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Studying the Agony, Turmoil and Implications of Intergenerational Trauma in Children in the God of Small Things

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Abstract

Arundhati Roy's, *The God of Small Things* explores the multifaceted nature of trauma and its ramifications on various characters in the novel. This paper studies the multiple aspects of trauma endured by the characters especially Rahel and Estha, and how their psychology is affected by the ways in which their parents, family and society treats them. It will also highlight the fact that how the memories of strained parental relationships, patriarchal dominance and class difference reverberate in their mind and shape their identities. The narrative techniques used by Roy in the novel, such as fragmented storytelling and non-linear narrative structure, further exemplify the redolent nature of trauma. Through a detailed reading of the text and its critical exploration, this paper will examine how *The God of Small Things* is basically a text which deals with psychological trauma that gets transferred from the society, family, and parents to their children, through their behaviour and eventually shapes their identities in the long run. Ultimately, the novel manifests as a powerful testament to the complexities of memory, healing, and resilience in children in the face of profound suffering.

Key words: trauma, psychology, intergenerational trauma

The God of Small Things, a seminal work by Arundhati Roy, is a mystifying blend of emotions, sensations, stories, and pictures from the past, that indulges the readers in the complex social dynamics of Kerala, and its lush landscapes. Born on 24th November 1961, in Shillong, India, Arundhati Roy, one of the most prominent Indian writers, who has spent her childhood in Ayemenem, Kerala, weaved her childhood recollections and echo in her debut novel, *The God of Small Things*. Dhawan (1999) describes this book as "a taboo-breaking protest novel" and "out of a sense of complacency at having rid the society of discrimination based on caste and gender" (118).

The Greek word 'trauma' in psychiatry means a wound inflicted, not on the body but on the mind. Cathy Caruth mentions about it as a 'double wound' in her book, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. This wound is not present physically as well as not available to the conscience, but imposes its presence in the form of repetitive actions, flashbacks, nightmares, and narration. It cannot be related only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our actions and our language (1996, 3).

Through the intersected and intertwined stories of the dysfunctional Ipe family, Roy weaves a mesmerizing narrative that weaves together past and present, love and loss, tradition and modernity. This particular paper will be a testament to the foil and misery experienced by the characters (as children and adults both), the trauma endured by them which eventually becomes a part of their being, getting

knowingly or unknowingly transferred into their children as they grow up. Some even have become 'perpetrators of trauma' in a sense that they inadvertently, through their actions instil the same trauma in them either through abuse, beatings, neglect etc. In *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and the Possibility of History*, Cathy Caruth defines trauma as:

"a phenomenon that not only arises in the reading of literary or philosophical texts but emerges most prominently within the wider historical and political realms, that is, the peculiar and paradoxical experience of trauma. In its most general definition, trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of the hallucinations and other intrusive phenomenon (11, 1991)"

In the traditional Indian set up women were treated merely as objects. They were expected to follow assigned roles and were bound in the socio-cultural set up wherein they had no life of their own and were stereotyped. During the time when this novel was written the condition of women was entirely wretched and miserable. The novel also talks about the plight, terror and fears of women along with the subject of child abuse. Tapan Kumar Ghosh opines in "Tomorrow Will Never Die: Arundhati Roy's Tryst with History in *The God of Small Things*" that Roy's purpose is "to write about an unfair, male-dominated society that treats women and low-caste people very badly" (Ghosh 184) and "her focus is on the small, individual lives of men and women who, without any heroic pretensions, break the long-cherished social taboos and tamper with the rules that lay down the social codes of behaviour" (Ghosh 186).

The novel follows the technique of trauma narrative. The narration is a representation of how the novel exhibits the symptoms of trauma. Flash backs are imminent in the novel and suggest the evocative nature of trauma in the characters. They do, in fact, appeal to the senses because they emphasize the sights, sounds, and odours that relate to the senses—for example, the scene where Rahel fiercely crushed an ant colony. The psychological fluctuations that Little Rahel experiences are depicted as, "Rahel found a whole column of juicy ants. They were on their way to Church. All dressed in red. They had to be killed before they got there. Squished and squashed with a stone. You can't have smelly ants in Church. The ants made a faint crunchy sound as life left them. Like an elf eating toast, or a crisp biscuit" (185).

To begin with Ammu, neither did she enjoy a polite and comfortable childhood nor she experienced a sense of security and happiness as a child. Ammu, who was just nine years old, had to endure a lot. To avoid Pappachi's abuse, Ammu and her mother would hide in the hedge. Pappachi, a frustrated old man feels jealous when Mammachi learns violin from her master and becomes self-sufficient to manage the Paradise Pickles factory. Pappachi would never help her with the management of the pickle factory as it "he did not consider pickle-making a suitable job for a high-ranking ex-government official" (Roy, 47). He too stopped the music lessons of Mammachi when she got appreciation from her music teacher. His dissatisfaction with his unsuccessful life puts him in random dark moods which provokes him to beat his wife incessantly. He would kick furniture, destroy table lamps, and rip down drapes in addition to abusing his wife and kids. For Mammachi, "the beatings weren't new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place" (47).

The novelist elaborates the excruciatingly appalling experience of Ammu in the given passage from the text, when she was just nine years old.,

"On one such night, Ammu, aged nine, hiding with her mother in the hedge, watched Pappachi's natty silhouette in the lit windows as he flitted from room to room. Not content with having beaten his wife and daughter (Chacko was away at school), he tore down curtain, kicked furniture and smashed a table lamp. An hour after the lights went out, disdaining Mammachi's frightened pleading, little Ammu crept back

into the house through a ventilator to rescue her new gumboots that she loves more than anything else. She put them in a paper bag and crept back into drawing room when the lights were suddenly switched on…bring him Mammachi's pinking shears" (Roy 181).

The constant beating of Ammu and her mother by Pappachi on a regular basis tarnished her relationship with her father and she hardly did have any sort of decent experience in her family. There are instances from where we can decipher that Mammachi was actually relieved after Pappachi's death but her longing towards trauma makes her feel that she is in dire need of the routine in which she was regularly beaten, harassed and tortured. "At Pappachi's funeral, Mammachi cried and her contact lenses slid around in her eyes……She was used to having him slouching around the pickle factory, and was used to being beaten from time to time. Ammu said that human beings were creatures of habit, and it was amazing the kind of things they could get used to." (50)

Apart from Ammu, Chako, her brother, too is a witness to the harassment his mother is subjected to but he enjoys a more privileged status than his sister, "her eighteenth birthday came and went. Unnoticed, or at least unremarked upon by her parents" (38). He does not permit her to pursue an education at college. He claims that a girl's college education is not worth the cost. She desired to be educated, but was rejected because she was a girl. Ammu lacks privilege in both higher education and marriage, as dowry presents a challenging proposition.

There was hardly anything for a young girl to do in Ayemenem but to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with housework. "Since her father didn't have enough money to raise a suitable dowry, no proposal come Ammu's way" (Roy 38). She realised that according to her father a girl has a temporary and redundant existence in her father's family and they had no money to finance the education of a girl as it is not going to yield any result. On the other hand, her brother Chako was sent to Oxford to complete his higher studies, being no better by Ammu in any form.

A famous feminist writer of the eighteenth century, Mary Wollstonecraft mentions about the Rights of Woman in *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* and mentions:

"Women ought to have an education commensurate with their position in society, and also, she argues that women are essential to the nation because they educate its children and they could be 'Companions' to their husband's, rather than mere wives. Instead of viewing women as an ornament to society or property to be traded in marriage, Wollstonecraft maintains that they are human beings deserving of the same fundamental rights as men" (WollstoneCraft 25).

Virginia Woolf views household life as largely social and devoid of a personal space for women. She vehemently states in *The Room of One's Own,*

"The son of my house may be granted freedom to develop his mind; he may have room of his own. But the daughter is expected to be at everyone's beck and call…for domestic life cultivates the irrational side of a woman's nature; it is distinguished by the primacy of intellect. The domestic arts involve mainly in the fine discrimination of feelings and the ability to bring about adjustments in personal relations" (Woolf 34-35)

To get out of this stifling atmosphere, she decides to marry Babu, a man who she had met only five days ago but she is ready to take a rebellious stand for him. The sadness in Ammu stems from the constant strained relationship between her parents and her pathetic relationship with her father. But this marriage doesn't fetch her something good as well, on the contrary it makes her life more pathetic. She too, is beaten by her husband incessantly who she discovers later, is an alcoholic. She is even asked by him to sleep with

his boss to increase the chances of his promotion. She beats her husband in turn and runs away from the house. Meena Usmani in her article "Violence against Woman" rightly said:

"The women have frequently been ruthlessly exploited in our society and the problem is growing day by day. The case of eve teasing, sexual harassment, abduction, sati, rape and wife battering in public and at the workplace etc. have been more regularly reported since the 1960's and early 1970's. The issue of violence against women has become the public problem as the women are discriminated at work, home and are denied their due in every field. The constitution of India promises freedom, equality, opportunity and protection to women and gives them several rights, in spite of that they enjoy an unequal status" (Usmani 13).

Following her divorce from her husband, she is clearly an unwanted visitor to her parents' home in Ayemenem. Her life came to a halt at the young age of twenty-four. She is practically untouchable in her own family and community. The comments made by Baby Kochamma in the book make the description quite vivid,

"A married daughter had no position in her parent's home. As for a divorced daughter – according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love, marriage-Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject" (Roy 45-46).

Chako also faces a disappointing divorce in his life but later becomes the owner of Pickles and Paradise. He continually insults and remarks Ammu's children as "Ammu had no Locusts stand I" (Roy 57) which indicates his jealousy and self-centeredness. He is the brand ambassador of "wonderful male chauvinist society" (57). Her parents discriminate against her because she is destitute and defenseless. In Ayemenem, she finds solace in the hot river, the pickle factory, and the front and back verandas. Her frustration travels to her children where she is hardly able to show that motherly affection and love to them and on the other hand becomes so dissociated and frustrated that she enters into an extra marital affair with Velutha. Although she enjoys a brief period of love in the vicinity of Velutha, which doesn't continue for long. Another peculiar incident mentioned in the beginning of the novel is the indecent treatment of Ammu by the policeman. Her verbal as well as physical molestation and insult in front of her children leaves her wretched and disgraced.

"When they left the police station Ammu was crying, so Estha and Rahel didn't ask her what veshya meant. Or, for that matter, illegitimate. It was the first time they'd seen their mother cry. She wasn't sobbing. Her face was set like stone, but the tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her rigid cheeks. It made the twins sick with feat Ammu's tears made everything that had so far seemed unreal, real……... "He's dead," Ammu whispered to him. "I've killed him." "Ayemenem," Estha said quickly, before the conductor lost his temper." (8 Roy).

Baby Kochamma viewed them as nothing superior but "doomed, fatherless waifs" (44) She felt that, "worse still, they were Half-Hindu. Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" (45). Chacko considered that "Ammu and Estha and Rahel were millstones around his neck" (77) and felt they were not his responsibility. All of them including "vinegar-hearted" Kochu Maria, their cook, lost no opportunity in constantly reminding them "that they lived on sufferance in the Ayemenem House, their maternal grandmother's house, where they really had no right to be" (39). Stigmatized and subjected to a series of taunts by family members, the occasional episode of happiness occurs in their lives' general drama of traumatic taunts only when they are with Velutha, the low-caste paravan. The twins are like a

pair of small bewildered frogs engrossed in each other's company, lolloping arm in arm down a highway full of hurtling traffic. Entirely oblivious of what trucks can do to frogs. (43). Julia Tanney in her book, *Trauma and Belief*, writes that when we undergo a traumatic experience, such as life-threatening accident or brutal attack, war or witness or commit atrocities, we survive a period of relentless stress. The other reasons may be raised by parents who are alcoholic or mentally ill or we are ignored and neglected (352). When we discuss about the mental state of the characters in *The God of Small Things*, we can clearly decipher that there is an overlapping of the time frame. The characters are nowhere in the present, the past memories are still prominent in their mind and there is a hybrid time frame existing for them. They are the victims of their past and can't fully live in their present.

Elizabeth Outka Roy again in her article, "Trauma and Temporal Hybridity in Arundhati Roy 's *The God of Small Things*", reflects that

"The novel's most traumatized characters—the twins and their mother Ammu—reveal Roy's careful portrait of temporal hybridity and its mixture of amnesia and flashback, frozen time and relentless return. Rahel, for instance, who remains the most functional of the trio, and who seems to remember the most about her story, nevertheless is haunted by recurring memories. The drowning death of her cousin, Sophie Mol, lives on most prominently in her thoughts; the death "was always there…. It ushered Rahel through childhood (from school to school to school) into womanhood" (Outka 17).

Rahel returns from America and is reunited with her brother Estha after twenty-three years, who is also re-returned by his father. The siblings haven't had a simple and happy childhood, unlike other children. They have endured a lot of traumas in their childhood, and hence it results in a tampered and broken adult life. The novel doesn't follow a linear plot; on the other hand, it moves back and forth in a flashback. Beginning with a narrative and ending with a flashback the novel appears to travel back in time. According to Roy, children have a more acute sensitivity than adults and can sense hurt in others or in themselves on a completely different level than adults can. This is in spite of the fact that children may not be able to fully explain relationships or the nature of feelings that people may experience toward one another. But it is impossible to confine the child's thinking to only an emotional level. The way a youngster thinks, particularly about its own future and how it sees itself, is equally intriguing to study. When asked to describe maturity, a lot of people would say that it involves opening up to others and the understanding that oneself is not the only way to experience the world.

How a child's consciousness depends so totally on itself and operates just within its own bubble is what makes it so beautiful. Naturally, one eventually learns of the three children's awful fate. Estha going insane and becoming a recluse, Sophie Mol dying as a kid, and Rahel making a vain attempt to integrate herself into the Western world. The children's lives have a very bleak outcome. Since both twins end up sad, Arundhati Roy may have been more merciful in not giving her characters too much optimism when they were young, as this spares the book from needless bitterness.

Due to their paternity, Rahel and Estha are unlucky from the beginning and live in a world where they only meet individuals who dislike them. Additionally, children give the author the amazing opportunity to offer different perspectives and ideas about life and events in general to those that adults often express. As mentioned by the narrator that "as though Ammu believed that if she refused to acknowledge the passage of time, if she willed it to stand still in the lives of her twins, it would. . . . [Ammu] seemed terrified of what adult thing her daughter might say and thaw Frozen Time" (Roy 152-153). Ammu's attempts to freeze time clash with the evidence of thaw, as she struggles to ignore time's passage at the same time that she is faced with her inability to force time to "stand still"—an effort that, ironically, serves

to paralyze her further. Roy depicts that in the search of happiness, Ammu, "temporarily set aside the morality of motherhood and divorce hood (Roy, 44). Roy named the battle of Ammu which was going inside her as an "unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber" (Roy, 44).

Hope Jennings observes the presence of nostalgia in her article "The Ethics of Nostalgia in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things.' She points out how the children had suffered from the past. She mentions: Rahel and Estha are perpetually living with the ghosts of the past and due to the nature of their trauma, time for them has become frozen like Rahel's toy watch with the hands pointed out it at ten to two. This is symbolic itself in spite of the text's fluid narrative movements between past and present. (132)

The insult Ammu faced in the police station and the fake charges made against her regarding the violation of the laws of love, in which it should be kept in mind to which person we should love and to what extent, made her psychologically ill. After sending Rahel and Estha to Aymenem and Calcutta respectively, Ammu remains lonely and emotionally broken because of which her health deteriorates with asthma. The continuous dreams that Ammu had regarding the police arrest and their urge to cut off her hair with scissors because she was considered a prostitute, further tormented her mental condition. In Alleppey (a city in Kerala), Ammu left this tormented world at the age of thirty-one *"a viable, die-able age"* in Bharat Lodge (Roy, 1997, p.161). Her tormented soul, being a sister, daughter, wife and mother, silently came to an end. However, at the end the church denied burying her body there so it was given to the Electric Crematorium. (Suleman and Mohamed, 55).

Discussing about Estha, he faced sexual abuse at a very young age which added to the already existing parental trauma. He loses his sense of belongingness. But his mother's bitter words hurt his innocent mind and propel him to take extreme actions. She brawls: "I should have dumped you in an orphanage the day you were born. You're the mile stones round my neck" and "why can't you just go away and leave me alone" (Roy, 253). He flees the house with Rahel, but still wishes that Ammu might come to beg for forgiveness and take them back. "What if Ammu finds us and begs us to come back", asks Rahel. "Then we will. But only if she begs" replies Estha (Roy, 1997, p. 292). Estha was a quiet child. That Quietness was embedded in him. The unspeakable inside him tranquilizes his memory and overpowers its presence. The text provides a vivid description of Estha's plight,

"Once the quietness arrived, it stayed and spread in Estha. . . . It sent its stealthy, suckered tentacles inching along the insides of his skull, hoovering the knolls and dells of his memory. . . . It stripped his thoughts of the words that described them and left them pared and naked. Unspeakable. Numb. . . . Estha grew accustomed to the uneasy octopus that lived inside him and squirted its inky tranquilizer on his past. Gradually the reason for his silence was hidden away, entombed somewhere deep in the soothing folds of the fact of it." (Roy 11,12)

Sexual abuse or so to say molestation is faced by Estha in Abhilash Talkies when he encounters the Orangedrink Lemondrink man who takes advantage of his innocence and abuses him in a broad day light. "Now if you'll kindly hold this for me," the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said, handing Estha his penis through his soft white muslin dhoti, "I'll get you your drink. Orange? Lemon?" …The Orangedrink Lemondrink Man's hand closed over Estha's. His thumbnail was long like a woman's. He moved Estha's hand up and down. First slowly. Then fastly. (Roy 103) Frightened Estha returned into the hall and sat up and watched. His stomach heaved. He had a greenwavy, thick-watery, lumpy, sea weedy, floaty bottomless-bottomful feeling. (Roy 107) After sometime, his state is as if "Feeling vomity." Ammu saw her son's bright feverbutton eyes. "Estha's sick," Ammu said. "Come on!" (Roy 109) And the family

compels to leave home in-between the movie show. But "these are only the small things". The novel gradually discloses that throughout the formative years of their lives, they have been subjected to psychological trauma that leaves deep unhealable scars in their lives.

In *Trauma and Recovery*, Judith Lewis Herman offers a basic classification of the symptoms of trauma. She divides the symptoms into "three basic categories": Hyperarousal, intrusion and constriction (35). Hyperarousal occurs when after a traumatic event "the human system of self-preservation seems to go into permanent alert, as if the danger might return any moment" (35). This is quite visible in the novel when Estha seems scared that the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man, who had molested him will come and locate him at Paradise Pickles to abuse him again. In this state of mind, he has two notions- "Anything can happen to anyone and its best to be prepared" (Roy 186). On the basis of his second thought, he asks Rahel to transport the supplies to the history house as a medium of escape from the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man. When Kuttapen tries to divert their attention by engaging them in a playful banter, Estha feels that "Temporarily for a few happy moments the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man shut his yellow smile and went away. Fear sank and settled at the bottom of the deep water" (202).

Herman further mentions about 'intrusion' as what 'reflects indelible imprint of the traumatic moment' she explains that long after the danger is in past traumatised people relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts (37). Rahel's fragmented traumatic memories are a result of intrusion. Her inability for form intimate relationships wholeheartedly with Larry McCaslin and also her weird behaviour in social settings leads to her exclusion from public places and schools. The third category is classified as constriction by Herman which is described as "the numbing response of surrender". It seems to occur when they do not agree to the fact of the police officers taking Velutha away, but his imaginary 'twin brother' Urumban from Kochi which signifies that they dissociate from reality.

Rahel did not enjoy an easy childhood as well. After parting from her twin brother and watching the separation of her parents she faced many atrocities following their divorce. She senses 'Pappachi's moth fluttering in her heart'. She can also be related to the same situation as, "The 'Loss' is alive for Rahel at every moment, following her—and even chasing her—through linear time, from school to school, from childhood to womanhood, a frozen moment and yet one that is perpetually on the move" (Outka 6). She suffered quiet a similar turmoil as was faced by Ammu in her childhood, "They left her alone. She was never invited to their nice homes or noisy parties. Even her professors were a little wary of her—her bizarre, impractical building plans, presented on cheap brown paper, her indifference to their passionate critiques" (Roy 18).

The children suffered traumatic childhood because of their parents and grandparents. They even felt alienated from their own family during the arrival of Sophie Mol who gathered a lot of attention from the family members. Janet Wilson opines; "The children enjoy playing with Velutha, greedy for love, even if it could come only from one, who to the adults in an untouchable" (Wilson 74).

Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge. "What Larry McCaslin saw in Rahel's eyes was not despair at all, but a sort of enforced optimism. And a hollow where Estha's words had been." (Roy 19, 20). Her husband could easily sense the hollowness in her attitude and soul but he was not expected to understand that. That the emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other. That the two things fitted together. Like stacked spoons. Like familiar lovers' bodies" (Roy 19). "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 the window at the sea. At a

boat in the river. Or a passer-by in the mist in a hat" (19). In *The God of Small Things*, Rahel, one of the central characters, is depicted as a chronic nail biter. This repetitive action represents her "anxiety and inner turmoil" resulting from the traumatic event of Sophie Mol's death that she has witnessed (Yasir 1317). In the face of trauma, nail biting becomes a coping strategy and a physical outlet for her suppressed feelings.

Furthermore, after Sophie Mol's murder and the abuse he experienced as a child, Rahel's twin brother Estha, who was forced to lie to protect his mother, becomes more reserved and quieter. His selective mutism and withdrawal can be interpreted as a reaction to the overwhelming intensity of his pain and a means of defending himself from further injury. The lie he tells condemns someone he cares for, which thus causes "Silence [to slide] in like a bolt" (Roy 303). Silence is said to "intensify the impact of trauma" and therefore his repetitive silence reflects Estha's struggle to process and communicate his traumatic experiences (Sidor).

By depicting strong female characters who are attempting to defy the artificial norms and deals directed against women, Arundhati Roy not only captures the emotions of repressed women but also offers a fresh hope for women's empowerment. Despite the fact that all three generations of women must endure the oppressive nature of society, the third generation musters the courage to oppose it. In the end, the continuation of the healing process the novel becomes a tool to release ghosts, sit down with them, and be a witness to their stories. It also offers these stories a proper burial and a funeral as a way of memorializing them permanently in history. Even though they are gone, like the footprints behind the house or by the river, the reader is invited to remember and honour them by passing the stories on to the next generation for the healing to continue and also continue the legacy of the neo-slave narratives.

L. Chris Fox rightly observes; "Traumatic memory patterns inspire not only the content but also the narrative structure. It seems to share the urgency to communicate, a problem of repression which implies a desire for social healing, figured perhaps in the (re) union of Estha and Rahel" (Fox 56). Estha and Rahel can rightly feel and understand each other. So, when they meet twenty-three years later, their condition is like; "a pair of actors trapped in a recondite play with no plot or narratives. Stumbling through their parts, nursing someone else's sorrows. Grieving someone else's grief" (191).

Their traumatic childhood has destroyed their innocence completely. It has made them sinners. It has developed and ingrained the sense of insecurity within them. They are wounded due to their distraught childhood and so they have drifted from the right path and found relief in each other's arms. As Pradeep Kumar Giri observes; "They have been victims of past memories of series of deaths, violence, enforced separation, bullying, neglect, humiliation and stressful times. Their life cannot move forward smoothly as other children's due to the traumatic events occurred at the age of seven" (Giri 1433).

The affair of Ammu and Velutha overlaps with the death of Sophie Mol which was just because the boat had been upside down and she had drowned in that incident. But in this matter the twins are accused of her death. The Kottayam Police had taken action on the basis of a false complaint about allegation of rape and kidnapping filed by Baby Kochamma. The authorities were left with the death in custody of a man when they realised that Velutha was technically innocent after the encounter and verbal statement of the twins.

Inspector threats Baby Kochamma saying that, "The matter is very simple. Either the rape-victim must file a complaint. Or the children must identify the Paravan as their abductor in the presence of a police witness. "Or I must charge you with lodging a false F.I.R. Criminal offense." (302). and the twins are blackmailed by Baby Kochamma to put the entire blame of her death on Velutha,

"So now you'll have to go to jail," Baby Kochamma said kindly. And your mother will go to jail because of you. Would you like that? ..If you want to save her, all you have to do is to go with the Uncle with the big meeshas. He'll ask you a question. One question. All you have to do is to say 'Yes.' Then we can all go home. It's so easy. It's a small price to pay." (302)

Chacko becomes violent and with chrome handle in his hand, cries at Ammu to leave the home, "Pack your things and go." (Roy 222) Even Kochu Maria, the, short-tempered, cook *orders* to Estha "Tell your mother to take you to your father's house. There you can break as many beds as you like. These aren't your beds. This isn't your house." (75) And poor Ammu with her trying-notto-cry mouth (300) forced to send Estha back to his father (Aggarwal, 355).

Longworth, in her article, "Trauma and the Ethical Dilemma in Arundhati Roy's, The God of Small Things", mentions,

"It is not surprising then that the twins' incest is the focus of much attention amongst the critics of *The God of Small Things*. For the most part these critics unanimously agree that the twin's incest is inevitable, though they do so by pursuing different angles of a similar argument. These angles include but are not limited to the argument that the incest is a part of healing or an expression of the repressed, that it represents a love purer than that of the other relationships in the novel, and that Indian society as portrayed in Roy's fiction leaves the twins with few options for emotional connection with other characters. What all of these interpretations have in common is that each account for the twins' traumatic past, acknowledges their victimization, and thus sympathises with their need for emotional connection, support and healing. Further these readings of the novel suggest that healing from trauma is more vital than adherence to man-made social boundaries." (3).

Conclusion

Hence, this paper is a deep exploration of the profound psychological turmoil faced by the protagonists, basically children who become a witness to the parental conflicts due to patriarchy, dysfunctional family dynamics, and class difference which eventually victimises the characters and affects their psyche to such an extent that they turn quiet, ambitionless and emotionless. All the mishaps in their life impact their ability to develop a happy and healthy relationship with people causing them to withdraw from society. Estha and Rahel's withdrawal from the society, family and themselves at large and their inability to find happiness in adulthood, leaves them numb and they find solace not anywhere else, but in the vicinity of each other.

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