

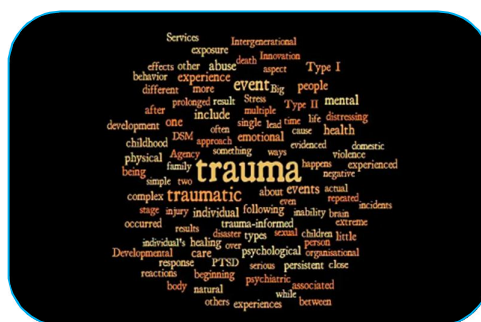


SILENCE AS EXPRESSION: TRAUMA, TEMPORAL HYBRIDITY, BIOPOLITICS, AND ETHICAL WITNESS IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the concept of silence as a kind of expression, as well as trauma, temporal hybridity, biopolitics, and ethical witness. The purpose of this article is to examine the role that silence plays in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* as a method of expressing thoughts that is both complicated and sophisticated. According to the findings of the study, Roy makes use of formal, psychological, social, and ethical silences on purpose in order to demonstrate trauma, break linear temporality, and reveal biopolitical and gendered frameworks that decide whose lives are recognized and which are ignored. The study examines four different sorts of silence that are present in the book: the physical muteness of Estha, Rahel's emotional detachment, Velutha's structural voicelessness, and Ammu's gender-based erasure. The use of trauma theory (Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, Ruth Leys), temporality studies (Elizabeth Outka, Paul Ricoeur), biopolitics (Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben), affect theory (Sara Ahmed), and postcolonial/subaltern criticism (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) are some of the methods that enables it to do this. By doing a comprehensive examination of Roy's temporal disruptions, lexical experimentation, and narrative omissions, one can see how the text converts experiences that are incomprehensible into a need for the reader to comprehend and react to. The study presents a postcolonial trauma paradigm that establishes a connection between psychological breakdown and institutional violence. Within this framework, silence in the narrative serves as both a symptom and a criticism, as well as an event and a form of ethical involvement. If the reader is aware of the unsaid, they will be able to see the societal structures, such as caste, gender, and state authority, that have an effect on and conceal suffering. Some of the terms that spring to mind include trauma narrative, temporal hybridity, biopolitics, silence, and ethical witnessing. Arundhati Roy is another word that comes to mind.



KEYWORDS: trauma, temporal hybridity, biopolitics, and ethical witness.

THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

"The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy, published in 1997, is a book that is well-liked by readers due to its exceptional writing, its unique narrative, and its insightful political concepts. One of the most major challenges in critical analysis is to address the multiple silences that are present in the book, such as silent bodies, concealed histories, and narrative gaps, without reducing them to the status of simple absences or affirmations. The purpose of this study is to investigate the research question: How does Roy make use of silence to illustrate the limits of speech within the context of trauma and to reveal the structural structures (caste, patriarchy, and state brutality) that render some lives intolerable and inexpressible? A complicated form of expression that tackles trauma and challenges

readers to retain ethical standards is the purpose of this project, which aims to redefine silence as a complex form of expression that is psychological, narratological, and political.

There are three interrelated goals that the article intends to accomplish. To begin, it provides a method that is logically sound for categorizing the many types of silence that are present in the book, which include psychological, narrative, structural, and gendered silence. Second, it examines significant scenes and features of style (such as temporal dislocation, lexical play, and kid narration) in a repetitive manner in order to demonstrate how silence is stored at the formal level. In the third place, it supports a postcolonial trauma model by using trauma studies, temporality theory, and postcolonial biopolitics. Furthermore, according to Roy's book, trauma is not just something that occurs in the mind, but it is also something that occurs as a result of caste-modern governance and gender regimes. Silence is a sign as well as a censure of the speaker.

The Literature Review and Analysis

Despite the fact that Roy's work has been the subject of a great deal of academic discussion, there are three aspects that stand out as particularly significant in this context: (1) narrative form and temporality; (2) trauma and witness; and (3) caste, gender, and subalternism.

Numerous studies on the structure of narratives have highlighted Roy's disruption of chronology as well as her groundbreaking language innovation. Putting the work in the context of postcolonial memory and cosmopolitan criticism is what Tickell does with his examination of Roy. What it demonstrates is that formal play has the ability to dismantle national myths (Tickell). She claims that the novel's intertwined timelines indicate occurrences that cannot be integrated into one history (Outka). This is an important article written by Elizabeth Outka, which relates Roy's non-linear time to traumatic temporality, which she refers to as "temporal hybridity." knowledge how Roy rejects the traditional function of the story in building coherence among events and, as a result, rejecting closure (Ricoeur) requires a knowledge of the idea of narrative time, which should be considered essential. Psychologists who specialize in the study of trauma have interpreted the book as a narrative about the disintegration of the psyche. The paradigm of trauma as belated return developed by Cathy Caruth is commonly applied in order to provide clarity about the lingering and haunting pictures that circulate without fully articulating the substance of the traumatic experience (Caruth). The investigation of evidence that Felman and Laub conducted sheds light on the representation of the witnessing crisis in literature, which is marked by fragmented language (Felman and Laub). In her criticism of trauma universalism, Ruth Leys invites critics to concentrate on narrative choices rather than assume that trauma is indescribable. Leys's statement is based on the idea that trauma should not be regarded indefinable. A number of recent research, such as Giri and Sibi, investigate Rahel and Estha's child psychology in relation to trauma. Other studies, such as Fox and Outka, investigate the moral implications of reading traumatic accounts.

The last thing I want to mention is that caste and subaltern studies provide us a political framework. It is well known that Gayatri Spivak posed the issue, "Can the subaltern speak?" with this inquiry. It is essential to have a solid understanding of the reasons behind Velutha's inability to speak. According to Spivak, the speech of Velutha is stifled by the structures of society since it does not have the backing of any institutions. The explorations of biopolitics and "bare life" that Foucault and Agamben have conducted shed light on the mechanisms that are responsible for the dispensability of some persons without causing social guilt (Foucault; Agamben). (Navarro-Tejero; Dodiya and Chakravarty) Academics in the field of Indian English studies and feminist critics like Antonia Navarro-Tejero have investigated the ways in which gender and caste interact to make Ammu a marginalized character.

Literature offers comprehensive frameworks that include traumatic experiences, the passage of time, and political silence. Despite this, the vast majority of research focus only on these particular topics independently. An method that completely combines silence as a traumatic symptom, narrative tactic, and biopolitical consequence concurrently is one of the gaps that still needs to be filled. By combining these essential components and putting an emphasis on affect theory (Ahmed) and narrative ethics (Iser; Felman), the purpose of this study is to make up for that deficiency.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework that originates from a variety of industries serves as the foundation for the argument. Cathy Caruth's concept of trauma as belatedness provides a core framework for understanding the recurrence of traumatic experiences as fragmented pictures or lacunae, rather than as cohesive episodes (Caruth). This framework is known as the "belatedness idea." By providing frameworks for understanding silence as a sort of incomplete but meaningful testimony, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's theories of testimony and the crisis of witnessing (Felman and Laub) provide light on the concept of quiet. An examination of the ways in which different cultures construct narratives about traumatic experiences is required by the corrective admonitions offered by Ruth Leys (Leys).

Elizabeth Outka's concept of temporal hybridity and Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative time are the foundations upon which temporal arguments are built. Roy's interruptions of chronology generate ethical disquiet by posing a challenge to the narrative normalizing of violence (Outka; Ricoeur). Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare existence" and Michel Foucault's biopolitical theory make it possible to conduct a political analysis of Velutha's death as an embodiment of governance via exclusion and the classification of certain lives as politically susceptible (Agamben; Foucault). Sara Ahmed's affect theory provides us with a framework for considering the ways in which fear and guilt interact with one another within the context of families (Ahmed). Last but not least, Gayatri Spivak's subaltern criticism investigates the ways in which recognition and systemic marginalization interact with one another (Spivak). There is a consensus among these thinkers that silence may be seen as a psychological expression, a narrative device, a way of emotional management, and a tool of political erasing.

An in-depth analysis that is supported by evidence taken from the text. The Ethics of Keeping and Moving Through Time while Keeping Time In the very first sentence of the tale, Roy says, "the world will not be the same again," which is the beginning of a story that alludes to a catastrophe without revealing the whole history. This technique is referred to by Caruth as "belatedness." Because the event that initiates the novel cannot be completely incorporated at the time it occurs, it repeats itself in fragments (Caruth). Roy's use of capitalized epigraphs, lines such as "Things may change in a day," and recursive pictures to repeat themes develops a grammar of deferral that allows the reader to experience the mental time that the characters are experiencing rather than just observing it from a historical distance (Roy).

Elizabeth Outka's term "temporal hybridity" is an excellent approach to explain the manner in which Roy blends the years 1969 and 1993 in order to infuse both memory and the present with a sense of reality (Outka). For example, moments from the twins' youth are seen through the eyes of grownups, which makes it impossible to distinguish what is genuine and what is simply a recollection. The chronology does not come to a conclusion in the novel, which deprives the reader of the consolation of knowing that time has passed and forces them to engage in deep contemplation over what constitutes good and evil. Because they do not get a conclusive moral judgment, they are responsible for figuring it out on their own.

Utilizing Estha's Silence as Evidence for Her Statements. Among the many ways in which silence may be an indication of mental illness, Estha's stillness as an adult is the finest example. Following the sexual assault that he endures and the need of assisting Velutha in her death, Estha stops communicating. Roy perceives his quiet not as a sign of absence but rather as a type of language. It is a criticism of societal institutions that employ testimony against the weak that he chose not to speak, which demonstrates that words are not capable of properly capturing the experience of trauma. According to Caruth, traumatic experiences may resurface in ways that extend beyond accounts. According to Caruth, Estha's experience of this homecoming is characterized by bodily withdrawal. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub have shown that the failure of testifying is a kind of proof; Estha's incapacity to speak clearly indicates that a moral catastrophe is almost to take place (Felman and Laub).

Do you have any ideas about what occurs in the novel after the twins have been through a great deal of suffering? Roy claims that Estha's "no" was like a fortress, and that he "erased" himself from words that he had previously spoken. Due to the absence of any internal discourse inside the book, it is

up to the reader to determine what quiet really means. Due to the fact that it does not possess the characteristics of narrative exposition, the unsaid functions as proof.

The Dissociation of Rahel: The Effects on Emotion and Memory thereafter A peculiar kind of quietness characterizes Rahel; she speaks, but she does not express how she is feeling. In the Ipe family, shame, fear, and secrecy have an effect on relationships and cause individuals to desire to leave (Ahmed). Sara Ahmed's theory of emotion as socially disseminated demonstrates how these factors have an effect on the household. The existence of Rahel, which is characterized by unstable relationships and emotional disintegration, serves as an illustration of the concept of postmemory. According to Hirsch, the twin's adult identity is influenced by traumatic experiences that are communicated through familial silence and social repression, rather than through direct cognitive reconstruction. Similar to Rahel's inner stasis, Roy's literature often combines the perspectives of children and adults in the same instance. By the time the story comes to a conclusion, the twins have reconciled their differences and are able to communicate with one another via nonverbal means and physical proximity. The fact that this is the case implies that trauma and being separated might result in a different method of communication.

Among the topics covered in Velutha's Silence are caste, biopolitics, and naked living. An excellent illustration of how people do not speak about things is the manner in which Velutha passed away. His remarks are meaningless in a society that is built on caste, despite the fact that he is articulate, competent, and morally pure throughout his whole life. Giorgio Agamben's concept of "bare life" provides us with a better understanding of Velutha's predicament. As an Untouchable, people see him not as a political person with rights but rather as a mere biological being (Agamben). Michel Foucault's book "Biopolitics" examines the ways in which social orders exert control over populations, hence increasing the likelihood that some groups may be subjected to oppression or death (Foucault).

The community's quiet after Velutha's death does not suggest that they were unable to speak out; rather, it indicates that they opted not to testify or hold anybody responsible. Roy's depiction of Velutha's murder as violent, public, and usual demonstrates a societal mechanism of erasing. Despite the fact that Velutha's speech is ignored not because he is unable to articulate his thoughts, but rather because the institutions that legitimate discourse are inaccessible to him, Gayatri Spivak's question, "Can the subaltern speak?" continues to be an important one. Judith Butler's study on grievability provides an explanation for why people did not grieve Velutha's death jointly. In doing so, it reveals that the social economy places different values on different lives (Butler). By demonstrating how the community disregards the issue and how the government does not make any statements on it, Roy's book discusses the politics that are responsible for this imbalance. A Look at the Effects of Gendered Silence on Society: Ammu's Erasure Ammu's marginalization exemplifies how gender might encourage individuals to keep their mouths shut. As a result of her recent divorce and the fact that she has fallen in love with Velutha, people begin to look down on her. Because she no longer feels secure, she quietly declines to continue living and then passes away. The controlled portrayal of Ammu's deterioration that Roy provides, which is characterized by a lack of sensationalism and communal sadness, exemplifies gendered dispossession as a symptom of hidden violence. Butler's idea of unequal grievability sheds light on the contempt that society has for Ammu's loss (Butler). Feminist criticisms bring attention to the marginalization of women's suffering under patriarchal systems. Roy's account makes this silence very clear: rather than being punished in court, Ammu's mad desire is punished by being removed from society. This does not happen in court.

Language Maintains Its Silence Through Form and Lexis

Not only are Roy's stylistic alterations, which include fragments, innovative compound words, capital letters, and the child's slang, for the sake of aesthetics, but they are also instruments for moral instruction. The cheery tone of the novel conceals the violent nature of its construction. Readers are made more conscious of the fact that it is impossible for regular language to adequately convey what was happened when they are exposed to the contrast between infantile language and awful occurrences. Wolfgang Iser's idea of textual gaps is helpful because it requires the reader to be an active observer and interpreter (Iser). This is because the missing portions, silences, and situations that are

not portrayed in the text are all examples of textual gaps. Experiments conducted by Roy using lexico-syntactic analysis demonstrate that silence is a common technique of communicating ethics. Discourse that is Critical The above examination sheds light on a range of significant concepts. To begin, the quiet that is present in *The God of Small Things* is not straightforward or unidimensional; rather, it is a multifaceted phenomenon that is psychological, narratological, and political in characteristics. The way in which Roy utilizes silence to make a point and be moral is something that you will not be able to perceive if you simply think of silence as being missing. The second point is that the novel demonstrates the connection between trauma and power. The mental rupture that Estha and Rahel experience and the political erasure that Velutha and Ammu experience are mutually reinforcing. It is possible that a trauma theory that distinguishes suffering from social circumstances may portray systemic violence as an isolated episode. On the other hand, political narratives that disregard psychological effects could minimize the complexity of ethical issues. The purpose of this research is to propose a postcolonial trauma model as an integrated framework that asserts the mind and the state are both significant components of each other.

Third, Roy's concept of temporal hybridity utilizes moral concepts as its foundation. Due to the fact that the book does not adhere to a chronological order, it contradicts the notion that violence is an inevitable component of historical events. You must, however, read the material at this time. In the fourth place, readers have a moral obligation since Roy's writing style makes it their responsibility to piece together and react to events that have been concealing information. In this circumstance, being silent is a signal to take action. According to Felman and Laub, reading literature may help individuals understand things more clearly, and Roy's book is an excellent illustration of this.

Last but not least, a thorough reading should avoid very straightforward word combinations such as stillness and speech, presence and absence, and victim and agency. For instance, the fact that Estha is silent demonstrates that he is in agony and in control, Rahel's dissociation demonstrates that she is ill and alive, and Velutha's inability to speak demonstrates that he is both a tragedy and a political indictment. In order to avoid making moral decisions that are too simplistic, the primary challenge is to determine what these ambiguous circumstances really entail.

CONCLUSION

The novel "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy makes use of silence as a significant technique for both moral and artistic expression. Through the use of fragmented temporality, lexically inventive storytelling, and painstaking rendering of silent bodies and suppressed histories, Roy transforms absence into a communicative force. It is imperative that that which is not articulated be acknowledged. When you read the book through the filters of trauma theory, temporal hybridity, biopolitics, affect theory, and subaltern criticism, you will be able to perceive the connection between systematic violence and mental rupture. In the book, silence serves as a symptom, an accusation, and a demand; it is a rejection of closure, a need for recollection, and it engages the reader in the process of ethical witnessing. A postcolonial trauma framework that takes into consideration caste, gender, and state power is required in order for us to effectively address the novel's difficult representation and moral responsibilities.

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