

CHAPTER - X

ROY'S THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

Arundhati Roy hails from Kerala and is a graduate in architecture from Delhi School of Architecture. She remained ~~in~~^{she won} ~~cognito~~ until the Booker Prize for her first novel *The God of Small Things*. She has said somewhere that she has taken four-and-half years to write this novel. This novel superceded hundred and six novels that came before the Booker Prize panel from across the world and won the covetous prize. The initial reaction ranged from sheer exhilaration to utter damnation. But the novel gets more positive responses. Arundhati Roy is ~~the~~ entirely homegrown Indian to win the Booker Prize. *The God Small Things* broke the record of sale of *Midnight's Children* and *The Golden Gate*. *The God Small Things* has been translated into forty languages.

I. Introduction: *The God of Small Things* is a narrative of a Syrian Christian family in Ayemenem town in Kerala. It is about the children, the grand children and the great grand children of E. Jhon Ipe and Aleooty Ammachi. Their children are Bennan Ipe, who is most known as Pappachi and Navomi Ipe as Baby Kochamma.

The narrative's chief focus is on the misery of Ammu for ~~being~~^{being} female. As a daughter, she is subjected to discrimination by her parents, as a sister, she suffers inequality in her rights to her parental assets, as a wife, she is exploited and divorced by her husband. She returns to her parental home as a destitute with her ~~two~~ children. Being deprived of love and affection from her family, ~~her~~ ~~children~~ seek consolation in the friendship of Velutha, a low caste person.

While the children look at him as their companion, Ammu falls in love with him. Since such an intercaste love has no social sanction, the lovers are ravaged. While Velutha is killed in the police custody, Ammu is excommunicated and is left to die in poverty and disease. The Ayemenem House is ruined with the passage of time. The children of Ammu who are grown up now return to Ayemenem House to live together for ever at the end.

The God of Small Things is revolutionary in many ways for it defies various notions that have been deeply rooted in the culture both at home and

abroad. On the basis of this assumption, *The God of Small Things* is read as a subversion of Endogamy which has bred social taboos.

II. SUBVERSIVE THEMES: The prime theme of *The God Small Things* is subversion of the notion of Endogamy practiced in various aspects of the Indian society. Subversion of Endogamy is divided into three parts, namely, i) Subversion of the notion of Patriarchy, ii) of Marriage as a sacred Bondage, iii) of Impurity. To examine the novel as a subversion of these notions, it is felt necessary to know the history of the Vedic tradition, for these notions are presumed to have originated from the last of the Vedas. Hence a brief note on it.

Historians are of the view that the Dravidians were either the natives or the first ever settlers of the undivided ancient India. The Dravidians were short and black. The famous Indus Valley Civilization is said to be the evolution of the Dravidas' culture from the Stone Age. The Indus Civilization of the Dravidians has been very rich and considered as one of the three best civilizations of the world, the other two being the civilization of Mesopotamia and of Egypt.

The Dravidian culture is said to have flourished at the time of the Indus Valley Civilization. The characteristic features of the Dravidians are that they were an agricultural Community, used the Bull as a symbol of fertility and worshipped Shiva as the prime Deity.

They cultivated wheat, barley and cotton. Theirs was a matriarchical society. They had established a well-planned village with all the basic amenities like public well for water, road for transport, good houses for shelter, gutters for drainage, medical facilities, and led a healthy and civilized life. The system of caste never existed among them. They had trade relationship with foreign countries. ^{Being so much advanced in all aspects,} the Dravidians were the most civilized people in the world. With regard to language also, the Dravidian language was, and still is, the second major language family of India, despite the fact that the invaders, specially the Aryans tried to destroy the Indus Valley Civilization. The Dravidian languages are spoken by more than one fourths of the people of India and are unique in the sense, unlike the Indo - Aryan tongues, a division of the Indo-European family -- the Dravidian tongues

form a language family of their own. They are spoken only in the Indian subcontinent and in the adjoining island of Ceylon. Now one hundred million Indians speak Dravidian languages, making this linguistic group one of the leading families of the world. The Indus Civilization endured as long as one thousand years from 2500 B.C to 1500 B.C. without the wicked caste distinction among them.

Though there were invasions of foreigners into India, they were only trade oriented. These include the Roman and ~~the~~ Chinese traders. The first foreign invaders that settled in India are the Aryas or Aryans. Unlike the natives, the Aryans were tall and fair. Though their origin is not known for certain, it is believed by the majority of the historians that the Aryans migrated from West Asia. They settled mainly in the Indus and Ganges Valleys and subsequently their descendants moved south into the Deccan.

The Aryans established a religion called Hinduism. The Vedas came into existence. Unlike the Dravidians, the Aryans were conscious of preserving their history. The Vedas -- Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva, and the Upanishads and the epics -- the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, -- are not only spiritual scriptures and literature but also the history of the Aryans.

It seems the notion of caste did not exist during the time of the first three Vedas. But in the Atharva Veda, the notion of varna is found incorporated. Manu, who is believed to be a son of God, has codified the social structure and their duties in his *Smirti*. *Manu's Smirti* has been regarded as the 'Constitution of the Vedic India'. The Vedic society was divided into four *varnas* and each of them was ascribed an occupation. They are: Rank I. Brahmins - the priests of Aryan Religion- Teachers, Rank-II. Kshatriya - the rulers and warriors from whom Brahmins won the first Place, Rank-III. Vaishya or peasants and later Merchants and town people, Rank-IV. Shudra or Serf who occupied the bottom rung in the class ladder.

These four *varnas* which were meant to represent the occupations of the people were fluid in their structure, and later were made rigid castes with the passage of time. Some versions say that the caste system was articulated in the *Manu Smirti* and in the epics.

The Aryan culture is said to have given birth to notions of the patriarchy and the caste system, and the caste system has paved the way for exploitation and untouchability. These are the notions around which the plot is woven with a view to subverting the same.

The Aryan culture is basically Patriarchal. In this system, the basic rights for women are denied. Woman was deprived of her right to choose her husband and was not entitled to remarriage, property, education and employment. Their status was similar to that of serfdom.

With regard to the caste system, the Aryan culture sowed the graded inequality. It means that this system does not give sanction for the social intercourse among the four categories. They are not allowed to change their occupations either. While the people belonging to the first three categories ^{were} blessed with the occupations of high worth and dignity, the Sudras and Adi Sudras were cursed with the occupations of shame and humiliation.

The low occupation caused degradation to the Sudras and Adi Sudras and they were treated as untouchables. The Aryan culture insisted that every Hindu was a member of his occupational caste and the varna into which his ancestors were born. To a large extent caste determined what was permissible and what was forbidden for an individual in the society, especially in the rural areas. A Hindu's occupation, whom he can marry, what he can eat and how he should behave are matters ordained by caste, custom and tradition. *The God of Small Things* has depicted this as 'the Law of Love'.

The greatest victim of the caste system is the community of untouchables. They were assigned the most inhuman works such as sweeping the street, cleaning the latrines and disposing of dead animals, etc. They were prohibited to enter the streets of the Caste Hindus. They were forbidden to fetch water from the public well, to wear tidy and full clothes and to use foot wear. To protect their purity from the so called 'Shadow Pollution', they were made to carry an earthen pot tied around the neck as a spittoon and a broomstick tied around the waist which would automatically sweep their foot prints. Thus every moment of the day the untouchables were constantly reminded, through words or actions, of their low positions.

Several religious and social reformists have revolted against the caste system. The foremost among them is Siddhartha^{the} Buddha. He condemned the caste system and other inhuman taboos in Hinduism. Since the taboos were not likely to be removed from Hinduism, he renounced it and gave birth to Buddhism in which discrimination among the people on the basis of the birth was not given room. Indeed, it never believed in the caste system and inequality based on caste. Like Christianity and Islam, it is a religion without castes.

In the twelfth century, another reformist emerged in south India. He is Basavanna. Being very radical, he implemented inter-caste marriages which none could have imagined at that time, because the caste taboo was so severe that no revolution was possible but by a person of extraordinary calibre like Basavanna. He established a casteless society identifying its members only as 'Saranas' without any caste identity. Unfortunately the religion of Basavanna with the noble thoughts and lofty principles as good as those of Christianity and Islam, was subjected to disintegration with the passage of time.

In the modern time, social reforms of the nationalists from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi, pleaded for the emancipation of women and the untouchables who were worst affected by the taboos in the endogamy. As a matter of fact, their first priority was for the preservation of Hinduism and national freedom. Their role to abolish the serfdom of womanhood and untouchability was only nominal and thereby, they may be described in the proverbial saying that they ran with the hare and hunted with the hounds.

The reformers who attacked the Hindu religion for the emancipation of women and untouchables with the mission of establishing a casteless India can be classified into two, i.e., the touchable and untouchable. Mahatma Phule and Sahu Maharaja from Maharashtra, Narayansamy from Kerala and E. V. Ramasamy Periyar from Tamilnadu belong to the former. They bitterly criticized and attacked the Brahmins and Brahmanism and opposed the doctrine of Varnashrama Dharma. They gave birth to the rational movement in India and fought against the practice of patriarchy, untouchability and Sanskritisation. The Movement may well be called the Dalit Movement.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar belongs to the latter. Being an untouchable himself, he vows to liberate the untouchables. He spent all his energy -physical and intellectual, to prove that the taboos of endogamy is a human construct. He learnt Sanskrit and studied all the sacred literature. He established that the untouchables were the byproducts of the caste system and the result of the conspiracy of the Brahmins. About Dr. Ambedkar's reaction to the sacred literature, C. Paravthamma says: "So he (Dr.B.R.Ambedkar) argues for the destruction of all the sacred literature - Vedas, Puranas, Shastras, Smurti, and Sruti - and advocates the abolition of priesthood and finally destruction of Hinduism itself".¹

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar's struggle for the cause of the untouchables began in 1916 and he remained a vibrant fighter till his demise. He waged a war against the practice of untouchability in the most scientific manner by claiming that this race was the original natives of the country. Finally, he fulfilled his vow to save the community by incorporating an article in the Fundamental Rights to abolish The Practice of Untouchability in the Constitution. He secured numerous safeguards for the depressed class constitutionally.

For the emancipation of women from the patriarchic taboos, his struggle is more prominent than for anything else. He invested all his learning and energy to prepare the Hindu Code Bill which pleads for complete freedom for woman and for participating in all aspects of life without the social impediments. It aims at freeing woman from discrimination in the rights to marriage, widow marriage, divorce, parental property, education, employment etc.,. He submitted the Bill in the Parliament in 1948 but was asked to make some changes. On 25, Sept. 1951 the Bill was submitted ^{again} and was voted out by the caste Hindus. On the same day, Dr. B.R.Ambedkar resigned his Law Minister post as a reaction against the betrayal by the caste Hindus. Later on only the modified version of the Bill was passed.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar has denounced the idea of 'Inter - Dining' as a means of eradicating the caste system. He advocated Inter - Marriage as the only remedy for the caste system. He was severely criticized for the radical thought for the fear of probable collapse of the age old the *chaturvarna*. The next blow

came in his call for mass conversion to Buddhism. He embraced Buddhism with lakhs of his followers on 14 Oct, 1956 in Nagpur. Dr. B.R.Ambedkar is the foremost Indian post-modernist in politics for it is he who revolted against the notion of graded inequality and subverted the notion of superiority in the society.

Now women and the untouchables appear to have attained a better position economically. But there is no marked change in their social status. The political, economic and social equalities form a trinity in India. Denial of any one of them to the people affects the other two. The real sense of equality can be complete only by granting all the three to all and at once.

Woman has not been sanctioned the right of choice in respect of marriage, remarriage, widow marriage or divorce. Woman is suffering from discrimination in her right to education, property and employment by the society even after fifty years of Independence. Arundhati Roy addresses all these issues in her *The God Of Small Things*.

(i) Subversion of the notion of Endogamy in *The God of Small Things*

Endogamy as a social institution is practiced in various aspects of life. Its suppressive character is found in the management of family, marriage and untouchability. In respect of the first, it is realized in the form Patriarchy. In this system Man, as father and son, is the chief, and is vested with all power of the family affairs, like education, employment, and inheritance of the family titles and property. Woman is treated as a secondary member, and is expected to be servile all through her life. In respect of the second, man is provided with incentives and liberty. He is not bound by monogamy, and is regarded as ever chaste. The patriarchy is the norm here too. In respect of the third, the high caste section is enjoying the power. Endogamy has helped the caste system and untouchability to prevail by its strict imposition on the closed social intercourses. The novel has included these social evils in its plot. Thus for the purpose comprehension, the subversion of Endogamy is divided into three parts as :

(i) Subversion of the notion of Patriarchy.

(ii) Subversion of the notion of Holy Marriage as a sacred bondage.

(iii) Subversion of the notion of Impurity.

The notions of Patriarchy, Sacred Marriage and Untouchability (Impurity) are obviously the saplings of the system of Endogamy. The doctrine of endogamy has been codified in *sruties*, *smrities* and *sastras* during the ancient period in Indian social polity. This is an impediment to equality because it does not sanction equal rights to all, irrespective of class, gender and caste. The endogamy system represents the closed social structure and prohibits the social intercourse among unequals.

Thus in Patriarchy, there is a barrier between man and woman. In sacred marriage, inter - class and inter - caste is not approved. To preserve the purity of clan, the section of people belonging to the lowest rung in the society is denied any sort of interaction with the upper caste people. *The God of Small Things* shows that these notions are of human construct and subverts them in the post-modernist fashion.

(A) Subversion of the notion Patriarchy: *The God of Small Things* is a narrative of four generations of the family of Aymanam House in Kerala. The characteristic features of patriarchy are incorporated and subverted in all the four generations.

E. John and Aleyooty Ammachi represent the first generation. The narrative dwells more upon E. John Ipe than on Aleyooty. It suggests that Aleyooty is given a marginalized social status. The narrative focuses on the childhood life of E. John Ipe, his company with Father Mulligan, his charity works and his concern for his daughter Baby Kochamma, ^{but on} the contrary Aleyooty Ammachi is not provided with any freedom or facility.

The patriarchal bent of mind of E. John Ipe and its subversion is skillfully worked out by the author in the incorporation of a family photograph in a subtle manner: " They hung there now, the Little Blessed One and his wife on either side of the stuffed, mounted bison. Reverend Ipe smiled his confident - ancestor smile out across the road instead of the river. Aleyooty Ammachi looked more hesitant. As though she would have liked to turn around but couldn't".²

In the next generation of Pappachi and Mammachi couple, the rule of patriarchy is found stronger than in that of the Pappachi's parents. Pappachi dominates the family, and oppresses his wife and daughter who are marginal in the patriarchy system.

Pappachi is portrayed as a symbol of male chauvinism to the core. He is an Entomologist. In his external appearance he is modernized for he has received western education. But his temperament is characterized by the Indian Patriarchy. He is ruthless towards his wife and daughter. He is jealous of his wife because she is more able and more intelligent. His wife does well in her pickle business. But he looks down upon the business of pickle as an inferior occupation, because of his ingrained pride as an Imperial Entomologist, and becomes intolerant of his wife's progress and her rising status as a skilled person. So he ill-treats and beats her regularly. It said -- " Every night he beat her with a brass flower vase. The beatings weren't new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place".³

When he learns that she is doing well in her learning of violin, he reacts to it in the typical male chauvinist manner. He stops her from going for her violin classes suddenly. Not content with that he even destroys the violin itself: "One day Pappachi broke Mammachi's violin and ~~threw~~ it in the river".⁴

Pappachi behaves shamelessly by beating his wife even after their children are grown up. His arrogance and violent behavior are the reflection of his obsession with the superiority complex of patriarchy. The answer to this question is to be sought in the tradition of Endogamy. From time immemorial, the tradition has imbibed the belief that the womankind is servile and inferior to man. In the act of beating, man exhibits his power over woman, and reminds her of his superiority over her. It indicates how men are the same in their attitude towards the women and how deep-rooted is the system of patriarchy among the men, irrespective of social status. It has permeated the culture of Indian life so much so that no amount of education could change it.

The author shows her contempt for the oppression of patriarchy by making Pappachi pay for his foul game. He is degraded by being overpowered by his son, who intervenes and sets his father right not by begging but by

warning him. Madhumalati Adhikari is happy to note the elimination of patriarchal power in Pappachi after the intervention of Chacko as: " Her physical torture is stopped by Chacko's intervention. His strong stand, "I never want this to happen again" saves Mammachi from Pappachi's future physical assaults. His brute force is destroyed".⁵

This is the first sign of subversion of the notion of patriarchy in the character of Pappachi. As a result of the intervention of his son, he stops abusing his wife directly. He thinks that by becoming silent and indifferent and stopping all sorts of intercourse with his wife he could torture her. Therefore, he suspends all sorts of correspondence with his wife.

But his calculation goes wrong because his wife feels this as a blessing in disguise. It is so because there ^{is} ~~is~~ love lasting between them. He appears only as a necessary evil to her because there is no respect for woman without a husband in the tradition-ridden society. She has no other expectation from her husband. In the end he is made to suffer on account of his own male arrogance.

In addition, there is a hint of self defeat of Pappachi in his death. He dies of a heart attack. His isolation and silence may have caused much humiliation and tension. If he had been normal with his family members, he could have definitely avoided the tensions, and in turn he could have survived the heart attack and lived happily till the end with his family members. By making Pappachi die miserably, the author seems to punish him for his brutal acts. Thus the text subverts the notion of patriarchy in the episode of the second generation. Mathumalati Adhikari points out the subversion of Pappachi's male chauvinism as follows: "Mammachi's physical vulnerability and Pappachi's supremacy are established in a conventional manner but Mammachi's dogged determination to continue the activities of the pickle factory, suggests her rebellion against total subordination. Her entry into the business world, the man's world forbidden for woman, is a clear indication of the power she enjoys. Pappachi's futile attempts to undermine her image of a loving and dutiful wife by sewing shirt buttons in presence of visitors is a ploy often used by an authority to condemn woman. Arundhati Roy rejects these customary methods."⁶

The roots of Patriarchy ^{are} even more deep and strong in the third generation. The children of Pappachi form this generation. The patriarchal discrimination between the male child and the female child in the family is subverted in this episode.

There are two children, one son and one daughter, to the Pappachi and Mammachi couple. Their names are Chacko and Ammu respectively. The depiction of discrimination between them and the text's subsequent subversion can be seen better through the comparison between how they are treated by their parents.

Chacko is given education not only in India but also in London. His parents do not object to his higher education, however costly it may be. Giving higher education to ^{the} son is considered a mark of distinction to the family. So he is allowed to go abroad, and he becomes a Rhodes scholar. He works as a professor in Madras Christian College, and gains wide popularity. But Ammu is denied this privilege not because her parents could not afford it but because she is a daughter, after all a girl. As a typical male chauvinist, Pappachi refuses to give her higher education. So she grows uncared and unnoticed by her parents for education for a girl was considered as an unnecessary expense.

Pappachi fails to treat his son and daughter equally. He grants the right to education to his son because the belief of the patriarchy is that only the son is the legitimate heir of the family and the male alone is qualified to get education. He denies the same to his daughter because the belief of the patriarchy is that daughter has no legitimate claim to be a heir of the family, and ^a female is qualified only for performing the roles of a wife and a mother. She should always be subservient to the male.

Chacko is invested with authority. He enjoys the power to interfere in the affairs of his father too. On his return from abroad, he witnesses the ^{brutal} act of his father ^{ing} beat his mother. He is privileged to warn his father against such acts. His father also heeds his son's warning. The transmission of power from father to son is evident here. But when Ammu tries to intervene in Pappachi's brutality on her mother, she is not heeded at all. In addition, she is made to share the atrocity ^{along} with her mother. Pappachi beats her too: "Ammu had

endured cold winter nights in Delhi hiding in the mehndu hedge around their house (in case people from Good Families saw them) because Pappachi had come back from work out of sorts, and beaten her and Mammachi and driven them out of their home."⁷

Mammachi is not mother only to Chacko. She is mother to Ammu also. When ^{the} mother is beaten, its impact on son and daughter is the same. Hence the father's act of heeding to son and not heeding to daughter in the similar background is a distinct mark of discrimination. Reward for son and abuse for daughter typifies male chauvinism and patriarchy.

In respect of the right to property, their mother shows discrimination between her son and daughter. Mammachi develops a pickle factory amidst the disturbances from her husband. Her husband passes away. Ammu marries a Bengali and goes with him. Chacko returns to Ayemenem as a divorcee. He becomes the master of all the properties of the Ayemenem House. Ammu also returns with her two children to the Ayemenem House, her parental home, after she has divorced her husband. But she is not entertained by her mother, brother and aunt. She is denied any claim ~~to~~ the property of her parents by her mother, brother and aunt. Only a son has ^{the} right to parental property. This is a social law of patriarchy. In denying the same right to property to the daughter, the Ayemenem House espouses the ancient social law of Endogamy: " Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my factory, my pineapples, my pickles. Legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property".⁸

The God of Small Things as a ^{about} subversive text of the notion of Patriarchy does not remain silent ~~the~~ the atrocity of the patriarchal system. It rebounds on the oppressors in its own way. Mammachi, who enforces the patriarchy by bestowing all the property rights on her son, is finally kept away from the dealings of the factory which was established by herself. She is treated as a sleeping partner with no power to exercise in the matters of the factory. The theme of self immolation is revealed ironically in this event.

Chacko loses his wife, daughter and his interest in the factory. Ultimately he emigrates to Canada. All the ancestral properties are left to the care of his aunt. The Ayemenem House is on the verge of complete ruin at the end. Those who deny the right to Ammu to enjoy the property are themselves deprived of it by the destiny. Thus the notion of patriarchy is subverted in the episode of the third generation.

The child of Chacko and the children of Ammu form the fourth generation. In ~~this episode~~, the discrimination between the grandchild through the son and the grandchildren through the daughter is highlighted. Chacko marries an English woman, Margaret. A daughter is born to them. Her name is Sophie Mole. After the birth of Sophie, difference of opinion ensues between the couple, and are separated through divorce. Margaret marries Joe. After the demise of Joe, Margaret and Sophie are invited once by Chacko for the Christmas.

Ammu also arrives at the Ayemenem House along with her two children after she is separated from her husband. Sophie is treated affectionately by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma, whereas Estha and Rahel are treated with contempt and hatred by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma. Even the maid servant, Kochu Mria, takes an undue advantage and looks down upon the children of Ammu.

All these are the reflections of the attitude of ~~the~~ system of patriarchy. The children through the son are considered the real grandchildren and are bestowed with all familial privileges. The children born to the daughter are not entitled to any rights in the house of the grandparents. In addition, the children of Ammu are treated like outcasts because they are the children of the parents of inter-caste couple and divorced parents. Thus the discrimination between the children of a son and a daughter is a legacy of the patriarchal system.

The text comes down heavily on these notions which are nothing but human constructs. With the passage of time, they have grown so strong and deep in ~~the~~ the social system. Sophie Mole's pre-mature ~~is~~ death intended to deliver a fatal blow to the patriarchal system which denied the rights to the children of the daughter. Those who glorify Sophie Mole and reject Estha and Rahel are

made to suffer humiliation in the death of Sophi Mole. Though injustice is meted out to Estha and Rahel when they are denied their genuine share in their grand parents's house during their childhood, they are done justice by the author by bringing them back to the Ayemenem House to stay there for ever. Thus *The God of Small Things* subverts the notion of patriarchy in the last generation.

Patriarchy creates a wide gulf between man and woman. It has constructed a strong gender barrier by keeping the man at the center and the woman in the periphery. The woman has been denied social equality. This cannot continue forever. Awareness is fast spreading among the women and they have already launched a challenge to the male domination. This is an apocalyptic age. In the portrayal of Estha and Rahel, the author seems to suggest that the separate identities as man and woman will cease to exist and a new species is going to emerge. This will be an inseparable blend of both man and woman. This concept is symbolized in the depiction of Estha and Rahel.

S.Krishnakumar in his critical note states : "a new gender consciousness is produced through Estha\ Rahel combine (yes, Estha and Rahel form a union , a combine and not a polarity, not a dichotomy) which reject the socially constructed man - woman divide. . . . the author develops them in such a way that the man \ woman divide is displaced."⁹

(B) Subversion of the notion of Marriage as a sacred Bondage: Marriage in the Endogamy is an institution of oppression on womanhood. It denies the right to woman to choose her life partner, to oppose her husband and to opt for remarriage. The system is rigid only to the woman, whereas it provides ample freedom to man. There is no social sanction for marriage outside the community. Invariably the marriage is allowed between a man and a woman belonging to the same caste. Marriage is an enclosure, i.e., a prison, to a woman in all aspects. *The God of Small Things* looks at marriage as a sacred bondage with askance. Though the family of the Ayemenem House belongs to the Syrian Christians, the members ^{of} this community are believed to be the descendants of the Brahmin community because their ancestors seem to have converted from their community to the sect of Syrian Christianity. Therefore, the members

belonging to this community follow the Brahminic traditions. Though their religious identity is changed, their cultural attitude remains the same as that of the Brahmins. Hence the endogamy system is adopted by the family of the Ayemenem House.

The God of Small Things installs the endogamy system in the marriages and subverts it. In the first generation, the marriage between E. John Ipe and Aleyooty Ammachi is in the strict observance of endogamy. Both the Groom and the Bride are from the same community. The author hints in the episode of this couple that the endogamous marriages need not provide a happy married life. It may turn out to be a disappointment also. The wife of E. John Ipe is unhappy in her married life. K.V. Surendran notes the disharmony in the couple that are married in accordance with the Endogamous marriage system : "We don't know anything more about Rev. Ipe's wife except that she continued to live in an oil portrait which was put up in the front verandah. The portraits of Rev. Ipe and his wife hung on either side of the stuffed, mounted bison head. A contrast is drawn between the two photographs. While Rev. Ipe smiled, Aleyooty Ammachi looked more in the whatever little descriptions the novel has about her that she also was not one who was happy with her life".¹⁰

The author suggests that the rigidity in the norms of marriage may cause adverse ~~effects~~ on the married ones. The traditional marriage can also fail to satisfy the couple. If happiness is not guaranteed by traditional marriages, the novel seems to suggest that such marriages ^{are} not desired at all.

Pappachi and Mammachi are also united as husband and wife through the conventional marriage system. At the very beginning of the marriage itself, the evil of the endogamous marriage system is exposed in the vast difference between the age of the groom and that of the bride, for -- "He was seventeen years older than Mammachi, and realized with a shock that he was an old man when his wife was still in her prime".¹¹ It is very obvious that if freedom had been given to Mammachi to choose her groom, she would never have chosen a man older than her by seventeen years. But the social system has denied that freedom to her owing to which she is subjected to injustice, humiliation and atrocity.

Mammachi has been subjected to physical, moral and psychological assaults by Pappachi who is rude and jealous of his wife. The wide age difference is the root cause of his envy. The author challenges the system by portraying Mammachi as superior to Pappachi in many ways. She is a successful entrepreneur, musician etc. The author strikes a loud note of subversion in the description of Mammachi's temper which she shows on the demise of her husband: "At Pappachi's funeral, Mammachi cried and her contact lenses slid around in her eyes. Ammu told the twins that Mammachi was crying more because she was used to him than because she loved him".¹²

Pappachi and Mammachi are married according to the conventional 'Law of Love'. Though Mammachi accepted that marriage system, ^{she} did not want to comply with the law of love by refusing to love her husband. The reason for such an attitude of Mammachi is the repercussion of the oppressive marriage system. Thus the married life of Pappachi and Mammachi becomes a mockery of the Endogamous marriage.

In the episode of Baby Kochamma, there is a subtler mark of ridicule of Endogamy. Baby Kochamma falls in love with Father Mulligan. Though they are Christians they do not belong to the same sect of Christianity. While Baby Kochamma belongs to the Syrian Christian community, Mulligan belongs to the Roman Catholic Community. Since both of them are Christians, their love does not amount to ^{the} breach ^{of} the Law of Love. Baby Kochamma moves heaven and earth to woo Fr. Mulligan. She joins the convent of his jurisdiction. She embraces the Roman Catholicism. But she is disillusioned as Fr. Mulligan has been surrounded by a number of nuns already. She returns home and pursues higher studies in America cherishing the thoughts of Fr. Mulligan all the while.

Her love for him turns out to be against the spirit of endogamy when Fr. Mulligan embraces Hinduism. In other words, Baby Kochamma's persistent love for Fr. Mulligan even after his conversion to the Hindu religion amounts to the breach of the traditional law of love because they belong to different religions. She claims that she has not violated the code of conduct. It may be true in her external life for she remains a virgin. But it is untrue in her internal life because she continues to love him not only after his conversion to

Hinduism but also even after his demise. She notes in her diary that she loves him. Surendarn considers the claim of Baby Kochamma that she is always right as hypocritical: "Baby Kochamma had managed to persuade herself over the years that her unconsummated love for Father Mulligan had been entirely due to her restraint and her determination to do the right thing. Her hypocrisy is revealed from this line of thought".¹³ Thus Baby Kochamma also does not stand by the law of love and thereby her episode is subversive of the Endogamy.

A louder note of subversion is heard in the episodes of Chacko and Ammu who represent the next generation. Here comparison between Chacko and Ammu is undertaken because it will throw more light on the subversion of both the notion of Endogamy and the notion of conventional marriage.

Chacko falls in love with Margaret in England and they get married. After the birth of a daughter, a rift ensues in their relationship and are separated through divorce. His family admits him without much resentment.

Ammu chooses Baba an assistant manager in West Bengal only as a means of escape from the patriarchal oppression at home. What Mohit Kumar Ray says in this regard is revealing: "When no suitable marriage proposal came in a reasonable time Ammu began to grow desperate. At Ayemenem she felt like a captive lady, fettered to household chores and dull, mechanical routine. Her frustration for sudden disruption of education, uncongenial atmosphere at home and lack of a viable alternative through marriage made her desperate".¹⁴

In this state of mind Ammu agrees to marry a man of only a five days acquaintance. But the marriage happens to be an exogamous one without her parents consent. It is true that Ammu's choice proves to be a failure for Ammu and Baba are divorced. Ammu ~~cannot be responsible~~^{held} for her marriage failure because she has chosen him not out of love but out of helplessness. If Ammu's parents had permitted her to pursue her education and shown a little love and affection to her, she would not have conceded to the proposal of Baba.

When Ammu returns to the Ayemenem House, she is not received with warmth, as Chacko is received when he returns home after having divorced his wife. Ammu's position is similar to that of Chacko because Chacko is also a divorcee. None the less she is given only a step-motherly treatment.

Chacko flirts with the women working in the factory. Some of them come to his bedroom. Mammachi has kept ^a ~~separate door~~ for her in such a way that it does not disturb the entry and exit of the women coming to him. She also leaves some notes of currency on the floor to the sight of them purposefully so that they could collect them for their fee. Mammachi uses new concept to help her son to gratify his desire through the outside women. She calls it 'Man's Needs' and argues that there is nothing wrong to allow her son to fulfill his 'Man's Needs' outside his marital relation. She does not think that his sexual relationship with other women causes defilement to her family. She does not think that his act amounts to the violation of the 'Law of Love'. This tendency is a perfect example of the notion of sacrilege of marriage.

But Ammu is expected to be pure. When her liaison with Velutha, an untouchable, is revealed to Mammachi and Baby Kochamma, their fury knows no bounds. Baby Kochamma hatches a plan to murder Velutha and to excommunicate Ammu.

The orthodox tradition permits man to have illicit liaison with women as much as he wants but condemns the same in the case of woman. Ammu is as much devoid of the sexual pleasure as Chacko is. In addition, she is like an orphan in her own house because she is treated as an unwanted person by her mother, brother and aunt. While Chacko has no wife, Ammu has no husband. But the oppressive social system functions in a biased manner by allowing Chacko to gratify his sexual urge through working women and by denying the same freedom to Ammu. This 'Law of Love' is partial to the male section. Therefore Ammu breaks that law and gets her desire gratified out side the code of endogamy.

The novel objects to the forceful imposition of the Law of Love in the episode of the fourth generation. Chacko's daughter and the children of Ammu represent this generation. Ammu has reacted against the Endogamy system by breaking it not once but twice. She has chosen Baba against the will of her parents and carried out a liaison with an untouchable. But she is destroyed by the social system.

The children who grow under the strong influence of Ammu rebound on the system that killed their Ammu and favourite Velutha. Rahel pursues her studies at the school of Architecture in Delhi. She meets Larry Me Caslin there when he visits the institute for his doctoral work. They fall in love and get married. Her marriage is ironically described as: "Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge".¹⁵

The attitude of Rahel towards marriage is contrary to that of her great grand mother, grandmother and mother. For the latter, marriage is regarded as a serious, important and inevitable institution. But for Rahel, marriage has no significance. It is not an important event nor is it a permanent relationship between man and woman. She thinks that the marriage is not an ever lasting bondage.

Rahel has developed this sort of tendency because of her early exposure to the oppressive characters of both traditional marriages and love marriages. She has heard about the suffering of her grandmother. Her mother has briefed to her how her grandmother was put to torture without any fault of her by her grandfather. Rahel has personally witnessed how her mother was put to torture without any fault of her by her father and how her mother was put to discrimination and embarrassments by her grandmother, grandaunt and uncle. All these have an adverse effect on her psyche and made her cultivate the attitude of carelessness and negligence towards the notion of marriage. She does not attach any importance and sanctity to marriage. She is prepared to lead her life without marriage and without the support of any male member outside her own family. Thus her attitude of irreverence towards marriage exemplifies the tendency of subversion of the notion of not only Endogamy but also that of marriage as a whole.

The novel seems to give a caution to the practice of Endogamy through the episode of Estha and Rahel. The twins commit incest. It is a bold and unprecedented experiment in theme in the history of Indian Novel in English. A close examination of their life will reveal that they are victims of the wicked social taboos. They are treated as outcasts. Since the social system prohibits them to enjoy the social intercourse with others for they are children of the

religiously mixed parents and of Ammu who is a divorcee. The denial of any sort of solace for their anguish drives them to seek it in each other. Thus they are forced to commit incest for which none else than ^{the} wicked social taboos are responsible.

Ever since they return to the Ayemenem House, they are subjected to discrimination, abuse and humiliation. Their grandmother states that they are ~~waiifs and strays~~ because they are the children of divorced parents. At this stage, the children know nothing about the idea of divorce. Baby Kochamma offends the tender psyche of the children severely: "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed, fatherless waifs. Worse still, they were Half-Hindu hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry".¹⁶

Rahel's marriage with Mc Caslin is also broken not because of Rahel but because of Mc Caslin for he suspects her fidelity: "But when they made love he was offended by her eyes. They behaved as though they belonged to someone else. Someone watching. Looking out of window at the sea. At a boat in the river. Or a passer-by in the mist in a hat".¹⁷

Rahel has no chance of getting solace in the traditional marriage. She is rejected by the society because she does not have a Hindu identity nor a Christian identity. Being a hybrid, she is not entertained in the conventional marriage system. Being a victim of the social norms, she suggests that if marriages are conducted between the man and the woman born in the same caste, it may cause scarcity of brides and groom. Since marriage outside the community is ruled out, one may have to choose his/her kin for ^{partner in} marriage.

In other words, the instances of divorce and incest are the outcome of the rigidity of marriage norms. Thus it suggests that exogamy is preferable to endogamy to avoid the unhealthy repercussions. Since *The God of Small Things* depicts incest as an inevitable consequence of social oppressions, it can be read as a subversion of the notion of Endogamy.

Subversion of the notion of Impurity: Impurity means defilement, pollution, contamination and notion of impurity includes the causes of impurity as well as

the ways and means of getting rid of impurity. There are two kinds of impurity - one is temporary impurity and the other is permanent impurity.

The former is notional, physical and ethical in its nature. This impurity is caused by the events like birth, initiation, puberty, marriage, co-habitation and death etc. This impurity is only temporary, and only those who are affected become untouchables, but they are not separated from quarters. They can be purified by means of rituals.

The latter impurity is associated with birth and is permanent. According to this notion, one is born impure and dies impure. There is no scope for purification. Death is the only remedy for this impurity. Such born impure persons are called untouchables by the caste Hindus. These groups of untouchables are isolated from the village in order to avoid contact with them, because such contacts are believed to transmit defilement and evil to the touchable. Thus every village has a ghetto. The people of this section ^{have} ~~been~~ oppressed for several thousand years by the belief that their mere touch causes pollution to the caste Hindus. This untouchability is called hereditary untouchability and it forms a class by itself. It has no parallel in the history of the world.

The notion of impurity is obviously a human construct. During the Vedic period this notion ~~did not exist~~. The Varna concept was based ^{the} on division of labour. The Varna concept paved the way for the caste system from which issued the notion of impurity. Though this system had prevailed before the birth of Manu, there is no second opinion ^{about} the belief that Manu is the architect of the social constitution in the ancient time. He framed the law of society with enclosures in each sect of the society. Thus the society became endogamous despite the fact that the society was exogamous during the Rig Vedic period.

The endogamous system prohibits socialization like inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage between the first three Varnas and the last two, namely Shudra and Adi Shudra. This social prohibition intensified the existing form of the caste system and untouchability. Untouchability was born out of the notion of impurity and defilement. The first three Varnas treated the last two as untouchables based on ^{both} occupation and birth. Dr.B.R.Ambedkar opines

that endogamy is the only trait that can be called the essence of the caste system. He firmly believed that caste was an artificial chopping off of the population into fixed and definite unit, each one ^{being} prevented from fusing into another group through the custom of endogamy.

The God of Small Things deals with the theme of impurity to a great extent. It records the history of untouchability and shows it as oppressive and finally subverts it. The novel exposes how untouchables are exploited at the social, economical and political levels.

In 'Velutha' the author has created a different image of the society of untouchables. Before coming to the character, it is worthwhile to note how the novel represents the oppression in this society. The life history of the untouchables is subtly narrated in the episode of Mammachi:

As a young boy, Velutha would come with Vellaya Paapen to the back entrance of the Ayemenem House to deliver the coconuts they had plucked from the trees into the house. Nobody would. They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchable touched. Caste Hindus and Christians. Mammachi told Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom sweeping away their foot prints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's foot print. In Mammachi's time Paravans, like other Untouchables, were not allowed to walk on public roads, to carry umbrellas. They had to put their hands over their mouths when they spoke, to divert their polluted breath away from those whom they addressed.¹⁸

This description mirrors the practice of untouchability from time immemorial. What has happened to the untouchables in Ayemenem has been happening to the Untouchables in every nook and corner of India.

Though the emergence of Christian Missionaries is thought to have improved the status of the untouchables, it is only a misnomer. Indeed, it paved

the way for another section of untouchables called the Christian Untouchables. The author presents this phenomenon ironically in the following words:

When the British came to Malabar, a number of Paravans, pelayas and pulayas (among them Valutha's grand father, Kelan) converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of Untouchability. As added incentive they were given a little food and money. They were known as rice-Christians. It didn't take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They were made to have separate Churches, with separate services, and separate priests. As a special favour they were even given their own separate Pariah Bishop. After Independence they found they were not entitled to any Government benefits, like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians, and therefore casteless. It was a little like having to sweep away your foot prints without a broom. Or worse, not being allowed to leave foot prints at all.¹⁹

The problem of untouchability was not paid sufficient attention by the English who claim that they are intellectuals. They were more concerned with the expansion of Christianity and their safe rule in India than abolishing the practice of untouchability. Thus the problem of untouchability was left unsolved.

Arundhati Roy does not tolerate the idea that the touch of an untouchable will cause defilement. It is a baseless belief and an upper caste conspiracy according to the author. She, who subverted the oppressive force in the notion of patriarchy, traditional marriage, now takes her cudgel against the notion of untouchability.

In Velutha, she creates a fine skilled, intelligent protagonist from the society of untouchables. He is portrayed to have received school education, trained in carpentry and initiated in politics. Mammachi sees in him "a little magician".²⁰

He is endowed with multiple facilities. He could make toys like tiny wind mills, rattles, minute jewel boxes out of dried palm reeds etc. He has made a dining table with twelve dining chairs, cardboard etc. He is talented in machines. He could mend radios, clocks, water pumps. Besides these, Velutha knew more about the machines in the factory than any one else. Mammachi exclaims at his skills : "Mammachi (with impenetrable Touchable logic) often said that if only he hadn't been Paravan, he might have become an engineer".²¹

His name 'Velutha' also is purposefully chosen because Valutha means 'Whiteness'. The author suggests that untouchables are not impure but pure and white by creating such an untouchable as Velutha. In creating an untouchable with many distinct merits, the novel subverts the notion of not only untouchability but also the notion that the untouchable are incompetent.

The untouchables have been betrayed by politicians. This thesis is developed in the episode of Comrade Pillai. He is a founder of the communist party in Kerala and projected as a crusader of the labourers. He is made to defend working class and to raise his voice against the exploitation of the this class. Velutha is a registered member of his party. In Pillai's biased attitude towards Valutha, his hypocrisy and exploitation of untouchables by politicians is exposed. In a conversation with Chacko, Pillai's original colour is revealed: "But see, Comrade, any benefits that give him, naturally others are resenting it. They see it as partiality. After all, whatever job he does, carpenter or electrician or whateveritis, for them, he is Paravan. It is a conditioning they have from birth. This I myself have told them is wrong. But frankly speaking, Comrade, Change is one thing. Acceptance is another. You should be cautious. Better for him you send him off . . .".²²

This helps one to understand the manifold injustice done to the untouchables. This speaks about the notion of hereditary untouchability. Though Velutha is a converted Christian, and holds an occupation of dignity and is a sincere member of the Communist Party, he has not been freed from the taint of untouchability and admitted into the touchable society. It shows the caste minded politician in Pillai despite his pose as an advocate of the social reformation. And it also shows how there is a wide chasm between the theory

and practice of the principle of social equality. It implies the practice of 'Social Boycott' by the Caste Hindus to deprive the untouchables of the basic amenities when they are found guilty of violating the social code.

Pillai removes Velutha from the party. Not content with this, he conspires with the police to convict him on the abduction and rape charges. His intolerance of the prosperity of the untouchables is evident in his endorsing the act of the police to annihilate Velutha.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar was very apprehensive of the police in denying justice to his untouchable brethren. Hence he insisted that there should be the post of a police inspector for the candidates belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe in each district so that the untouchables would get their due security. This is wanting in the modern India. The role of the police in inflicting atrocity on the untouchable is symbolically represented in the episode of Inspector Mathew. His introduction reveals the man in him: "Inspector Thomas Mathew, receding behind his Air India moustache, understood perfectly. He had a Touchable wife, two Touchable daughters - whole Touchable generations waiting in their Touchable wombs . . .".²³

This touchable Inspector prefers his community to duty. When he learns that an untouchable has a liaison with Ammu who belongs to his own community, his fury knows no limit. He traces Velutha and beats him black and blue. He persuades Ammu's children to state that Velutha is the culprit of the death of Sophie Mole by striking fear in Estha and Rahel. He abuses Ammu when she volunteers to save Velutha from conviction of abduction and murder and rape. Thus the police join hands with the other forces of oppression to torture the society of the untouchables.

The whole system has been corrupted by the Aryan imperialism which treats the untouchables as their common enemies. The Caste Hindus do have their own internal conflicts and so also the rest of the racial and religious groups. But they stand united to oppose the Untouchables. *The God of Small Things* highlights all these social environments and subverts the antisocial elements in the practice of Untouchability.

The author has created a great person from among the untouchables. She attacks the notion of untouchability in an unprecedented manner. She depicts that Ammu, who belongs to the upper rung of the society, falls in love with Velutha who is an untouchable. Ammu does not feel ashamed of having a liaison with Velutha. In a way, she treats him as her god. She craves for him and seeks and attains gratification from the sexual intercourse with him. The untouchable is not only touched, but also loved, fornicated by a touchable woman from the family which has been encouraging and practicing untouchability.

Ammu's children Estha and Rahel are fond of only Velutha. They hate Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Chacko but love Velutha. Velutha is elevated to the status of God for Ammu and her children. In securing a status of God for an untouchable in the creation of Velutha, *The God of Small Things* shatters the age old notion of Untouchability. Considering this sort of innovative way of Roy to challenge the oppressive forces in the practice of Endogamy system, De Beno compliments Roy for brilliant new ideas.

III. Technique: In respect of technique, *The God Of Small Things* makes a departure from the traditional techniques of novel by adopting the new devices for framing the structure, for creating characters and in forging a suitable diction; which are in accord ^{ance} with the subversive theme of the novel. Dr. John E. Abraham says that – "A cross-stich pattern, a criss-cross of contrasts in emotions, language and movement of time, *The God of Small Things* is superb in its architectonics".²⁴

(i) The Structure: The Structure of the novel may be compared to the structure of an epic. The novel opens with the daughter of Ammu, Rahel, who returns to her twin brother to subsequently break the age old notion of the law of Love by committing incest. And it ends up with Ammu's copulation with Velutha. Both of them are not in agreement with the logic of proper beginning and proper end. The real beginning and the end are found in the middle while the real middle part is pushed to the two corners of the novel. In the beginning, the episodes that are to follow are hinted in the telegraphic manner.

This device of improper beginning and end serves two important purposes of the author. Firstly, it helps to focus the thesis of subverting the norms of social oppression. In the beginning, the incest of Estha and Rahel is hinted in Rahel's return to her twin brother. In turn, it breaks the age old Law of Love pornographically. In RgVeda there is an instance of incest. It states that Yami invites her own brother Yama for sexual intercourse. But Yama objects to her and refuses to yield to her proposal. Incest is forbidden by the Hindu Law of love. By allowing incest, the novel ~~contests~~ the notion of the Law of Love.

In the latter, the adultery between Ammu and Velutha amounts to be subversive, because Ammu has courtship with Velutha who is an untouchable. Where as mere touch of an untouchable is considered to cause defilement, Ammu has had sexual intercourse for sixteen days successively. Surendran observes on this point as follows : "It was the thought of her naked, coupling in the mud with a man who was nothing but a fifthly coolie which made condemn Ammu. Her fury was, in fact, unmanageable. She thought Ammu had defiled generations of breeding and brought generations of breeding and brought the family to its knees".²⁵ If improper end is a symbol of revolt against the notion of form of the novel, it also agrees with the tone and theme of the novel.

Secondly, *The God of Small Things* belongs to the unconventional mode of narrative. It rejects the linear mode of narrative. Therefore, the beginning and the end are in clash with the logical beginning and the end of traditional notion of the 'form of the novel. Logically the novel should have begun ~~with~~ the episode of the father of John E.Ipe. The end should have been ^{with} the episode of the last days of Baby Kochamma. But a device of criss-cross pattern is employed intentionally to depart from the architectonic traditional novel.

In between the improper beginning and the end, many stories are told in a haphazard manner. The episodes of John. E.Ipe, Pappachi and Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Ammu and her children, Chacko and his daughter and Velutha are narrated in fragments. No episode is narrated completely in linear progression. The novel subverts the very notion of the plot having a beginning, a middle and an end by providing scope to readers to open anywhere and enjoy

reading without the loss of aesthetic pleasure. Indeed 'backward writing' by the Estha and Rahel to make fun of their teacher holds good to the structure of the novel as well. One can read the novel from the back to the front. To emphasize this factor, all the chapters are not given numbers for two chapters are not numbered after the thirteenth chapter. One chapter after the fourteenth and twentieth chapters is not numbered. It implies that no order is required to read the novel. Even then it does not affect the comprehension of the novel. All the fragments put together provide a meaningful narrative.

Intertextuality: A wide range of abstracts from other texts are incorporated in the structure of *The God of Small Things*. The lines from Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* are found in the episode of Ammu. She reads the lines from Kipling's *Jungle Book*: "Now chil the kite brings home the night That Mang the Bat sets free".²⁶

The abridged version of *The Tempest* by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb also appears in the novel in fragments. Baby Kochamma reads the following: 'Where the bee sucks, there suck I'.²⁷ This echoes *All About H. Hatterr* in which also the same line has been included.

Charles Dicken's *A Tale of Two Cities* is assimilated in the novel. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the *Mahabharata*, *Chemmeen* are also manipulated into the narrative of *The God of Small Things*.

The text of *A Tale of Two Cities* is incorporated in the description of the melancholic condition of Rahel: "Rahel wasn't sure what she suffered from, but occasionally she practiced sad faces, and sighing in the mirror. 'It is a far, far better thing that I do, than ever done', she would say to herself sadly. That was Rahel being Sydney Carton being Charles Darney, as he stood on the steps, writhing to be guillotined, in the classics Illustrated comics version of *A Tale of Two Cities*".²⁸

It is difficult to understand the relevance of the comparison between Rahel and Sidney Carton in respect of their condition of melancholy. This absurdity is intentional to distort the notion of organic plot. The complexity and absurdity are the characteristic features of the artistic sensibility of a post-modernist writer.

Julius Caesar's response to Brutus at the time of his assassination is found in the text. There are two implications about incorporating the text of *Julius Caesar*. The first is that it reflects the inflated image of Baby Kochamma as a Western educated person. The second is that it concurs with the theme of betrayal in *The God of Small Things*. The episode of Kunti and Karna from the *Mahabharata* in the form of Kathakali is assimilated in the structure of the narrative seemingly for two reasons. Firstly, the episode of Kunti is parallel to the episode of Ammu because they have broken the Law of Love in committing polyandry. Secondly, it is victimized by the woman who is obsessed with patriarchy. The artist playing the role of Kunti beats his wife as soon as he returns home even before he removes his woman's attire. Ammu is victimized by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma. Thus, the scene from the *Mahabharata* works as a parallel to the episode of Ammu.

Above all, intertextuality is one of the devices post-modernist artists. Almost all post-modernist novelists have employed this technique in order to subvert the notion of the singularity of the text. Arundhati Roy has also followed her seniors in portraying the life of the Ayemenem House which is characterized by pluralism.

Mixed Genre: The novels, which appeared after *Midnight's Children*, have resorted to the device of mixing multiple genres in the text. This espouses the post-modernist perspective that the novel as a single form has died. By incorporating multiple forms, the old notion the novel itself is contested. In *The God of Small Things*, numerous forms, like poetry, Kathakali, anecdote, obituary, and cookery are incorporated.

Poetry has been extensively assimilated in the texture. Poetry is embedded in the structure of the novel in two ways. Firstly, the abstracts from other texts are incorporated as they are or with slight modifications. The text from Kipling's *Jungle Book* is read to Estha and Rahel by Baby Kochamma as shown above.

On another occasion, Pillai asks his niece, Latha, to recite the lines she has learnt from Sir Walter Scott's 'Lochinvar'. Since she has learnt it through translation in Malayalam, she produces it with some modification :

'O, young Lochin varhas scum out of the vest,
 Through wall the vide Border his teed was the bes;
 Tand savissgood broad sod he weapon sadun,
 Nhe rod all unarmed, and he rod all lalone".²⁹

The girl has repeated the last sound of some words in the beginning of the next word. For example, the last sound 's' of has is repeated in the next word cum as 'scum'. This shows another error that the 'cum' as a homophone of come is used in the place of come. This explains two factors.

Firstly, it is a contrast to the foreign educational background of Baby Kochamma for she reproduces the text without any damage to the original. Secondly, it reflects idiolect of the Indian rural learners of English.

Secondly, there are many poems in the novel. In the manner of Hardy, the author has incorporated songs sung by a few characters in the novel. Baby Kochamma sings more than once. For example, Kochamma sings a song:

*" There's a sad sort of clanging
 From the clock in the Hall
 And the bells in the stee - ple too.
 And up in the nursery
 And abs - urd
 Litt - le Bird
 Is poping out to say".³⁰*

And Rahel also sings a song:

*I'm Popeye the sailor man dum dum
 I live in a cara- van dum dum
 I op-en the door
 And fall-on the floor
 I'm popy the sailor man dum dum".³¹*

The God of Small Things is woven around children. The main focus is on the childhood of Estha, Rahel and Sophi Mole. The words 'Small Things' in the title *'The God of Small Things* also suggest that the text is woven around the children. The songs chosen are more or less rhymes.

Another novel method of intertextuality has been tried by the author in this novel. She has cited the school rhyme in the Malayalam vernacular as :

“ Koo – koo kokum theevandi
Kooki paadum theevandi
Rapakal odum theevandi
Thalannu nilkum theevandi”.³²

Also the obituary of John E.Ipe which appeared in The Indian Express is incorporated in the narrative: “Noted entomologist, Shri.Benaan John Ipe, son of late Rev.E.John Ipe of Ayemenem (popularly known as punyan kunju), suffered a massive heart attack and passed away at the Kottayam General Hospital last night. He developed chest pains around 1.05 a.m. and was rushed to hospital. The end came at 2.45 a.m. Shri. Ipe had been keeping indifferent health since last six months. He is survived by his wife Soshamma and two children”.³³

An anecdote is also ingrained into the novel. When Chacho pursues his studies in England, he meets Margaret Kochamma in the college canteen. He is impressed by her. In order to impress her back, he cuts a joke. So he narrates an anecdote. A father presents birth gifts to two sons. Their names are Pete, an optimist and Stuart, a pessimist respectively. He gives Stuart an expensive watch, a carpentry set and a bicycle on his thirteenth birthday. On finding them Stuart becomes discontent and grumbles that he does not find them of any use.

The father fills the room of Pete with cow dung for his birthday. When he visits his room to find out what Pete is doing with the cow dung, he could not see him there. He only hears his frantic shoveling and heavy breathing. On asking what he is doing there, he replies that he searches the pony because if there is so much of dung, there must be a pony.

Chacko does not narrate the anecdote at a stretch. In between he consumes his food. So the story is told with intermittent halts and digressions. Indeed, this is the metaphor of the whole structure of the novel.

This obituary of Pappachi is purposefully intertwined in the narrative to unfold his hypocrisy. Pappachi's one side is given in the obituary. His personality as a male chauvinist is narrated immediately after the obituary.

The folk art of Kathakali is also integrated into the narrative. It serves the purpose of explaining the content and purpose of the novel. The author has not attempted to provide any new story in *The God of Small Things*. Like Kathakali, the novel presents the familiar history of the codification of Social Laws of Manu in the local colour. The Ayemenem House is a microcosm of the community of the caste Hindus in the nation. The decadence of the Ayemnem House symbolizes the decadence of the orthodoxy of Hinduism. Therefore, Kathakali is not only a device of multiple forms in the narrative but also the model for the narrative.

The form of the various cookery is incorporated in the novel. One example may suffice to prove this:

Banana Jam (in his old best writing) Crush ripe banana. Add water to cover and cook on a very hot fire till the fruit is soft.

Squeeze out juice by straining through course muslin.

Weigh equal quantity of sugar and keep by. Cook fruit juice till it turns scarlet and about half the quantity evaporates. Prepare the gelatin (pectin) thus:

Proportion 1:5

I.e: 4 teaspoons Pectin: 20 teaspoons sugar".³⁴

The induction of cookery serves two purpose. Firstly, it is faithful to the depiction of the occupation of Syrian Christian in Malabar in Kerala. The occupation of this community is the spice trade and food recipes. In the novel also the occupation of the Ayemenem House from the generation of Mammachi is pickle-making. Secondly, it accounts for the autobiographical features in *The God Small Things*. Arundhati Roy's ancestor, were really a business group in pickles. Thirdly, the composition of *The God of Small Things* is also like the composition of the recipe with various ingredients. Thus in the making of the novel cookery has a great significance. Further, it also shows its kinship with the art form of Salman Rushdie. The occupation of pickle making is found in the plots of the *Midnight's Children* and the Moor's Last Sigh of Rushdie.

Thus the devices of improper beginning, middle and end, the criss-cross of episodes, intertextuality and the incorporation of multiple genres denote ^{that} The

God of Small Things a post-modernist text. All these devices^{are} meant to subvert the old notion of the novel as a single genre. The subversion of Endogamy in God of Small Things can be discerned as a post-modernist tendency. It cautions that the practice of endogamy may breed such undesirable social repercussions as divorce, adultery, incest, child molestation, murder and chaos.

Characterization: There is ^a vast galaxy of people in The God of Small Things. But they belong to different generations. They may be classified as shown under.

1. First generation ^{is} a very old generation. John E. Ipe and Ayeyooty belong to this generation.
2. Second generation ^{is} old generation. Pappachi and Mammachi belong to this generation.
3. The Third generation ^{is} a modern generation, Chacko^{and} Ammu belong to this Generation.
4. The Fourth generation ^{is} a post modern generation. Estha and Rahel belong to this generation.

In the creation of characters belonging to five generations the author has successfully highlighted the history of Endogamy and its repercussions on the psyche of ^{the} people. The characters are classified into normal and abnormal (wicked and unusual).

To the former belong Velutha, Ammu and Sophie Mole. They behave like normal humans in their reactions. The portrait of Velutha is Arundhati Roy's masterpiece. Velutha is committed to his duty and responds to affection of the children and Ammu in a quite natural way. His portrayal is a challenge to the notion of impurity and untouchable. He is better than Chacko in workmanship and ethics. He is better than Pillai in the cultural disposition. His relationship with Ammu can not be called indiscipline as Pillai terms^{it}. It must be seen a sympathetic response to the appeal of Ammu. C. Sathiyamala's observation sums up the character of Velutha in a nutshell as : "Velutha, lover of small children (during the day) and their mother (during the night) is in fact the only ^{one} who does not feel victimized. A low caste, working class man in the bloom of his manhood (unattached, early twenties), a politically aware card holding member of the Communist Party (Marxist), aesthetically packaged in a

beautifully sculpted body (which includes a pair of high (?) cheek bones and beautiful sparkling white teeth unlike "Malayalees [who] have such awful teeth," [140]) who without shame, without guilt, without apology, asserts his humanness. He gets killed for his pains".³⁵

Ammu is also similar to Velutha. She chooses her own groom when she realizes that nobody is interested in her studies or marriage. She gives up her husband when he tries to sell her to his manager. She falls in love with Velutha since she is treated as an outcaste in her family. Ammu is a rebel and revolts against the oppressive laws of the society. She is modern in so far as her mental make up is concerned. She disobeys her parents in marrying Baba. When she realizes that she has made a mistake in her choice of Baba because he is not only a drunkard but also a shameless barter^{or} of his wife for retaining his job.

When her husband becomes a barter^{or} to send her to his manager^{in order} to retain his job, she wastes no time to seek divorce from him. When she returns to her parental home, she does not remain idle. She works in her family pickle factory. Her love for Velutha is a parody of endogamy. She makes all her efforts to get Velutha released from the police custody but fails. When she is driven away from the Ayemenem House, she does not lose heart. She struggles and secures a job for her livelihood. Unfortunately, she dies in her thirties. Her death is not a negative signal, that death is a reward for the revolt against the social oppression but an ignition of the new spirit for the future. Her destruction is an illustration of Hemingway's idea of a tragic-hero that he can be destroyed but cannot be defeated. Ammu is a herald of a new cult. She is a new breed characterized by hybridity.

The latter include the rest of the characters. The characters such^{as} John Epen, Pappachi, Mammachi, Pillai, Baby Kochamma, Chacko are not normal because they are marked by dualism. Their appearance is deceptive. The author has also made the evolution of the cultural history of India in micro form.

John E. Ipe is not portrayed very conservative in his public life. He has opened a school for the untouchables and is very generous. He is, in a way, philanthropic. He sends his daughter abroad for studies, though traveling

overseas is prohibited in the Caste Hindu Social Custom. He justifies his acts as a Christian.

But in his personal life, his image seems to be that of a conservative patriarch. From the photograph, it is deciphered that he has not provided freedom to his wife. Thus there is dichotomy in John E.Ipe's character.

His children Pappachi and Baby Kochamma are marked by dichotomy. Pappachi is well educated, has held the ~~Post-Imperial~~ ^{Post-Imperial} Entomologist in Pusa Institute of Entomologist in Delhi. He wears a western suit. He has sent his son abroad for higher studies. This is one face of Pappachi.

But he is totally different in respect of his behaviour towards his wife and daughter. He has married ~~So Shamma~~ ^{So Shamma} who is younger by fifteen years. He realizes that he is old and his wife is young at the time of his retirement. He loses his rationality and abuses his wife severely. He does not spare his even daughter. He beats her too. He stops her studies and postpones her marriage to avoid paying dowry. He is ^{an} ~~is~~ educated person but not cultured. Thus he is portrayed with dichotomy.

The character of Baby Kochamma is very complex for she combines diverse characteristics. ~~She~~ ^{who} is a Syrian Christian by birth, ~~embraces~~ ^{embraces} the Roman Catholicism and ~~enters~~ ^{enters} a nunnery. She loves an Irish Priest and leaves nunnery in order to pursue higher education abroad. ~~She~~ ^{is} is obsessed with ancient tradition but uses modern accessories like Television etc. Her affiliation to the endogamy is found in her disapproval of Ammu's marriage with Baba, her divorce and her liason with Velutha. She is portrayed as being similar to Miss.Havisham in *The Great Expectations*.

There is a dichotomy in the character of Chacko too. He is a Rhodes scholar and a divorcee. He is hypercritical in two ways. He saves his mother from the brutality of his father. But he usurps his mother in the family trade and makes her only a sleeping partner. He lectures on Marxism and pleads for the causes of the workers, but he seduces the workers and the spouses of workers in his factory.

In the portrayal ^{of} ~~Rahel~~ and Estha, the author has captured the globalized hybrid cultural experience. They are twins born in a bus in Shilong called

Ayemenem. In Ayemenem they are subjected to various types of humiliation. Estha is subjected to child molestation by a vendor in the theatre. Rahel undergoes peculiar experiences in her boarding school. They are separated at the age of eight and join together in their thirties not as brother and sister but ^{as} lovers. This is the most unthinkable relationship in India but as a typical post-modernist ^{writer} Arundhati Roy has thought the unthinkable.

(iii) **Diction:** Arundhati Roy has been greatly appreciated for her masterly use of ^{the} English Language in her maiden novel. R.K.Dhawan summarizes the exclamation of the Jury of Booker Prize 1997 in the following: ^{words} "The chairperson of the Booker Prize judging panel, Professor Gillian Beer of Cambridge University praised the book's use of language, and said that the judges had been engrossed by it".³⁶ Her diction is in kinship with the post-modernist notion of language as a word play. Her diction is marked by the subversive tendency towards the notion of Standard English.

The subversive character of Roy's diction can be divided into two parts, namely, hybridization and the poetic tone in the text. The diction is an admixture of Malayalam words, the register of children, the translation and transliteration. The medium of the novel form is generally prose. Besides the abstracts from other poems and songs, the novel's tone is marked by lyrical quality.

Hybridization in the diction :

Alessandro Monti notes the process of hybridization in the novel in the following words: " The English text is made hybridized by including a handful of Malayalam words".³⁷

The inclusion of Malayalam is found in the words pertaining to food like " avalose oondas, chakka velaichathu, parippu vadas.' There are words referring to the family circle like, " deaf ammomas, the cantankerous, arthritic appoopans". Such ^{numerical} ~~as~~ 'Onner, Runder, Mooner'. The words referring to names like 'Modalali Mariakutty', 'Punnian Kunchu' are also there, besides the words referring to the castes, like ' Achoo Parayan, Kelan Paravan, Kuttan Pulayan' the words pertaining to the forms of address like, addeham, Eda, Edi; verbs like Kando, Kandoo; the folk songs like, Pa pera - pera - perakka', Ende

parambil thooally', the expression pertaining to the dance rhythm, like, Thaiy thaiy thaka thaiy thaiy thome are abundant.²¹ There are the translations of the Malayalam expressions like, 'Enda da Korangacha chandi ithra thenjadu?', (Hey Mr. Monkey man, why is your bum is red ?). There are words of abuse like Poda patti, there is a full sentence in Malayalam like, 'Oru Kaaryam parayatta?' etc., In addition, some Hindi words are also found in the expression of political slogan like 'Inquilab Zindabad.

In addition, there are some of the stylistic features which have already been noticed in the novels discussed earlier. They are an integral part of the diction in *The God of Small Things*;

1. References to famous writers, like Shakespeare, Charles Lamb, Fitzgerald, Kipling etc., books like *Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *Jungle Book*, *The Mahabharat* etc., and characters, Sydney Cartan, Sindbad, Three Witches, Kunti, Karna etc., and the titles of films like *Chemmeen* and *The sound of Music* etc.,
2. Use of topical references like *Comrade E*, *M. S. Namboodripad*, *Adoor Basi*.
3. The device of run - on - words like *pleasetomeetyou*, *this wayandthatway*, *Yesyesyesyesyes*, *weatherwise*, *Whatisyourname?* *Deadlypurposed*, *stoppit* etc.,
4. Phrases in parenthesis as full sentences like, *Not old*, *Not young*, *Satin - lined*, *a rushing, rolling, fish swimming sense*, *And how much*, and there are numerous single word sentences like, *Stones*, *out*, *In*, *Up*, *Down*, *Sky*, *Rain*, etc.,. Regarding the stylistic feature, Indira Nityanandam aptly notes : "This stylistic device is eye - catching and novel but the aesthetic purpose served by it eludes comprehension".³⁸
5. Adultration of the notion of R.P. like 'Porketmunny for pocket money, 'Amayrica' for America, 'Dee Ay Em En' for damn, 'Prer NUN sea ayshun, for pronunciation etc.
6. The author's new coinage of words like *stopitted*, *Men needs Entrance*, *getting - outedness*, *greenmosing*, *Sad - about*, *Joe silence* ect.
7. Improper combination of opposites like 'bottomless - bottomful feelings'.

8. Improper punctuation: This is found in abundance in various ^{places} in the novel. They are like one word, a phrase in italics in the beginning or middle or end of the sentence. Words are found in the capital letters in the middle of the sentences. Punctuation marks are erroneous and absence of punctuation marks in some sentences adds to the difficulty of the text.

Mrs Indra's observation in this regard is worth while to note: "The novel abounds in single word sentences and paragraphs, mis spellings, verbless sentences, capitals at will etc. Her linguistic deviation is overdone even when we accept the writer's right to poetic license".³⁹

These stylistic features are not totally new, for similar features are observable in the novels of Desani and Rushdie. But Roy must be admired for the new order of paragraphs. In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, a section of the episode of Guru is presented in the shape of pyramid. Roy has moved one step ahead by reversing the order of letters in words and of words in sentences: 'ehT serutnevda fo eisuS lerriugS. enO gnirps gninrom eisuS lerriugS ekow pu' instead of 'The Adventure of Susie Squirrel. One spring morning Susie Squirrel woke up'. Similarly, reverse spellings such as ssenetiloP, ecneidebO, ytlayoL, ecnegillentnI, ysetruoC, and yeneiciflE for Politeness, Obedience, Loyalty, Intelligence, Courtesy, and Efficiency respectively. This feature can be called the register of children for this sort of language game is common among children. There is an extensive deployment of word play and humour in the novel which not only challenges the notion of Standard English but also the ability of an average reader to bring it within the compass of his study. A similar observation is made by Dr. Abraham as: "The narrator's sense of language and humour can never be adequately praised".⁴⁰

Another very important feature of the diction in *The God of Small Things* is its strong undertone of poetry in the narrative structure. The observation of P. Hari Padma Rani in this regard is very illuminating: "The extensive use of alliteration, rhythm, repetition, figures of speech like similes, metaphors, paradoxes, the juxtaposition of antithetical images, poetic license compel us to discern the structure of *The God of Small Things* as poetic. The novel may not come to the level of *Wuthering Height* in its poetic intensity but it certainly has a

poetic power of its own. The poetic quality of *The God of Small Things* springs more from the author's imaginative use of language than from the intrinsic atmosphere of the novel. The linguistic devices Roy adopts in the recounting of her tale are those that are generally employed in poetry rather than fiction".⁴¹

Some poetic features like rhythm, repetition and poetic license have already been explained. Hence it may suffice to highlight the remaining features now. Alliterative expressions are found in abundance. For example; 'The sad singing started and they sang the same verse, ' wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine,' ' gently clinging curled claws,'.

Similarly, juxtapositions of opposites is also frequent. For example; 'The Big Things' and ' The Small Things', 'Touchable and Untouchable', 'The Pessimist' and 'The Optimist' 'chill and warmth', 'Life and Death', 'youth and age' and 'victory and defeat'. Likewise, paradoxical expressions ^{are} galore. Our sorrows will never be sad enough, Our joys never happy enough, Her brownness against his blackness. Her softness against his hardness.

- a. Chacok's ears stuck out on either side of his head like tea pot handles.
- b. Velutha smiled when he saw the Marxist flag blooming like divisions.
- c. The heat lunged out at them like a famished beast-
- d. Her face was pale and as wrinkled as a dhobi's thumb from being in water for too long.
- e. Some things come with their own punishments. Like bedrooms with built in cupboards.
- f. Kathakalli men are as familiar as the house you live in. Or the smell of your lover's skin.

Metaphor:- The very title '*The God of Small Things*' is a metaphor. It has various implications. Thematically, it implies that Velutha is the God of the outcaste, children, love and loss. His yellow teeth were magnets. They saw, they smiled, they sang, they smelled, they moved. They mesmerized.

Considering the linguistic pyrotechnics in the novel, Hari Padma Rani says that:

"The subtle use of oxymoron's like Beautiful Ugly Toads; absurdly beautiful, and brilliant intertwining of metaphors and paradoxes with the structure of the novel further corroborate the poetic dimension of *The God of Small Things*".⁴²

Arundhati Roy's linguistic manipulation in *The God of Small Things* astounds the readers. The grammar is erroneous, the figure of speech is unusual, the speech acts are hybrid and it provides a special flavour with all these unconventional language usages. This novel reads like an integrated cultural discourse.

III. Conclusion (i): *The God Of Small Things* is regarded as a post-modernist work for it represents the sensibility which is ahead of the realists like the Major 'Trio'. It leaps from the conventional notion of God 'God the Almighty', the God of the persons who are on the top of the social, religious, economic and gender hierarchy. This image of God is not the one which is reserved for a few only. This God of the weaker section' weaker gender and weaker mind is accessible only to those who are innocent like the children and genuine like Ammu. Tradition has denied God to the underprivileged, depressed and the little ones but the author has created an image of God from this species. This God is small but kinder than the big ones.

(ii) The main focus of the study of Part Three is to highlight the continuation of the subversive sensibility among the recent generation of novelists and to show that post-modernism is sustained in the Indian Fiction in English. Amitav Ghosh continues to write in the post-modernist fashion. His first novel *The Circle of Reason* has been analysed threadbare in chapter VIII in this part. The narrative echoes *All About H.Hatterr*, which is the grandparent of the post-modernist, of the children of *Midnight's Children*, both in themes and technique. While its first theme subverts the notion of science and Reason, the second theme subverts the taboos in Hindu tradition concerning the funeral. It marks not only the continuation of post-modernism but also the nativization of post-modernism which was set afloat by Desani in 1948. The study of technique has revealed that the norms of the form are not adhered to and it is full of post-modernist devices like mixed genre, intertextuality, metafiction, magic realism,

hybridity, chutnification and others to distort the notion of the well-made structure, characters and diction.

Ghosh has paved the way for Tharoor to ~~continue~~ the process of post-modernism in general and Indian post-modernism in particular in his novel *The Great Indian Novel* which has been examined in chapter IX. On the one hand, the narrative subverts the notion of sacrifice and democracy in the history of Modern India, and on the other, overturns the ancient epic story of the *Mahabharata*.

The narrative subverts the notion of nationalism and history as in *Midnight's Children*, the notion of Hindu tradition as in *All About H.Hatterr*, *Onion Peel*, *The Circle of Reason*, and ridicules the image of Gandhi as in *Goodbye to Elsa*. Besides exhibiting its allegiance to the western post-modernism in its subversion of the received notion of the *Mahabharata* and Democracy, it distinguishes itself from the western post-modernism by grappling with native received notions, by being affirmative and optimistic.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* follows suit but in a more serious manner. This novel has been interrogated in Chapter X and the interrogation has revealed that the narrative subverts the three taboos of Endogamy i.e, the notion of patriarchy, the notion Marriage as a Sacred Bondage and the notion of Impurity. It shows that Ammu and Velutha are victimized by these taboos in the name of 'Law of Love'. But the narrative does not have ^a negative vision of life while subverting the man made tradition. There is optimism and positive sign of life for the future generation.

Thus all these three novels rooted as they are in the Indian Tradition continue to be typically Indian, despite the borrowed garb of Western Post-Modernism. No doubt, they are citizens of "Cyber space" (as M.K.Naik describes these authors) the ties that bind them to their motherland are strong and continue to be stronger still.

NOTES

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- 26 Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 59.
- 27 Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 59.
- 28 Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 61.
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- 31 Roy, *The God of Small Things*, 98.
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