



Artistic Use of Linguistic Devices in the Creative and Critical Works of Arundhati Roy

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Abstract:

Arundhati Roy has given us her creative work, *The God Of Small Things* and her collection of critical essays in two volumes: *The Algebra Of Infinite Justice (AIJ)* And *An Ordinary Person's Guide To Empire(OPGE)*. *The God Of Small Things (TGST)* won her the Man Booker Prize in 1997. It is the story of the life of middle and lower middle class people, the grief and suffering in their lives. In her critical essays also she has voiced her concern on issues demanding national and international attention. In both the types, the creative and the critical, Roy has made a very wonderful use of the linguistic devices thus making the reading simply worthwhile. She has used the devices at all the three levels-Syntactic, Semantic and Phonological.

Key words: Syntactic, Semantic Artistic, Skillful, Phonological, Creative, Critical

Language is the most refined mode of communication by the humans, of the humans and for the humans. Communication is done by other creatures as well. The communication that human beings do is because they have the divine gift –to be able to speak and not just produce sounds. Language is the ability of human beings to be able to convey the inner thoughts of one's mind to the right receiver. All living beings are capable of communicating their requirements through sounds but humans can communicate even their thoughts and feelings through the unique system called a language. As Carleton Hodge remarks, "Each language is unique not only in its inventory of sounds but also in the manner in which it employs them in meaningful combinations". Syntactic concerns are the concerns of an author as to what arrangement would he make of the words in a sentence. It can also be said that it is, regarding the rules for the arrangement of words into phrases and phrases into sentences. Semantics deals with the meaning of words and phonetics deals with the sounds of human beings. At the syntactic level she has made use of Repetition, Vernacular syntax, Verb

less sentences, Compound words and Parenthesis. At the Semantic level she has made use of similes metaphors, symbols and at the phonological level too Roy has exhibited her Skill at the appropriate use of alliteration, onomatopoeia, mis-spelt words at the appropriate places. She has not used them just for the sake of using them or just to make a show of her learning. Whichever device she has used at whatever place in her creative or critical work, it has served a purpose. It has helped her bring her creative work closer to reality. She has made use of some selected devices in her critical works also. There also they have served a purpose. The critical essays have been written on issues of national and international importance. She has employed only those devices which have helped her drive home a point ,its gravity and consequences if the issue is neglected. .Robert Lado explains the proper function of Syntax."In syntax, the linguist describes the patterns of words in phrases and sentences and the matter of arrangement among words". Roy has used Repetition as a devise in both her creative and critical works About her use of repetition Roy writes," I love repetitions because it made me feel safe. Repeated words and phrases have a rock feeling like a lullaby, they help take away the shock of the plot-- death, lives destroyed, of the horrors of the settings a crazy, chaotic emotional house."

The repetition of the word Past in a description of the place where Estha after his Re-return, is walking is too picturesque. It also shows us the aimless moving forward Estha." Other days he walked down the road. Past the new ,freshly baked, iced, Gulf money houses built by nurses, masons, wire benders and bank clerks who worked hard and unhappily in faraway places, Past the resentful older houses tinged green with envy Cowering in their private driveways among their private rubber trees. He Walked past the village school. that his great grand-father built for Untouchable children. Past. Sophie Mol's Church Past the Ayemenem Youth Kung Fu Club, Past the Tender Buds Nursery school (for Touchables), past the ration shop that sold rice, sugar and bananas that



hung in Yellow bunches from the roof (Pg,13 TGST)Similarly In her description of Inspector Thomas of the Kottayam Police Station, Roy writes: "Inspector Thomas Matthew, receding beyond his bustling Air India, Moustache understood perfectly. He had a Touchable wife, two Touchable daughters-Touchable generations waiting in their touchable Wombs(Pg 259TGST)

The repetition of Past in the previous description shows the aimless drifting away of Estha for even he doesn't realise how far away he is from his home..It also leaves a silent message that Estha is friendless. The repetition of the word 'touchable' her clearly brings before our mind's eye the alienation and the subjugation of the untouchables. The touchables were proud that they were touchables and looked down upon the untouchables In her Critical works also, she has made use of this device . The repetition of" they will "highlights the selfish attitude of those in power, the extent to which they can go to get their work done and once their work is over, conveniently forget those who have helped them. Till then, they keep the carrot dangling before the innocent people." They will turn to you because you are all they have. They will love you even while they despise you. They will trust you even though they know you well. They will vote for you even as you squeeze the very breath from their bodies. They will drink what you give them to drink; They will breathe what you give them to breathe. They will live where you dump their belongings (P135 AIJ) She further adds:" You are their mother and their father. You are the Judge and the Jury, you are the World. You are God "(Pg135AIJ).In The God of Small Things, Roy has very selectively made use of repetition. An already alienated Ammu dies in a lodge." That night in the lodge, Ammu sat up in the strange bed in the strange room in a strange town. She didn't know where she was. She recognized nothing.(pg 161-162 TGST).

In The God of small Things, Roy has made use of Vernacular Syntax as well. she has added the peculiar Kerali flavour to her fictional work making it more factual. The fiction comes closer to fact. Paradise Pickles and Preserves was a literal translation of Ruchi Lokathinde Rajavu " When Comrade Pillai learns about Estha,his spontaneous reaction is Aiyoo paavam" (Pg 131 TGST)

It means a poor fellow. Poor not financially, but due to unfortunate circumstances. The workers at Paradise Pickles factory stop their work when Chacko arrives with Sophie Mol. They whisper, Chacko saar Vannu' (pg 171 TGST). In The God of small things Roy has also made use of Compound words in her sentences..Some examples

are: Thunder-darkness of the day. (pg 10t) Hymn book holding arm (pg 5) Tea-coloured minds (Pg 10), Gulf money houses(pg 13) Easy to understand laugh (143). She has exploited her skill at coining new words. They have not distorted the meaning but added flavour to her description. In her critical works, Roy has made use of Parentheses

"Once again we are pitifully behind the times not just scientifically and technologically (ignore the hollow claims) but more pertinently in our ability to grasp the true nature of nuclear weapons, (AIJ 4) Again in the same essay she writes:" And when all our larders are bursting with shiny bombs and our bellies are empty (deterrence is an exorbitant beast), we can trade bombs for food (Pg 10AIJ) Roy has made use of this technique in The God of small Things also

" Estha had always been a quiet child. so no one could pin point with any degree of accuracy exactly when (the year, if not the month or day) he had stopped talking. (Pg10TGST), Mammachi's Pro-Chacko and anti- Ammu attitude is clearly stated, "There is very little that any one could say to clarify what happened next. Nothing that (in Mammachi's book) would separate sex from Love or. Needs from Feelings (P9 328 TGST)..Yet another feature of her syntax is the extraordinary use of verb less sentences..They are short but pregnant with meanings, equally effective as a subject -verb-agreement sentences" .In November, after a hair-raising bumpy bus ride to shilling, amidst rumours of Chinese occupation and India's impending defeat, Estha and Rahel were born. By candle light.(Pg 40TGST).Ammu left her husband and returned to her parents in Ayemenem.To everything that she had fled from only a few years ago. Except that now she had two young children. And no more dreams.(pg 42TGST).At the Semantic level Roy has made a wonderful use of similes, As Marjorie Boulton remarks:" A Simile is very like a metaphor, in that it makes a comparison, but in a simile we use a word, generally like or as to show that it is a comparison,.. A simile may be used in order to make something clearer or merely as an ornament". Laws like POTA are like buttons on a TV. You can use it to switch off the poor, the troublesome, the unwanted" (Pg 23 OPGE) In The God Of Small Things she describes Estha. He was wearing a long sleeved red shirt with a pointed collar and black drainpipe trousers.. His puff looked, crisp and surprised. Like well whipped egg white" (P.137 TGST).

Ammu explains to Rahel the nature and intensity of cough.



Phlegm is like fruit. Ripe or raw. You have to be able to tell, (Pg 161 TGST) Baby Kochamma has abandoned her garden. The condition is something like this, "Left to its own devices, it had grown Knotted and wild like a circus whose animals had forgotten their tricks", Roy has also employed Metaphors in her critical and creative works.

As Middleton Murry remarks: " A metaphor is the result of the search for a precise epithet. It is no more ornamental than a man's Christian name"

In the God of small things, Roy describes the orange drink, lemon drink. Man."His Yellow teeth were magnets. They saw, they smiled, they sang, they smelled, they moved. They mesmerized"

(pg 102 TGST) In her critical essay on Democracy in the Collection The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire She writes: "Democracy is the Free World's whore Willing to dress up, dress down, willing to satisfy a whole range of taste, available to be used and abused at will. (Pg 15 OPGE)

In The God of Small Things, the description of Ammu's Critical condition in the lodge is made. The faraway man is the breath." Sometime close to midnight the... faraway man who lived in her chest had stopped shouting". (Pg 162 TGST.) Roy has also made a wonderful use of phonological devices in her Creative and Critical works,. Her skillful use of alliteration shows her studied observation .As Dr. Sharad Rajimwale observes, "Alliteration is a matter of sound and not spelling". She describes " Powerful people know that ordinary people are not always reflexively ruthless and Selfish (Pg 50 OPGE)." Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits have appeared like a team of trolls on their separate horizons." This is the picture of grown-up Rahel and Estha., Her, description of the Ayemenem house is thus.

"The doors had not two but four shutters of panelled teak so that in the old days, ladies could keep the bottom half closed, lean their elbows on the ledge and bargain "Visiting Vendors without betraying themselves below the waist. Technically, they could buy carpets or bangles .

A Nuclear war will have its consequences. "Burned and blind and bald and ill, carrying the cancerous carcasses of our children in our arms , where shall we go?(Pg6 AIJ)

She has also made use of mis-spelt words in The God of Small Things. Comrade Pillai asks Rahel : I think so you are in Amayrica now? (Pg129 TGST) Rabel's revelation of her husband gives him almost a shock. May be he thought the daughter was on the footsteps of her late mother

"Die-Vorced? His Voice rose to such a high register that it cracked on the Question mark (Pg-130 TGST) He further comments,:

"Mo - Stunfortunate. (P 130-TGST) This is a clear case of phonological deviation. Comrade Pillai is unmindful of that. Phonological deviation is seen in Lenin's rendition of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. I come to berry Caesar, not to Praise him Theevil that mendoo lives after them The goodisoft interred with their bones. (Pg 275 TGST)

The Separate words are joined by Lenin. Come to bury, the evil men do, good is oft are those words. Distortion of spelling is also seen in words, Music Written as myoozick (95) Useless written as yooseless (312) Exactly written as eggzackly (324)

As Beena Gopinath Points out "In The God of Small things, the evocation of childish language is mainly achieved through a Phonological play with words resulting in linguistic and stylistic exuberances"

Roy has made a very fitting and suitable to the occasion use of Onomatopoeic words in The God of Small Things. "Baby Kochamma pulled Rahel down and she landed on the seat with a surprised thump (P71 TGST). Estha put on the tap and water drummed into plastic bucket. -(P-91 TGST)

Ammu said. "Two clicks to close the suitcase" click and click (P-114 TGST)

As M.H. Abrams says, Onomatopoeia, sometimes called echoism, is used both in a narrow and in a broad way. "Roy has made use of this device in a limited and narrow way."

By way of conclusion, it can be said that Roy has very artistically made use of the I linguistic devices. She has made use of only those which she thought would serve the purpose of enhancing the beauty of her work and driving home a point which was important in her critical work. Unwanted and superfluous use she has avoided. In both her creative and critical works, Roy has shown herself as a Commander in chief of her ideas and her theme and used the devices as a supporting staff

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