to the world - theirs becomes the language of the dead.
Children of the divorced parents, the twins Estha and Rahel, feel unwanted and unloved in Ayemenem family. Ammu at one moment calls them ‘mill stones’ because of which she suffers agonizing loneliness. This really leads them to find a place for themselves which they find in an ancient haunted House of Darkness. The two children, their innocence and loneliness are presented with vivid details. They are guilt-conscious children whose paradise of childhood with sweet memories of their friendship with Velutha is lost and destroyed as is the Paradise Pickle factory. "It would have helped them if they could have made that crossing - the tragic hood of victimhood" (191). That they were “the victims and not the perpetrators” (191). Not even their mother explains this to them. They carry the burden of this guilt for twenty three years and are unable to lead simple normal life. This guilt consciousness can only be wiped off by their incestuous relationship, so the novelist makes us believe. These twins who were victims of childhood abuse in the hands of the society, take their vengeance on it by flouting its ethical and moral norms. Roy has created beautiful pictures of real innocent enrichment of the pathetic-situations they find themselves in. The frequent references to the House of Darkness were indicative of the novelist's view of the innocent children and their destiny. It is also indicative of the area of darkness as this country sometimes is described. It is the darker side of India, of Kerala's Christian Society, of the small and helpless people that Roy chooses to paint. All her wonderful and colourful descriptions of Nature are eclipsed by the blind hats which cannot see the day-light.
Roy creates wonderful pictures of Nature and inhabits this Nature with people who do not see the light of love and innocence. They can refer to all the great poets and writers, imitate the western manners but remain shackled to the yesteryears' traditions of this society. The novel is an exotic portrayal of the colourful Nature that is inhabited by the inhuman and cruel human beings who are victims of their own attitudes and beliefs.

Chacko's life is governed by personal whims and caprices as far as choosing of a life partner is concerned. While carrying out research studies, he comes across a waitress named Margaret in a café and marries her later. A hasty and ill-sorted marriage as in Ammu's life works out to be fatal. Margaret rejects Chacko and remARRies Joe. Bearing the brunt of betrayal and frustration Chacko comes back to India and leads a life of debauchery. He makes no attempt to remarry but indulges in free sex with women labourers. His mother takes a lopsided view of her son's libertine' relationship with women labourers of her factory. The victims are regularly and handsomely paid money for not opening up their lips. Poverty and suffering force women labourers into flesh trade. Intellectuals and rich men lead a life of double standards and Chacko is a glaring example. Victimized by Margaret, Chacko takes revenge multiple times by victimizing poor women; he outrages their modesty for poor monetary compensations.

The character of Baby Kochamma represents the numerous old spinsters in our society. Her behaviour draws into controversy Christian sectarian attitude in India. Failure in love affair in her youth makes her a hard boiled cynic. Her desperate effort to consummate love with a clergy man ends in dismal failure.
Baby Kochamma is deprived of her love for the white man Father Mulligan. She is a perfect picture of a perverse and pathetic old woman deprived of the fulfillment of her desires. Such a woman could hardly understand Ammu's affair with Velutha and wouldn't allow her to rescue him. It is she who makes Estha condemn Velutha, explaining that thereby he will be saving his mother. Estha and Rahel are made to feel guilty for Sophie's and Velutha's death. They know that Sophie died accidentally, but feel responsible for her drowning in the Meenachal River in the dark of the night. Hardly understanding Velutha's relationship with Ammu and goaded by Baby Kochamma, Estha points an accusing finger at Velutha, and feels guilty all his life since no one tells him or Rahel that they were really not guilty. They are the victims in the hands of Baby Kochamma.

*The God of Small Things* also deals with the revolutionary theme of illicit relationships. The sexual relationship between Ammu and Velutha does not sound shocking to a westernized urban sensibility. But a conventional caste mentality, particularly in India, is sure to be shocked by such transgressions. Before Freud, sex was supposed to be a taboo subject. But when he propounded a highly revolutionary theory about sex and called sex the root of all our energy, literature began to come abundantly saturated with the elements of sex and illicit relations.

Arudhati Roy has exploited a really profound source in depicting love in the novel. Chacko, the prophet of love philosophy, interprets love for Rahel who raises the question of parents loving their children in the deepest manner. Chacko says: “Anything’s possible in Human Nature..... Love. Madness. Hope. Infinite joy” (118).
The theme of love is closely associated with the idea of small gifts mutually exchanged. What Wordsworth, the romantic poet, calls “the little nameless unremembered deeds” (29), is the basic theme of this novel.

The illicit relationship was dead against the attitude of both socialism and Marxism. *The God of Small Things* received much attention from the media in India and abroad bringing both praise and adverse criticism, maybe on this count. While a section of critics dismissed it simply with nothing serious, others discussed many things positive. Making persistent efforts to read and analyse the novel threadbare has enabled the researcher to state emphatically that Roy’s could not be pornographic writing.

The love-making scene at the end of the novel is found to be “bad enough” and “clearly obscene” by Abu Abraham. But parallels to it can be easily pointed out in Indian classics and in the novels of the west. Sharma and Talwar feel that its poetry and its feminist contention help to raise it from the level of mere sensationalization of sex. Nature disregards distinctions of caste and class. Pleasure in love and sex relation depends on love, on willing and equal partnership. The scene is important for it asserts that love is the only answer for all class and caste prejudices in society.

The four line verse in the context of the sexual abuse of Estha is to point out child abuse in our society. The incestuous relationship of Estha and Rahel seems to carry the message to the orthodox that if they victimize people for outcaste marriages their activities may lead to the breaking of the greatest taboo, namely,
incest. Sex relations are purely personal and they need not be interfered with. Roy, as a socially committed novelist, naturally thinks about all these pernicious evils.

Almost every character carries a secret vault within, which is too full of worms and rot. The glossy exterior is only a sepulchre that hides ill will, jealousy, antipathy and inhumanity. This secret vault is created by the atrocious animosity and acrimony of the preceding generation and perpetuated by the successive generation. Thus the whole book is about the cyclical nature of human depravity hidden away in the crypts of souls. Unless this crypt is destroyed, men will victimize one another.