

ARUNDHATI ROY'S ORTHOGRAPHIC AND TYPOGRAPHIC EXPERIMENTATION WITH ENGLISH IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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Abstract

This paper investigates Arundhati Roy's orthographic and typographic abrogation and appropriation of English in *The God of Small Things*. During the colonial era, colonizers' language has gained currency in the colonized lands by overshadowing all the native varieties. However, the writers of the postcolonial countries have challenged this hegemonic power of colonial language and subverted it into their own context in order to make it compatible with their own socio-cultural realities. Consequently, English has lost its colonial status and developed into a number of postcolonial varieties which are quite apart from the Queen's language. This research paper aims to analyze Roy's abrogation and appropriation of orthographic and typographic structure of English in the linguistic context of India in *The God of Small Things*.

Key words: *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy, Orthographic and typographic, Abrogation and appropriation of English, Indian English, Postcolonialism.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, is the well known addition to the South Indian English literary writings. Published in April, 1997 in Delhi, the novel became the bestseller within no time. In October, 1997, it won the most prestigious British literary award, Booker Prize, which established Roy's status on International literary horizon, as a new novelist of striking ability; particularly in her use of English language.

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy satirizes politics, public administration, colonial legacies and cast ridden Indian society. The novel is a story of "Dizygotic" twins, Esthappen (Estha) and Rahel, set in a small town; Ayemennem of Kerala, India. On a fateful day, the story takes a tragic turn when it is revealed that their mother "Ammu," a divorcee; has an illicit relation with an untouchable, named Velutha and their half-British cousin Sophie Mol accidentally drowned. The subsequent events destroyed the Ipe family and shattered the childhood of Estha and Rahel. This domestic drama, though; is the story of Estha and Rahel; brings the socio-political background of Indian society; particularly its caste-system which outlaws inter-caste relationships and the marginalization of women among other themes into the lime light. Therefore, commenting on the thematic nature of the novel, Roy herself has described it in several different and sometimes contradictory terms. Such as, in one of her interviews with

Lewis Brukes Frumkes, she claims that her novel is about everything. However, in another interview she holds that, *The God of Small Things* is “not about history, but biology and transgression” (Rao 13) and in Taish Abraham’s interview, she has rejected the perception that *The God of Small Things* is about “our culture”. These contradictory views of Roy refute the claim that the novel is about everything. However, the novel reflects a conflict between human nature and social conventions of Indian society, as Roy herself concludes that, “It is really a way of seeing, a way of presenting the irreconcilable side of our culture, and our ability to love so deeply yet to be so brutal” (92). So, it’s a constant struggle between the “love laws” and Indian social laws that shapes the novel as a whole, together with Roy’s distinctive narrative style and innovative use of English language.

However, written in an era that is historically known as postcolonial; the novel is a true reflection of postcolonial literature and carries its various characteristics in which the abrogation and appropriation of English language as an attempt of linguistic decolonization is the most prominent one. English language has sparked countless debates in postcolonial world due to its colonial heritage. Therefore, the postcolonial literature which emerged in the former colonies reflects the tension between the colonial language and postcolonial attempts of linguistic decolonization. As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin postulate that the postcolonial literature has evolved in its present form out of the experience of colonization by asserting in the foreground its tension with the imperial power, a significant feature of this literature entails the use of English language in a discourse that reflects the postcolonial sentimentalities. Although, postcolonial writers like Frantz Fanon, Wa Thiong’O and a number of others have completely opposed its use, majority of others have proposed a strategic resistance against the dominance of English language by abrogating and appropriating it into their own contexts in order to produce an effective counter discourse. Thus, abrogation and appropriation of language becomes a strategy that many postcolonial writers use, though under different labels; to challenge the colonial narratives in a language that has the ability to bear the burden of their experiences. This creative experimentation with English language and artistic structure of *The God of Small Things* has compelled the critics and reviewers to take notice of it. As James Wood claims that, the greatest pleasure of *The God of Small Things* lies in its language, which makes the novel a play field of linguistic innovations. Ramlal Agarwal comparing her with Salman Rushdie asserts that the creative exploitation of Roy’s English resembles with Rushdie’s felicity of expression in using English. Apart from Rushdie, her language innovations often analogized with James Joyce and her reflection of regionalism with William Faulkner. The way she has used English language in her novel is strikingly different from the Standard English. She has broken the Standard English into pieces and then put all those pieces back together in a vernacular style. This break up of Standard English helps Roy to dislocate the language from its origin and relocate it in Indian soil. As a result, her English bears the touch of Indian soil and flickers with Indian spirit, which is a defining characteristic of postcolonial English. Boehmer asserts that the novel is unmistakably postcolonial in nature and fabricates Indian variety of English by “expanding, distorting, excavating, disconcerting” Queen’s English (67).

Roy has used the linguistic strategies of abrogation and appropriation to abrogate and appropriate English in the Indian context. Abrogation is the process through which has rejected the categories of the imperial culture, it’s aesthetic, its notion of the correct usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning “inscribed” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 38-39) in the words. And through appropriation, the language is made to “bear the burden” (Ashcroft et al 38-39) of Roy own cultural experience. By employing both these strategies of abrogation and

appropriation in her maiden venture, *The God of Small Things*, she has redesigned English and freed it from the so called rigidity of the British variety and then appropriated it to develop another variety of English which is Indian in nature and reflects the postcolonial tendency of resistance. Commenting on the tendency of resistance of postcolonial literatures, Tiffin says that "Post-colonial literatures/cultures are thus constituted in counter-discursive rather than homologous practices, and they offer counter-discursive strategies to the dominant discourse" (as quoted in Kossew 14). Her novel is, therefore a true reflection of the literature that is, "always written out of the tension between the abrogation of the received English which speaks from the center and the act of appropriation which brings it under the influence of a vernacular tongue" (Ashcroft et al 39).

Thus, Roy's use of English reflects the Postcolonial writers' attempts to abrogate and appropriate the Standard English, in order to examine and scrutinize the native history of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial times, its spatio-temporal coordinates, its cultural shifts, its repressions and oppressions, its struggle for the subjective space and most pressingly its own unique existence. Roy has used the language as a tool to consciously decentralize and decolonize the language. The matchless power with which she has blended English language with Indian sensibility is quite remarkable. By abrogating the Queen's English, "Roy appropriates it with flamboyant confidence of style, making language sing, sigh, scream, weep and grimace on her own terms" (Raveendran 100). In a similar vein, Taisha Abraham also feels that 'through collaged words, regional aphorisms, and culturally eclipsed meanings, Roy tore up the colonial roots of English language by creating her own "Locusts Stand I" (89).

Therefore, the rejection of conventional rules of writing in *The God of Small Things* shows Roy's remarkable guts, besides talent, in the development of Indianized variety of English, with its distinct orthographic and typographic style. The Marxist literary critic Aijaz Ahmed despite his differences with Roy's ideology and political opinion says that, "She is the first Indian writer in English where a marvelous stylistic resource becomes available for provincial vernacular culture without any effect of exoticism or estrangement" (103). While, Prabhavati asserts that the beauty of Roy's novel lies in the use of Indian English and varieties of her innovative techniques. She deviates from the standard conventions of English language by using regional words and sentences, unusual capital letters, italics, sentences without subjects, miss-spellings, one word sentences and abnormal word order in *The God of Small Things*. Consequently, Roy's novel considerably contributes in the development of Postcolonial variety of Indian English that re-asserts Roy's socio-cultural identity. Using this theoretical framework, this research work attempts to analyze Arundhati Roy's orthographic and typographic experimentation with English in *The God of Small Things* as an attempt of linguistic decolonization.

Result and Analysis

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy abrogates the Standard English to challenge the linguistic inheritance of British colonialism and then appropriate it to express her postcolonial experiences. Although the novel is written primarily in English, yet, the way English is being used is quite rare. She willfully abrogates the conventional patterns of English and then appropriates it to express her postcolonial experience. Therefore, in this process of abrogation and appropriation, she has used various strategies, in which the most important is the childishness of the twins' language; as the story is told mostly from the twins' perspectives, particularly Rahel's, many words and actions are altered in their views who split words into

syllables, read backwards, create rhymes and songs, and use logic that would make no sense to anyone but a child. Apart from the children language, the use of glossing, untranslated words, Interlanguage, code switching, code mixing, lexical and syntactical innovations and typographical deviations to suit her Malayalee idiom and Indian experience also play an important part in the abrogation and appropriation of English in Indian context. However, this research paper's focus is only on the orthographic and typographic abrogation and appropriation of English in *The God of Small Things*. Therefore, for the sake of convenience, the researcher has divided this textual analysis into two main sections. Section one deal with the orthographic strategies while in section two, typographic analysis has been given.

Orthographic Strategies

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy has used a number of orthographic techniques, including miss-spellings, reversal of the order of letters, word-breaks, hyphenation and capitalization to challenge the dominance of English and to develop a distinct style of Indianized variety of English. Through these innovative techniques, Roy on the one hand has abrogated the orthographic fabric of English language and on the other, appropriated it to communicate her socio-cultural sensibilities.

Use of Miss-Spellings: Roy has deliberately miss-spelled various words to mock the assumptions of correct usage, associated with Standard English. In this way, Roy has not only rejected the colonizers' notions of their linguistic superiority but also blurs the boundaries of correct and incorrect usage. There are numerous examples of miss-spellings throughout the novel, such as "Amayrika" (Roy 129) instead of America, "gnickers" (149) rather than knickers, "Orlways" (36), for always, "mint" (134) for minute, "Porketmuny" (102), instead of pocket money, "Yooseless goose"(312) in place of useless goose. These examples clearly defy the Standard usage of English.

Similarly, certain words are being spelled on the basis of their pronunciation, though there is no close connection between spelling and pronunciation in English. Such as, "Angshios" (49) rather than anxious, "Myooozick" (95) for music and "eggzackly" (324) in place of exactly which reflect the sarcastic use of language by the writer . The distortion of the word "pronunciation" into "Prer NUN sea ayshun" (36) shows the intention of conveying the actual sound of the word. These words, though, fall under the category of phonology; they are being discussed here due to the orthographic representation of actual sounds.

Word-Play: Roy has used various types of word-plays throughout the novel; including the writing of words in reverse order. Such as, during the visit of Miss Mitten, Baby Kochamma's Australian Friend to Ayemennem house, the twins' backwards reading annoyed her because she believes that there is only one right way to speak English. Therefore, she says that "she had seen Satan in their eyes" and raised objection on their improper speaking (58). However, uninfluenced by Miss Mitten's annoyance, children have taken this opportunity to say it backwards, "nataS ni rieth seye," (58). Although at surface level, it creates only comic effect in the novel, Roy has used it to reflect the psychological desire of the formerly colonized to reverse the colonial experience and re-take their socio-cultural lives of the pre-colonial era.

Again, during the tragic night of boat capsizing in which Sophie Mol lost her life and Velutha was caught and tortured to death by the police, when the twins brought into the office of Inspector Thomas Mathew, behind him a red and blue board acrostically displays the word Police stands for, as:

Politeness

Obedience

Loyalty

Intelligence

Courtesy

Efficiency (8)

Estha read aloud from the board on the wall (313) in a reverse order, as:

‘sseenetiloP,’ he said. ‘sseenetiloP, ecneidebO,’

‘ytlayoL, ecnegilletnI,’ Rahel said.

‘ysetruoC, ycneiciffE’ (313).

With the reversal of the letters, Roy, on the one hand ironically depicts the contrast between the word Police and inexplicably discourteous behavior of Inspector Thomas Matthew in the context of the novel while on the other; she ridicules the dominance of English. Thus, this technique of word-play has a deep symbolic importance in the novel, through which Roy raised voice against the psychological impacts of colonization.

Another type of word-play, which can be noticed in the novel, is unusual word-breaks. It is also a phonological aspect of the language, but due to the orthographic representation, it is being discussed under the heading of orthographic strategies. Roy splits different words to communicate the spirit behind them, on the pattern of regional languages. Such as the words in Estha’s car song, “Rej-Oice in the Lo-Ord Or-Orlways” (36) has been broken with the help of hyphenation at wrong junctures. Although, these distorted spellings are an attempt to convey the actual sound of these words while articulating, it also signifies the underlying ideology of the postcolonial writers to indigenize the imperial language by distorting, mangling and splitting it into pieces.

Similarly, the disyllabic word ‘later’ becomes “Lay.Ter” (146) to communicate the intimidating command implied by Ammu. An ordinary barnowl, turns into “Bar Nowl” (193) in a child’s view of its surrounding and Comrade Pillai’s use of “Die-vorced” and “Mo-stunfortunate” (130). Further, through the childish misrepresentation of the phrase, “locus standi” as “Locusts Stand I” (57), writer has criticized the socio-cultural patterns of oppression against women. Because the Indian laws give the inheritance rights, only to male members of the family and women are completely denied.

Opposite to the words-break, Roy has busted words together without any consideration of the conventional rules of the punctuation marks, to create something new. Such condensation of words can be seen in the following examples, as “Whatisit? Whathappened?” (6), “Thiswayandthat” (101), “longago” (97), “lemontoolemon” (105), “CocoColaFantaicecreamrosemilk” (301), “I cometoberry Ceaser, not to praise him...” (275). These examples of the telescoped words seems quite meaningless, but it sheds light on the phenomenon of brutalization of English language in the hands of postcolonial writers.

Use of Capitalization: English is a stress-timed language in which the stressed syllables are pronounced at approximately regular intervals and unstressed syllables shorten to fit this rhythm. Whereas, a number of sub continental languages are syllable-timed, in which each syllable takes roughly the same amount of time. This aspect of English language has been rejected by Roy, with an extensive use of capital letters to emphasize different situations, ideas, thoughts or peculiarities of different characters based on the pattern of regional languages. Consequently, it seems that Roy’s English follows the grammatical rules of the sub continental languages instead of Queen’s English.

There are numerous examples of capitalization such as, while describing the over imaginative nature of Rahel, during the funeral scene of Sophie Mol, the writer says that Rahel imagines as Sophie Mol is being awake at her own funeral and showing Rahel, “Two Things” (5). Similarly, when the circumstances compelled Ammu to send Estha back to his father in Calcutta, writer describes it as “Returned” and when he comes back to Ayemennem, after the lapse of twenty-three years, it is termed as “re-Returned.” At another place, depicting Baby Kochamma in her advanced years, the novelist remarks that she “used her windows for specific purposes. For a Breath of Fresh Air. To Pay for the Milk. To Let Out a Trapped Wasp” (28). Further, similar treatment has been given to the description of Rahel and Lenin, Comrade Pillai’s son, forced visit to “Dr Verghese Verghese (Kottayam’s leading Paediatrician and Feeler-up of Mothers)” (131), since both Rahel and Lenin were suffering from the “same complaint -- Foreign Objects Lodged up their Noses” (131). Lenin’s awkwardly passive state, even when he is being brought before the doctor, is narrated humorously by the writer in the following words, “Perhaps he was a little too young to know that Atmosphere in Waiting Room, plus Screams from Behind Curtain, ought logically to add up to a Healthy Fear of Dr V. V” (132).

Further, the same technique of capitalization occurs at the end of chapter 8, when Kochu Maria, the house maid observes the beach play of Rahel and Sophie Mol. And writer describes her observance as:

Kochu Maria watched with her cake-crumbs
The Fond Smiles watched Fondly.
Little girls Playing.
Sweet.
One beach-coloured.
One brown.
One Loved.
One Loved a Little Less. (186)

These textual examples clearly reflect that the way; Roy has abrogated and appropriated the conventional rules of English, irrespective of what is and what is not proper, as if she has used her own language.

Use of Subject-Less (Elliptical) Sentences: The extensive use of subjects-less (elliptical) sentences, based on single words, phrases and non-finite clauses; in *The God of Small Things* is another syntactical feature of Roy’s English, which clearly violates the syntactical rules of Standard English. These subject-less sentences, though lack one of the basic ingredients of a complete sentence, can be declared as sentences by virtue of their initial capital letters. However, they successfully communicate their meanings on the basis of their contextual placement. For example, when Estha was being sent to his father in Calcutta, the writer describes it in the following manner, “He had a Tiffin carrier with tomato sandwiches. And an Eagle flask with an eagle. He had terrible pictures in his head. Rain. Rushing, inky water. And a smell. Sicksweet. Like old roses on a breeze” (32). The context makes it abundantly clear that these elliptical sentences referred to the tragic night in which Sophie Mol gets drowned during the boat capsizing in the flooded water of the Meenachal. And Velutha caught and inhumanly tortured by the policemen. In another scene at Abhilash Talkies, when Ammu goes back to bring Baby Kochamma and Rahel, due to Estha’s feeling of sickness, the writer comments on the atmosphere inside the theatre as, “The back-inside smell. Fan shadows. Backs of heads. Necks.

Collars. Hair. Buns. Plaits. Ponytails. A fountain in a Love-in-Tokyo. A little girl and an ex-nun”(110).

Similarly, Meenachal River, which appears in Estha and Rahel’s dreams very often, is also described in a similar fashion:

They dreamed of their river.

Of the coconut trees that bent into it and watched, with coconut eyes, the boats slide by. Upstream in the mornings. Downstream in the evenings. And the dull, sullen sound of the boatmen’s bamboo poles as they thudded against the dark, oiled boatwood.

It was warm, the water. Greygreen. Like rippled silk.

With fish in it.

With the sky and trees in it.

And at night, the broken yellow moon in it (22-23).

The above cited examples clearly point out the way Roy has abrogated and appropriated the orthographic structure of English language, while trying to develop a new orthographic style for Indian English based on the patterns of regional languages.

Typographical Strategies

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy has used typography as a tool to abrogate and appropriate English language. Her typographical abrogation and appropriation consists on extensive italicization, spacing, brackets and single worded paragraphs.

Use of Italics: Italicization is the most prominent typographical feature of the novel, which is used as a tool to abrogate and appropriate the English language in print-medium. Roy’s extensive italicization includes words, sentences and even entire paragraphs which clearly deviate the conventional rules of English writing. Roy’s chief purpose of italicization in *The God of Small Things* seems to emphasize, to make ironic statements, to create comic effects or to express strong feelings and emotions. Her italicization is not confined only to non-English words, she has italicized a large number of other words including the names of books, films, firms, newspapers, theatre, pickle factory, dictionary meanings, excerpts from letters, slogans, quotations, impositions, priest's funeral songs at Sophie Mol's burial and reverse readings etc. Therefore, it can safely be said in the context that Roy’s italicization in the novel develops a new typographic style of Indian English.

Generally, she has used italicization as a typographical indication of emphasis, such as, “*She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem*” (39), “*but simply because he didn’t believe that an Englishman, any Englishman, would covet another man’s wife*” (42). Non-English words of Malayalam, “*pallathi,*” “*paral,*” “*korri*” and “*karimeen*” (203), the Hindi word “*chhi-chhi poach*” (51), the Tamil “*Rombo maduram*” (323) and the French, “*Et tu? Brute?*” (83) are also italicized by her.

The italicization is also notable in the names of books, such as “*The Reader’s Digest World Atlas*” (42), “*The Tempest,*” “*Jungle Book,*” and “*The Adventures of Susie Squirrel*” (59); words, like “*Anglophile,*” and “*disposed,*” (52) which are searched for their meaning in dictionary; excerpts from famous books, such as, “*Gatsby turned out all right at the end . . .*” (38), “*Where the bee sucks, there suck I*” (59), and “*It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done*” (61); name of films, like “*The Sound of music*” (35), “*Meet Me in St Louis*” and “*The Bronze Buckaroo*” (40); songs, like “*Rej-Oice in the Lo-Ord Or-Orlways*” (36) and “*Some people like to rock, some people like to roll*” (37); Malayalae expressions, like, “*Ruchi*

lokathinde Rajavu,” besides its translation as, “*Emperors of the Realm of Taste*” (46); the logo of “*Paradise Pickles & Preserves*” (46) factory; the newspaper name, “*Indian Express*” (50); advertisements, such as “*Things go better with Coca-Cola*” (62); imposition lines, as in “*I will always speak in English*” (36); slogans, such as “*Inquilab Zindabad*” (66); the communist term “*Comrade*” (65); the political treatise, titled “*The Peaceful Transition to Communism*” (67); caste names, like “*Parayan*,” “*Paravan*” and “*Pulayan*” (69), and Baby Kochamma’s “*How could she stand the smell?*” (78)

Roy also used italicization to describe the curiosity of Rahel and Estha about certain English words, as in, “*Rahel thought that boot was a lovely word. A much better word, at any rate, than sturdy. Sturdy was a terrible word*” (46). Again, when Ammu has told them about the cuff-links, they have thrilled behind the logic of cuff-links which is depicted by the writer in italicized words, as “*Cuff + link = Cuff-link. . . . Cuff-links gave them an inordinate (if exaggerated) satisfaction, and a real affection for the English Language*” (51); and “*(Humbling was a nice word, Rahel thought. Humbling along without a care in the world)*” (54), etc. Roy has also italicized the twin’s habit of reverse reading, as “*ehT serutnevda fo eisuS lerriuuqS. enO gnirps gninrom eisuS lerriuuqS ekow pu*” (60). The profusion of such examples, including the ones listed above in various other contexts, also serves to establish the fact that through excessive use of italics in the novel, Roy has rejected the so-called superiority of the imperial culture and language.

Use of Brackets (Parenthetical structure): Another typographical feature of *The God of Small Things* is Roy’s extensive use of parenthetical structure. Parenthesis is basically an explanatory word, clause or sentence inserted into a passage without any necessary grammatical connection (Freeborn 68). The bracketed words can consist of selected pieces of additional information which may or may not be important. But it mostly provides authorial comments in order to supplement the contextual understanding, if not the plot itself. As, in the very first chapter of the novel, writer narrates the life of Rahel after the demise of Ammu, her mother in a parenthesis:

After Ammu died (after the last time she came back to Ayemenem, swollen with cortisone and a rattle in her chest that sounded like a faraway man shouting), Rahel drifted. From school to school. She spent her holidays in Ayemenem, largely ignored by Chacko and Mammachi (grown soft with sorrow, slumped in their bereavement like a pair of drunks in a toddy bar) and largely ignoring Baby Kochamma. In matters related to the raising of Rahel, Chacko and Mammachi tried, but couldn’t. They provided the care (food, clothes, fees), but withdrew the concern. (15)

In the above quoted parenthetical reference, the writer gives vital details in brief regarding the death of Ammu, an incident that is the tragic center of the novel. While the psychological trauma experienced by Chacko and Mammachi at the tragic and untimely death of Sophie Mol is also communicated the writer in the form of parenthesis to add emphasis.

At several other occasions in the novel, Roy has given bracketed information which, though actually irrelevant, becomes the part of the narration and functions to link the disconnected thoughts that shuttle between various time and place zones. For example, “Rahel at the bathroom door. Slim-hipped. (“Tell her she’ll need a Caesarean!” a drunk gynecologist had said to her husband while they waited for their change at the gas station.)” (92). This bracketed incident occurs while Rahel is in America before she gets divorced, and this flashback in the narrator’s memory takes the reader from present to the past, with the provocation for the thought just being the slimness of Rahel’s hips. Another similar treatment of the parenthetical

information is to be found where Rahel is impressed by the enormity of Baby Kochamma's legs, during the toilet scene at Abhilash Talkies, as:

Rahel studied her baby grand aunt's enormous legs. (Years later during a history lesson being read out in school – The Emperor Babur had a whitish complexion and pillar-like thighs – this scene would flash before her [. . .] Poor little tiny feet to carry such a load!) (95).

Here, Rahel's thoughts are depicted as progressing unnaturally--from the time of narration of the incident to that of one which takes place years later. Similarly, the translation of Malayalam folk and film songs in parenthesis is more evident along with the boat song sung by Estha in the Pickle factory. As a whole, Roy has used the technique of brackets in *The God of Small Things* to give her own take and reflect the innermost feelings of the characters that remain hidden from the eyes of the reader in normal mood of narration. Besides this, Roy's use of parenthetical structure in the novel has symbolic meaning as well, which reflects the internal life of the oppressed cultures, in the presence of a dominating culture and language.

Single Word Paragraphs: Another, typographical characteristic of Roy's novel is its use of single word sentences and paragraphs. She has rejected the syntactical order of the sentences, while writing single word sentences and paragraphs. In this way, Roy has not only abrogated the syntactical order of Standard English, but rejected its typographical conventions as well. Such single word paragraphs as follows:

Flying. Whightless.(98)
Entered.
Loved.(78)
Wild. Sick.Sad. (159)
Slimy. Warty. Croaking. (187)
Up.
Down. (293)
Gate.
Road.
Stones.
Sky.
Rain. (285)

These single word paragraphs are a unique addition in English's typographical fabric. That clearly reflects the postcolonial writers' attempts to bring English language under the vernacular influence, so that it can carry and transmit their socio-cultural realities.

Use of Space: Spacing is another extraordinary feature of the novel, through which Roy has adulterated the typographical fabric of English language. She has used unusual spacing throughout the novel; however, it is quite noticeable on page number 33 and 34 of chapter one. Page number 34 consists of a single sentence, that is also the last sentence of chapter one, which is being separated from penultimate text by more than half a page gap. Moreover, the writer has typographically indicated the incompleteness of the sentence by the use of elliptical dots, as "HOWEVER, for practical purposes, in a hopelessly practical world . . ." (34). Visually it seems an afterthought that contrasts the last section of the chapter, where the writer tries to locate the

exact time when “it all began” (33). Then says, “That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much” (33).

However, in this sentence, the writer has reached at a conclusion and decides to begin the story, at least on practical considerations, from a more recent time. Chapter two which begins with elliptical dots, provides a logical continuity of chapter one when it completes the elliptical sentence of the previous chapter and tries to provide a logical beginning to the story as, “a skyblue day in December sixty-nine (the nineteen silent)” (35).

Similar spacing is to be found on page numbers 251, 252, 265 and 266 of chapter thirteen of the novel, which begins with Sophie Mol’s first day at Ayemennem and then the story shifts back to narrate the details of Chacko and his English ex-wife Margaret’s initial encounter to their marriage and post marriage life . In between these events, the point of view shuffles from Sophie Mol to Chacko and Margaret, and then the tragic death of Sophie Mol. However, the incidents lead to the actual tragedy that takes place after a spatial delay of about half a page, in a typographically distinct manner as, “IT WAS ABOUT NINE in the morning when Mammachi and Baby Kochamma got news of a white child’s body found floating downriver . . .” (252). In order to express the magnitude of the tragedy, Roy has found the incapacity of English language and used unusual spacing and capitalization to narrate the unfortunate coincidental events that contribute to her death and the events thereafter (252-265). Again, the narration shifts towards the arrival of Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol at Ayemennem, and the writer indicates something unusual with capitalization and spacing, as, “SORROW, HOWEVER, was still two weeks away. . .” (266).

Further, Roy has used the same technique of unusual spacing on page numbers 282 and 283 in chapter fourteen, when the narrative shifts, after a vacant gap of more than a page, from Chacko and Comrade Pillai to Velutha, who was coming back from the city, totally unaware of the day’s unfortunate happenings, “VELUTHA CAUGHT the last bus back.” (283), again the writer relies on capitalization to communicate the emotional setbacks received by Velutha in the hands of Mammachi first and then Comrade Pillai. While, the heart-rending scene at the Cochin Harbor Terminus, on page number 323 to 326 of chapter twenty, compels the writer to violate the conventional typographical rules, to describe the emotional intensity of Estha, the seven-year-old, separation from his whole world, namely his most beloved mother and twin sister, Rahel. Then after a wide gap of more than half a page, the story turns its focus on Rahel and Estha as grown-ups, and begins with capitalization, “TWENTY-THREE YEARS LATER, Rahel, dark woman in a yellow T-shirt, turns to Estha in the dark” (327).

Besides these, Roy has also used the regional dialects and slang words, with orthographic representation in place of phonetic script, to indicate the peculiar Indian pronunciation of English. A typical Malayee use of English is discernible in Latha’s recitation of “Lochnvar” and Comrade Pillai’s use of English.

Comrade Pillai, the self-proclaimed bilingual, is the true representative of Indian English, in the novel. He violates the standard norms of social behavior that is inherent in English, at different occasions. For example, when he meets Rahel, after her return from America and asks her highly personal questions which are against the expected social behavior of English.

Further, his use of articles is based on the patterns of regional languages, such as, “He is good worker.” (227), and “For you what is a nonsense, for masses it is something different” (279). Similarly, his use of preposition reflects the influence of Indian languages, when he says, “send him off” instead of “send him away” (278).

The use of verbs also reflects the regional influence, when Comrade Pillai uses progressive aspect with be + verb, as, “He’s standing first in class. This year he will be getting double-promotion” (275). The influence of regional languages is also visible in the use of declarative statements. Such as, when Comrade Pillai comments on the silence of his son, Lenin, in the presence of Chacko, he completely disorders the usual subject, verb, object order of the sentence, as, “In front of visitors only he’s quite” (274). The use of intimate kinship terms, like “uncle”, “aunt,” where, there is no relationship at all, is also a peculiar quality of sub-continental culture, which lacks in English culture.

Thus, the detailed study of the orthographic and typographic strategies i-e use of misspellings, word-play, upper case letters, elliptical sentences, extensive use of italics, parenthetical structures, single worded paragraphs and un-orthodox spacing in the novel suggests Roy’s skillful abrogation and appropriation of English language in Indian context. She has deliberately defied all the conventional rules of correct usage in *The God of Small Things* and fused the fabric of English language with sub continental vocabulary, idioms, collocations and mannerism. This artistic replication of imperial language by Roy clearly indicates that language is a tool that can be used for different purposes in different circumstances. The colonizers used it as the language of domination while postcolonial writers have abrogated and appropriated it to adapt it in their own socio-cultural fabric. Instead of accepting the prescribed standards of Queen’s language, Roy has not only questioned the conventional rules of language but she has also devised her own rules its usage which are typically postcolonial in nature. Thus, she has discarded the imperial centrality of English by abrogating its standard rules and appropriating its syntactic structure in Indian context instead of following British English.

As a result, her novel reflects the true spirit of postcolonial literature, which challenges the colonial legacies in one way or the other. The Booker Committee has declared, “Roy as an architect in literary circle molding language in all shapes and sizes as was never done before at least in the Indian literary context” (as quoted in Surendran). Therefore, it can be safely said that Arundhati Roy’s novel is a milestone in the abrogation and appropriation of English in postcolonial Indian English Fiction in which she imbibes the characteristics of Indian culture with a spirit of resistance in order to reclaim her land, her language, her history and the memories of pre-colonial era. Thus, it can be said that the excellence of *The God of Small Things* lies apart from its thematic perspective, in its use of language that is English in letter but Indian in spirit.

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