



A SAGA OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED HUMAN BEINGS IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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Abstract: When discussing the literature of South Asian women, the diaspora's concerns tend to overshadow those of those who live in their home cities. There is still much to learn about internal migration and feeling uprooted in one's own nation in scholarly circles. Characters also suffer alienation and the need for home, for which they travel home in order to find resolution. Numerous scholars have investigated how characters suffer estrangement as a result of being uprooted, moving to a new location for socioeconomic reasons, or fleeing persecution because of their ethnicity or religion. However, it doesn't appear that many scholars have taken an interest in the internal diaspora perspective. By focusing on a south Asian woman writer and how her work contextualizes the issue of diaspora in an Indian setting, this study aims to close that gap.

This paper suggests reading *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy in the context of the diasporic tradition, which clarifies the idea of internal migration for a variety of socio-cultural and ethnic causes. This essay argues that such depictions of internal migration capture the harsh reality of the Indian state, where migration has become a gloomy part of peoples' lives due to a variety of factors. It would make an effort to map the many diasporic components that the characters encounter and embody in various settings that mirror the heterogeneous realities of Indian culture.

Index Terms - Diaspora, internal migration, ethnic, Bi-sexual, transgender

I. INTRODUCTION

The unexpected rise of the creative writing movement and the awareness of the country's diversity occurred in the 1980s. Great works of art, fiction, and other creative works not only depicted the emerging worldview of the new Postcolonial India, which is essentially a synthesis of tradition and modernism, but also highlighted the conflict between East and West. It exemplifies the global vision of the younger generation, which seeks to strike a balance between absorbed foreign culture and inherited traditional values. The international and transcontinental writers of today have achieved complete success. Some of the writers who have achieved international recognition include Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, and Upamanyu Chatterjee. The three writers deftly explore the challenges that a recently independent country faces, often presenting a brutal truth. Using a revolutionary storytelling technique has raised these authors' profile among English-language Indian fiction writers. They have boldly attempted to

reassemble the shifting views of India after colonization. Comparably, Indian women writers are progressing just as quickly and steadily as those throughout the world. We watch as they open up and release their own fragrances. They are known for their inventiveness, flexibility, and capacity to render the distinctive qualities of the terrain in their artwork. Pioneers in exposing readers to a broad spectrum of indigenous Indian issues while keeping a strong feminism were Indian women authors such as Anita Desai, Nayantara Saghil, Bharathi Mukherjee, and several more.

Diaspora

Sociologists have associated “diaspora” with “socialization” by characterizing it as simply the process of absorbing culture. Orientalism and identity crises, displacement and alienation, contradiction, hybridity, and generational differences are a few of them. Other subjects covered include difficulties adjusting to and integrating into society, prejudice, and reverse culture shock. Literary works that discuss the diaspora, transnationalism, globalization, universalism, imperialism, and capitalism fall under these themes. There are many different kinds of diaspora, including victim, imperial, labour, trade, and cultural diasporas.

The definitions and characteristics of post-colonial literature, particularly diaspora writings, have been debated by John McLeod in *Beginning: Post-Colonialism* (2012), Pramod K. Nayar in *Post-Colonial Literature - An Introduction* (2008), Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Post-Colonial Literature* (1995), and many other experts in the field. In addition to the detailed features of diaspora derived from the aforementioned classic literature, it is noteworthy to note that they, or their predecessors, have also been distributed from a certain original “centre” to one or more periphery, or foreign, places. Nevertheless, the diaspora group clings to a common memory, vision, or myth about their original land—its exact location, its glorious history, its victories, and, oftentimes, its tragedies. Because they feel they are not, and maybe cannot, be completely accepted by their host community, the scattered group experiences a degree of alienation and isolation from it. These cultures also hold the belief that they or their ancestors will eventually return to their native country. The immigrants are adamant that in order to preserve or rebuild their ancestral home and guarantee its safety and prosperity, they should cooperate. In addition to these traits, people continue to feel a connection, either direct or indirect, to their homeland. Their sense of oneness and ethno-communal consciousness are greatly influenced by the existence of this relationship. Moreover, the lack of this link makes it difficult to talk about trans-nationalism, an important part of immigrant life. Since individuals of this group have a shared feeling of “peoplehood” with both their home nation and their ethnic kin who live abroad. These “roots to routes” groups are also ready to survive as a tiny minority by conserving and transferring a religious and/or cultural heritage that they inherited from their birthplace.

In a similar vein, moving abroad or travelling within the diaspora are frequent and well-known events. Many factors lead people to travel abroad, such as financial need or the desire to elude political or racial prejudice. The phrase “diaspora writing” refers to the writing of authors who have left their native country yet continue to write about it or have connections to it. Their songs usually convey existentialist feelings, such as a desire to be rooted in one’s own location and feelings of alienation, loss, and rootlessness. The topics of cultural exchange, the blending or breaking down of cultures, and the conflicting identities that migrants experience are also examined. They map the many stages of diasporic experiences and look at the difficulties immigrants have adjusting to life overseas. Prominent Indian-Canadian author Uma Parmeswaran documents these phases as;

first is one of nostalgia for the homeland left behind mingled with fear in a strange land. The second is a phase in which one is busy adjusting to the new environment that there is little creative output. The third phase is the shaping of diaspora existence by involving themselves ethnocultural issues. The fourth is when they have ‘arrived’ and start participating in the larger world of politics and national issues (1998, 108).

The agony of leaving behind everything familiar, the distance from their origin and memories of it, and the circumstances of their chosen country are some of the major causes of suffering for immigrants. William Saffran (1991) states that these migrants “continue to relate personally or vicariously, to the

homeland in some way or another, and the existence of such a relationship is important in defining their ethnic-communal consciousness and solidarity” (23).

Cultural displacement has a huge influence on diasporic imagination, which talks about the challenges of uprooting, accepting, and adjusting while yearning to construct a culturally imaginative world where a sense of cultural affiliation may be developed. Because of this, remembrance becomes one of the essential elements of diasporic writing as people reflect on their childhood and give it an emotional and creative spin as “memories constitute dialogic processes in public spaces. It articulates some particular past and brings together two different spaces and times. As a result, it is multi-dimensional and transcultural by nature. Remembering a specific event from the past reprocesses a cultural past and its practices” (Kumar, 04). In the realm of fiction, imagination and nostalgia collide to produce a tale of separation and loss.

Diasporic Elements in Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things

Among the most well-known authors from India is Arundhati Roy. On November 24, 1961, she was born in Shillong, Meghalaya, to Mary Roy and Ranjit Roy. She writes novels, essays, and is an activist. She was reared in Aymanam, Kerala, and went to the Lawrence School in Lovedale, Nilgiris, and Corpus Christi School in Kottayam. Completed in 1996, *The God of Small Things* won the 1997 Booker Prize. Roy was the first female Indian recipient of the Booker Prize. Pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, Hindu, Christian, and Communist times are all covered in the work.

Many issues are brought up by postcolonial studies, such as those pertaining to identities, diaspora, mobility, in-betweenness, hybridity, and cross-border creolization. Hybridity is a central idea in postcolonial philosophy. In humans, impurity and racial mixing are referred to as hybridity. As a result of colonial interaction, hybridization spread widely, necessitating both the continual civilization of colonized people and their otherness. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a lot of discussion in culture surrounding the idea of hybridity. Homi Bhabha is an expert on diaspora and hybridity. Diaspora includes both migration and tradition. “Diasporic identities” refer to those who “are formed through movement and the process of dispersal; they will never be able to return to their homes” (12 and 13). They consciously give cultural identity new dimensions. They are adept at blending in with diverse groups and expressing themselves in a variety of hybrid ways.

Kerala is a state rich in historical layers and details; it is here that *The God of Small Things* is set. The context of these historical occurrences may encourage the development of hybrid and diasporic identities. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha popularizes ideas such as hybridity, mimicry, and the linguistic ambiguity between colonizers and colonized people. One may argue that this idea is supported by the Indian educational system. This is shown in the writing, since Chacko is inspired by British culture and is an Anglophile. He is educated in accordance with British standards. This chapter also addresses some of Darwin’s hypotheses. According to this theory, racial groupings are divided into “advanced and backward, or European-Aryan and Oriental African” categories by science (207). The Europeans solidified their opinion that they are cognitively and biologically superior to other races based on this rationale. The passage “It was about nine in the morning when Mammachi and Baby Kochamma got news of a white child’s body found floating downriver where the Meenachal broadens as it approaches the backward” (10) is how Roy explicitly conveys this in the book. She mentions being White and English, but she doesn’t bring up Mol’s mixed-race ancestry. The Indians refer to her as a British girl. This implies that it could be making a reference to this idea. This suggests that Indians may support the idea that Europeans are the superior race to other races.

The caste system and Chacko, a high caste man educated in Britain, have endured throughout history’s numerous periods. Anglophile Chacko observes astutely about Indian history: “A war has crept into our minds. This war has been won and lost by both of us. The worst type of conflict is one that resurrects and captures dreams. A battle that has caused us to admire our conquerors and despise ourselves (26). According to Chacko, the “war of dreams” is a struggle involving history (11). It suggests a clash between diametrically opposed views of Indian society. According to his view, history is a meta-narrative in which

the historical narratives that are grandiose exclude colonized people. Roy believed—though this may be problematic—that history cannot be separated into distinct periods. Furthermore, discrimination based on sexual orientation and caste is still prevalent in all historical eras and political regimes, including the “war of histories,” which refers to the struggle between secular and spiritual history as well as between post-colonial India’s past and present. This struggle and exclusion are referred to by Roy as the “dreams that fueled the freedom struggle” (11).

Diasporic writing brings up an entirely new set of problems. The writers from the diaspora usually portray original problems and circumstances. They talk about how joining a new group may empower them all the time, especially women. This second kind of community may be Kerala’s complex community. Roy illustrates the complexity and richness of everyday existence. It illustrates how a micro-vision is necessary to comprehend national politics at large. One significant migration mentioned in the book is that of Syrian Christians. Roy brings up the history of the Syrian Christians.

Diaspora is a prominent theme in the literature, encompassing four distinct migrations. The first mentions the Syrian-Christian community in Kerala. Syrian Christians in Kerala claimed to be descended from the 100 Brahmins, and on his voyage east after the Resurrection, the Apostle Saint Thomas converted them to Christianity. Moving to Britain is the second one, for Chacko. In the third, it is mentioned that Rahel immigrated to America. In the fourth, there is a reference of Father Mulligan moving to India. He is an Irish priest who comes to Kerala to study Hinduism. At last, he converts to Hinduism. These movements stand for a diasporic and hybrid identity. Rahel, a character who shares many similarities with Arundhati Roy’s eventful life, talks briefly on the diasporic way of existence. The semi-autobiographical novel combines recollections of her childhood in Aymanam with a postcolonial analysis of relationships and history. Historically, the diaspora has been portrayed as a kind of loss, a separation, and an unending longing for what was and may have been somewhere else—the home somewhere else—held in the memory.

Diasporic languages provide several difficulties in a complex society such as India. The book makes clear these issues with the diaspora. As soon as the Moguls took over Iran, the Iranians became ambassadors for the Iranian language. Persian or Parsi became their court tongue in India. After conquering India in the eighteenth century, the British banned the use of Parsi in the courts of several Indian monarchs. Roy uses four phrases that originated in English but are now prevalent throughout the Persian diaspora. The following sentences include these terms: “his family was once-wealthy zamindars who had migrated to Calcutta from East Bengal after partition,” in which the speaker refers to Ammu’s husband (19). The term “zamindars” conveys the text’s diasporic qualities. In the words of Roy, “They caught them in the bazaar and branded them so that everyone would know what they were.” He was a caravan dweller (77 and 78). In another passage, she adds, “My darling Papa is what Baby Kochamma wrote for her father. Nonetheless, Koh-i-noor seems discontented and lonesome (13). The research claims that this is a sign of diasporic communities in India, specifically in Kerala. Since this is a Persian word, the Parsi community uses it.

Written by an Indian person, this story portrays Indian society as it actually exists. Roy claims that the work is a masterful synthesis of imagination and experience. Hybridity is one of the novel’s most important themes. Migration creates the blended identities. When immigrants engage with the local populace, the result is hybridity. It is the book’s most significant idea. Each person has a distinct personal identity that is derived from how they see themselves fitting within a larger nation or culture. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha claims that all cultural statements and systems originate in the “Third Space of Enunciation” (38). Bhabha argues that it is impossible to have a hierarchically pure culture since cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambiguous setting. He claims that by comprehending this contentious aspect of cultural identity, we may be able to move past the exoticism of cultural diversity and towards an appreciation of the potent hybridity that makes cultural difference possible.

Language, culture, and biology are all hybrid. Sophi Mol is the real hybrid in the novel since her father Chacko is Indian and her mother Margaret is Christian. Baby Kochamma refers to the twins as “Half-

Hindu Hybrids” (126). A case of biological hybridity has occurred. The outcome of repeated encounters and mixing between different cultural groups throughout historical eras of colonization is cultural hybridity. Her father, Ammu, is Hindu, while her mother, like the rest of the Ipe family, is a Syrian Christian. The twins Rahel and Estha are examples of how cultures may merge together. Their mother is Ammu, and their father is Babu.

They have not seen one other since Estha was sent away as a child to live with Babu in Assam. The other example of Ammu’s brother Chacko’s cultural hybridity is his sense of entitlement as a member of the lower caste who happens to be a Marxist. His schooling came from Oxford. Nonetheless, he takes advantage of the unstable condition of their existence to have sex with women from lower castes (Kumar, *Precarity Redefined*, 2019). Dalit women in the caste system suffer from triple subalternation as a result of the power dynamics of caste, gender, and class (Kumar, *Becoming Dalit Women’s Voice*, 2022). However, he gives up on his modern beliefs and returns to the previous caste system upon learning about the relationship between Ammu and Velutha. This exposes a conflict in his behaviour. This kind of behaviour is hybrid. Sophi Mol, Chacko’s daughter, receives an education in English culture. The term “a white child’s body” is used by English Sophi (119).

As “linguistic examples include local dialects of a colonizer-introduced language, such as pidgin and creole languages,” language hybridity is evident throughout the book (13). Despite being an Indian writer, Arundhati Roy wrote her book in English. Malayalam words, poetry, or song lyrics are frequently encountered. The author has translated a few of these words. These songs might be used as an example: “An Onamboatrace tune permeated the factory. ‘Thaiythaiythakathaiythaiythome! (Hey Mr. Monkey guy, why is your buttocks so red?) Enda da korangacha, chandiitharathenjadu. (94). The characters’ limited command of English sometimes prevents them from understanding one another. Among these figures is Kochu Maria. This is clear from this paragraph in the book: “If Estha were to resurrect, he would stand over his bed and inquire, Et tu? Kochu Maria, Estha will fall and die again” (40). Since Kochu Maria believes that the usage of the term “Ettu” in English is offensive, she waited for the appropriate opportunity to protest to Mammachi about Estha. Occasionally, the characters speak in English, although their speech is illiterate. They are able to speak, yet they don’t understand a word. Shakespearean quotation from Lenin’s son, Comrade Pillai, “lend me yawYERS” is an excellent illustration of this circumstance (129).

Sometimes, the twins write words precisely as they hear them: “They had to form the words correctly and pay close attention to how they were pronounced.” Prer NUN sea aysun” (14). This illustrates how children play with English terminology with ease. The letters Sophi and Mol combine to form the word Mol. This word, which mixes Malayalam and English, refers to Kerala’s many local language crosscurrents. Roy uses phrases from India’s native language in her English novel. He consents to act as an interpreter for readers who do not understand Malayalam as she continues, saying, “In Malayalam, Mol is Little Girl and Mon is Little Boy” (29).

This is an example of hybridity in literature. She occasionally argues for the power dynamics of this cultural mediation when Roy declines to give an explanation, saying that “Estha and Rahel couldn’t call (Chacko) Chacken because when they did, he nicknamed them Chetan and Cheduthi.” Because “if they called him Ammavan, he would have called them Appoi and Ammai,” they referred to him as Chacko (29). Roy aims to draw attention to how crucial names and naming are to the formation of identity and meaning. Her “non-Malayalam readers” are alienated by this quotation, which demonstrates how “cultural differences cannot always be easily translated or explained” (15).

The essence of diaspora, as presented by Roy in her tale, is encapsulated by the variety of Kerala’s people. By focusing on Kerala, a single state that is a smaller version of India, this literature aims to portray the intricacies of Indian life, in contrast to diasporic writing that focuses solely on concerns linked to migration, displacement, and settling down in a new society.

Conclusion

The God of Small Things provides a distinctive epistemological view of internal migration brought on by a variety of circumstances and the hybrid cultural scene that is a feature of daily life in India from the perspectives of the diaspora, imitation, and hybridity. There are many different races in the world. These ethnic groups have different beliefs and traditions. Hybridity is the result of combining two races. Hybridity is a crucial notion in postcolonial theory. It's a major issue in the novel. Because TGST features a number of female characters, like Rahel, Ammu, and others, the status of women in Indian society is another subject. The work challenged established notions of identity, especially the construction of postcolonial women. Women were given considerable concern in postcolonial thinking. as it becomes a symbol of the anti-colonial movement and symbolizes inner space under colonization. Roy links gender and caste as a crossroads of mixed diaspora, in addition to other social challenges. She tried to use her own voice to speak for herself.

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