Chapter - VII

SUMMARING UP
After Rushdie seventeen years later Arundhati Roy has brought the honour again, this time to a small state in the south of the country which has created a record by achieving hundred per cent literacy, very high health standards and also a standard of living which is often compared to the ones existing in the major cities of the world and of course to the country at large. De Beno has observed that "brilliant new ideas are produced and we do not know how they come about. We can study and analyze the behaviour of creative people, but this will not tell us very much, because often such people are themselves unaware of what triggered the brilliant idea" (De Beno, p.4).

*The God of Small Things*, which bagged the coveted *Booker Prize* for literature, is now a matter of great discussion among the readers and critics of the world. It is being termed by many celebrated critics as the most remarkable work in Indo Anglican fiction. It presents a fine correspondence between feeling and form, matter and manner. Roy's contribution to English fiction is a precious laurel in the crown of Indian fiction. Her extraordinary linguistic inventiveness; her satirical portrayal of the contemporary society; her psychological depth of the isolated characters; her new and original style containing many new things as opposed to traditional renderings of things etc. have certainly exercised a great influence on the readers of literary flavour. If a reader goes through this book, his heart is overflowed with many beautiful words and phrases, images and symbols. Sometimes he is bound to be baffled by some ungrammatical construction, new coinages, unconventional rhythm, bizarre phrases etc. Almost every page of the book is so beautifully written that a literary person begins to leap with joy to see some new expressions, which give a jerk and jolt to the mind.

W.H. Hudson remarks: "A nation's life has its moods of exultation and depression, its epochs a strong faith and strenuous idealism, now of doubt, struggle and disillusion, now of unbelief and flippant disregard for the sanctities of existence and while the manner of expression will vary greatly with the individuality of each writer, the dominant spirit of the hour, whatever that may be will directly or indirectly reveal itself in his word."(Hudson, p.79) and this is what one can see in Arundhati Roy's well-known book, *The God of Small Things.*
An attempt is made in this thesis to highlight Arundhati Roy's contribution to Indian English Novel in order to place her among other champion novelists of the country. In this novel, Roy has shown her personal views of the past life through the vision mostly of the twins.

Rahel seems to represent the author's mother, Mrs. Mary Roy. So in order to present her vision mostly of her past life, Roy creates characters, which beautifully translate her vision on the pages of the novel.

The characterization of Roy is even more fascinating. Through her realistic characterization, she is able to depict the social theme of the high and the low, the rough and the sublime with advent of women writers the prevalent trend has been to portray the women mainly as victims of the atrocities by men, society, ideology and culture. Women writers have explored the stance of male chauvinism and atrocities committed against women. Though the novel is essentially a sensitive study of childhood and its trauma it is a significant fact that the writer, Arundhati Roy, has titled the novel relevant to the victimised man and not the woman, who is also a victim but her life is different from that of her male counterpart. Roy presents different male characters who are as varied as life itself. They range from the chauvinistic grandfather to the Marxist leader, Pillai, to Velutha. Set in Kerala which was just establishing its Communist identity, it explores these credentials in varied aspects ranging from the private life to its social implications.

Roy explores it as the conflict between tradition and modernity and as an individual's perception of the same. In this narrative Arundhati Roy makes a study of different men, their conflicts and their reactions. It is the feminine narrator's representation of life and men as she saw it through the eyes of a girl and a woman. This representation ranges from viewing man as hero or God and villain or versions of antihero. The text provides scope for interpreting men through a woman's eyes or the narrator's authorial. The importance of men and their superiority has been a part of Indian social mores for generations. Women had always been the less important individuals. The men in this story range from those who are lunatics like Muralidharan to perfectly normal but mad-for-power men like Pillai, men like the paedophile Kari Sapu, Kuttappen, the lonely disabled
brother of Velutha, the doctor who was the feeler up of mothers, Father Mulligan
to an out right chauvinist Chacko, the alcoholic Bengali father, the ill-tempered
Pappachi, the Orange drink Lemon drink man, Estha and The God of Small Things
Velutha.

The novel deals with another equally important issue that is the novelist’s
valorization of women in the Indian society. The predicament of women is
presented by Roy through her female characters. These characters represent Indian
women belonging to three generations. They are all exploited in the novel. For
example Ammu, the biggest victim of system, is an archetypal image of a daughter
marginalized in a patriarchal society.

Rahel daughter of Ammu unlike her mother she is a rebel from her
childhood, who revolt against the age old patriarchal norms laid down in the
society. Roy Throughout the course of the novel each of the character shies away
from addressing life’s larger issues, the “Big Things,” as Roy cleverly puts it. The
use of language allows the characters to mask their true feelings, scratching only
the surface of the thoughts and feelings which govern their actions. Even in terms
of Ammu and Velutha’s relationship, the heart of the matter is never addressed:
“Instinctively they stuck to the Small Things. The Big Things ever lurked inside.
They knew that there was nowhere for them to go. They had nothing. No future. So
they stuck to the Small Things” (Roy, p.320). It is not the characters alone who
’suffer’ in the novel. When Faulkner wrote his The Sound and Fury, there was a
critical assumption (perhaps incorrect) that “Faulkner was trying to write a
sociological study of the American south but did not know how to go about it”
(Carvel Collins, p.156).

For Roy it is Ayemenem, which has a story to tell of its old glory. Even the
opening sentences of the novel are about Ayemenem where one can get a
description of the summer in Ayemenem. “May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding
month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on
Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruit air. Then they stun themselves
against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun” (Roy, p.1).
She has achieved the maximum effect by most economical linguistic means. The readers find an undercurrent of connotation aestheticism and pure artistic exuberances. In terms of solidarity, condensation, crafting and linguistic inventiveness Roy’s place in Indo Anglian fiction is highly original and sometimes astonishing.

The narrative technique of The God of Small Things is an amalgam of many things. ‘The Point of view’ of this novel is of different types. The author has very beautifully taken the help of all the important points of view, which one generally sees in the modern novels. It has the Omniscient point of view; the limited point of view. But the chief point of view seems to be that of the seven-year-old twins, Rahel and Estha, whose point of view occupy large portion of the book. The authorial voice is also present here and there in the novel. The God of Small Things is unique type of novel in which the author seems to be in a mood of boldly mingling all types of the forms of narrative techniques and thereby creating a new and astonishing style which baffles the reader and sometimes even impairs the receptive process of reading and enjoying the book.

The structural pattern or the architectonics of The God of Small Things has vehemently brought about revolution in the literary scenario. A thorough study of the book obviously shows that the novel is rich in both matter and manner. However, it is the manner of the book that fascinates the reader much. The design, language, mode of material of the novel are so beautifully employed and tugged together that they cannot help without enamouring the reader, particularly those readers who are in the habit of tasting the flavour of only traditional and regular pattern of things. The style of the book reminds one of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Henry James and T.S. Eliot and in Indo-Anglian fiction, it is very close to Salman Rushdie.

In style, it is a new experiment in the field of literature. It has metaphoric structure, verbal exuberance, idiosyncratic use of language challenging even the age-old rules of grammar, unconventional rhythm, sprinkling of italics etc. But this newness does not confront the readers rather it charms them. It makes them stay for a while to think over the new construction of phrases and fine use of language.
The grammatical distortion of words and sentences has been deliberately done in order to conform to the childhood sentiments and the abnormal situation of the mind of some neurotic characters.

For this new conception of form, she may be placed next to the line of great innovators like D.H. Lawrence, Henry James, James Joyce, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf and Salman Rushdie.

Roy uses language psychologically, typographically, structurally, and culturally to create a powerful story. In each stylistic choice the author makes the characters (most notably Estha, Rahel and Ammu) connect with the readers. By allowing the reader to see and understand as the twins do, the reader is drawn into the events of the novel in 1969. Likewise, the use of different types of language both verbal and silent create dynamic relationships between the characters and the world in which they live. While Roy constructs a compelling story for her readers she does so with the expectation that the reader will have to work to understand her words and her characters. The combination of standard English, manipulated English words and Malayalam words serves to create a deeper understanding of the characters and the Indian culture. Roy exhibits how the influence of English culture has infiltrated the Indian culture, bringing both positive and negative effects. Uma Mahadevan rightly remarks that, “To me personally, the book was an exciting linguistic experience and a double treat. It gave me the satisfaction of reading an English novel and a Malayalam novel at the same time.” (Uma Mahadevan, p.108)

Roy is non-discriminatory in her analysis of contemporary Indian culture. She uses her characters to point to flaws in both the English and Indian world. Roy’s deliberate use of English and Malayalam suggests that she is giving the reader vital information, information she hopes her reader will interpret in a specific way. Anne Cluysenaar argues, “The individual’s knowledge of, and selection from, his language is so vital a matter. His perceptual and inner world is, it seems, largely articulated even to himself within the confines of his linguistic awareness, and is certainly expressed to the reader solely through the forms he has chosen from amongst those available to him” (Anne Cluysenaar, p.25). Indeed Roy’s “linguistic awareness” as Cluysenaar puts it, is vast.
She gives her reader the novel as a sort of structure to explore. By using fragmentation, capitalization, and focalization the reader can understand what Roy deems important as well as why.

In providing such challenges, Roy engages the reader with the text and characters, often exposing the reader to cultural practices different from their own. Without a doubt, the novel *The God of Small Things* is a masterpiece, which contains an innovative blend of language.

Roy’s characters are clearly understood not only by their actions but by their use of different types of language: verbal and silent, as well as body language. Each of these linguistic aspects combine to create a compelling story deeply rooted in culture. The author’s use of both English and Malayalam explicates the culture of both Roy and her characters. The novel may have only been successful due to the combination of the languages for, as John McLeod insists, “To dismiss a language is to dismiss a whole culture” (John McLeod, p. 126).

The things which attracts the readers much after reading the novel is the style of Arundhati Roy, a new and origins style which employs a circuitous narrative technique. Event emerge elliptically and sometimes impairs the tempo reading. There are time shifts, fast-forwards and reversal; which enhance the narrative art of the author and make the novel of post-modern period. A thorough study of the book shows that Roy's style is a unique style.

Arundhati Roy has brought architecture in her novel. The reason is that he has been the student of architecture. She has not written the novel 'from the beginning to the end', but rather followed the architectural methodology. The whole story of the book is concisely revealed in the first chapter. In one of her interviews Roy rightly observes that “I would start somewhere and I’d colour in a bit and then I would deeply stretch back and then stretch forward. It was like designing an intricate balanced structure.”(*The Week*, p. 46)
In other words, Arundhati Roy, basically a student of architecture has yielded most of the important events and their chronological signposts in the beginning of the book. Thus the structure of the book is very complex. It is very difficult to understand fully the chronological order of the book in the first reading.

It demands second reading to have a thorough acquaintance of the new technique Roy has employed in the novel. In spite of the various knots and complexities of the structure of the book, the aesthetic perception or the poetic exactitude cannot be totally ignored. Roy has also taken a great risk in involving the reader into a jigsaw puzzle.

The next stylistic feature of Arundhati Roy is her brilliant display of some powerful images. The book is a whirlpool of images and symbols, mythology and modernity, sex and sensation. It is rich with many other poetic devices such as personification, irony, oxymoron, pun, hyperbole etc. But the main concern of the novelist is her abundant use of similes and metaphors. Right from the beginning up to the last, the reader is charmed by the beautiful application of words and phrases, similes and metaphors. They taste the flavour of poetry in each line. Most of the images of the book smell the sweetness and fragrance of Indianess. They are common and as comprehensible as most of the images of Shakespeare. Sometimes, some metaphors have got much significance in the development of the plot.

The image of 'History House', 'Pappachi Moth', 'Ayemenem House', 'Orangedrink Lemondrink Man', 'Plymouth car', 'Mombatti', 'Laltain' etc always come again and again like the refrain in poetry.

The novel is a saga of lost dreams from several points of view. Almost all the characters in the novel have something to say about their loss. Even the minor characters are not an exception to this rule. Roy draws a large canvas and the novel unfolds the story of five generations beginning from Rev. E. John Ipe's father. Rev.Ipe is the great grandfather of Sophie Mol whose arrival from England to Ayemenem becomes a turning point in the novel, "Perhaps it’s true that things can change in a day. That a few dozen hours can affect the outcome of whole life times. And then when they do, those few dozen hours, like the salvaged remains of
a burned house—the charred clock, the signed photograph, the scorched furniture—must be resurrected from the ruins and examined. Preserved. Accounted for” (Roy, p.32).

Modern English literature is replete with the instances of psychological studies of the characters their traumatic experiences caused by cruel and callous atmosphere, their abnormal attitude to sex, their unknown psychosomatic diseases, their strange sense of isolation, frustration and desolation, so on and so forth.

Psychology says that the mind of the man is so complex that it is an arduous task to examine it properly. In order to properly evaluate a man's personality, one has to dive deep into the man's inner world so as to dig out the hidden seed of his temperament. This is what most of the modern psychological novelists and poets in English literature do.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is also an attempt to evaluate the abnormal psychology through some characters and situations. A broad study of the novel shows some psychological elements playing vital role in the inner workings of some of the major characters of the novel. The characters like Ammu, Estha, Rahel, Baby Kochamma and Velutha are ken suffering from some psychological disturbances.

Roy has shown her sympathetic and revolutionary attitude especially to the neglected women in the novel. The novel apart from many other things, deals with the universal theme of social consciousness for example a confrontation between the big and man and the small man or to speak through the term of Roy, a confrontation between the 'Laltain' and the 'Mombatti'.

She also exposes the hypocrisy and ostentation of some of the people who felt no qualm of conscience in blowing hard on the suppressed and the injured of society. Police in the day to day life are generally supposed to be the protector of the rules and regulations laid down by the great constitution. But what one can find in police administration is just otherwise. Arundhati Roy, a close observer of men and manners, very aptly flings a mild but pinching irony on the various loopholes of the police. Through the picture of the Kottayam Police, she truthfully delineates the corruptions prevalent in the police administration almost all over India.
The other prominent theme Roy raises in this book, is realistic delineation of the plight of the women in society. She strives to express in this novel her sympathy towards those women who are devoid of everything. Ammu the protagonist in the novel, is such a woman whose social situation is full of many ifs and buts, ups and downs. She strongly yearns for pleasure and happiness and a life far from the shackles or constrains. By her own consent, she married a man who proved to be an alcoholic and so her sweet marriage is broken.

Being divorced, she returned to Ayemenem, the big house of her parents but there too, she found her parents cool and indifferent towards her and her children. All the members of the family Pappachi, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Cochu Maria etc. treat Ammu badly. Through this characters Arundhati Roy hammers hard on the man's domination over woman. Cultural plurality and heterogeneity have always been the main concerns in the post colonial studies. Roy's novel examines India's cultural transformation from colonial, postcolonial period to contemporary era of globalization. Through this character, Arundhati Roy hammers hard on the man's domination over woman. She seems to say that women are not a mere toy or an object of pleasure or a means of gratifying the men's baser passions, but they are the noble and richest part of a man's life.

Meena Usmani in her article “Violence Against Women” rightly remarks: “The women have frequently been ruthlessly exploited in one’s society and the problem is growing day by day. The case of eve teasing, sexual harassment, abduction, sati, rape and wife battering in public and at the work place etc. have been more regularly reported since the 1960s and early 1970s”. (Meena Usmani, p.13)

Arundhati Roy’s debut novel which set in a small village called Ayemenem in the southwestern India state of Kerala, where Roy was raised, tells a story of the Ipe family. Nestled inside the centre of the family chronicle spanning from the country’s colonial period to its independent present is a heartbreaking tragedy resulted from a profane romance involving a transgression of the Love Laws that takes the reader’s breath away.
Love Laws, an oxymoronic term Roy creates for her novel, points toward the cultural basis upon which Indian society addresses its traditional and strict control of caste segregation and sexual discrimination.

In the cross-border tension caused by the conflict between human desire and Indian socio-political constructs that suppress individual liberty Roy does not only depict the social reality in India but also proposes a scathing critique of the multilayer social restraints on Indians’ bodies and minds.

Individual bodies attached to the culture, first of all, are the vehicles of various cultural signs that allotted according to the caste difference and gender asymmetry; at the same time, bodies are the specific location where the infliction of society’s power to discipline and to punish takes place. Body contact that pursues forbidden love as relief from the social oppressions leads to the ultimate penalty, death, which can destroy the body and also scar the witness’s mind. Focusing on two innocent children’s difficulty in piecing the memory fragments together to come up with a belated response to the tragedy and their melancholy fixation about the lost beloved, Roy tries to reveal the lingering effect of trauma and the symbolic death happening to the victims who can’t work through the trauma but trapped by it instead.

Roy deliberately provides the novel a traumatic structure consisted of aesthetic poetics, sensual narratives, ungrammatical phrases, repeated images, fragmental passages, etc., to convey a literary experience of trauma to the reader as if they are dealing with trauma when reading the novel. Through discussing the Love Laws from a historical perspective, Roy purposes to suggest that the major trauma in *The God of Small Things* doesn’t belong to a particular age or place. All Indians in the past, the present and the coming future share the same trauma because the Love Laws have already been a significant part of Indian culture and the practice of Love Laws will continue to traumatize Indian people from generation to generation.
Besides tackling the Love Laws as the cause of Indians' national trauma by presenting the oppression of laws, the novel also offers a remarkable point of view to discuss the cruel nature of love when love is employed as a conditional reward for the obedient in the rhetoric to command, to regulate, to threaten, to bargain, and to inspire loyalty.

People's unceasing desire to win and to give love, against one's common belief in love's sublime value, may bring about hurt, pain, fear, jealousy, mistrust, quarrels, etc., all of which can make a deep cut in any human relation or even cause more serious destruction what is generally considered as the consequence of the exercise of the power of law in its tug of war with love. What lies at the heart of The God of Small Things is the twin characters' encounter with the loss of their loved ones.

The family abandoned their mother Ammu, and then Ammu abandoned herself to a silent death in despair. Velutha, Ammu's untouchable lover, was beaten to death not long after the exposure of their love affair. Estha and Rahel, bearing the witness of the couple's tragedy, continued to be afflicted by the traumatic past throughout their lives. As the narrative jumps back and forth between the twins' childhood and their present adulthood the reader perceives the long-lasting effect of trauma. Trauma, according to Cathy Caruth, is "not simply a problem of destruction, but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival" (Caruth, p.24). Besides locating the very residence of trauma in the breath - taking scene of Velutha's violent death, Roy in the novel turns to explore the baffling relation between trauma and survival by presenting the twins' lifelong hard battle with the enigma of their traumatic survival. For Estha and Rahel, "those who undergo trauma, it is not only the moment of the event, but of the passing out of it that is traumatic; that survival itself, in other words, can be a crisis" (Caruth, p.9).

What makes the survival a crisis is the suffering of post-traumatic stress disorder, which Caruth defines concisely as a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also
increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event. (Caruth, p.4) The characteristics of traumatic survival are found in Roy’s portrayal of the bizarre patterns of Estha and Rahel’s behaviors, which were disregarded by their family but carry outstanding significance for the critics and readers who are interested in the literary representation of trauma. The twins’ unusual behaviors, although seemingly different in some details, embody the constellation of traumatic symptoms.

In this novel Roy focused on the psychic development of the protagonists. The leading characters, Ammu, the twins Rahel and Estha, and Veluthu, are peripheral individuals in their milieu, and suffer greatly due to the oppression and bigotry of their society. Their journey home represents the attempt to come to terms with reality while asserting their human dignity. However, their failure to reach a reconciliation of the spiritual world and the outer world leads the protagonists to catastrophe, not only for themselves, but also for their family.

Thereby, through her characters, Roy not only reveals the struggles of repressed women and of casteism in her real world, but also conveys a condemnation of an unjust society that devastates human beings and brings about a crisis in human relations.

The conflicts between the protagonists and society in this novel can be probed by making use of psychoanalytic ideas, which can expose the unspoken thoughts within a work or uncover the concealed text. By doing so, the relationship between Roy’s backdrop and her work is laid bare.

The book is a work of fiction, but it is a work as an expression or reflection of reality and it enacts human experience, or embodies an author’s intention, or its structures reproduce the structures of the human mind.

Ammu and her twins, Rahel and Estha, are treated as Untouchables in their high caste milieu. Velutha was born an Untouchable. However, they do not simply forego life to escape their disappointments in life. They try every means to breathe like other human beings, through despair and hope, through faith and love. They are true to themselves in how they pursue equality and deal with the struggles that
confront them. They retain their dignity as human beings by taking responsibility for their actions. In their inner world, they have fulfilled their hopes to be a human being. They cannot allow themselves to follow the dictates of the unequal system.

They choose to follow their feelings, their inner world and are not afraid of being rejected by their outer world, the unjust society. At least, they are happy for what they have done because happiness is one of the significant values for a human being, the subject, in terms of psychoanalysis.

The big world in the novel, the unjust society in Kerala in the 1960s, underneath its ossified communal and caste structures, is rife with the turbulence of mutinies and rebellions of individuals who fight against injustice.

Kerala is one of the smallest states in India, yet it is the most densely populated one. In addition, high literacy rates contributed to the turbulence of the times. At present, the pace of change of the human mind is faster than that of society.

Through education and economic growth, individuals learn to value their right of equality and question social injustice with demands that spread through the air. From the view of the people, especially peripheral individuals, society with its entrenched traditional values enslaves and represses them and binds them to regulations, thereby allowing high caste to dominate low caste, men to dominate women. Individuals revolt to claim social justice. The protagonists' transgressions are just part of them.

The collapse of the last three generations of the Ipc family can be viewed as a warning against injustice. It is symbolic of the problems and future struggles latent in society. Pappachi and Mammachi represent the old generation and abide by the social restrictions. The traditional values they uphold as naturally as they breathe. They are blind to the problems within their society.

They never question society, be it in the colonized era or in post-independence times, because they represent society's henchmen at the family level. Ammu and her elder brother Chacko are raised near end of the colonized era and
the beginning of the post-independence era. They represent individuals who have ambivalent values between the old and the new. With inspiration and life experience, Ammu has an innately strong character, and she pursues change with a sense of self-realization. Her forbidden love undermines the cornerstone of her social system.

By contrast, Chacko is weak and follows the flow of the unjust society. After the fall of the family, he leaves the country forever. Ammu’s twins, Rahel and Estha lose their childhood and suffer in their adulthood. Their incestuous relationship embodies the radical interrogation that the society will face if it continues to restrain human nature.

Through the Lacanian mirror stage theory, the psychic journeys from innocence to self-realization of Ammu, her twins, and Velutha were discussed with different experiences in life, they return to their hometown and hope to negotiate with reality. However, they finally determine to turn away from society.

In light of the Lacanian mirror concepts, the psychic process of achieving the sense of self, the subject, is based on the harmonious relationship between the inner world of the individual and the other, the outer world. The individual needs to be recognized as the other for the confirmation of his or her position in the outer world.

However, the protagonists are marginalized or peripheral individuals in their society. They are small things in the big world, the society. The asymmetric sense of their spiritual world and the external world has existed since the day they unconsciously entered into reality. Because of their mutual love and recognition, Ammu and Velutha, Rahel and Estha, find their own places within each other’s mind. Their radical transgressions lead them to forfeit everything in the outer world. Hence, the protagonists choose their own sense of the subject, their inner world, rather than prostrate themselves before the unjust society. In The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy depicts a world constituted by small things, and each small thing attaches its significance with those who live in Ayemenem, especially for the twins Rahel and Estha. By remapping the small things scattered in
Ayemenem, the reader can easily explore the interrelation between place, people, and space. Place is meaningful for those who live there when their personal history, social relation, and personal experience produce life space and thus have the sense of place.

Therefore, place is defined by the personal experience, not the changes of landscape or political history. The sense of place is developed from life space which is formed by small things that people perceive and conceive.

Place is identified by personal history and experience, not by the changes of landscape. The twins are traumatized by the small things that trace Velutha’s death and are confined in the space constructed by the past memories.

Even though the landscape and people of Ayemenem become different, the twins still sense Ayemenem consistent with its past. The small things are left in Ayemenem by the god of small things, Velutha, who belongs to subaltern group. It illustrates the social relation between place and people through the dilemma and oppression he faces. By remapping the small things of the novel and it further represents how people identify place to produce their life space.

Life space is produced from the interrelation between people and place, while the sense of place is constructed by people’s life experience and life space.

In this novel Roy’s deals with patriarchal oppression. Women are often oppressed in different societies with different patterns. They often have no sense of subjectivity in the logic of phallocentric society. In this novel the female characters are also forced to occupy a low position. Ammu, the central character of the novel, challenges the patriarchic, male-dominated society. Ammu’s revolt is seen as her way of achieving a sense of subjectivity, a woman’s subject.

For instance, she refuses to choose either her father's or her husband's surname for her children. She affirms her capability of being a subject in the patriarchic society. The relationship between Ammu and Rahel is close, in terms of their mother - daughter relationship. Rahel enacts a similar style of the mother. However, as women, Ammu’s mother Mammachi and aunt Baby Kochamma serve
as society's henchmen. They capitulate to the social system, with its entrenched caste system and subjectless women, so they disdain and punish Ammu for her infringement of the social structure and tainting the family reputation.

In other words, the tragedies of Ammu and her children have their seeds in their mother's house. Nevertheless, as women in their society, Ammu and Rahel have questioned the asymmetric social position of men and women.

They also present that the improvement of the mother-daughter relationship is a pivotal element in a woman's pursuit of subjectivity in a male-controlled society.

Though Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* does not appear to be a political novel, she has made a room for politics Kerala between 1958 to 1970. But Roy faced adverse criticism from the political parties of Kerala especially left parties as she misrepresented the political scene in the novel in few contexts. One feels that the writer could easily have avoided reference to politics without damaging the main theme of the novel. Either directly or indirectly, the repeated references to the political events do not appear to be related to the story of the novel. They neither added nor substantiated the central theme of the novel.

It was the firm and irresistible political convictions of the author that made her comment on them. The writer made uncompromising and categorical comments on political events of Kerala. Thus, it becomes a social novel by a politically committed novelist. Since this is the case, the contents automatically invite the scrutiny of political observers. Roy's novel may be called as a political novel for its depiction of political events whether or not ideological leaning can be seen. The part of the fame and success of the novel is because of its preoccupation with the matters related to Kerala - its society, politics, culture, economy, environment, caste question, gender issues and so on. Thus the novel appears as a document of Kerala and a critique of Kerala's social, political, religious and cultural institutions.
The God of Small Things attempts to tell stories of characters whose lives have been rewritten by society's, and history's, higher powers. One notable exception, each of these narratives ends in disappearance and loss, due in part to unfortunate turns of events but due primarily to the marginalizing sweep of history. Embedded within the novel are stories of characters whose sexual desires are rewritten as social deviancy, characters who have no choice but to internalize society's Rules and Lessons emphasizing how people are not supposed to act, and characters who are taught to be complicit in their own silencing. To counteract the overwhelming presence of such narratives, though, Roy's novel participates equally in the subalternist project of tracking resistance. This occurs by way of the narrator's almost religious devotion to Small Things. Rather than participating in the academic tradition of seeking to "understand" its characters by creating a grand explanatory narrative that depersonalizes those very same characters, the novel speaks through the subjectivity of its children, treating minute sensual details as building blocks of experience and memory, and undermining the Platonic rigidity of the linguistic sign by stripping words down to their sounds and visual qualities.

An attempt at reading and interpretation of Velutha's imposed 'silence' in his life of oppression reveals that this 'God of small things' is a victim of the systematic schemes of the agents of oppression prevalent in the socio-cultural life of Kerala.

One of the prominent themes of the novel, which merits readers attention much, is the author's truthful portrayal of untouchability, a fatal infectious disease, which prevents the development of society.

Right from the Vedic age up to this time, the untouchables in society have been bearing the brunt of social persecution without any rhyme or reason. The misinterpretation of the nation's great scriptures led this problem to such an extent that hitherto, it has not been absolutely uprooted from the society. The untouchables of Kerala during the period that Arundhati Roy delineates in her novel were victims of social ostracism. They were forced into silence and anyone who dared to break the 'silence' did so at his or her peril. What is, however, revealing is that Arundhati Roy explodes the myth of absence of social
stratification in Christian society. She painstakingly points out that like the tiny elite of Nambudiri Brahmins, Syrian Christians—a community which included numerous landlords and prosperous traders—were also upholders of the elitist consciousness to the extent of detestation towards Paravan Christians. This animosity perpetuated through generations is betrayed by the fear and anxiety in Vellya Paapen, the father of Velutha, and by the arrogance and insularity in the Mammachi-Baby Kochamma combine.

Arundhati Roy presents realistically the inhuman and unadmirable situations faced by the untouchable, the downtrodden in Kerala. But through this state, she seems to peep into the lives of almost all the untouchables of the country who are treated worse than beasts.

In this novel, Velutha is an untouchable paravan who, unlike other untouchables, is gifted with technical skills. He symbolically stands for The God of Small Things. But he has to face many unbearable difficulties in his day-to-day life. His father, Vellya, converts himself into the Christian religion only to immune from the victimization of the upper caste. But his conversion never brings any fruitful result. Velutha, along with his father, always goes to Ayemenen House to deliver coconut plucked from the trees. But they are never allowed to enter the room. They are never permitted to touch a thing that a 'Touchable' can. Moreover, Mammachi remembers his past days when the untouchables were expected to crawl backward with a broom, sweeping away their footprints.

She also remembers how the untouchable had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed.

In short, Arundhati Roy, like a devoted social reformer, wants to highlight the cause of the untouchables and their difficulties to adjust in a cold and indifferent society. She seems to bring to the readers notice the grave situations the country has been facing and draws one's attention or one's sympathy to their piteous plight.
In this regard, she is very close to Mulk Raj Anand who at first, dared to describe realistically the terrible and heartrending blusterings and false accusations imposed on the untouchables.

She also conforms to the opinions of M.K. Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar who, to their very core of heart, showed the sympathy to a large section of society devoid of humanity. One of the important duties of a great writer is to describe almost all the details of social and historical settings, new changes in society so that the readers may be able to be acquainted with the pattern of living daily routine, rites, customs, rituals, and habits. The God of Small Things is suffused with all these things. It presents the realistic picture of dresses, men and manners of the contemporary Keralite society.

Some people say that her book, The God of Small Things is replete with vulgar scenes and pornographic delineations. No doubt, there are certain scenes of the book, e.g.; the masturbation scene in the Abhilash talkies; the scene of Ammu's bathroom in which she puts the toothbrush on her breasts to see whether it stands or falls; the scene of the last chapters in which Roy has dared to describe the genitals of both man and woman and the process of copulation; the scene in which Rahel, in her college day, deliberately collides against other girls to see whether her breasts hurt or not; etc.

Certainly this type of sexual portrayal somewhat looks absurd and unethical in the eyes of India where the people are ethically deep rooted. But the occidental culture doesn't think it vulgar. Arundhati Roy, like a true artist delineates only those abnormalities and discrepancies which she counters in the day to day modern life in which there is a conspicuous breakdown of moral and spiritual values' in which people seldom abide by the trodden path of ethics and culture; in which the children are immensely tyrannized and brutally behaved; in which the dalit and the deserted don't command proper respect, in which an innocent child like Estha is forced to masturbate an old man, 'Orangedrink Lemondrink' man in the cinema hall; in which divorcing a woman has become the order of the day. So it is quite wrong to call the book and the author immoral as some critics call her. In deed it is not unethical or immoral, but simply the bitter reality or the truthful mirror of the present day scenario.
In other words, through the psychological interpretations of the various layers of human mind, Roy seems to present a trenchant critique of the present day Indian society, where people are bound to suffer traumatic experiences leading to so many physical absurdities.

Arundhati Roy, as a writer of the Nineties, is a representative of the current Indian writing in English. She seems to be a harsh critic of the traditional way of Indian life especially the one that Indian women have been leading. She is modernistic in her approach to life as well as to art.

Today one can observe that Shakespeare's dramas and sonnets appeal to universal readers. It is because they contain poetic beauty and poetic truth. The same thing happens in the case of Arundhati Roy, who has lived up to the ideals of great art in her first novel, *The God of Small Things*. Inspite of the fact that the novelist has shown the brutal truth of society, she has not forgotten the norms of great art in terms of images and symbols, ironies and overtones and other aesthetic aspects of life.

As a matter of fact the readers are never inclined to disregard the small: on the contrary, one perceives the vastness and glory of God in the smallest particle of the universe.

The small things need not be as small as they seem to be even if they are really small they need not be of small or trivial influence in ones life. The novelist has a unique gift of being able to see even the smallest, apparently meaningless details and create a complex, significant and aesthetically satisfying mosaic of life. She has structured her novel *The God Small Things* around sort of small things. It focalizes on a whole world of small things, tiny creatures, small children, small happenings and small lives.

She knows in well as to how the narrative found its form. "Little events, ordinary things, smashed and recapitulated. Imbued with new meanings. Suddenly then become the bleached bones of the story." (Roy, pp.32-33)
The world of *The God of Small Things* is a world in which ancient and modern, nature and culture, small and big appear against each other. Any mention of small things is explicitly accompanied by a mention of big things.

The novelist places the two God together: “The big God howled like a hot wind, and demanded obeisance. The small God (cosy and contained, private and limited) came away cauterized, laughing numbly at his own temerity.” (Roy, p.19).

The question of smallness is relative. While Rahel and Estha are small before Ammu, she herself is small before Baby Kochamma who in her turn is small before Father Mulligan. Chacko is big for Ammu but small for Margaret Kochamma. The use of the term big and small may have philosophical implications, but if one wants to grasp the real significance of the novel, one will have to understand them in terms of the author's critique of society.

It is manifest in the pettiness of the passions and prejudices of the so-called big, and enormity and integrity of the experience of the so-called small, which underlines every contrast or conflict between the small and the big in the novel.

In this way on the basis of the aforesaid discussion, one can find that the small in the novel is not really small. On the contrary, the big in the novel looms large but is petty at the core. *The God of Small Things* does die in the novel but resurrects himself as a big powerful God, the novelist herself takes up cudgets in behalf of the children subjected to abuse.

The small and the big exchange their roles, the small grow big and the big shrink to small. In fact, the dichotomy between small and the big man made and so the fists of the novelist are not raised to heaven but are aimed nearer home, at man and society. *The God of Small Things* is much more the story of the “two-egg twins” Rahel and Estha than the story Ammu and Velutha.

They are the living embodiment of what Ammu and Velutha suffered in life as well as in death and primarily it is through the consciousness that the whole story is visualised. As a matter of fact the novel is not just a novel; it is a fundamental node of social enquiry as well.
Arundhati Roy, the Booker prize winner novelist, is known to all not only for her new and original style but also for her thought provoking attitude regarding social consciousness. Roy emerges as an artist who blends psychological sequence with presentational sequencing and creates, in the process, her jigsaw puzzle of a tale that invites the reader for the teasing and pleasing task to piece it together. Her novel has great relevance to the whole India, socially and politically. After publishing her first novel Roy has not written the fiction but instead she invested her time exclusively in writing political speeches, articles, books, attending demonstrations, etc., with her wide experience and maturity, she may hopefully come out with better works of fiction, which she regards as a way of negotiating with the world. She has immense possibilities despite her limitations and the readers will be eager to see how well she makes most of the opportunities coming her way.