

Greatness of the God of Small Things

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Abstract: The God of Small Things, the highly acclaimed prize winning debut novel, of Arundhati Roy. Her solo novel has invited critical attention, largely complimentary, from writers and critics foreign, as well as Indian. In terms of structure and style, Moore goes to the extent of asserting that Roy's novel displays exuberance as well as a freshness and embarrassed immediacy which are rare in good fiction from this country. Artistically, The God of Small Things is characterized as "fine web of poetry." The God of Small Things is undoubtedly a post colonial text, both in form and content. The diction loaded with meanings with a rhythmic rise and fall of notes produce a scintillating poetry full of rhythms, metaphor and similes. The ending of the novel is as string as its beginning. The book ends with the word "tomorrow" Indian literature has gone a long way to establish and identity of its own. Arundhati Roy lives her principles. Her convictions are rooted in life and living. Her words have a ring of reality, She is a rare champion of social causes and she goes to any extent to measure up to them in her day today living. The book has attracted applauses from several quarters on several aspects of brilliance of the book.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The God of Small Things, the highly acclaimed prize winning debut novel, ushered in a new era in Indian writing in English, from this work of fiction and fact it becomes evident that Roy is a committed novelist coupled with an uncommon zeal for championing the popular causes, not only in writing but in life and living as well. Her solo novel has invited critical attention, largely complimentary, from writers and critics foreign, as well as Indian.

In terms of structure and style, Moore goes to the extent of asserting that Roy's novel displays exuberance as well as a freshness and embarrassed immediacy which are rare in good fiction from this country. Jason Cowley has rightly called her the 'Princess of Prose' in an article published in India Today where he further adds The God of Small Things "fulfills the highest demand of the art of fiction to see the world, not conventionally, or habitually but as if for the first time." She takes a lot of care in the art of narration in her writing. In the opening chapter in an enigmatic nutshell, unconventional time shift, elliptical chronological sequence and the circuitous narrative gives the story of the novel, a rare speckle.

The narrative skills of this free and frank writer who seems to echo the voice of the nation. With her lively original language rhetorical devices, linguistic inventiveness, sparkling symbolism, ever fresh similes connotations, intonations, deliberate distortions of diction, magical realism and sensitive poetic style, she keeps the reader glued to her writing form first to last.

It will not be inappropriate if The God of Small Things may be defined as a fine web of poetry comprising semantic, aesthetic, and emotive features in beautifully inscribed words, orthodox punctuation, coins new logic, yet the innovative poetic expressions captivate the flow of words. Artistically, The God of Small Things is characterized as "fine web of poetry".

The diction loaded with meanings with a rhythmic rise and fall of notes produce a scintillating poetry full of rhythms, metaphor and similes. The ending of the novel is as string as its beginning. The book ends with the word "tomorrow". The lovers as well as readers know what this "tomorrow" means. It is not the "tomorrow and tomorrow" of Macbeth but something frightening, something terrible. There will be no change in the world. The 'Dark of Heartness' will always tiptoe on the 'Heart of Darkness'. Nevertheless, it is a wonderful experience. It is the romance of living. It is larger than life. Roy comments on the ending of her novel that even though it's terrible, it's wonderful that it happen at all. Nothing happens in Joseph Heller's Something Happened.

Indian literature has gone a long way to establish and identity of its own. The dream of Raja Rao has come true. Rao writes in his foreword to Kanthapura that we can not write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indian. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the Americans. Time alone will justify it. It is time for us to look at Indian Literature in English as Indian literature.

It has at least freed itself from the colonial hang over and language imperialism. The God of Small Things is undoubtedly a post colonial text, both in form and content.

However fine a writer, she is one cannot remain above criticism. Ms Roy, too has her critics. M. Prabha in her path breaking book of socio literary criticism, entitled, *The waffle of the Toffs*. A Socio cultural Critique of Indian Writing in English which has pin-pointed some of the immediate reactions on conferring the prestigious Booker Award to Ms Roy's *The God of Small Things*.

Soon after the award was announced, BBC channel four, beamed a live programme in which Carmen Cahill, the panelist and a former Booker judge remarked; I dislike the book so much. It has got vulgarity about it that embarrasses me. The writing in such a sickly sweet toffee style that it should never have made to the Booker Shortlist itself. Peter Kemp bemoaned her overwriting and typographical tweekness, archly capitalized phrases, coy misspellings and liberal sprinkling of italics.

Continuing her tirade M. Prabha alluding to some critics attributes the Booker Prize to India's 50th year of independence. In her home state Prabha alleges, "The novel is threatened with a ban because of its anticommunist stance," Referring to Pradip Krishen as a filmmaker and the break he gave her in his films – *Massey Sahib* (as an actress) and later in which Annie gives it those ones and *Electric Moon* (as a prize winning script writer) M Prabha strains to prove "how the pedigree and connections of Pradip Krishen have come to Arundhati Roy by a proxy."

Most of the above mentioned changes can be perhaps rebutted Literature as we all know, is a reflection of life. It certainly reflects the good as well as the seamy side of life. If there is obscenity in life, should it not be reflected in literature? So the famous Chinese proverb aptly sums up the distinct concept of writers: A wise man make his own decisions, an ignorant man follows public opinion.'

Arundhati Roy lives her principles. Her convictions are rooted in life and living. Her words have a ring of reality, She is a rare champion of social causes and she goes to any extent to measure up to them in her day today living. This makes her stand head and shoulder above the growing crop of novelists, the world over. This is why her one and only one novel could attract., with appreciation, the critical literary attention in terms of a prestigious award which quite often remains an unrealized dream of many aspiring or even established literary personalities the world over. Her literary status today eminently thrives on quality rather than quantity.

This fact is a healthy pointer to a quality writing rather than mediocre writing in today's age of bulk publication. Thus, the recognition of her work will surely give the much needed fillip to quality writing in the literary world and also successfully meet the expectations of the modern reader.

The book has attracted applauses from several quarters on several aspects of brilliance of the book, "Books like *The God of Small Things* come only once in the long time and even Roy is unable to tell if she would, and could, write another such novel in future.

NOTES

- [1] Jason Cavley, *India Today* 27 Oct 1997, 28.
- [2] M .Prabha, *The Waffle of the Toffs*, A Sociocultural Critque of Indian Writing in English (New Delhi: Oxford; IBH 2000) 138.
- [3] Pashupati Jha, "Greatness of The God of Small Things", *The Indian Journal of English Studies* 35 (1996-97) 118.

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