Collective unconscious in the novel ‘The God of Small Things’

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**Abstract:** The God of small things was a novel written in 1997 by booker prize winner Arundhati Roy. The novel primarily talks about the multiple issues which are happening around us and creating such chaotic situation have become human’s inheritance in post-colonial India. Though, India has become freed from colonizers still some roots prevalent in society’s mind, so these things are clearly shown in the novel. Here the writer is even though in Globalized Era how she portrayed the characters through some cultural constraints, of course these cultural constraints have become finger points in the novel to show what is happening around us. Roy particularly focused on contemporary issues which become primordial in individual’s life. As Rabindranath Tagore says in Gitanjali that the great world has been broken down into several narrow domestic walls such as caste, class, race, women subjugation, community, creed and other beliefs. These are all the first and foremost important tools to show in the novel The God of small things. Generally discrimination has the potential to occur on the basis of any difference. It is a natural consequence that happens in any society whether it is India or other countries. on the whole in this paper, we are going to make a different attitude on different perspective by using the Archetypal criticism in the writings Arundhati Roy. This paper technically tries to present that how archetypes become part of writer’s mind, When the author lives in society because of the totality of the cultural constraints happened in the novel. That we are going to look into them in the paper.

**Key words:** Collective unconscious, Archetypes, Characters, Human psyche, patterns, Analysis, Cultural constraints, Women subjugation, Marxism.

**Introduction:**

The novel God of Small Things was a fictional story published in 1997 in the southern India Kerala especially in a small traditional village Ayemenem. It is a story which revolves around the orthodox family and has some patriarchal dominance. So, in the story there is a character named Ammu was born in the upper middle class family and got married an alcoholic husband. When the plot gets developed in the novel Ammu Character undergoes many hurdles, because an alcoholic husband she faces many problems. In the story there are some major characters which have some significance roles to show some specific cruelty minds in the novel. However, the novel was written in post independent India things were portrayed as they were before independent India. So, here we are about understand some significant points which would come from totality of the society irrespective of religion, creed, discrimination and other beliefs. In general what we are going to understand is how archetypes affected the writers mind despite they were living Globalized country.

It can be seen here that the two factors that unleash the barbaric violence are (a) the coming together of persons from two opposite classes-the high and the low, rich and poor, high caste and the low caste (b) the subliminal fear of natural impulses themselves mostly the sexual passion. What Ammu and Velutha did was a challenge to human nature’s pursuit of ascendancy, order and control. Their punishment was the expression of society’s hatred of Nature. Velutha’s death was not a mere death, just the end of living. His deaths brought into play various manoeuvres and strategies. He was charged with kidnapping and murder. The Communist party accused the police of eliminating a party worker while it did not do anything to save him. It tried to get a political mileage and dividends out of his death. Baby Kochamma poisoned minds of Mammachi and Chacko that Ammu and her twins were responsible for the mishaps. So Ammu was made to leave the house. Estha was sent alone to live with his father. Consequently, Ammu worked elsewhere on a meagre salary in different capacities for four years. Then she died, due to many reasons. The Church refused to bury her. Hence she was taken to electric crematorium in a van. Her life came to an end. Her remains were crammed in a clay pot.

If we understand the crux of the story , we will come to know that the writer can not escape from cultural boundary which is around him/her, so thing happens the in the God of Small things. On the other hand in the novel Women have been portrayed by Roy as objects of oppression, and subjugation, domestic violence and discrimination, societal pressures and prejudices. An interesting point concerning the universe of Arundhati Roy’s novel is that it is not peopled by moral monsters and yet evil is cropping up at every nook and cranny. The novel *The God of Small Things* tells the story of a woman, Ammu divorced by her husband and neglected by her family. Ammu is the daughter of Pappachi and Mammachi and sister of Chacko. She had a traumatized childhood having seen how her father used to beat her mother and being beaten herself in habitual working out of sadistic fits of rage. She was deprived of higher education because her father thought that girls should not have it. Pappachi, her father was outwardly a model citizen. Though servile and fawning in his dealing with white men, he otherwise carried himself with dignity and had a good reputation in his work. At home, however, he was very different, being a cruel tyrant to his wife and children. Home for Ammu was no less than a prison and it was mostly because of her need to escape from it that she entered matrimony in a hurry.

It was not an arranged marriage as was the custom rather her own decision. Ammu married, out of her community, a Bengali young man working as Assistant Manager in a Tea Plantation in the north. She discovered after marriage that he was a feckless alcoholic who, to save himself from being dismissed, was willing to accept the indecent proposal of his boss Mr. Hollick. Aghast, she left him with her twins Rahel and Estha. Ayemenem, her parent’s house, did not receive her with any warmth. She returned to “everything she had fled from only a few years ago” (1) and her father did not believe her story “because he didn’t believe that an Englishmen, any Englishmen, would covet another man’s wife.” (2) Her brother Chacko went to Oxford while she was deprived of higher education even in India. Chacko married abroad, had a divorce and came back. The child of that marriage, Sophie was left in her mother’s care in England. His belief in his sole ownership of his parents’ property is suggested quite early in the novel by his habit of claiming everything as his own. He would joke: “What is yours is mine and what is mine is also mine.” (3) In Ayemenem the life of Ammu came to a standstill. She was lonely and restless living in a drab and unfriendly environment. As a married woman, and a divorcee she had no position in parents home. A divorced daughter has no position anywhere, the novel insists on making this point, especially after she had married outside her community and broken faith.

Here, if we apply Curl Gustav Jung Archetypal criticism and Collective unconscious to the fictional story then we will come to know that these characters come from writers collective unconscious. If we study the female character, Particularly in the story Ammu character it shows as if it was drawn from our Indian mythology. Therefore, all the major fictional characters in the story seemed the same in the scriptures like Ramayana and Mahabharata. If we take an example from the Ramayana where an orthodox woman Sita is humiliated by sending into woods but in believing in other words at the end of the Ramayana. Similarly in the novel The God of Small Things Ammu an orthodox women humiliated because of her divorce with her husband. So in the novel what happens is she is not given the respect and priority in male dominated society. On the whole what we are going understand is that what ever happened in the scriptures same things are portrayed in the novel The God of Small things.

We are here understanding not the novel but also the scriptures through collective unconscious by studying Archetypal criticism.

A philosopher and psychoanalyst Curl Gustav Jung treats the entire human self as the totality of all psychic processes. Here rejecting Freudian theories of the libido as restricted to the sexual, Jung proposed that the libido was energy that could be channelized into any field. His second key departure from freud was his idea of archetypes.

Freud generally, as we have seen, saw the self-dreams and fantasies proceeding from the unconscious. Jung proposed that, while the unconscious was important, the self was also influenced by social norms and world around it.

***Another important thing that Jung suggests that the human imagination draws upon images and ideas from myths and legends that occur across cultures and time-spans.***

***These images he termed as Archetypes, and they emerge from collective unconscious which is common to all human kind and not restricted to a particular individual or self.***

Art argued Jung often exhibited universal images , so Jung significance lay in a radical shift

* Here Jung says from the individual unconscious to the social-collective one and
* From the individual creation of particular dreams to social store house of common images and themes.

As we have seen C.G. Jung’s collective unconscious and how it impacts the writers psyche the whole. At the same as we see the characters in the story like Ammu and Velutha of course they are leading characters in the novel, but in fact they were oppressed in the scriptures and also in the novel.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research paper tries to portrays that authors collective and past circumstantial aspects always get inserted unconsciously into literary characters. According to Curl Jung collective unconscious and his twelve archetypes it is analysed and paved that Arundhati Roy memory into her novel characters, Ammu and on the other hand velutha have been described in this paper. Finally we are to understand how the major characters in the novel suffer and assassinated that happened in Indian scriptures. According to the theory of‘ collective unconscious’ this unconscious and suffered incidental ideology will influence the works and behaviour patterns of a person unconsciously, this influence is everlasting process in the field of literature. And it will be shared among the beings of the same species inevitably alike the influence of sunlight over the world.

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