Chapter - IV

A STYLISTIC APPROACH

TO

THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS
The God of Small Things is the most prominent outburst of female emotions breaking up the conventional linguistic system of syntactic structures at several places in the novel. Roy has made a revolutionary attempt at crossing the limits of some male made grammaticalities of English language. One can find her linguistic inventiveness at almost all levels of syntactic, semantic and stylistic elements and structures. Her innovations almost at all pages of the novel make the female attitudes and behaviours work successfully in a magical and miraculous way.

Roy has proved that her novel The God of Small Things has changed the traditional concept of the structure of the 'sentence'. She proved that grammatical constraints are not necessary for the writer to express her ideas and emotions in her new language very successfully. 'Subjects' and 'predicates' of a sentence are now not essentially needed for the structure of sentence. A single phrase or even a single word can now become a full sentence in her new system of syntactic structures. Roy has maintained her incipient feminine potentiality of writing by subverting and undermining the fixed rules, significations, logic and the closure of the male centered language by opening out into a joyous free play of meanings and emotions, for this purpose she has broken the fixed word order of the syntax. Without such deliberate distortions and breaking up the logical syntactic structures, free play of meaning and ideas would have remained impossible. Her performative use of English language is very successful towards the end of the novel to bring about the erotic functioning of the female sexual experiences. The force of fluidity and rapidity is always apparent in the new structure of the language, the feeling of the experience and the exposure of behavior.

Arundhati Roy with her efforts of linguistic and psychological behavior, has created a monumental architecture of marriage and divorce with the play of love, hatred and politics. These ungrammatical new sentences are constructed with fractured sentences. She has made English language to work for the expression of paradoxical and ambiguous truth of a divorced life and language. She has really proved "the energy efficiency of vernacular architecture". Her new syntactic system of patterning and coining words and phrases adds a new horizon to the linguistic principles of diversity, generativity and multiple possibilities. These ungrammatical new sentences are structured with new use of connective elements generating paradoxes and ambiguities of meanings through the idiomatic constructions of words and phrases.
Most of the description and the discourses of experiences in the novel are pointedly structured where long traditional sentences are concluded with pointed sentences have been expressed through fractured and meaningless sentences and utterances. She has broken the borders and the boundaries of grammatical rules of sentences. It is not necessary for her to give a logical grammatical shape to the meanings and ideas contained in the writer’s mind. It has not the language that makes meaning clear. But it is the meaning or the background that plays a vital role to reveal the structure of the sentence. In the first chapter of the novel the writer makes description of Rahel and Estha through such grammatical and ungrammatical constructions of phrases, clauses and sentences. Edges, Boarders, Boundaries, Brinks and limits have appeared like a team on trolls on their separate horizons. Short creatures with long shadows, patrolling the Blurry End. Gentle half – moons have gathered under their eyes and they are as old as Ammu was when she died. Thirty – one. Not old. Not young. But a viable die – able age.” (Roy, p.2)

Here Roy has to express a long shadow of meanings containing in ‘Blurry End’ and ‘half – moons’. So she has used the short sentences without subject and predicate. She has made a mixture of the linguistic and the non-linguistic constructions having their separate horizons in English language. Another example from the novel for traditionally ungrammatical but pointed syntactic constructions of utterances may cited “ what’s the worst thing that can happen? I could lose everything. May job. My family. My livelihood. Everything.” (Roy, p.334)

An example is mentioned from the novel for long traditional and grammatical sentence followed by a chain of ungrammatical short sentences “ As he rose from the dark river and walked up the stone steps, she saw that the world they stood in was his. That he belonged to it. That it belonged to him. The water. The mud. The trees. The fish. The stars.” (Roy, p.333)

Roy has deliberately used such a new language where a clause and a phrase have been made an independent sentence. This way of using English language is the performative use of the language which is found inherent in women if they have undone the patriarchal pressure. The peculiar pattern of using participles and prepositions for the purpose of connectivity beyond the writer’s successful attempts at her linguistic style and indicates towards the linguistic innovation in the language of the novel.
A reader clearly looks into the description where both Ammu and Velutha were lonely enjoying their nothingness and futurelessness. "They laughed at ant - bites on each other's bottoms. At clumsy caterpillars sliding off the ends of leaves, at overturned beetles that couldn't right themselves. At the pair of the small fish that always sought Velutha out in the river and bit him. At a particularly devout praying mantis. At the minute spider who lived in a crack in the wall of the black verandha of the History House and camouflaged himself by covering his body with bits of rubbish - a silver of wasp wing. Part of a cobweb. Dust. Leaf rot." (Roy, p.338).

The preposition 'at' used in the first sentence has further been reused several times to continue the connectivity beyond the sentences. It is also interesting to note another example from the text of the novel where 'like' has been used as a connecting element beyond the sentences. Such linguistic touch of Roy makes the reader feel the trail of semantic goose bumps on their mind "Like flat chalk o a blackboard. Like breeze in a paddy field. Like jet - streaks in blue sky." (Roy, p.339).

The negative temporal phrase, 'not until' is used repeatedly to show the connectivity beyond the sentences. The whole utterance starting from 'at least not until' and ending at 'had touched' is in continuation of the sentences. Though the sentence structurally ends, it continues semantically. It is because the writer has to connect several other sentences starting with 'not until'. This new technique suits the writer's purpose of conveying connectivity. "But this time he held his peace. He said nothing. At least not until the terror took hold of him. Not until he saw, night after night, a little boat being rowed across the river. Not until he was it return at dawn. Not until he saw what his untouchable son had touched. More than touched. Entered. Loved." (Roy, pp.77-78).

Roy has dispelled many semantic constraints from English language. The least use of conjunctions for maintaining the trailing of the semantic and sensuous goose bumps through the set of sentences. She has constructed a long sentence without conjunctions disobeying the traditional way of syntactic structures "His yellow teeth were magnets. They saw, they smiled, they sang, they smelled, they
moved. They mesmerized.” (Roy, p.102). The novelist has made such a stylistic innovations where meaningless sentences have been loaded with multiple meanings lying beyond traditional significations.

She used some regional phrases in the novel though they are meaningless, they have been used as escape valves for human mind in trauma. For example ‘stopitted’ in place of ‘stopped it’ where verbal paradigm ‘stop’ has been firstly treated as noun then compounded with the pronoun ‘it’. It has been further inflected as the past tense form to procure ‘stopitted’ which has successfully been used in the language of the novel.

The coinages of some new phrases like ‘The Torch Man’, ‘the Monkey Man’ and ‘Orangedrink Lemondrink Man’. Many more examples of new constructions may be cited when a reader moves further. The phrase ‘impossible – to – forget’ is used as an adjective in the following sentence. “ His men had briefed him about the pots and pans. The grass mat. The impossible – to – forget toys.” (Roy, p.314)

‘God – knows – what’ is grammatically peculiar phrase which is used as a noun in the following sentence. “ In the back varandha of the History House, as the man they loved was smashed and broken. Mrs.Eapen and Mrs.Rajagopalan, Twin ambassadors of God – knows – what, learned two new lessons” (Roy, p.309). Another example in this regard ‘the boat – on – legs’: “The boat – on – legs approached the hut.” (Roy, p.205). The writer compacted certain words without using any hyphen as part of her mission for rapidity in language. “Cartoon platoon and deadly purposed” (Roy, p.304), “CocaColaFantaicecreamrosemilk” (Roy, p.301) and “Yesyesyesyes” (Roy, p.86).

Roy deliberately deleted the predicates of the sentences at most of the places in the novel to achieve her intended desire through fractured construction of sentences. She consciously did away with the subjects of the sentences.“ It was a boat. A tiny wooden Vallom. The boat that Estha sat on and Rahel found.....So old a boat that it had taken root. Almost... in the sun” (Roy, p.202). Within the fixed boarders of grammatically constructed wet of sentences many fractured ungrammatical sentences have been used consciously.
At many places in the novel, the author has deliberately violated the normal sequence of syntactic patterning of subject + verb + object / adverbials. She had brought object before subject. "But Rahel Comrade Pillai knew well" (Roy, p.14), "Though what exactly they meant by Group Activities they never said" (Roy, p.11), "This was the stuff their dreams were made of" (Roy, p.326) and "Dizygotic doctors called them" (Roy, p.2).

The author has adopted a new style of linguistic presentation of the traumatic state of children's mind by reversing the order of letters in the words, phrases and sentences: "A yellow hoarding said (BE INDIAN, BUY INDIAN in red. 'NAIDNI YUB, NAIDNI EB'. Estha said" (Roy, p.58). When Estha and Rahel were offered a book entitled 'The Adventures of Susie Squirrel' by Miss Mitten, they read it aloud to her backwards in a reversed order as "chT scrutinvdafo eisuS leriuqS. enO gnips gninrom Susie leriuqS ekow pU" (Roy, p.60). According to the writer, these reverse readings are a kind of trauma management.

The language used in *The God of Small Things*, has been organized on the concept of ‘Word Logos’ where two opposite constituents of a grammatical sentence, the subject and the predicate are unable to express the female feelings and attitudes emphatically, if they do not transcend the limit of the rules. Apart from the grammatical or traditional sentences some ungrammatical sentences are also essential for the performative play of language in a transcendental state of anger, anxiety, fear, hate, love and ecstasy.

The style in the English Fiction, particularly in the modern fictions, plays a significant role. Style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse. It shows to the reader how a writer or speaker says or speaks and how he uses dictions or the characteristic choice of works, the sentence structure and syntax. The density of language and figurative statements, the pattern of the rhythm and sounds and above all, the rhetorical aims and designs. So, form, structure and design presents a very vital role in the development of the novel. "Form, design, composition, have a rather different bearing upon the art of fiction that any they may have elsewhere." (Percy Lubbock, p.12).
Now a day’s writing a novel of classical nature, a novel which makes a correspondence between the present and the past with an eye to the future—is really very difficult. Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, which comes under this category is beautiful in both form and content, matter and manner. It has heralded a new conception in the realm of traditional thinking.

Indira Nityanandan observes, “Arundhati Roy writes in a style truly different from that of other Indo-English novelists both male and female of the country. She writes differently to a great extent and in doing she breaks many of accepted rules of language.” (Indira, p.170). In respect of technique and style, Roy’s novel lulls the reader away from the world of cheap writings to the world of metaphorical structure, architectural pattern. There are passages in this novel where the technique overrides the content and one often has a feeling that the story gets stifled under the weight of her style. Her proclivity of experiment with language and its poetic attributes as well as her rapidly witching points of view, seeking to fuse the past and the present create difficulties in the way of the readers. Arundhati Roy has invented such a new and original style and the western critics and reviewers have hailed her as one of the finest users of English language in recent years, while her critics point out that to an Indian mind anything done in excess evokes revulsion and the book is never touched by anyone. Louella Lobo Prabhu comments that, “When I read through the whole book slowly and painfully, but with a dogged determination to finish. I began by being enchanted with the language which for the first few pages, brought to my mind.” (Prabhu, p.171)

The prose of the book shuttles back and forth among its key images like refrain in poetry which reminds the reader of the major images of Shakespearean drama. Sometimes, the author has dared to coin some new terminology, which are essentially Indian in nature. In other words, whatever newness one can get in this novel, smells the fragrance of Indianess. The author is also seen turning and twisting language to conform to the feeling as a result of which the reader can enjoy broken sentences, illogical statements, unrestricted sprinkling of italics, bizarre phrases, ungrammatical construction, unconventional rhythm etc. In other words, the author has tried her best to create such words and phrases, intonations
and connotations that the sound suggests the sense. Roy rightly observes in an interview, "I would start where and I'd colour in a bit and then I would deeply stretch forward. It was like designing an intricate balanced structure." (The Week, p.46). It is obvious that to create a novel like The God of Small Things is not a layman's work. It is not only pen, ink, paper and patience that are essential, but an aesthetic sense saturated with images and symbols, rhythm and diction. The most prominent aspect of The God of Small Things is its structure. Roy used clipped scenes and episode and either juxtaposes them or fuses them into unusual scenes. "I never believed that there was any sort of direct link between studying architecture and building buildings. So far as I am concerned, I still practice architecture. Constructing my book was actually an architectural thing." (The Week, p.46)

The story is narrated from different angles, most of the episodes of the story of the novel deal with the musings and observations of the twins-Rahel and Estha, whose inside or outside perception of the realities takes the reader to places where one cannot hope to go, the very core or feelings and experiences.

The structure of The God of Small Things can be best approached by using an analogy from the world of living things and the structural pattern or the architectonics of The God of Small Things has vehemently brought about a revolution in the literary scenario. As Arundhati Roy is an architect, has got clear knowledge about architecture and she might have followed the architectural methodology. This structure is consciously devised to symbolically represent the chaos that surrounds the lives of Ammu, her children Rahel and Estha, Chako, Margaret Kochamma, Velutha, his father and even Mammachi and Baby Kochamma. The structure also enables the reader to see that the present is as livingly connected with the past as the past lends significance to the present, unfolding its deep mysteries and enigmas. She rightly observes: "I would start some where 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." (Sharma, p.34). One can note that architectonics feature in the novel from first chapter onwards where the whole story of the novel is revealed concisely in one line in the first chapter and it begins near the end of the story and the novel's structure makes use of various time-frames and memories that break the barriers in a way that makes the past merge with the present.
Everything of the novel has been rendered through the stream of consciousness method or through the point of view of the various characters-major or minors. The novel ends with the beginning with the word "Naaley". In the very beginning of the story, the author very judiciously presents a hint or a concise story of the latter course of actions.

In the novel the first chapter ‘Paradise Pickles & Preservers’ begins with Rahel coming back to Ayemenem to see her twin brother, Estha in the midst of rainy season. A reader may not questions himself ‘what happens next?’ when he reads this chapter instead shows curiosity to know ‘How it happen?’ or ‘How it came about?’ since many of the chief characters are dead or gone. “The house itself looked empty. The doors and windows were locked. The front verandah bare. Unfurnished. But the skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins was still parked outside and inside, Baby Kochamma was still alive” (Roy, p.2). The actual event is the arrival of Rahel to Ayemenem. The remaining part of the plot has-been dealt through Rahel’s memory and the narrator's information with a bit mixture of the point of views of some other characters.

Rahel remembers what the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man did to Estha in Abhilash Talkies. She also remembers the taste of tomato sandwiches that Estha ate on Madras Mail. The reader also come to know that Ammu breathed her last at the age of thirty-one. Sophie Mol, the twin’s cousin paid her debt to Nature when she, along with her mother, was a visit to India. After the funeral of Sophie Mol, Ammu, along with Rahel and Estha went to police station to see Velutha. But she was humiliated by the Inspector. The first chapter also deals with the life of Estha in Calcutta. He is imagined as “a quiet bubble floating on a see of noise.”(Roy, p.11) The novelist very beautifully provides us hints of the future events under the cover of some enigmatic sentence. Thus the narrator holds the view about Estha, “Slowly over the years, Estha withdrew from the world. He grew accustomed to the uneasy octopus that lived inside him and squirited its inky tranquilizer on his past. Gradually, the reason for the silence was hidden away, entombed somewhere deep in the soothing folds of the fact of it.”(Roy, p.12)
Here one sees that in a very epigrammatic way, the narrator gives a fine portrayal of the reticent character of Estha. Now the reader is curious to know about the cause of the silence that is entombed somewhere deep in the heart of Estha and the reader gets acquainted with the inner depths of the child's psyche only in the forthcoming chapters.

Thus Arundhati Roy has yielded most of the important events and their chronological signposts in the first chapter in a very cryptic and abbreviative way. An expert architecture draws the whole picture of the building in his brain; and later on plasters the wall and gives a finishing touch. Similarly, here the novelist has yielded a strong foundation. But in the proceeding chapters, the reader gets a glance of the inner construction of the building and after the last chapter the reader is allowed to have the whole vision of the mansion. It clearly shows that 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 techniques Roy has employed in the novel. In spite of the complexities of the structure and style, the aesthetic perception or the poetic exactitude can't be totally ignored.

Roy has also taken a great risk in involving the reader into a jigsaw puzzle. As a matter of fact, in the process of reading generally one sees that the reader's receptive process is impaired on account of spending all his energies to the intellectual task of unraveling the intricacies of the plot so frequently. In order to have a perfect vision of the book, the reader's mind has to push back and forth in a hectic movement; he feels like being shaken vigorously while standing on the same spot because the novel yields up the entire story in the first chapter itself.

Another striking feature of the novel is Arundhati Roy's narrative technique, which is somewhat different from the old tradition. Point of view in a fiction plays a very vital role. It signifies the way a story gets told, the vision of the author which is presented through characters, actions, setting and events. The most common point of view in a fiction is The Omniscient Point of View. In this method, the narrator knows everything about the events. Many of the great novelists including Fielding, Jane Austen. Dickens Thackeray, Tolstoy have
employed this technique successfully. Another point of view is the Limited Point of View technique, the narrator tells the story in the third person. But he is confined himself to what is experienced, thought and felt by a single character or a very limited number of characters. This method of narration was later developed into the stream of consciousness narration. All the events and actions of his works are represented and filtered to the reader in a very beautiful way. It is the consciousness of the protagonist that matters most.

In the First Person Point of View the whole events and actions of the novel are mainly dependent on the first person narrator who himself knows, experiences and finds out by talking to other characters. For example, Marlow in Heart of Darkness by Conrad, Ishmael in Melville's Moby-Dick, Nick in Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby etc. Two other frequently discussed narrative techniques which present the diverse point of view in the novel are the self conscious narrator or the fallible or unreliable narrator.

Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things seems to be an amalgam of all the above mentioned techniques. 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. A thorough study of the novel clearly reveals that the consciousness or point of view is not singular but plural. There are many passages which lie outside the point of view of the twins. Arundhati Roy doesn't run the story straight but in a zig-zig way.

Baby Kochamma's point of view is mostly related to her letters written by her to her father. In short, The God of Small Things is a 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 style, a new innovation. R. S. Sharma rightly observes, "Me cover point of view is the third person omniscient point of view and the final vision that arises out of the work is that of the narrator. But the narrator modulates the perspective by contacting or entering the other consciousness within the story. At points, one may have passages in which the narrator has invested herself/himself with the personality of a character. When this
takes place. there is a shift of point of view to some degree.” (Sharma, p.34). Most of the episodes of the story of the novel, The God of Small Things deal with the musings and observations of the twins-Rahel and Estha.

Once Rahel and Estha with their mother. Ammu, uncle Chacko and grand aunt Baby Kochamma go to Cochin from their village Ayemenem by a Plymouth car. Rahel and Estha occupy their seats just beside the window of the car. So, in this visit, almost all the scenes are projected by the point of view of the twins. In this trip, Rahel sees Velutha, an untouchable character and the most beloved character for Ammu and their twins. Though the scene is very short, yet it has a lot of meanings on the later tragic story of the novel: “It was Velutha, that much Rahel was sure of she'd seen him. He'd seen her. She'd have known him anywhere anytime. And if he hadn't been wearing a shirt she would have recognized him from behind. She knew his back. She'd been carried on it. More times than she could count.” (Roy, p.73). Through this short but significant point of view of Rahel, the author has given a hint to the later course of the story.

Much of the twin’s point of view can also be observed in their visit to the Airport at Cochin. Here Ammu can be seen through the point of view of the twins. Sophie Mol’s reception at Ayemenem House is again projected by Rahel. She also remembers Mammachi, who is portrayed as a lady of musical taste, “Mammachi held a gleaming violin under her chin. Her opaque fifties sunglasses were black and slanty-eyed with rhine-stones on the corners of the frames. Her sari was starched and perfumed. Off-white and gold. Her diamond earnings shone in her ears like tiny chandeliers.” (Roy, p.166) Some of the visions or consciousness of the twins are the fine example of puerilism which means reverting to a child’s state of mind and vision. On can see it in this passage in which Rahel sees a number of ants and tries to kill them.

It aptly presents the psychological ups and downs in the mind of little Rahel “Rahel found a whole column of juicy ants. They were on their way to church. All dressed in red. They had to be killed before they got there. Squished and squashed with a stone. You can’t have smelly ants made a faint crunchy sound as life left them. Like an elf eating toast or a crisp biscuit.” (Roy, p.185)
A large part of the novel is concerned with the point of view of Ammu. Her point of view shows her secret passions and isolation, trials and tribulations, her fears and uncertainties, her dream and reality. The early passages of the novel deal with her unlucky marriage, her divorce and arrival to Ayemenem House. Her point of view also shows her restlessness after divorce, the tussle between the mother and the lover in her. When she sees Velutha, she is attracted by his muscular body. Her depressed sexual passions begin to take root and culminates in the sexual union. At her first sight she sees, “The ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach grow taught and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed so quietly, from a flat muscled boy's body into a man's body, Contoured and hard, A swimmer's body, A swimmer carpenter's body, Polished with a high wax body polish. His had high cheek bones and white, sudden smile.” (Roy, p.175)

Chapter Eleven is thoroughly related to the point of view of Ammu. In this short but significant chapter, she has a dream of the one-armed lover which symbolically suggests here Velutha. 'One arm' suggests the helplessness and degraded social status of the untouchable character, Velutha. Ammu symbolically dreams, “ That afternoon. Ammu traveled upwards through a dream in which a cheerful man with one arm held her close by light of an oil lamp. He had no other arm with which to fight the shadows that flicked around him on the floor. Shadows that only he could see.” (Roy, p.215)

Here the term 'shadows' beautifully suggests the dark, cruel and monstrous law of society which never permits an untouchable to love, never allows him to cross the premises of age-old tradition of the so called morality. The upheavals caused by the failure of love in the mind of Baby Kochamma also cover many important passages in the book. At the end of the play the consciousness of Baby Kochamma plays the role of the villain. She lodges a false FIR of alleged murder and the abduction of the kids against Velutha. Ammu also goes to the police station after the funeral of Sophie Mol is over.
This makes Baby Kochamma disturbed. She lodges a false FIR of alleged murder and the abduction of the kids against Velutha. Ammu also goes to the police station after the funeral of Sophie Mol is over. This makes Baby Kochamma disturbed. She thinks, “Ammu, whatever else she did, however angry she was, would never publicly admit to her relation-illicit relationship would amount to destroying herself and her children. Perhaps this is why she had an idea that she had to get Ammu out of Ayemenem as soon as possible. Chacko breaking down doors was only the sad bull thrashing at the end of Baby Kochamma's leash. It was her idea that Ammu be made to pack her bags and leave. That Estha be returned.”(Roy, p.322) The study of the point of view of the novel clearly shows a new and different technique in which many elements fuse together to make a complete whole. In other words, the text of the novel has a design and a purpose.

One of the significant features of The God of Small Things is a brilliant display of some powerful images. Imagery presents a very vital role in the texture of a good work of art. However profound an idea or a philosophy may be, it has no such good place in literature as it is generally associated with some other branches of knowledge. In the realm of art and literature, symbols, sound, rhythm, rhyme and some other ingredients of good art are inevitable factors which cannot be denied at any cost. The god of small things is a whirlpool of images and symbols, antithesis and balance, rhyme and rhythm, mythology and modernity, sex and sensation. Though the book is also rich with many other tropes such as personification, irony, oxymoron, pun and hyperbole etc., the main concern is the appropriate and powerful similes. In the field of similes and metaphor, she is entirely original and impressive.

Her handling of images and symbols, is very near to James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner, T.S. Eliot and Salman Rushdie. In other words “It will be obvious by now that rhythm, sound, imagery, diction, feeling are inseparably bound up with discussion on poetic thought: and the further we proceed with our examination of the various elements, the more we shall come to realize the organic quality, fusing all elements, of the finest writing.” Roy in the novel has sagaciously selected some images that they present a very fine correspondence between the major and the minor term. Sometimes, her images are so complex that they call for cerebral gymnastics to understand the inherent meaning.
A brilliant display of the most appropriate and striking images is a crowning achievement of Arundhati Roy as a writer. Although she has made use of many other tropes, such as, personification, metaphor, irony, etc., her forte is simile. In this arena she is most original and impressive. In her use of similes, she has her unique position beside such writers as James Joyce and Salman Rushdie. Like Dickens, she possesses the child's power to apprehend things in all their sensuous glory. This power is most active in the portions of the novel where the narrator fully invests herself with the twins' consciousness. Moreover, there is undoubtedly an autobiographical element in the story. Therefore, even in the passages which, for the most part operate on the literal plane, the diction evokes vivid images in terms of colour, sound, and movement which probably arise from the author's personal experience. “May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid... on bright mangoes in still.... Jackfruits burst... Then they stun... fatly baffled in the sun.” (Roy, p.1)

In evoking the experience of filth and rottenness, Arundhati Roy will have few rivals. Here is a short, slightly figural passage depicting the condition of Meenanchal river in 1993, “Once it had the power to evoke fear. To change lives. But now its teeth were drawn. its spirit spent. It was just a slow. sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous. weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers.” (Roy, p. 124). If the reader once again focus his attention on the two passages just quoted. He / she becomes aware of the author's penetrating sense of discrimination as regards colour, sound, and movement. Without always resorting to figurative language, she can forge words which differentiate the various shades, nuances, intensities and amplitudes of which the reader was not conscious earlier.

Under her brush, the colour green breaks itself up into such modulations as dustgreen, wetgreen and mossgreen. The white light itself is depicted in its varying modulations: the sunlight was fractured by 'thin trunks of tilting trees' (Roy, p.306). 'wedge of light' (Roy, p.248). 'edges of light' (Roy, p.219). Similarly she has introduced to the reader several kinds of smells that one is made to smell in the novel: sicksweet smell, oldfood smell, sourmetal smell, sickled smell, smell of
smoke, a sour party smell of red ants, back-inside smell, smell of fresh wood shavings, smell of pickles, smelly ants. smell of lover's skin, smell of the bus conductor's hands, smell of Father Mulligan's beard, medicinal smell of stale alcohol, smell of history.

Smell of the sheaf of bus tickets, smell of still water, smells of milk and urine, smell of printer's ink, cloying smell of incense, smells of sandalwood and the crushed green gram, dinner smells. smell of shit, Irish-Jesuit smell, Paravan smell, smell of old roses, smell of yellow maps. smells of breathing people and hairoil. smell of old carpets, a magical Sound of Music smell, smell of sleep, smell of vinegar and asafetida. smell of London.

In respect of the olfactory sense which, as psychologists tell us, is often associated with gustatory sense, Arundhati Roy turns out to be at the keenest. She, in fact, shares the primacy of this sense with children and animals. But in order to realise the scope and keenness of olfactory sense, one must pay attention not only to similes but also to coinages, compound words and adjectives that she uses to indicate the various nuances of smell. The author makes use of similes and metaphors for the purpose of bringing out the contextual essence and effect of a person, thing, event, object, movement, activity or process in respect of internal or external reality. Now this aim naturally involved the employment of complex images because the comparison often calls for a vehicle whose properties relevant to the meaning involve more than one sense. Therefore, the readers have very few examples of similes/ metaphors depending only on one sense impression. Still, in several cases, it is clear that the focus falls on one of the senses.

**Visual images** : “They were puffy with oedema, like little footshaped air cushions.” (Roy, p.20), “Her hair, dyed jet black. was arranged across her scalp like unspooled thread.” (Roy, p.21)

**Auditory images** : “like a sea-shell always has a sea-sense, the Ayemenem house still had a river-sense.” (Roy, p.30), “ that sounded like a faraway man shouting.” (Roy, p.159)
**Gustatory images**: "touching it with their tongues, sucking it like a sweet" (Roy, p. 17), "The Loss of Sophie Mol ... Like a fruit in season" (Roy, p. 267)

**Olfactory images**: "History's smell. Like old roses on a breeze" (Roy, p. 55), "Meat-smelling blood money" (Roy, p. 95)

**Kinetic images**: "The sexual excitement that rose like a tide in the slender girl ..." (Roy, p. 21), "Still birds slid by on moving wires, like unclaimed baggage at the airport" (Roy, p. 87).

**Sinaesthetic images**: "They remembered being pushed around a room once, from Ammu to Baba to Ammu to Baba like billiard balls" (Roy, p. 84), "Perspiration trickled through Chacko's hair. He felt as though a company of ants was touring his scalp" (Roy, p. 277)

**Static images**: "The two things fitted together. Like stacked spoons." (Roy, p. 20), "Dead as a door knob" (Roy, p. 118), "Twin millstones and their mother. Numb millstones" (Roy, p. 225).

There are a number of similes and metaphors in the novel which compare two objects in terms of concept, function or connotation rather than of the senses. Which are called as conceptual images."The Loss of Sophie Mol grew robust and alive ... As permanent as a government job" (Roy, p. 16), (Of the baby's growing organism) "A new government setting up its systems. Organizing the division of labour, deciding who would do what" (Roy, p. 117).

The few syanaesthetic images the reader came across appear to produce a remarkable effect. Here Roy conies close to Keats. When the gurgling, bubbling sound of her own pissing carne.Baby Kochamma listened with her eyes. At another place smells are said to hold memories like music, which is actually auditory. The teeth of Orangedrink Lemondrink Man "like yellow piano keys watched little Elvis the Pelvis". Here teeth are visually compared with yellow piano keys but their action is described in terms of watching. The figure appropriately suggests the experience in the way in which it makes its impact on Estha. A little later, the yellow teeth are metaphorically denoted as magnets, which suggests the sinister attraction they exercise on the child's mind.
Arundhati Roy too is an expert in comparing concrete with abstract in a most meaningful manner. When a man is imagined to have fallen from a great height, dark blood spills from his skull “like a secret”. At the Aymenemem House “strange insects appeared like ideas in the evenings and burned themselves on Baby Kochamma's dim 40-watt bulbs” (Roy, pp.9-10). The aptness of this image is realized when one keeps in view the fact that it is the time of the rainy season when such ephemeral beings are a common sight. Evening is also the time when transitory ideas arise in mind and then fade away quickly. The readers have some very original images of this type.

When Rahel was seven years old her “new teeth were waiting inside her gums. like words in a pen” (Roy, p.37), when the policemen are in pursuit of the supposed abductor of the twins, they walk past giant spider webs that spread “like whispered gossip from tree to tree” (Roy, p. 305). The order is reversed in another group of similes in which the tenor is abstract but the vehicle is concrete.

The major class of images which are employed in abundance in the novel and which reveal Arundhati Roy's skill in this line to its best advantage. These images are deeply grounded in the context and uniquely arise out of it. They call forth several sense impressions that are related in a complex or a composite manner. The reader is familiar with a chameleon image appearing quite often in literature and conversation. But in this case, the visual quality of changeability is combined with kinetic property to provide a figure for the way Pillai actually conducted himself through the affairs of the world.

Such complex images require some qualifying expressions in order to bring out the subtle effect or meaning intended. Father Mulligan in chocolate robes and comfortable sandals would walk away “like a high-stepping camel with an appointment to keep” (Roy, p.24). As this example suggests, the main image needs another or ancillary image for its crystallization.

In some cases, there are multiple similes focussing on a single object. In such instances, the comparison is multi-dimensional as in the following passage. “She touched him lightly with her fingers and left a trail of goosebumps on his skin. Like flat chalk on a blackboard. Like breeze in a paddy field. Like jet streaks
in a blue church sky” (Roy, p.339). Roy draws images from nature and natural life. She demonstrates in fresh manner in order to produce an effect in the reader and from the following example, “slanting silver ropes slammed into loose earth...(rain)” (Roy, p.1).

One must also say something about the 'hole' image which has a deep significance and is quite pervasive. It seems to be based on an ontological notion which regards individual existence as some kind of etching into the space or universe. Thus, individual existence and different modes of existence may be regarded as creating depressions of different shapes in the substance of the universe, whatever it may be.

Perhaps the image also suggests an idea that is similar to the one implied by Rushdie in the sentence. “A washing-chest is a hole in the world, a place which civilization has put outside itself, beyond the pale: this make sit the finest of hiding-places” (Midnight's Children, p.184). For an example “A Joe-shaped hole in the universe” (Roy, p.118).

Roy's uses of different vehicles for the same tenor as the situations vary. Her choice of the vehicle is quite sensitive to the context sought to be generated through a figurative expression. The choice of the vehicle for eyes is according to the physical condition and the emotional state of the character. Dilation of eyes may occur both in children and in very old people whose eyes differ in appearance considerably; also dilation of eyes may be caused both by a sense of triumph and a feeling of shock or fear. In each combination of these four factors the sensitive observer will have a different impression. Baby Kochamma is eighty three years old, she wears thick glasses and she is in a state of triumph. Therefore her widening eyes call up a specific comparison “Her eyes spread like butter behind her thick glasses” (Roy, p.20).

Silence is generally a negative state-absence of sound. But it may, in certain states of mind be felt as something substantial even moving. Silence may also be localized or pervasive. In his abnormal state, Estha spends his time quietly, he has lost his urge to express himself in anyway. Rahel's arrival at Ayemenem and her presence in his room demanded voluminous expression from her brother
because there were so many memories and feelings clamouring for outlet. But these things were barred any exist through words—there was a sense of loss. And therefore, “Silence hung in the air like secret loss” (Roy, p.91).

The reader can make some observations regarding the structural importance of imagery in The God of Small Things, when he moves forth. The following are the examples for such images in the novel. “Filth had laid siege to the Ayemenem house like a medieval army advancing on an empty castle” (Roy, p.88), “She felt like a road sign with birds shitting on her” (Roy, p.161). When one consider the prominence of this kind of imagery in The God of Small Things in its symbolic significance and implication in respect of the plot and character of the novel, the readers can understandably come to the conclusion that Roy's vision of the Indian society in general and the Keralite society in particular is a negative one with a very specific meaning: through the net work of images, the author has evidently suggested that our society is filthy, sick and wounded.

Satire forms the prominent stylistic element in this novel. It is in the vision of things done to people, the vision of men’s lives twisted by those in power, the perception the power alliances between various pockets of authority. Roy has used satire to expresses her intense dissatisfaction at the state of affairs and her anger at the shame being practiced by hypocrites. Satire brings out the co-existence of the mutually incompatible elements and forces, the essential contradictions in the lives of people, pulling the mask off their faces and holding them up to ridicule. Roy evolves satirical modes into a refined weapon whereby to expose the fraudulent, and the spurious and lay hare the injustices practiced in a society that considers itself highly civilized.

She sharpens her language to be satirically effective, employing various modes that often remind the reader various master of satire like Ben Jonson, Jonathan Swift, Pope, Dickens and Huxley. The reader is intensely aware of the hard-hitting approach to certain from things ranging the personal to the social to the familial and the political topics where subtle use of literary devices enables her to launch a direct attack. In fact it would not he an exaggeration to say that the novel is nothing sans satire, it is full of various forms and modes of satire that the
author so masterfully handles. Satire is a matter of inventing a language appropriate to one's intention of exposing the inherent flow in a person, institution or attitude with a view to creating in the readers a feeling of anger and dissatisfaction. Satire permeates *The God of Small Things* in every respect. Her descriptions sparkle with satirical comments. The very opening section that portrays the outward environment of the Ayemenem gives us a clear indication. "The house itself was empty. The doors and windows were looked..." (Roy, p.2).

It is difficult to miss the devastating sarcasm in the portrayal of the happenings in Kottayam Police Station. In this episode there are three context that are satirically treated (i) the manner in which Inspector Mathew ogles at Ammu, his tapping "her breasts with his baton. Gently. Tap, tap. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the one that he wanted packed and delivered", (ii) The willful manner in which the police could arrest anyone without having no account for their act. Inspector Mathew seemed to know whom he could pick up and whom he couldn't or shouldn't. "Policemen have that instinct". The second sentence is full of satirical jibe. (iii) On the wall hags a red-and-blue board proclaiming the ethical principles on which Indian police supposedly work and behave. "Politeness, Obedience, Loyalty, Intelligence, Courtesy, Efficiency" Throughout the novel this vacuous proclamation haunts like a spirit that has been banished by debauched police morals. It recurs at exact moments to remind us of the terrible satirical significance of its presence on the wall.

In chapter 18 entitled The History House, the reader gets the description of "a posse of Touchable Policemen" closing their ranks on the hapless Velutha. Satirically they are described by the author as "Servants of State" and there follow the six principles of ethical behaviour referred to above. After that the dart is further driven home in the following manner. "The Kottayam Police. A cartosspatoon. New Age princes in funny pointed helmets. ....... their shabby Khaki crowns. Dark of Heart...... clumping through tall grass. Crowned creepers snagged in their desidamp leghair....." (Roy, pp.304-5). The description, as can be seen, aims to reduce them to mere cardboard puppets, the impotent killers of a helpless being. The way they used brutal force against Velutha is tragic mockery of
the declared principles of “Politeness, Obedience, Loyalty.” This reversal of the
professed role is fore grounded in the backward reading of the words on the board
in Kottayam police station.

Arundhati Roy at several places uses the expression ‘Touchable Police’ in
order to remind the readers of its role in oppressing the untouchable as also the fact
that its role in sustaining the caste-based division of society where the lower class
are denied through force their basic rights to equality. Here is the classic use of
satirical obliquity. “...the posse of Touchable Policemen acted with economy, not
frenzy. Efficiency. not anarchy. Responsibility, not hysteria.....” (Roy, p.309) The
last sentence is reference to the ‘outbreak’ of the awareness of freedom among the
depressed classes, sense of pride they are beginning to feel in their strength and
personality.

Next to Arundhati Roy’s devastating exposure of the police it is the
communist hypocrisy that is brought under merciless scrutiny. There are three
representatives of the communist Party (Marxist) that are targeted. What interests
the author is not communism or its philosophy, but those people or organizations
that profess to follow it and in reality everything that contradicts its tenets.
Comrade K.N.M. Pillai is the local leader, a trade unionist who can organize
workers for increase in wages without much difficulty and who enjoys seeing
himself worshipped by the poor as their messiah. However, he has been portrayed
as a very uncouth common person like any other person in the locality victim of
all those ordinary temptations, greed, lust and deficiencies that normally goad an
ordinary man to commit errors in life.

It is this utter commonness of Comrade Pillai that is held tip to ridicule, his
involvement in petty business and unscrupulous practices. The last sentence is a
severe comment on the dilution of the Marxist ethics among those who claimed to
be the Marxist leaders. It, besides being symbolic, brings all the preceding lines in
sarcastic light. It appears that the author deliberately paints Comrade Pillai in
ordinary colours, portraying as a bumbling, flustering common man, that makes
him lose all the luster and glow of a communist revolutionary. “Comrade Pillai
himself came out in the mornings in a graying Aertex vest, his balls silhouetted
against his soft white mundu. He oiled himself with warm, peppered coconut oil,
kneading his old, loose flesh that stretched willingly off his bones, like chewing gum” (Roy, p.14). The last five sentences concentrate the acid remarks in a way she evokes both comic responses and revulsion for him. Perhaps there could not have been a more apt summation of his character than the sentence. At one stroke Arundhati Roy rips off the mask of humanity from their faces by calling them 'mechanics' who service the same machine.

Chapter14 describes Chako's visit to Pillai's. The author lavishes all her descriptive art on this particular segment which shows that she can masterfully evoke the external reality of a quality that easily puts it beside the writings of the best of nineteenth century English novelists. Comrade Pillai's mother with a 'funel of mosquitoes like an inverted dunce cap, whined over her head'. A "rotary table fan by the bed measured out its mechanical breeze in exemplary democratic turns first lifting what was left of Old Mrs. Pillai's hair, then Chacko's" (Roy, p.269). Chako eyeing Pillai's wife Kalyani who smelled of sandalwood and the crushed green gram that she used instead of soap.

This while he was waiting for Comrade Pillai. Ms. Roy does not miss a chance to comment on Comrade Chako's lecherous habits. “For the first time in years, Chako watched her without the faintest stirring of sexual desire. He had a wife (Ex-wife, Chako!) at home. With arm freckles and back freckles ” (Roy, p.270). Comrade Pillai's son was called Lenin, after the great Communist leader who founded the Socialist state in the world, the Soviet Union. This was an expression of his worshipful devotion to communism. In another scene of Comic significance the author describes Comrade Pillai's arrival at home.

It is curious to see that the two communists were there to discuss business, the logo and the labels, to be prepared for a new product that Paradise Pickles and Preserves planned to launch in the spring. Comrade Pillai's son Lenin gets a job in Delhi.

It is this pretentiousness, this sham so assiduously kept up by the Communists that is sought to be exposed by Arundhati Roy. What she is showing here is that they work against their professed responsibilities, living a life of deadly
contradictions that finally contribute to subverting the very ideals their red flag symbolizes. There cannot be a more severe criticism of this pretentiousness than Comrade Pillai drifting to the Police Inspector in order to liquidate Velutha. The brief but comical scene reduces Comrade Pillai to the level of common, unfeeling male whose baser instincts can dominate over the bigger problems. Velutha's short interview with him brings out the deceitful nature of this man for whom politics in nothing but a game of tricking innocent well-meaning men and women into hopeless situation. The dialogue is very illuminating, full of bitter feeling that the author reflects in what goes no between them.

Even a cursory reading of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals the force that she injects in her satire. It is devastating. It is merciless. It is intensely revealing and amusing. She is unrelenting in her exposure of the evil and spurious, be they communist, governmental agencies or anyone else. Arundhati Roy's characteristically powerful use of language has multiple functions: one significant function is that of revealing ironical force in certain situations. If there is a heavy dose of satire in the novel, there has to be a strong element of irony also, because satire without irony is devoid of animation and liveliness.

Irony works more subtly, causing pin-prick feelings of discomfort and creating an intensely amusing effect. Mark this already quoted line, "The flag that fluttered on the roof had grown limp and old. The red had bled away" (Roy, p.13). For instance, the very name History House makes us conscious of the role of History in keeping the oppressive social system going and the so-called modern and progressive people that side with such a system. In chapter 5 while describing Kari Saipu's house that is being converted into "the centerpiece of elaborate complex" the author's vision penetrates into history and brings out the irony in the elaborate exercise of conversion. She writes, "Like the sheaves of rice in Joseph's dream, like a press of eager natives petitioning an English magistrate. the old houses had been arranged around the History House in attitudes of deference. 'Heritage' the hotel was called" (Roy, p.126).

Even in modern democratic times the relation between the master and servants, the moneyed and the poor has nothing much to show by way of change.
The age-old practice of slavish obeisance paid by the native to the English rulers is referred to in the above-quoted passage. The lost sentence explodes the myth of so-called preservation of old culture in the convergence of a chain of ‘Heritage’ hotels.

Chapter 18 is entitled *The History House*. Ms. Roy wants to present history as a reservoir of the upper class lores of oppression, as the history written by the oppressors and it is here that Velutha is cornered finally and killed by the heavy-footed sentinels of history. The author plays upon the expression Heart of Darkness of turn it into ‘Dark of Hearts’. “The Kottayam Police. A cartoon platoon. .... Their shabby khaki crown. Dark of Heart. Deadly purposed” (Roy, p.304).

The policeman's slow, rhythmical movement is seen by the author as the march of history's terror into the realms of the untouchable destroying his dreams of equitable social justice. In a language that flips the expressions backwards and forwards she writes, “Dark of Heartness tiptoed into the Head of Darkness.” This is followed by the passage, “The History House. Where, in the years that followed, the Terror (still-to-come) would be buried in a shadow grave. Hidden under the happy humming of hotel cooks.” How is small situations irony is borne out through the play of words is to be seen in the following extract where the labels of the new product are being designed, “Comrade Pillai’s unsolicited contribution” (Roy, p.46). It was Ammu whose keen eyes saw the humour in the label. “Ammu said that the Kathakali dancer was a Red Herring and had nothing to do with anything. Chako said that it gave the products a Regional Flavour and would stand them in good stead when they entered the Overseas Market.” (Roy, p.47)

It has already been pointed out in preceding sections how situations are devised or developed to bring out the latent force of irony which is profoundly truth-revealing. The career and life of Pappachi affords a classic example of fate's ironic turns and twists. His discovery of a particular kind of moth represented the highest sense of achievement for him and his 'greatest joy. However, he became a victim of description. “his life's greatest setback was not having had the moth the he had discovered named after him.” (Roy, p.49)
A small moth transformed his entire life: he was a dejected and disappointed man, “Pappachi’s moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper”. And in sneering tone the author observes, “Its pernicious ghost-grey, furry and with unusually dense dorsal tufts haunted every house that he ever lived in.” (Roy, p.49).

One can’t miss the ironic significance of coming together a Chako and Comrade Pillai, both acting against each other, both the communist and yet desperately wary of each other. Pillai prepares the labels for Chako’s new product, and we learn that later on he mobilizes the workers of Chako’s factory against the ‘management’. It was Pillai who was partly responsible for the damage cause to the factory and its final closure: The whole development is a kind of cruel mockery of the move of forge Marxist unity as professed by the communists universally.

Velutha is also a card-holding member of the Communist Party, whose active participation in the worker’s marches and demonstrations earn him prominence and name among all. His dedication to Party ideals and his faith in its power as a defender of the common workers whether Touchable or Untouchable is very simple and free from self-interests. The nexus that emerges between the Police, Comrade Pillai and Chako (who incidentally, is the only person who sides with Velutha, but Sophie Mol’s tragic death prevents him from taking interest in Velutha’s case), ironically involves the champion of people’s security, each one of them, the most paradoxical being the tie-up between the Police and Comrade Pillai.

It is ironical that Velutha’s brutal death, his physical dismemberment and extremely painful treatment at the hands of Police should have occurred in the precincts of the History House the house of Kari Saipu, the ancestral home of Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad, ‘Kerala’s Mao-Tsetung’. It reveals the painful reality of Velutha’s fate, “something icy buried in the ground under grass…. A child’s plastic wristwatch with the time painted on it. Ten to two it said. A hand a children followed Rahel on her walk.” (Roy, p.127) Arundhati Roy delights in seeing comic element in ordinary things as has been noted earlier; such portrayals are lent a deliberately ironic twist in order to rip open the hollowness.
Let us see the following passage, "Comrade Namboodiripad's house functioned as the hotel's dining room. where semi-suntanned tourists in bathing suits sipped tender coconut water (served in their shell), and old communists, who now worked as fawning hearers in colourful ethnic clothes. stooped slightly behind their tray of drinks" (Roy, p.126).

Ammu's life is classic instance of ironic twists of Fate that characterize the course of events. Her marriage proved highly dramatic in the sense that she forced her way out of Ayemenem house, "All day she dreamed of escaping from Ayemenem and the clutches of her ill-tempered father and hitter, long-suffering mother." (Roy, pp.38-9)

Her return sealed her fate. Neglected and despised by the women inmates Ammu soon developed a deep and fatal attraction for the Untouchable Paravan Velutha and could barely resist being sexually drawn to him. Their mutual attraction is described in this manner, "She saw ridges of muscles on velutha's stomach gone taut and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed.." (Roy, p.175). She knew what she was doing, as much as Velutha knew what he was doing. And yet there appeared a doggedness in both to go ahead and embrace their pre-ordained fates. The enormous irony lies in that a high-caste woman is allowing herself to be seduced by an untouchable. The scene in Chapter 18 (The History House) is both pathetic and ironical. It is full of suggestion of the complete absence of humane element in the police marching toward its target. "History in live performance as it were". In the midst of this scene of primordial barbarism are placed the two children, symbols of natural innocence, love and normal affinity. They witness the new scene, the savage brutality meted out with pleasure. The author says, "The twins were too young to know that these were only history’s henchmen." (Roy, p.308)

Thus one can find that in The God of Small Things the author uses most effectively the situational irony in order to emphasize the essential point which she wishes to make in it. This situation indicate her supreme command over her craft and her genius to employ various modes of narration with equal efficacy.
The style and language of Arundhati Roy are throughout sustained by a bubbling exuberance and playfulness that evoke comical mood. She has perhaps thoroughly imbibed all these significant influences which appear in traces here and there.

The realities are mostly presented through the eyes of children whose view of things frequently gives way to adult's perception. A unique link, therefore, is established between the child-like vision and that of the grown-ups so easily able to switch one from the other, resulting in a mixed view of the world and the variegated life being led in it by people.

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This examples show the various states of mind that is revealed through conversation or monologues. Here it must be noted in her use of satire Ms. Roy explores the comic aspect of characters as well as situation. In fact comicality is another side of the satirical repertoire of the author. In an attempt to expose the follies and weaknesses of the characters she reduces them to the level of two-dimensional existence through the medium of humour. It is not possible to launch
an effective satirical attack without employing comical or humorous devices and caricaturing individuals and situations. Ms. Roy's portrayal of Comrade K.N.M. Pillai, because it is in him that she unleashes her full arsenal of satire and humour. Throughout the novel Pillai has been portrayed as a comic figure, a self-centred politician, malicious and mean-minded, but he is not presented as a black-hearted villain, rather he is rendered amusing by developing the comical side of his character and family life.

So also with Chako. But there are passages where one sees what can be termed as 'innocent humour', and there are fairly liberal uses made of it. In such passage the purpose does not seem to satirize, but to create a purely humorous effect.

Arundhati Roy is generally criticised for being 'verbose', this may be true to some extent, but what saves this verbiage from becoming a dead weight is the quality of its being enjoyable. Humorous remarks and observations are scattered all over, from mall one-liners to comprehensive descriptions. Here are a few examples. "Rahel drifted into marriage like a Passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair us a airport lounge. With a sitting down sense" (Roy,p. 8). Even in the grim atmosphere of Sophie Mol's funeral service in the old church where the family stood huddled together, the sombreness is shattered by a small blackhat climbing up Baby Kochamma's expensive sari with wetly clinging curled claw. "When it reached the place between her sari and her blouse, her roll of sadness, her hare midriff, Baby Kochamma screamed and hit the air with her hymn hook. The singing stopped for a 'what's it? What happened?"(Roy, p.6).

In the novel the readers often come across instances of the author discovering humorous element in somewhat serious moments as the above example only illustrates. Thus one can see that there is notable blurring of the dividing line between the serious and the humorous which can be contrived only by an exceptionally gifted writer.

Arundhati Roy lavishes great descriptions of highest literary order in delineating the room, the character's mannerisms, and behavioural eccentricities with a photographic fidelity. This is a new aspect of her literary genius, indicating
that she can not only use magic realism in inspired burst of creative moments, but also use her pen in traditionally realistic manner of which Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan are proven masters.

She finds comical elements in commonest objects of household possession, fans, chairs, cot, settle, utensils and so on and sees a funny link between them and the characters. Her magical imagination ranges from concrete objects to abstract qualities in a sweep that encloses all of these in a single world. It sees the hidden psychological states and conditions behind the physical world creating humorous passages.

Here is a small extract. "Lenin gave up his post at the doorway, .... 'What about a poem from you, women man?' Ch-ako said to him, doesn't your father teach you any?' Lenin stared at Chako. ...., Comrade Pillai said, 'lie is genius. In front of visitors only he is quiet' .... Friends, Roman Countrymen'. (Roy, p.274)

This appears quite a common occurrence in any middle class family, children being pushed before the visiting guests for theirs to show their talents in specific fields. The humour lies in the discomfort that the visitor feels who is elevated to a special status and the great enthusiasm that the parents feel. In a way the whole scene is ironical, bringing out the basic tendencies of the family to present itself of possessing the excepted merits of education and culture. The comicality of the scene is further enhanced by Pillai's ridiculous English as in this sentence. "My sister Sudha met with fracture sometime hack" (Roy, p.274).

In chapter 5 Rahel remembers it visit to the clinic of Dr.Verghese (Kottayam's leading Pediatrician and Feeler-up of Mothers). The 'Feeler-up of Mother' is both comical and satirical expression. Both Rahel and Lenin were quite young and Kalyani and Ammu had to rush to the doctor because "Both Rahel and Lenin had the same complaint Foreign objects lodged up their Noses" (Roy, p.132).

Chapter 13 takes us along the memory lane to the times when Margaret Kochammna "was working as a waitress at a Cafe in Oxford when she first met Chako" (Roy, p.240). She broke away from her family and worked in the cafe
because she wanted to do a teacher's training course and then work at a school. The narration of Chako's first stepping inside the cafe in his rumpled sheet buttoned up wrong, shoelace untied, that gave him an appearance like an untidy, beautified porcupine, and Margaret's instant response to him. Pure, harmless humour arises out of the general portrayal of the visit such as "He took a seat by the window and sat down with and elbow on the table and his face cupped in the palm of his hand smiling around empty cafe as though with the furniture" (Roy, p.241).

It is extraordinary amusing to read the entire 'ritual' interspersed with one-sided conversation. Through she didn't hear most of his jokes, it is his simple-looking character, his casual natural manners and his capacity to enjoy small trivialities that drew her to him.

Lighter moments are created in scenes where children participate using their imagination to justify certain things in the childish manner. Such is the following example, "Ammu opened her eyes...you were having an afternoon mare;", her daughter informed her. It wasn't a mare'. Ammu said, "It was dream" (Roy, p.218).

Humour seems to arise naturally where the author portrays scenes involving children because in a world living under the gloomy shadow of adult schemings, children's innocent talks embody attempts to see relation between things and people that do not normally appear. One of the striking features of Arundhati Roy's narrative is this constant juxtaposition, the alternating view of the adult and children's perception of the world, one so fresh and simple, the other so jaded and deceptive.

Intertextuality signifies the inter-connectedness of one text with other texts and it reveals the presence of one text within the other and highlights the fact that no text can have an independent meaning. Every text takes something from the previous texts, and lends something to the future texts. Every text takes something from the previous texts, and lends something to the future texts. Intertextuality generally signifies that the literary works are not a closed network and are not autonomous in nature. Today, intertextuality is used frequently and it has
become a part of our notion as one watching film or TV, reading novel, or experiencing art. Graham Allen describes the concept of intertextuality as one of the central ideas as he argues: “Texts, whether they are literary or non-literary, as viewed by modern theorists, as lacking in any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists now call intertextual. The act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relations [. . .] Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all other texts to which it refers and relates” (Allen Graham, p.1)

The theory of intertextuality is developed by poststructuralist and postmodern theorists, has become an effective appropriation strategy for postcolonial writers. Postcolonialism is chiefly characterized by questioning and subverting the authority. Pramod Nayyar defines postcolonial literature as: “Postcolonial literatures seek to address the ways in which non-European (Asian, African, South American, but also settler colony) literatures and cultures have been marginalized as an effect of colonial rule, and to find, if possible, modes of resistance, retrieval and reversal of their ‘own’ pre-colonial pasts.” (Nayyar K, Pramod, p.1).

The sense of interconnectedness between different cultures is particularly significant in the postcolonial context, a context which arises due to the meeting of cultures. Arundhati Roy uses global referenced intertextuality to such a great extent in her novel. Intertextuality as a device in literary texts can be deployed at different levels. Roy makes intertextuality a conscious motif and device. The remark made on the twins in the context of the Kathakali performance: "Trapped in the bog of a story that was and wasn't theirs. That had set out with the semblance of structure and order,..." (Roy, p.236). Similarly, a rewriting of texts is suggested in the description of the twins as "Hansel and Gretel in a ghastly fairy tale in which their dreams would be captured and re-dreamed" (Roy, p.293). Roy makes extended references to texts as different as the popular film The Sound of Music (Roy, p.105-11), Heart of Darkness (Roy, p.125-26,199-200,305-06), Chemmeen (Roy, p.218-20), the Kathakali man and his "Great" texts like Kama Shabadam (Roy, p.218-20) and Duryodhana Vadham (Roy, p.229,234). Many passing
allusions are made to texts as disparate as popular soap operas like WWF's "Hulk Hogan and Mr. Perfect" (Roy, p.28), Shakespeare's The Tempest, The Jungle Book, The Adventures of Susie Squirrel (Roy, p.58-59), Sinbad the Sailor (Roy, p.80), Julius Caesar (Roy, p.82-83), Ulysses and Penelope (Roy, p.157), the fairy tales about the Three Bears (180) or the Ugly Toad who turns into a handsome prince, Rumpelstiltskin (Roy, p.182), Hansel and Gretel, and even literary texts like The Tale of Two Cities (Roy, p.61), and the boatsongs of Kerala (Roy, p.196-97). The contexts in which these texts are used are, in general, negative or pessimistic.

Roy in her novel especially in the first few chapters used intertext to create an atmosphere of 1960s. She concentrated on fashion and culture to create that atmosphere. “But the skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins was still parked outside.” (Roy, p.2). The reader will eventually realize that the attributes from the 1950s belong to Kerala and its inhabitants and that many of the attributes from the 1960s the arrival of Sophie Mol with her mother Margaret. “And then they were there, the Foreign Returnees, in wash’n’wear suits and rainbow sunglasses….Maxis and high heels. Puff sleeves and lipstick. Mixy - grinders and automatic flashes for their cameras”(Roy, 140).

Chacko’s exwife Margaret and daughter Sophie Mol arrival to Kerala is a turning point to the novel. Ammu, Chacko, Estha, Rahel and Baby Kochamma get into the “… skyblue Plymouth with chrome tailfins …” (Roy, p.2) to pick them up at the airport. The Plymouth car has many symbolic values. “The Plymouth used to belong to Pappachi, Rahel and Estha’s grandfather. Now that he was dead, it belonged to Mammachi, their grandmother” (Roy, p.35). The grandfather was a man who lived according to the British coloniser’s rules. He was also a patriarch and harassed his family. However, Chacko has taken Pappachi’s role of being the man in the house. The fact that the car is now driven by Chacko, who is a self proclaimed Marxist, which symbolises the new Marxist rulers of Kerala. The car is thus a symbol of entrapment and also it symbolises the delay in modernity in Kerala. This delay in modernity is emphasised at the airport when the family waits for their guests from London.
Estha, Rahel and Ammu are being resistant and suspicious of their guests. This is emphasised by the smell of London and the prosperity brought with the newcomers: “Then, there, among the wash’n’wear suits and shiny suitcases, Sophie Mol...She walked down the runway, the smell of London in her hair. Yellow bottoms of bells flapped backwards around her ankles. Long hair floated out from under her straw hat...” (Roy, p.141). Sophie is a symbol of freedom and therefore a threat to old Keralan values. She represents a breath of fresh air with flapping trouser legs and floating hair. Uncle Chacko’s daughter is only a young girl and still a threat to Esthás and Rahels world. “Estha was wearing his beige and pointy shoes and his Elvis puff. His Special Outing Puff. His favourite Elvis song was 'Party'. 'Some people like to rock, some people like to roll, 'he would croon, when nobody was watching, strumming a badminton racquet, curling his lip like Elvis. 'But moonin’ an’a- groonin’ gonna satisfy mah soul, less have a pardy...” (Roy, p.37).

In order to make a good impression on Margaret and Sophie, Baby Kochamma is showing off, pretending she is not as behind the time as the rest of the family: “‘Elvis Presley,’ Baby Kochamma said for revenge. ‘I’m afraid we’re a little behind the times here.’ Every one looked at Estha and laughed” (Roy, p.145). However, the children’s attraction to Sophie Mol and the modern world is there: “And the three of them, led by Sophie Mol, sashayed across the airport car park, swaying like fashion models, Eagle flasks and Made-in-England go-go bags bumping around their hips” (Roy, p.152). Further on, in the tragic story, Sophie Mol drowns and at her funeral she is still surrounded by her London-ness: “She lay in it (the coffin) in her yellow Crimplene bellbottoms with her hair in a ribbon and her Made-in-England go-go bag that she loved” (Roy, p.4). Now her hair is in a ribbon.

Modernity and change will perhaps never survive in Kerala. Estha and Rahel’s fear of losing their place in the family is partly explained by the *The Sound of Music* intertext. Before picking up Margaret and Sophie at the airport in Cochin, the Ayemenem family went to see *The Sound of Music*. However Chacko and Ammu had different views on the film: “Chacko said that going to see *The Sound of Music* was an extended exercise in Anglophilia”, while, “Ammu said, Oh come
on, the whole world goes to see *The Sound of Music*. It's a World Hit" (Roy, p.55). Rahel and Estha were on their way to Cochin to see *The Sound of Music* for the third time. They knew all the songs and to know all the songs is also important to the reader. this time the film would mean something special to the children. Estha and Rahel are scared of losing their uncle to Sophie Mol and Margaret. They feel as if they are not good enough. In comparison with the children in *The Sound of Music*, no child would be good enough: Estha is definitely not peppermint clean and he has been molested by the Orangedrink Lemondrink man. Shocked by this experience, Estha wonders if ever a Captain von Trapp, an uncle Chacko or a father could love him and Rahel. Estha imagined that “Captain von Trapp had some questions of his own. (a) Are they clean white children? No. (But Sophie Mol i s.) (b) Do they blow spit bubbles? Yes (But Sophie Mol doesn’t.) (c) Do they shiver their legs? Like clerks? Yes (But Sophie Mol doesn’t) (d) Have they, either or both, ever held strangers’ soo-soos? N...Nyes (But Sophie Mol hasn’t).” (Roy, p.106).

Apart from Estha’s comparison between him and the peppermint children in the film, there are also several images connected to Baby Kochamma. Baby Kochamma was in her youth very much in love with a Father Mulligan, working in Ayemenem. She decided, at a young age, to become a nun, while waiting for her love for him to be returned. However, the love was never returned and Baby became disillusioned. In *The Sound of Music* Julie Andrews or Maria is also a nun. The life in the convent does, however, not fit Maria’s personality and neither did it fit Baby Kochamma’s. They both escaped the convent life. Still, Baby Kochamma “liked the early nun bits best” in the film. “Ammu explained to Estha and Rahel that people always loved best what they identified most with” (Roy, p.98). Although Baby Kochamma escaped the convent life, she somehow still identified with the nuns. She is jealous of other people’s love and happiness, and especially Ammu’s: “They [the nuns] had complaints to make to their Reverend Mother. Sweetsinging complaints. About Julie Andrews, who was still up in the hills, singing The Hills Are Alive with the Sound of Music and was, once again, late for mass”: She climbs a tree and scrapes her knee, Her dress has got a tear. She waltzes on her way to Mass And whistles on the stair...And underneath her wimpleShe has curlers in her hair! (Roy, p.99-100)
These lyrics will lead the reader back to Baby Kochamma’s feelings about Ammu and Ammu, a divorced woman, who should feel shame and guilt over her failures, does the contrary and is in love. “She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parent’s home. As for a divorced daughter – according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma’s outrage.” (Roy, p.45). Thus, within the interpretation of The Sound of Music the reader also has to know the intertext Let it Be by The Beatles in order to link Baby Kochamma to the nuns, Julie Andrews to Ammu and jealousy to love.

The novel eventually develops into several tragedies where one of them is the horrifying ending of Ammu’s and Velutha’s relationship and Velutha’s death. There are many coinciding circumstances, although it is Baby Kochamma’s jealousy and personal disappointments that will have the most devastating consequences. In the film, Rolf is the oldest peppermint daughter’s boyfriend. He is a trusted person, as if he belonged to the family. He becomes, however, a Nazi and betrays the family von Trapp. Sadly, a parallel between him and Baby Kochamma can be found. Baby Kochamma also becomes a betrayer, although she is one in the family (Roy, p.313-320). She turns from a nun into a betrayer. This imagery, it is also linking Baby Kochamma’s betrayal with a negative view on Christianity. There are again a multitude of messages cooperating on different levels in the intertext The Sound of Music.

Uncle Chacko, the self proclaimed Marxist, who in a way is a betrayer as well. From being almost as a father to Estha and Rahel, he turns his back on them when Margaret and Sophie arrive. Uncle Chacko is thus a symbol of Marxist ideas and the Marxist government ruling Kerala at that time, a government picking the ‘best’ apples from the basket of Marxism, just as Chacko does.

The Love in Tokyo intertext was a successful Bollywood film released in 1966. The film plot involves forbidden love affairs just as in The God of Small Things. However, the most important symbol from this intertext is the “two beads on a rubber band” holding Rahel’s hair together: “Most of Rahel’s hair sat on top
of her head like a fountain. It was held together by a Love-in-Tokyo – two beads on a rubber band, nothing to do with Love or Tokyo. In Kerala Love-in-Tokkos have withstood the test of time, and even today if you were to ask for one at any respectable A-1 ladies’ store, that’s what you’d get.” (Roy, p.37)

Rahel and Estha are twins. I get the impression from Roy that twins form a unit, and that when they are separated, they are just halves. They are “Two beads on a rubber band” (Roy, p.37). One of the many tragedies in this story involves Estha being sent away to live with his father, while Rahel stays in Ayemenem. The children do not understand the causes of all the tragedies and as children often do, they blame themselves. When they meet in Ayemenem again, they have not seen each other for twenty years. They have therefore not been able to deal with their complexes of guilt and separation.

As Rahel saw her brother in the bathroom, she thought of him: “He was a naked stranger met in a chance encounter. He was the one that she had known before life began. The one who had once led her (swimming) through their lovely mother’s cunt” (Roy, p.93). Now, imagine the two beads, Rahel and Estha, being pulled apart as much as it is possible. As the rubber band is at its breaking-point and the puller has to let go, the beads will slip out of hands and by the force of the pulling, crash into each other: “They were strangers who had met in a chance encounter. They had known each other before Life began. There is very little that anyone could say to clarify what happened next. Nothing that (...) would separate Sex from Love. Or Needs from Feelings (...) Only that there were tears. Only that Quietness and Emptiness fitted together like stacked spoons (...) Only that what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief.” (Roy, pp.327-328)

Roy uses intertextuality to a great extent in order to give the story a deeper meaning than what it encompasses on a surface level. However, a deeper meaning can be found in most fictional work when analyzing images and metaphors.
Chapter - V

A POLITICAL INTERPRETATION OF

THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS
Many critics have underscored the political significance of the book. As Swathi Chandorkar points out, "Saresen suggest that Roy was applauded by at least some of the reviewers not because of the literary value of her book but because of its political significance" (Swathi Chandorkar, p.188).

*The God of Small Things* has attracted hostile reception especially from left circles for the incorrect portrayal of the veteran communist leader M.S.Namboodiripad. Aijaz Ahmad alleges that the novel is anti-communist, "Her ideological position to communism is very much a sign of the times in the sense that hostility towards the communist movement is now fairly common among radical sections of the cosmos - political intelligentsia in India and abroad" (Ahmad, p.103).

Arundhati Roy has selected a theme, created some characters and described the surroundings—both physical and human as she wished. *The God of Small Things* does not appear to be a political novel. The main theme of the novel has nothing to do with either presenting or evaluating political events of a particular period. Still, several times the writer found an occasion or made room to comment on the politics of Kerala between 1958 and 1970. 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. In particular, certain comments and observations by Roy have raised the hackles in certain sections. The essence of these comments is as follows.

(i) E. M. S. Namboodiripad is a castist. This is how he is described: "Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad, the flamboyant Brahmin high priest of Marxism in Kerala" (Roy, p.67). (ii) The rise of communism in Kerala was due to interplay of communal forces instead of ideological influence. This is how she interprets the growth of communism in Kerala: "The real secret was that
communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from within the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heavy mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy” (Roy, p.67).

(iii) E. M. S. Namboodiripad was the reason for the expulsion of naxalites from the CPI (M) in Kerala (Roy, p.69).

The above statements show that the author has selected very serious political events for airing her opinions. For a section of readers these comments may be provocative. However, the interesting thing is that the author does not seem to have even checked the accuracy of these events. Though it is within her right to support a particular strategy adopted for revolution or not, ignoring the facts does not enhance the respectability of the novel. Take the example of a state wide procession taken out by pro-CPI (M) trade unions.

According to the author, the trade unions affiliated to that party took up a state wide one - day agitation to present a memorandum to the government. Since the government was lead by the CPI (M), and the agitation was led by its affiliated unions, the author describes it as “the orchestra petitioning its conductor”. According to the author, that particular agitation was conducted in the month of December 1969. Surprisingly, no CPI (M) led government existed during that time. Of course, a coalition government was lead by the CPI (M). It came into power after the 1967 general elections held to the Kerala Legislative Assembly. But the government resigned on 24th October 1969. So there was neither a CPI (M) government nor any orchestrated petitioning, much less any engineered agitation.

The language preferred by the author to criticize Namboodiripad is quite unbecoming. Words like 'Brahmin High Priest', ‘running dog’, ‘Soviet Stooge’ (Roy, p.69) seem too motivated. Even the worst political enemies of Namboodiripad had some respect for his sacrifice, his intellect and his influence on the politics of Kerala. His ideas were scrutinised, criticised and even rejected by
many, but not his political integrity. Again the expulsion of Naxalites from the C.P.I.(M) was an all India issue and Namboodiripad was not personally responsible for it. The second split in the communist movement in India saw the emergence of a new party with the name CPI (ML), popular as Naxalite Party. The Kerala unit was one of the weakest units of that party. Except for the veteran leader K. P. R. Gopalan, no other leader joined that party and its existence was short-lived in Kerala.

M. K. Naik defines the genre of the political novel as a novel, which either has a strong ideological leaning or one, which depicts political events. So by traditional definitions, political novels explain how politics works in particular societies. Roy’s novel can then be called a political novel for its depiction of political events whether or not ideological leaning can be seen. To be sure, part of the fame and success of the novel is because of its preoccupation with matters related to Kerala, its society, politics, culture, economy, environment, caste question, gender issue and so on. The novel thus appears as a document on Kerala and a critique of Kerala’s social, political, religious and cultural institutions. But had it been only that, the book would have ended as yet another political allegory. The novel could also be seen as autobiographical because it is the document of a personal story of Ammu as well as the saga of the Ayemenem family, it is also the story of the growing up of the twins Estha and Rahel. As the novelist herself says, it is the experience of 37 years of her life and her fears with which anyone could agree or disagree with. She further says, “for me the book is not about what happened, but how what happened affected people” (Wibur, p.46).

It should be seen as a combination of all these, the private and the public. The development of the story and the characters are not done in isolation but in relation to the socio political, cultural milieu that prevailed in Kerala during a specific period: the sixties and the seventies of the 20th century. In The God of Small Things the historical verisimilitude of the novel is doubtful. The reference to the Communist Party, its leadership, and its policies point out certain lapses and inconsistencies. But seen from the perspective of New Historicism, Roy’s novel holds out an image of reality, her own version of Kerala's history.
Some of the inconsistencies in Roy's novel have already been pointed, as for example the purported time of the state wide agitation. In the light of postcolonial conception of India, one can attempt an understanding of the incorrect representation of certain facts by Roy. In Roy's book one can have the brief sketch of Communism in Kerala presented through the authorial voice. Arundhati Roy discusses 'oppositional theories' regarding the success of the Communist Party in Kerala. Even Chacko and Pillai representing Communist leadership have “no really complete explanation for why the Communist Party was much more successful in Kerala than it had been almost everywhere in India except perhaps in Bengal” (Roy, p.66). Of the several competing theories propounded, the first one is that “Marxism was a simple substitution for Christianity” and the second one is that the “success of the Communist Party had to do with the comparatively high level of literacy in the state.” There is an implied rejection of both these views and it is the third position, which seems to reflect the author's view, “the real secret was that Communism crept into Kerala insidiously” (Roy, p.66).

This is a challenge to the official version and is contradictory to the reason given by the Communist Party. The authorial voice argues that Communism as a reformist movement in Kerala “never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste ridden, extremely traditional community” (Roy, p.67). Roy seems to contend that the Marxist theory of class struggle which was the focus of the communist experiment in Kerala has not done much to fight against the social hierarchy based on caste prevailing in Kerala. The elderly theoreticians who put communism into practice in Kerala overlooked the institution of caste, deep rooted in the society and equated lower caste with the lower class, the proletarian. E.M.S. explained his party's positioning the 50s, which was reprinted in Social Scientist in 1981, “Our party and myself as one of its activists have thus been basing ourselves on the Marxist theory of class struggle and subordinating the problem of caste oppression to the needs of uniting the exploited against the exploitation of classes irrespective of the caste to which he belongs.”

It is this theoretical lacuna in the Party of sidelining the caste question that Roy is pointing out, as observed by Dasan (p.30). One can see this reflected in the behaviour of the characters of Mr. Pillai and Chacko. Mr. Pillai in the novel is not
only the local leader of the Communist Party, but also its prospective candidate to contest election to the State Assembly (Roy, p.120). Comrade Pillai projects himself as a champion of the downtrodden, yet at the core of his heart he is a class-conscious, ‘touchable man’, belonging to an upper class community. Pillai’s hypocrisy and opportunism is revealed in his contemptuous reference to Velutha as ‘that Paravan’ (Roy, p.278), i.e., by his caste name and not by his real name, although the latter is the only other card-holding member of the Marxist Communist Party at Ayemenem. He tries to persuade Chacko to fire Velutha from his service, as he perceives Velutha as a threat to his own position in the Party, “The only snag in Comrade Pillai’s plan was Velutha. Of all the Party workers he was the only card holding member of the Party, and that gave Comrade Pillai an ally he would rather have done without” (Roy, p.121).

The novelist implies that Pillai’s Marxism is not borne out of any political ideology or conviction. He tells Chacko, “That Paravan is going to cause troubles for you ... Send him off ... He may be very well okay as a person ... You see, comrade, from local stand point these caste issues are very deep-rooted” (Roy, p.278). Comrade Pillai virtually betrays Velutha by wilfully suppressing certain vital information about his membership of the Party, which precipitates Velutha’s arrest, torture and death in police custody. Comrade Pillai, though, does not admit his unsavoury role in the elimination of Velutha,” Though his part in the whole thing had by no means been a small one, Comrade Pillai did not hold himself in any way responsible for what had happened” (Roy, p.14).

Another character is Chacko, the self-proclaimed Marxist who is sneered at by his father for his idealism. His own sister Ammu describes him as “just a case of spoiled princeling, playing comrade! comrade! An Oxford Avatar of the old Zamindar mentality”, for he flirts with the women employees in the factory under the pretext of lecturing to them on labour rights and trade union law. Despite his liberal progressive ideas, Chacko also represents the high caste feudal morality. Even Mammachi and Baby Kochamma, despite being non Hindus - Brahmans converted Christians-inherited the traditional feudal norms and values. Neither of them notice any contradiction between Chacko’s Marxist mind and his feudal libido. Also despite being women, they have internalised patriarchal notions. Much
offence has been taken in Left circles at Roy's incorrect portrayal of the veteran communist leader E. M. S. Namboodiripad. What purpose is served in making E. M. S. Namboodiripad what he was not? Some of her observations like his owning a house in Kumarakom have since been disproved by critics. Should one assume that this is her understanding of the political scene in Kerala. N. V. Raveendran says, “the code E. M. S. Namboodiripad as internalised by many in this part of the world is different from the code E.M.S. Namboodiripad in the novel” (Raveendran, p.120).

Arunndhati Roy wields the scalpel of her irony in her handling of several major themes in the novel. She questions the hypocrisies and misconceptions of the society. The novel makes a scathing attack on the patriarchal and feudal notions of the high caste Hindus and the touchable high caste Syrian Christians of the society. What seems a story of a house peopled by abnormal personalities turns out to be a scanning of a society. It pinpoints the lopsided marriage system, gender biases and caste issues. It appears then that people who reacted emotionally and vehemently to her work noticed only the rhetoric of sheer condemnation and failed to see the other equally important issues, which form the focus of the novel. A more fruitful method would be to engage with the novel as a whole and the world housed in it and the major issues vitiating its ethos. The inconsistencies noted in the representation of political facts may be seen as irritants and it is not the researcher's intention to justify them: but researcher's view is that they need not detract from the literary worth of the novel. They are perhaps even to be expected, going by the postcolonial and postmodernist theories. The practice of the new generation of prominent Indian English novelists is an obvious example.

Irreverence, satire, irony, interrogation of central or official narratives, as also realism, characterise the portrayal of political figures and events in the writings of Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Shashi Tharoor, Khushwant Singh, Bapsi Sidhwa and others.

Social and historical realism in The God of Small Things does not in any way run counter to the thematic objectives of the novel. It appears to have been a part of Roy's intention to cover the bare bones of the story with details of social
and historical setting and scenario in order to give the reader a feel of patterns of living and daily routine, rituals, and sartorial habits, etc. However, *The God of Small Things* is not to be taken as a novel in the realistic tradition proper. It is a modern work. Like the works of James Joyce and Salman Rushdie, it employs poetic and symbolic modes along with realistic touches here and there with the limited objective of providing the social and cultural details characteristic of the persons and groups being dealt with in the novel.

Roy writes with zest about the styles of dressing by various characters. Sophie Mol lay in her coffin “in her yellow Crimplene bellbottoms with her hair in a ribbon and made – in - England go - go bag that she loved” (Roy, p.4). Similarly, Rahel and Estha are often described in terms of their dress and hair style, “Most of Rahel’s hair sat on top of her head like a fountain. It was held together by a Love-in-Tokyo-two heads on a rubber band, nothing to do with Love or Tokyo. In Kerala Love-in-Tokyo’s have withstood the test of time, and even today if you were to ask for one at any respectable A - 1 Ladies’ store, that’s what you’d get. Two beads on a rubber band.” (Roy, p.37).

Estha is often seen wearing his beige and pointy shoes and his Elvis puff. Mundu is a common article of dress in Kerala worn by lower and upper classes alike. Both Velutha and Comrade Pillai are shown wearing Mundu and its disadvantage is also pointed out. Around the Fifties and the Sixties most Syrian Christian women had started wearing saris. Both Mammachi and Baby Kochamma wear saris but “Kochu Maria still wore her spotless half - sleeved white chatta with a V-neck and her white mundu, which folded into a crisp cloth fan on her behind” (Roy, p.170).

One interesting feature of realism is the presentation of the typical scenes in private or public places. In Chapter 1, there is the penpicture of a vegetable market in the following passage, “Vendors in the bazaar, sitting behind pyramids of oiled, shining vegetables, grew to recognize him and would attend to him amidst the clamouring of their other customers….. me in the crowded train. A quiet bubble floating on a sea of noise.”( Roy, p.11). In Chapter 4, the readers are taken inside an Indian picture hall where a spectator is shown his seat by a torch - man. The fans make a whirring noise and people crunch pea - nuts in the darkness. There are the smells of breathing people, hair - oil and old carpets.
In Chapter 5, the readers are taken to a doctor's clinic where Ammu and Kalyani had taken their children to get foreign objects removed from their noses.

Another interesting feature of realistic writing is the description of amusing stock characters and activities found in a certain social setting. One have several examples of this kind of sketching. One such character is the ubiquitous old lady who came to help at Sophie Mol’s funeral. Masquerading as a distant relative, she often surfaced next to bodies at funerals. She “put cologne on a wad of cotton wool and with a devout and gently challenging air, dabbed it on Sophie Mol’s forehead” (Roy, p.5). Baby Kochamma herself is something of a stock character with fixed habits and mannerisms. Another interesting example is Murlidharan, the level-crossing lunatic. He was often seen perched cross-legged on the milestone with an embarrassing posture. In Chapter 1, the author presents a vivid picture of the church and performing of a funeral ceremony according to the customs of Syrian Christians, “The priests with curly beards swung pots of frankincense on chains and never smiled at babies the way they did on usual Sundays” (Roy, p.4).

The day Chacko’s daughter arrives, there is a special function in the family for her welcome. Everyone wears a special dress. Mammachi wears a bun made of her own fallen hair. She takes out her violin and plays a movement from Handel’s Water Music. After they alight from the car, Chacko proudly leads Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol up the nine red steps. Then, the usual greetings are exchanged. Mammachi makes eager enquiries about Sophie Mol’s physique. Even though an unpleasant stir is caused by Ammu’s peevish outburst, the ceremony continues. Kochu Maria cuts a sample piece of cake for Mammachi’s approval. Mammachi directs her to give one piece each to the family members present there. She puts the pieces on a large silver tray. In the meantime, Mammachi plays a Welcome Horne, Our Sophie Mol melody on her violin. She is, however stopped in the middle of her performance by Chacko.

In Chapter 12, there is a description of the temple elephant and the custom of presenting stories from the Indian epics in Kathakali. This is a custom which has not died out. The Kathakali man is a well-trained person skilled in performing stories. He regards his stories as his children who are to be handled like children.
He teases them, he punishes them, he laughs at them, because he loves them. The stories are about gods, but being for popular consumption, they are infused with ordinary human joys and sorrows. One of the stories being regularly presented is that of the *Mahabharat*. Although in the modernized tourist centre people ridicule the Kathakali man, “He checks his rage and dances for them” (Roy, p.231)

It appears Roy’s own experience helped her a great deal in giving us a clear idea of elementary education and the reading and composition material made available to children. The twins were precocious with their reading and the books they read were intended for a higher stage. They had completed *Old Dog Torn, Janet and John and Ronald Ridout Workbooks* and they had heard Ammu read parts of Kipling’s *Jungle Book*. Baby Kochamma was incharge of their formal education. She read to them a version of *The Tempest* abridged by Charles and Mary Lamb. They were fond of reciting Ariel’s ditty, ‘Where the bee sucks, there suck I’ The children were made to write stories and Estha wrote the story of *Ulysses*’ return home and a composition on crossing the road, he also composed a story called, ‘Little Ammu’. The children were given instruction not only in reading and writing but also in etiquette.

Certain occurrences tend to become a permanent part of the heritage of a race or community and they are recalled with great fondness by the racial group concerned. One such event occurred in 1876 when Baby Kochamma’s father was seven years old. This was the occasion when the Patriarch was visiting the Syrian Christians of Kerala. Baby Kockamma’s grandfather had taken his son to the Kalleny house in Cochin to see the Patriarch. They found themselves right in front of a group of people whom the Patriarch was addressing in the verandah, “Seizing his opportunity, his father whispered in his young son’s ear and propelled the little fellow forward. The future Reverend, skidding on his heels, .....on the Patriarch’s middle finger, leaving it wet with spit. The patriarch wiped his ring .....Reverend Ipe continued to be known as Punnyan Kunju - Little Blessed .....to be blessed by him.” (Roy, pp. 22-23)
The treatment meted out to the untouchables is a major concern of the novel. It is, therefore in the fitness of things and thematically relevant that the author supplies us historical information in socio-logical terms, that is to say, the social condition of the untouchables in the past. Although Velutha alone is an active factor in the scheme of the novel, Roy provides useful historical knowledge in terms of human relations. After the British came to Malabar, a number of low caste people including Velutha's grandfather, Kelan, became Christians and joined the Anglican Church in the hope of being freed from the curse of untouchability.

When converted, they were given some food and money; so they became known as the Rice-Christians. But they soon realized that this did not improve their social position. They were still discriminated against by being given separate churches, separate services and separate priests.

They even had their own pariah Bishop. In principle, such converts became free of caste discrimination, but in actual social terms they were still treated as the lowest layer within the Christian community and, as usual, regarded with derision. Naturally, therefore the upper caste Christians avoided having social and marital relations with them. The Independence brought no relief to them: since they were Christians and, therefore no longer belonging to a low Hindu caste, they were deprived of such benefit as job-reservations or bank loans at low interest rates.

It is in this historical context that the readers have to view Vellya Paapen's worries as regards Velutha's conduct. Vellya Paapen was an old world Paravan and, therefore he naturally felt that any attempt at social equality on the part of an untouchable would be met with most severe punishment. He had an idea of the practice of backward crawling by the Paravans in the past. Estha and Rahel were told by Mammachi that she could remember the times when "Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprints" (Roy, pp. 73-74). In those days Paravans and other untouchables were not allowed to walk on public roads, they could not cover their upper bodies and were forbidden to carry umbrellas. When they spoke, they were required to cover their mouths with their hands so that their polluted breath did not reach near the high caste persons they happened to be talking to.
Velutha, on the other hand, was a young man of the new age. His manner of talking to and dealing with the high caste people had an unmistakable smack of independence, self-respect and social equality. This is what alarmed his father. And it is shown by the consequences that hatred towards Paravans and their oppression were still very potent in Kerala. Arundhati Roy also indicates the pace and the measure of changes that have occurred since the days of Pappachi.

In the Nineties, anyone who visits a Kerala village will be struck by the contrast between two kinds of houses that reflect the disparity between the two sections of people that inhabit them, "Other days he walked down the road. Past the new, freshly baked, iced. Gulf-money houses built by nurses, masons, wirebenders and bank clerks who worked hard and unhappily in faraway places. Past the resentful older houses tinged green with envy, covering in their private driveways among their private rubber trees. Each a tottering fiefdom with an epic of its own." (Roy, p. 13)

The advent of satellite TV is shown to have produced considerable impact even on the life styles of the older generation. Satellite TV became the new love of Baby Kochamma who was now able to get glimpses of modern life "It wasn't something that happened gradually. It happened overnight. Blondes, wars, famines, football, sex, music, coups d'etat - they all arrived on the same train"(Roy, p. 27). Baby Kochamma enjoyed watching The Bold and The Beautiful and Santa Barbara "where brittle blondes with lipstick and hairstyles rigid with spray seduced androids and defended their sexual empires” (Roy, p. 27). Baby Kochamma was joined by Kochu Maria in pursuing their new hobby, the lady sitting on a chair and the servant on the floor.

Finally, it may be noted that realistic fiction often focuses its attention on the seamy and shadowy aspects of life. Descriptions of dirt and filth are generously supplied in The God of Small Things. One can be taken to the humble dwelling of Velutha where his disabled brother is lying in bed. Even in June of 1993 the river was no more than a swollen drain, its old, awful grandeur is gone, now its spirit is spent. “It was just a slow, sludging green ribbon lawn that ferried fetid garbage to the sea. Bright plastic bags blew across its viscous, weedy surface like subtropical flying-flowers” (Roy, p. 124).
On the other side of the river also, there was filth and dirt produced by the people. Children hung their bottoms over the edge and defecated directly onto the squelchy mud of the exposed river bed. The smaller ones left their dribbling mustard streaks to find their own way down. Eventually, by evening, the river would rouse itself to accept the day's offering and sludge off to the sea, leaving wavy lines of thick white scum in its wake. Upstream, clean mothers washed clothes and pots in unadulterated factory effluents. People bathed. Severed torsos soaping themselves, arranged like dark busts on a thin, rocking ribbon lawn. (Roy, p. 125). In prisons, the prisoners' cells at the police stations are notorious for their filth and murkiness. With Estha, the readers are allowed a glimpse of the pitch dark lock-up in which Velutha was confined. Estha heard the sound of rasping, laboured breathing and the smell of shit made him feel like vomiting. The detailed description of the pickle factory is an excellent piece of realistic writing.

It is so detailed and clear because it arises out of Arundhati Roy's personal experiences. She has herself stated that she spent the early years of her childhood in her grandmother's factory in Kerala and became "a formidable curry-powder packer and pickle label sticker." (First city, p.26)

The factory has gauze doors and the premises are dark and pickle smelling. The barn owl that lived on a blackened beam contributed its droppings to the flavour of certain products. One can get a view of the raw materials, products and furniture in the order in which they are placed: Green mangoes, cut and stuffed with turmeric and chilly powder and tied together with twine, glass casks of vinegar with corks, shelves of pectin and preservatives, trays of bitter gourd, gunny bags full of garlic and small onions, heaps of fresh green peppercorns, a heap of banana peels, the label cupboard full of labels, the glue and the glue - brush, an iron tub of empty bottles, the lemon squash and the grape - crush. The place is dark. "The jam was still hot and on its sticky scarlet surface, thick pink froth was drying slowly. Little banana bubbles drowning deep in jam and nobody to help them" (Roy, p. 194).

Most of the portions written with a view to presenting social reality succeed in according verisimilitude to the novel and also add flesh and life to the story. Historical realism, as the reader has been suggested, explains some developments.
and consequences which would have been regarded as unexpected and unusual in its absence. Most of the realistic material thrown in does not appear to be obtrusive or uncalled for, although some portions like the long description of the pickle factory appear to stand for themselves. However, there are certain matters, political, biographical and personal which do not appear to be well-integrated with the theme.

If one can see it as a consideration of social realism in the specific sense employed by the Marxist critics. There are clear indications that Arundhati Roy is keenly aware of the exploitation and oppression of the havenots by the upper classes. In fact, *The God of Small Things* encompasses the poor, the exploited and the socially rejected people of the Kerala society; they are misfits, outcasts, factory workers, and low caste people. Arundhati Roy projects class antagonism and class exploitation in terms of caste, and she cleverly makes a contrast between Touchables and Untouchables. When there is a crucial confrontation, the class affiliations come out in the open. When Velutha is discovered to be carrying on sexual relations with Ammu, all the representatives of the ruling class and its allies form a solid front - the police, the communist leader, the feudal minded elders of the family - all unite in acts of extreme savagery. Arundhati Roy also presents a study of the class character of the C.P.M. leadership. They claim to be part of the working class but in actual fact they are middle class people practicing opportunism and failing to identify themselves with the workers in an act of genuine 'declassing' and they are for the people, not of them. This feature has been taken to be a cause of the slow progress of the movement in India. There is also an attempt to trace the rise of the Naxalite movement which seems to enjoy the author's sympathy.

It is also clear that the author has a genuine concern for the downtrodden. She presents a living picture of their suffering and the injustice meted out to them. She is even capable of empathizing with them. In the third chapter, 'Big Man the Laltain, Small Man the Mombatti' she depicts the condition of the Bihari porter. In fact, this chapter symbolically focuses on class antagonism and the meaning of the symbols can be worked out in political and economic terms. Like the Laltain, the upper classes are well-fed and well-protected, whereas the lower classes lack security and are subject to the perils of economic and political upheavals.

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When one carefully examines the behaviour and words of the Orangedrink Lemondrink main, one can find that in his mind he harbours a bitterness against the feudal and rich people. He asks Estha to “Think of all the poor people who have nothing to eat or drink” (Roy, pp.104-5). He is also jealous of the boy for having a grandmother who owns a pickle factory and for being given pocket money, “You’re a lucky rich boy, with pocket money and a grandmother’s factory to inherit”(Roy, p.105). If the readers psychoanalyse the man’s child abuse one will discover that the act was a symbolic wish fulfillment for gaining mastery over the upper class.

Similarly, if one closely look at Ammu-Velutha relationship, one can find that, among other things, what draws Ammu to Velutha is their common discontent against the upper class people, “Suddenly Ammu hoped 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.” (Roy, pp.175-76)

Vellutha certainly was aware of the class antagonism and regarded Ammu and himself as belonging to two opposite camps. He tried to hate her, “She’s one of them, he told himself. Just another one of them”( Roy, p.214).

But the attraction was so strong that he could not maintain his position. He had to jump the class boundary. However, in spite of the author’s sympathy for the poor and dispossessed and identification with them, her portrayal is fragmentary and superficial. It is deflected from its true course by a bourgeois decadent romantic theme. The orientation given to the narrative moves away from the true intents of the novel of social realism.

One of the traditions that distinguishes India from other nations is the caste system. Like racism in America and apartheid in South Africa, caste is “the sign of India’s fundamental religiosity, a marker of India’s essential difference from the West and from modernity at large” (Dirks,p.5). Yet why put focus on caste instead of other cultural phenomena/practices in the novel? Does caste carry so much
influence in Indian society? The answer is definitely positive. In a sense, the Untouchable Velutha in the novel represents the political and social upheavals which are tightly related to colonialism, hegemony, class mobilization, hybridity, and identity problems in Indian society. In addition, the stigma of untouchability is so deeply ingrained in the minds of Indian people that it may become a dangerous juggernaut. Roy’s portrait on the caste system poses a challenge to this centuries-old shibboleth and she expresses her disillusionment toward the social conditions of postcolonial India where the Untouchables still face a hostile society.

Centering around caste, then, is a chain of issues which constitute the major themes of this chapter. First, a historical background of the caste system will be given for readers to better understand the fixed social hierarchy in Indian society. It then is followed with an analysis of the connection between caste, Velutha and social mobilization in the novel. Meanwhile, the situations of subalterns in India will be manifested because they are the significant “cultural others” in Indian history. Following the discussion of these “subordinates” comes the problem of identity. Under the dominance and influence of colonialism, both Indian people and India have faced some kind of identity crisis. It then moves on to the orientalist perception of India as an exotic, mysterious nation. Yet there leaves some room for justification about whether the Orient is represented correctly in academic research and historical documents.

“Postcolonial exoticism,” one of the features of Roy’s novel, reveals to the readers the function and significance of cultural translation both within and beyond borders. As Allison Elliott points out, the origin of caste could be dated back to 1200 BCE. Caste comes from the Spanish and Portuguese word “casta” with the meaning of “race,” “breed,” or “lineage.”

Yet nowadays many Indians use the term “jati” instead of the ancient ones. So far, there are 3,000 castes and 25,000 subcastes in India and each is related to a specific occupation.

These different castes are categorized into four varnas: Brahmins priests; Kshatryas--warriors; Vaishyas--traders; Shudras--laborers (Elliott, “Caste and The
God of Small Things". Outside the caste system are the Untouchables. They are considered polluted and not to be touched. Since upward mobility is hardly seen in the caste system, most people remain in the same caste for their whole life and marry within that caste. The character Velutha in the novel is then an exception of caste norms since he works in the factory owned by the Touchable and he can talk with people higher than his rank. However, the division between the Touchables and the Untouchables is deeply rooted in Kerala so that Velutha is regarded as a nonhuman--"If they hurt Velutha more than they intended to, it was only because any kinship, any connection between themselves and him, any implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he was a fellow creature--had been severed long ago" (Roy, p.293).

In late 19th century, there were three different views on caste: (1) The incubus view: caste as a divisive and pernicious force, and a negation of nationhood; (2) The "golden chain" view: caste as varna--to be seen as an ideology of spiritual orders and moral affinities, and a potential basis for national regeneration; (3) The idealized corporation view: caste as jati--to be seen as a concrete ethnographic fact of Indian life, a source of historic national strengths and organized self-improvement or "uplift" (Bayly,p.154). In the words of Indira Gandhi, the original idea of caste is incorporative of the whole Hindu community, about interdependence rather than exclusion or domination (Dirks,p.235). Also, Rushdie points out that "the new element in Indian communalism is the emergence of a collective Hindu consciousness that transcends caste and believes Hinduism to be under threat from other Indian minorities" (Rushdie,p.31). However, caste is sometimes used to decry the backwardness of Indian society. Besides, it is seen as a force impeding social equality and the better treatment of women in Indian society. The debates never seem to end over the issues about tradition, modernity, civil society, religion, politics and nationalist ideology. Since caste arouses many debates and controversies, the main questions here are: Is caste good or bad for India's development? Can caste be seen as a scheme of social and material "disabilities"? How can India become a truly free and independent nation if it remains a "caste society"? Bayly's question - "To whom do concepts of caste matter, and in what areas of social interaction?"- is stimulating and the value of
caste between past and present becomes suspect. However, the readers can’t deny the fact that caste was and still is inscribed by relations of power through and through. In caste society, power is inevitably encompassed by status. On the one hand, caste is converted by colonial history into a special kind of colonial civil society. On the other, caste could be seen as India’s special religious form of social self-regulation and the reason for India’s unsuitability for modern political institutions (Dirks, p.276).

Given the fact that caste is intricately interwoven with colonial history, one shall not ignore that colonialism not only happened in the past but continues to haunt the postcolonial nation in the present. For example, the British colonizers may take advantage of caste to control and assimilate those colonized. Nowadays in postcolonial India, it is still possible that the dominant authority see caste as its potent tool to demarcate the social properties and benefits between rich/poor, powerful/powerless. If caste is a sign of the past, it is also a vehicle for the construction of a different future. Rather, caste is a fit subject for historical exploration. Indeed, caste may be a colonial hangover in modern India. Yet the challenge of the postcolonial predicament is to find possible ways to transform history and at the same time acknowledge the barbaric hold caste has on us all. Put simply, one of the purposes behind a postcolonial historiography of colonialism is “to come to terms with the weight of the colonial past without turning our backs on that past” (Dirks,p.302). Furthermore, caste is closely linked with class mobilization and political associations. Caste as one recognizes it today has been engendered, shaped and perpetuated by comparatively recent political and social developments.

Also, Sen reveals that “the impact of caste, like that of gender, is substantially swayed by class” (Sen, p.208). So what exactly is the distinction between caste and class? Generally speaking, “class” is referred to social and economic criteria while the term caste” is usually used by those noncaste or groups outside the pale of caste. Yet this kind of classification is not without any problem since in this case, caste becomes the product of collective power or political dominance. As is shown in the novel, Untouchables are not allowed to “touch anything that Touchables touched. Caste Hindus and caste Christians” (Roy,p.71).
Some people even convert to Christianity and join the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of Untouchability. After Independence, however, the Untouchables find that they are still not entitled to any government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates (Roy, p. 71).

Hence, they couldn’t enjoy the benefits like other Touchables. Officially, they are Christians and therefore casteless. It is like “not being allowed to leave footprints at all” (Roy, p. 71). In this way, caste is a source of inequality and disparity, yet belonging to a privileged caste can help people overcome barriers that hinder them from getting a better future and promising welfare. In Grossberg’s words, “‘belonging’ opens up the possibility of another theory of identity and otherness, of identification and affiliation” (Grossberg, p. 148). Yet ironically for those Untouchables in India, their quest for a sense of “belonging” will not necessarily put them in the right place. In contrast, their “displaced” positions make them different from others and their identity is even more thwarted than before.

Take Velutha’s case for example. Despite his untouchability and poor background, Velutha is a great help to Ammu’s family. At first, it is Mammachi who notices little Velutha’s “remarkable facility with his hands” (Roy, p. 71). Apart from the carpentry skills, Velutha has a way with machines. In Mammachi’s words, if Velutha hasn’t been a Paravan, he might have become an engineer. Unlike the scholarly Oxford-training Chacko, it is Velutha who maintains the new canning machine and the automatic pineapple slicer. It is also Velutha who oils the water pump and the small diesel generator, and so on. Increasingly, the whole family of Mammachi depends more and more on Velutha. Yet it causes a great deal of resentment among the other Touchable factory workers when Mammachi rehires Velutha as the factory carpenter and puts him in charge of general maintenance.

Actually, there is a rivalry between Touchable and Untouchable workers since both sides need money to maintain their lives. In addition, Roy reveals to us that there is a competition and struggling between the local factories, the People’s
Government and the communist party. Not surprisingly, Velutha is a member of the Communist Party (Roy, p. 248). And he participates actively in the communist movements. At first glance, the communist party seems to provide political protection for those minorities and subordinate—"They were also demanding that Untouchables no longer be addressed by their caste names" (Roy, p. 67). For instance, when Comrade Pillai notices that "all the other Touchable workers in the factory resented Velutha for ancient reasons of their own," he "stepped carefully around this wrinkle, waiting for a suitable opportunity to iron it out" (Roy, p. 115). In this way, the communist party becomes the second government/authority which monitors the social order to see if there is anything wrong.

In Michel Foucault's terms, the disciplinary power here is to reduce multiplicity (difference, variety) to manageable and useful order (Harris, p. 269). Besides, the party even promotes workers' benefits by teaching them how to demand a raise, whether they succeed or not. Given the above elaboration, the question that has to be faced here is "caste is the natural focus of political mobilization and economic redistribution, as well as the somewhat illicit marker of cultural identity and traditional pleasure" (Dirks, p. 293).

Indeed, the caste consciousness is stirred by the impact of British colonialism, yet it also results in the movement for Sanskritization, caste solidarity and caste rivalry. As R. C. Vermani observes, due to the fact that the political evolution of Indian society leads to caste solidarity, some leaders of specific castes find it useful to mobilize support from caste brethren for social recognition, jobs and political favors which is encouraged by the gradual introduction of electoral politics (R. C. Vermani, p. 137). This remark can also apply to the binary concept between "us" and "them": "we" are the ones with a legitimate claim to solidarity; it is always 'they'- one's unworthy rivals - who are given to so-called 'casteism' or 'casteist' values and actions. Nevertheless, there is always a potential danger in social hierarchy and mobilization if caste is politicized or used as a source of political implementations. Rajini Kothari, a leading political scientist in India, has warned us that "casteism in politics is no more and no less than politicization of caste" (Rajini Kothari, p. 286).
Therefore, when castes group themselves together for political purposes. To a certain degree, the political process does not always erase divisions within caste/class groupings. Rather, it provides new opportunities for exploitation and the enrichment of elites. In the end, the policy of caste-based reservations does not help solve the problems but encourages the caste-based politicization. Ultimately, the rich and the influential get benefited most, not the poor and the weak. With regard to social hierarchy and class division, inevitably one needs to deal with subalterns in India. The term “subaltern” refers to “those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes,” as it is pointed out in Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies. Jawaharlal Nehru has once commented: “…no group, no community, no country, has ever got rid of its disabilities by the generosity of the oppressor” (Jayawardena, p.73). Here, Nehru suggests that the oppressed is usually under the manipulation of the oppressor. As David Lloyd puts it, “minority discourse forms in the problematic space of assimilation and the residues it throws up” (David Lloyd, p.222). He goes on to argue that minorities are the underdeveloped “who have yet to attain the capacity to participate in representative structures” but are those “whose numbers have been systematically controlled by exclusion or genocide”.

Given the fact that minorities are those deprived of voices and rights, the original purpose of Subaltern Studies is to “produce historical analysis in which the subaltern groups were viewed as the subjects of their own history” (Chakrabarty, p.472). Since the subaltern is not acknowledged as the maker of his own destiny and is denied the access to hegemonic power, the central issue of subaltern mobilizations is “a notion of resistance to elite domination” (Chakrabarty, p.472). Nevertheless, the protest/struggle of subalterns does not necessarily succeed. Rather, subalterns are likely to be assimilated by the dominant groups. In other words, the center domesticates the other by way of assimilation.

As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak asserts, “intellectuals must attempt to disclose and know the discourse of society’s Other” (“Can the Subaltern Speak?” 66). Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha insists that “the critic must attempt to fully realize, and take responsibility for, the unspoken, unrepresented pasts that haunt the historical present” (Homi K. Bhabha, p.450). Indeed, there are good reasons to
believe that those elites can do something for the subordinate. Here, one can take the peasant movements in India for example. As Guha insists, "the peasants was a real contemporary of colonialism and a fundamental part of the modernity that colonial rule gave rise to in India" (Guha, p.473).

It then raises the question of the relationship between texts and power when scholars quest for a history for the subaltern. Since historical archives are usually collections of documents, historians of peasants and other subaltern social groups have long emphasized the fact that peasants do not leave their own documents (Chakrabarty, p.478). Yet Chakrabarty believes that the illiterate are not in fact inarticulate. Instead, they can and do express their subjectivity by showing their strong will in the protest. The difficulty in historical documents lies in whether the truth is represented or distorted, and to what extent. Therefore, Spivak's suspicion is not rootless to me. She asks: Are those who act and struggle mute, as opposed to those who act and speak? How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak? (70; 80). Here, I am not going to take issue with the question of "whether the subaltern can speak." Rather, there are always two forces of contention and vicissitude between the dominator and the dominated.

It is not without possibility that both the elites and the subalterns achieve their purposes by cooperating well together. Sometimes, it is through the complicity of both sides that they get the benefits.

In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, most of the characters cross moral boundaries. Eventually, they all get punished for doing so. In this novel, Roy presents two kinds of morality. One of them is social morality, which can be defined as what a group thinks is good and right or the way one should behave. The other one is individual morality, what oneself thinks is the right way to act. These two kinds of morality inevitably clash. In *The God of Small Things*, Roy presents and, in some way, even encourages her characters to stand in the middle of this clash. She pushes her characters to pursue their personal truths. They are seen reveling in their freedom and courage for doing so. But, eventually, they get punished by their families and society.
The God of Small Things takes place in the Indian state of Kerala, a state where all the largest religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism exist. This is the part of India which includes the largest number of Christians, the group to which the Kochamma family belong to. This is also the part of India with the highest literacy rate in the country. Kerala is described as developed in comparison to other parts of India. However, it is not as developed as one might think or wish it was. In an interview with David Barsamian in the book The Checkbook and The Cruise Missile, Roy explains that the caste system is still used in Kerala, that Even among the Syrian Christians n who are the oldest, most orthodox Christians in India you have caste issues (Barsamian, p. 2).

She claims that the caste system, which is often seen as something made up and used by Hindus, is used all over India, no matter what religion or social class people belong to. In the same interview, Roy tells about the status of women in Kerala. She explains that women from Kerala work and earn their own money, which can be interpreted as high status. Nevertheless, they still will get married, pay a dowry, and end up having the most bizarrely subservient relationship with their husbands (Barsamian, p. 5). Both these things the caste issue and the gender issue are dealt with in the novel. Probably the biggest issue in the novel is how influenced all parts of society are by social norms, the rules that decide how every single person in their society should, or should not act. These are the rules that underpin both the gender and the caste divisions, social norms that decide that men and women who act similarly should be treated differently and the social norms that also decide that people who have had the misfortune of being born into a low caste have much less rights than people who are born into a high caste.

The women in The God of Small Things belong to men throughout their whole lives. From the day they are born until the day they get married, they are the property of their fathers. The fathers decide how their daughters should live and act; they are supposed to make sure that their daughters act according to the social norms in their community. One way to see the oppression of the female characters in the novel is by looking at how to get married. In order to marry off their daughters, the fathers have to pay a dowry to the prospective husband. To have a woman in the family is therefore such a burden that the fathers even have to pay to get rid of them, to burden another poor soul with them.
Therefore, to in any way invest in women is worthless. One example of this is when Ammu wants to go to study in college, but Pappachi refuses to send her. He does not want to waste any money on a woman’s education. According to him, it is much better that she stays at home, with her mother, and learns household chores. Pappachi does not think that sending her to college will pay off; staying home, on the other hand, is something she, since when married she is going to stay at home anyway.

As a young, unmarried woman, Ammu spends a summer in Calcutta with a distant relative. This seems to be when she starts to get into trouble, and when she starts to cross social boundaries. During this summer, she meets her future husband, the father of her future children. This man is not the kind of man her parents want her to marry; he is a stranger to the family, and, worst of all, he is a Hindu. And for a young Christian woman from the upper middle-class, a Bengali Hindu is not the right kind of man to marry. Therefore, by marrying this man, she brings shame not only to herself, but to her whole family, something that the rest of the family of course is not so pleased about. Because the women are owned by men all their lives, the only way to leave their father’s home is by marrying their second owner.

Just moving on their own is something impossible for these women and this is also the case for Ammu. When she accepts his proposal, the only thing Ammu has in mind is to get out of Ayemenem, to escape the life she will have if she returns home. At the time, She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem (p. 39). She wants to flee Ayemenem and everything that has to do with her home town; so, for her, marrying him seems to be the only solution of her problems.

However, as Nirmala C. Prakash in the article Man-Woman Relationship in The God of Small Things claims, this kind of marriage, a marriage of convenience, can be as terrible as any other unsuccessful marriage (Nirmala Prakash, p.81). It is not painful for Ammu just because they do not get her parents approval. Furthermore, what Ammu does not realize immediately is that, by marrying this

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man, she does not merely cross social boundaries. Unintentionally, she also continues the family - tradition of living in a loveless marriage. And this is, as she later realizes, an even bigger mistake; by marrying him, by putting herself in a loveless marriage a situation she is not happy in she also crosses her personal boundaries.

Obviously, marrying a Hindu is, according to the society Ammu comes from, a huge mistake, and her subsequent actions do not exactly raise their thoughts of her. In the end of their marriage, Ammu's husband asks Ammu to spend some private time with his boss. But when Ammu refuses, he beats her in punishment for not obeying him, as if she does not really have a choice. Because she is a woman, it is seen as her duty to just do as he pleases. However, when her drunken husband starts to not only beat her, but also the children, the rebellious Ammu leaves him to live in her parents house again. Her return, if possible, is seen as even more scandalous than marrying a stranger. The reason why Ammu leaves her husband is irrelevant, no matter how terrible a husband he is, no matter how he treats Ammu and their children, according to their society, divorcing him is even worse.

There are no excuses for divorces, they are just the wrong thing to be part of. End of story. Baby Kochamma, who seems to have some 'wise' words for every moment someone crosses societal boundaries, explains what she, and the rest of their society, think about the way Ammu lives her life,"She subscribed wholeheartedly to her commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents home. As for a divorced daughter according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage Baby Kochamma chose to remain quaveringly silent on the subject." (Roy,pp.45-46)

The family actually treats Ammu according to Baby Kochamma's sentiments. This is something that is revealed already in the first few pages of The God of Small Things. When beginning to read this novel, one immediately understands that Ammu and her children must have done something terrible.
One section in the novel where this is really shown is during the funeral of Sophie Mol, “Though Ammu, Estha and Rahel were allowed to attend the funeral, they were made to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Nobody would look at them” (Roy, p.5). They are allowed to go to the funeral, but they are not treated as a part of the family anymore. Now, their social standing is as low as Velutha’s, or one of the other Paravans. Nobody wants to talk with them, nobody wants to come near them, they are, as Mohit Kumar Ray in her article Locust Stand I: Some feminine critics of The God of Small Things calls it, ‘virtually untouchable’ (Mohit Kumar Ray,p.52). Ammu and her children are not at all wanted in the Ayemenem house; which is clearly indicated by the rest of the family. Nothing they do, from here on, will improve their standing. After Sophie Mol’s arrival, this starts to seem very clear. From that moment on, the true feelings of their family slowly become more and more evident. However, after the big revelation of the love affair of Ammu and Velutha, and the death of Sophie Mol, one really comes to see how resented Ammu and the twins are by their own family.

Because of the way the novel is narrated, because it constantly switches from one time to another, this is something one as a reader gets to experience very early in the book. However, the bad treatment of Ammu and her twins is something that is written about earlier in the plot too. These three people do not seem to be seen as worthy family members, as, for example, Chacko, Baby Kochamma or even Sophie Mol are . A place where this is shown is when the Kochamma family welcomes Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol to their country. Their British cousin gets a kind of welcoming that Rahel and Estha have never and probably will never get from their family, and the reason for this is that their mother married the wrong man. Ammu, of course, loves her children. All she wants is for them to be loved. But all she sees, and has seen, since the day they were born, in her own, or rather, her parent’s home, and in the rest of their community, is her children being unloved. However, this changes the day she sees the way Velutha treats them; with him, they can play and laugh as much as they want. All Velutha does is to make them happy, loving them and accepting them. This must be one of the reasons, a big reason, why ‘She loves by night the man her children love by day’(Roy,p.44).
Also Velutha does things that he, according to his society, is not supposed to do because he is a Paravan, or an untouchable. To make things easy, one can say that he is supposed to do everything in his power so that no touchable person has to go through the disaster of coming into contact with him. This includes obvious physical contact like touching, but also breathing directly on another, or talking to a touchable. In _The God of Small Things_, Roy presents the history of the Paravans. She writes about Velutha’s father who lived during “the Crawling Backwards days” (Roy,p.76).

When Paravans had to crawl backwards and sweep away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians did not have to step into a Paravan’s footprint and, by this, be polluted by any untouchables. And the Paravans still, to a certain extent, live by the rules of those times.

Vellya Paapcn is always worried about his son who does not seem to ‘know any better’. He has really accepted the boundaries he, as a Paravan, cannot cross. He does not seem to even think about questioning them. When Vellya Paapen tells Mammachi about Ammu and Velutha’s love affair is one passage in the novel where Roy really shows how ingrained the rules about castes are. Just going over to the Kochamma home and telling the story shows how important it is for him to please them. Before telling it, Vellya Paapen already knows that the Kochammans knowing about the love affair will probably kill his son, but this is not enough to stop him. Instead of just telling the Kochamma family what he knows, and then at least going to warn his son, he even offers to kill Velutha himself. The social norms about castes are even more important to him that his own son’s life.

The “problem” with Velutha is that he does not let the caste he is born to prevent him from doing what he wants. Although normally Paravans do not go to school, or at least finish high-school, he does. But were most people would stop, he just continuous. He does not think that maybe this is too much for a Paravan to do. So he learns to be a carpenter and starts working at a place where he still does not have the rights a touchable would have, but where he is allowed to do a lot more than other Paravans. It is shown that the way Velutha lives his life, and the way he is treated, is something unique, that he is not really like the other Paravans. “To keep the others happy, and since she knew that nobody else would hire him as a
carpenter, Mammachi paid Velutha less that she would pay a Touchable carpenter but more that she would a Paravan. Mammachi didn’t encourage him to enter the house (except when she needed something mended or installed). She thought that he ought to be grateful that he was allowed to the factory premises at all, and allowed to touch things that Touchables touched. She said that it was a big step for a Paravan.” (Roy, p. 77) Velutha is treated differently than the other Paravans, and, as Mammachi seems to see it, the only reason for this is the kindness of her good heart.

However, in a way, Mammachi takes advantage of the knowledge that Velutha possesses. She knows that given his capability, he deserves to get a much better job. But, along with this, she also knows that because he belongs to this very low caste, there is no possibility for him to get a better job than the one she has to offer him. Therefore, she can take advantage of the situation and pay him less than he deserves. For Velutha, being treated differently is not necessarily something painful; as long as he does not cross any boundaries seen as awfully important, he is still, to a certain extent, accepted. Velutha is allowed to do things that Vellya Paapen and other Paravans seem to not even dare to dream about.

However, the thing that annoys a lot of people is not just him having these rights. The thing that is so unique about Velutha is that he does not seem to think that he is fortunate. By the way he acts, it seems like he does not really care about the caste laws that so clearly control, among many others, his own father’s life. It seems as if he almost cannot see that he is a Paravan, that he has a lower caste than a lot of people, and, that being a Paravan, being Velutha, should not be something to be proud of, as social norms dictate. But Velutha does not think about these things. He does not see the difference between a touchable and an untouchable. He does not see why a Brahmin or a Syrian Christian should be worth more than him, or why he should be thankful to them, when he knows if it was not for his own intelligence, for his own capability with machines, he would never be were he now is and that none of it is because of the touchables’ kindness. The touchables in Ayemenem must be very annoyed by this, and they probably think him clueless, they probably see Velutha as ignorant because he does not seem to realize that he is subordinate to them.
What he rather should do, according to society, is to be ashamed of who he is. He should think less of himself; he should be grateful; he should be thankful to the touchables who allow him to live the life he lives, who allow him to have the advantages he has. In a way, it seems like they want him to be grateful to them for letting him live at all. It seems like they in some way even believe that it is thanks to them he is alive, that without them, there would never even be a Velutha. They do not see the kind of gratefulness that, for example, Vellya Paapen shows them. To a certain extent, by the way he acts, he does not let them feel superior to him. And this, to not really admit that he is less worthy than the touchables, is one of the worst things he does in this novel, Roy does not try to write a happy ending. So, the people who transgress the social boundaries eventually get punished for doing so. This does not necessarily mean that they get what they deserve.

They get punished for being good, or for just following their heart, without harming other people. And, in the same time, people who bring a lot of evil to the world still go through life rather easily. Both Ammu and Velutha are very good examples of people who act against the social norms and who are punished, fairly severely, for this.

The first example of people getting punished, for crossing the societal boundaries, which comes to mind, is probably Velutha. He is a good person who happens to be born in the wrong caste; he is born a Paravan, but he does not let that stop him from doing what he wants. He seems to really think that all people are equal; that being born a Paravan or a Syrian Christian does not make you worth more or less than anyone else. However, him thinking that everyone should be treated alike does not mean that everyone else will agree with him. The way he thinks and the way he acts upsets a huge amount of people. Even before the love affair with Ammu, he seems to be an outcast wherever he goes. For the touchables, he is just a Paravan, a worthless untouchable. However, he is in a way seen as even worse that other Paravans in their community; he does not feel subordinate to the touchables, and this is probably one of the worse things for an untouchable to do. But even with his own people, his own caste, he is an outcast. And the reason for this is probably the same as why he is an outsider for the touchables. The way Velutha acts and the way he is treated upsets the other untouchables. They probably feel that because Velutha does not let the touchables be superior to him, he is superior to other untouchables, that he is unique and worth more than them.
So both castes want Velutha to know his place, like the other untouchables already do. His love affair with an upper middleclass, Syrian Christian young woman, only makes people more upset than before, much more upset. He crosses almost all social boundaries that exist for his caste. Roy shows here that acting against social norms, crossing social boundaries is not something easy. She shows that crossing these boundaries is not something you can just do and then live your life the way you have always wanted to live. She shows that rebellious people, people who refrain from doing things they in their hearts know are wrong, eventually get punished, that the fairy tales do not correspond with reality; being good does not most of the time, pay off. And this is something Velutha experiences. The love affair with Ammu is the last straw. and for acting the way he does, the punishment he gets is death.

One could maybe think that Ammu gets off much easier than Velutha that she has done at least as much wrong as Velutha, but that Velutha is the only one to get punished. Nevertheless, I actually believe that Ammu is the one who gets the harder punishment; she is made to suffer for a very long time, for the rest of her life.

Velutha did not get off easily, but at least he did not suffer for years. Only twenty-four hours before dying, he was happy. In the chapter called The Crossing, the last couple of hours Velutha has before being found by the Police are presented. Here he is described as happy; he knows that his affair with Ammu is revealed and that he has to pay for it. However, he still seems to be quite optimistic about the future, "Things will get worse, he thought to himself. Then better" (Roy,p.290). And the beating and killing does not take a very long time. The happy thoughts in his mind do not have a chance to disappear entirely before he dies.

Ammu, on the other hand, does not immediately die. She suffers for a long time before she finally dies. Even before the affair with Velutha is revealed, Ammu pays for the mistakes she has made in her life, Ammu is treated differently in her family because she one time chose the wrong man. However, Ammu is not the only one suffering for this; her children, also Rahel and Estha, have to suffer because their mother chose the wrong father for them. They are treated differently for not having a father, for being children of a "Veshya's" children of a whore, a prostitute (Roy,p.8).
After the reveal of her love affair with Velutha, Ammu is locked in a room, and later, she is taken away to live a life without her beloved children and they to lead a life without their dear mother. Ammu dies all alone in an empty, dirty room, without love, without any new happy thoughts in her mind. Therefore, her punishment is in a way much worse than Velutha’s. Furthermore, even after her death, she is in a way not allowed to rest in peace. The choices she has made in her life, all the times she has transgressed societal boundaries, haunt her and her children, even after her death. One example of how wrong her actions are seen as is in the section where Ammu is dead and Rahel and Chacko have to decide what to do with the body, when it is told that the church refuses to bury Ammu, and she is sent, wrapped in a dirty bed sheet, to the crematorium, where beggars, abandoned people, and people who have died in police custody are sent to be cremated after their death (Roy,p.162). Here, I think, it is really shown how lonely Ammu must have been those last years.

The fact that the church does not even want to bury her and that the bedsheetshe is sent away in is dirty shows how little she is worth in people eyes she cannot even get a decent burial or cremation, but, is sent as this useless object, almost as just some piece of garbage they need to get rid of. She has to pay for the mistakes she has made in her life with every single day, for the rest of her life, and even after this, in loneliness.

In spite of all the violence and death in this novel, it in a way ends quite happily, and especially, hopefully. It ends with the scene with Ammu and Velutha, when Ammu tells Velutha naaley, meaning tomorrow (Roy,p.340). And, in a way, this itomorrowi gives hope. It feels like a future will come, that better times will come. And better times do actually come, eventually. This is discovered twenty years later after the scandal of Ammu and Velutha, when Rahel returns to Ayemenem. She has, just like her mother, married into an intercommunity love marriage and has also gotten divorced; but the difference now is that she does not really get punished for living the way she does and for making the choices she has made. People still see divorces and intercommunity love marriages as something bad, as something one should not do. But Rahel and other divorcees do not get
punished as hard as for example Ammu did, for choosing to do what they do. It is shown that their society is slowly progressing, with great losses, but still, progressing.

*The God of Small Things* deals with the ravages of caste system in south Indian state, Kerala, the miserable plight of untouchables and also the struggle of a woman trying to have fulfillment in life in a patriarchal society is successfully presented in the novel. Certain political developments in a country at the dawn of Independence, like the formation of the congress Government at the center headed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and mainly the impact of communist party on Kerala state has been explored in the novel.

The community represented in *The God of Small Things* is Syrian Christian. The Christians of Kerela are divided in five churches, they are Roman Catholic, Orthodox Syrian, Nestorian, Mar Thoma and Anglican. Syrian Christians claim Apostle Thomas as their founder. The term “Syrian” refers to the West Asian Origins of the group’s ancestors and to their use of Syriac as a liturgical language. For centuries, their spoken language has been Malayalam. In the novel religious differences appear in the disagreements between Father Mulligan (who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church) and Revered Ipe (who belongs to the Mar Thoma) as well as in Baby Kochamma’s conversion to Catholicism and her consequent lack of suitors.

The socio-political changes brought about by colonial rule led to the upper caste Hindus shunning the Syrian Christians. Between 1888 and 1892 every one of the main Syrian Christian denominations founded so called Evangelical society to sort out low-caste converts and built schools and chapels and publicized mass baptisms. *The God of Small Things* thus refers to the schools of “Untouchables” built by the Great Grandfathers of the twins Estha and Rahel. However, as Roy points out, even though a number of Parvans and members of other low castes converted to Christianity, they were made to have separate churches and thus continued to be treated as “Untouchables”. After Independence, they were denied Government benefits created for “Untouchables” because officially, on paper, they were Christians and therefore casteless.
"It did not take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan to the fire. They were made to have separate churches with separate services and separate priests. As a special, favour they is-ere given their own separate Parish Bishop.” (Wilbur, p.74) Their condition further deteriorated after the Independence. Their forefathers were not allowed to leave footprints on the path. In their case, however, “It was a little like having to sweep away (their) footprints without a broom. Or worse, not being allowed to leave footprints at all”. (Roy,p.74)

The reader is variously reminded in the novel of high-class Christians abhorrence of “Parvan smell”. To Baby Kochamma, the very thought of a Parvan touching the body of a Syrian Christian lady is abominable. The Ammu, Velutha affair clearly reflects the caste and class differences. A low caste man and an upper class divorcee have broken the “Love Laws”. Their illicit relationship shocks the entire social order. The ultimate outcome of this love-affair is the tragic death of an “Untouchable” by the “Touchable Boots” of the state police. The divorcee's affair with a Parvan horrifies not only the family but also the hypocrite Marxist leader, Comrade Pillai. Ammu goes insane and dies in grief. Caste, class, gender discrimination and culture all conspire against Velutha and Ammu.

The novel deals with another equally important issue that is the novelist’s valorization of the woman in Indian society. Gender in a patriarchal society, plays a very important role in discriminating between the powerful and the powerless. According to the ideology of male superiority and female inferiority all men are empowered to exercise “right” over all women.

The predicament of women is presented by Arundhati Roy through her female characters. These characters represent Indian women belonging to three generations. They are all exploited in The God of Small Things.

Pappachi, the 'patriarch' ill treats his wife who bears his beating and abuse in silence. He would donate money to orphanages and leprosy clinics. “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.” (p. 180) Mammachi belongs to the upper class but she has no rights whatsoever in her husband’s family. Moreover, he was always a jealous man. He does everything to assert his manliness. His violence, creating fear in his subjects, serves as a manifestation of his frustration. When Mammachi starts pickle making, he does not help her though she is turning behind and he himself has retired. Pappachi’s bashing stopped when Chacko twisted his hand and warned him not to repeat it. But still Mammachi had to undergo another sufferance. “He (Pappachi) never touched Mammachi again. But he never spoke to her either as long as he lived.” (Roy, p.48)

Ammu, the biggest victim of the system, is an archetypal image of a daughter marginalized in a patriarchal society. Ammu, the central character of the novel, has only a marginal existence in the family structure. Her experiences of marital life were almost equally shattering. She had to live with a “cold calculating cruelty” (Roy, p.118) throughout her life. “Drunken violence followed by post drunken badgering at the hands of her Bengali husband” (Roy, p.42). By the time she realized that “life had been lived... she made a mistake. She married the wrong man” (Roy, p.47). It was already too late.

Rahel in the novel, the representative of the third generation, who is still better off than her grandmother and mother. Rahel has been a ‘rebel’ right from her childhood. She wanted to have a watch which would show time according to her wishes. In the convent, she smoked, burnt her teacher’s bun of hair and dashed against young girls to see if breasts could hurt one. Her grandmother tolerated Pappachi silently throughout the life. Ammu latter had the guts to divorce her husband though she knew that she is the unwelcomed guest in her father’s house. Even then she did not give up her body and was ready to face the consequences. The third generation was Rahel who “grew up without a brief, without anybody arranging a marriage for her. Thus there is a generational shift in the attitude of three women. Through Baby Kochamma’s example the novelist shows that women are the worst perpetrators of sufferings on women.

“Along with gender-oppression, Roy comments on the colonization of the mind which many Indians suffer from.” (Ashish Nandy, p.83) Chacko’s father,
Pappachi, was very proud of his Government job to which he wore a three-piece suit unfailingly even in the extreme heat of Ayemenem. According to Ammu, Pappachi was an incurable British C.C.P., which was short for ‘Chhi-Chhi-Poach’ and in Hindi meant shit-wiper (Roy, p.51). The glorification of the west is thus visible. The Indian vs. the English dilemma is thus illustrated throughout the novel in the whole family of Ipe. Certain other issues like woman’s no right to property are also touched. Though Ammu is a daughter of the family, she has no say in any matter regarding property of household. Everything belongs to Chacko. Similarly Ammu had not the kind of education, reading or even upbringing like her brother. After growing up and completing her school she is left with the only option of waiting for marriage; as with most of Indian women.

Child negligence and child abuse is another issue. Rahel and Estha, the Siamese twins, are exploited by various kinds of persons. They behaved like “A pair of actors hopped in a recondite play with no hint as plot or narrative, stumbling through their parts, nursing someone else's sorrow. Grieving someone else's grief.” What made matters worse was the fact that no efforts would enable them to get the solace from a well meaning person who would say to them You are not the Sinner. You are the Sinned Against. You were only children. You had no control. You are the victims, not the perpetrators." (Roy, p.191).

The novel is thus an unqualified tribute to the innocence of childhood. The treatment meted out to them at the hands of people like Comrade Pillai and Inspector Thomas Mathew was nothing unexpected. The two custodians as law and justice didn't trust each other. But they understand each other perfectly. They were both men whom childhood had abandoned without a trace. Men without curiously. Without doubt. Both in their own way truly, terrifying adult.” (p.262). These lines clearly explain the novelist's eagerness to empathize with children. Further, Estha is sexually abused by the Orange-Leman drink man in the theatre. This memory haunts him and leaves him frightened and insecure. The adult never paid attention to this catastrophe and they Continued to behave as though everything is all right. The God of Small Things also deals with another important theme, the theme of marriage. Society regulates marriage in a number of ways. Marriage is one of the interpersonal relationships that society sanctions unreservedly.
But all marriages in The God of Small Things are failures, except Margaret's second one. There are five different marriages Mammachi and Pappachi, Chacko and Margaret, Ammu and Baba, Rahel and Larry Mc Caslin, Joe and Margaret. Pappachi always beats Mammachi. Chacko, an Indian husband fails to adjust with an English wife. Margaret later marries Joe. Chacko is the representative of eastern culture whereas Margaret of west. it culture with her liberalism. Ammu and Baba's intercommunity marriage also fails. The clashes between Christian culture and Bengali Hindu culture create problems. Rahel's marriage to a foreigner also fails. Thus, the novel deals with the theme of marriages in detail.

The novel touches the political history of Kerela of the turbulent communist periods of the fifties and the sixties. Though Roy denies that The God of Small Things is not about history in an interview, Roy maintained that the novel is not about history but biology and transgression”. But still the bold referral to the various political happenings during the time, cannot be neglected. The political developments in the country at the dawn of Independence, the formation of the Congress Government at the center headed by Pt Jawaharlal Nehru are all recorded in the novel.

Political reference becomes more pointed as in 1957, under E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Kerela became the first Indian state to elect a communist government. Despite a damaging split in the party in 1964 there have been communist led governments in Kerela more often han not. Roy writes that the reason behind the communist Party's success in Kerela was that it “Never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxist worked from within the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to.” The communist movement was supposed to aim at a classless society. In spite of communism's theoretical emphasis on equality and justice, the institution of the party in Ayemenem functions from within the caste system. This institution like Christianity, is concerned with maintaining itself to acquire power.
Arundhati Roy's novel is born in the soil of Kerela and it could not take roots in any other soil. Throughout the 300 odd pages of this book, Kerela remains a vibrant, throbbing presence. The reader is never allowed to forget that one is in God's own country. The vegetation of the region, the undulating landscape, the proximity to the Arabian Sea and the backwaters of Kerela provide an immortal locale to the novel.

At the beginning of the novel itself, the lush green post-monsoon scene is created. "But by early, June the South West Monsoon breaks. The countryside twins an immodest green-Boundaries blue as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn moss-green. Pepper it incs snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks.” (Roy, p.1)

The readers have a living description of nature throughout. Roy has an eye for minute details pertaining to its shape, colour and size, moods, wishes and whims. The most integral part of this landscape is the river Meenachal, which has been referred to by the novelist as “a better happier place.” The Meenachal river flows through the Kottayam district. The kids Rahel and Estha loved this river and spent many happy hours on its banks or in a boat on the river. But one can not forget Roy's concern for the degeneration of the environment. This degeneration is the result of various projects, launched in the name of development. This reveals her role in the Narmada Bachao Andolan. In an essay “The Greater Common Good”, She herself says, “... the congealed monass of hope, anger, information, disinformation, political artifice, engineering ambitious, disingenuous socialism, radical activism, bureaucratic subterfuge, misinformed emotionalism and of course the pervasive, invariably dubious. politics of super national Aid.” When Rahel comes back she finds a definite degeneration set in the landscape. Roy hints at the reality, how progress brings in the degeneration. The degeneration is chiefly due to economic progress, which involves a price. This change is not for the good but is for the worse.

Some western feminist critics have gone to the extent of equating nature with women. *The God of Small Things* portrays the exploitation of nature and woman equally, the patriarchal, imperialist and mercantile systems have caused immense destruction to both woman and nature.
The novel is, thus, of great relevance to the whole of India, socially and politically. The spread of treatment of these socio-political concerns in her fiction corroborates the truth that she is a powerful writer of talent and vision who is deep-rooted in ground reality. The readers may not agree with Roy in her views on India's need to take to nuclear testing, but in a democratic country like ours she has a right to stick to her views. 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 one will be eager to see how well she makes most of the opportunities coming her way.