Parody as a Postmodernist Technique to Reinterpret Fictional Forms: A Case Study of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*

By

Maria Farooq
106-FLL/MSENG/F08

Supervisor

Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Assistant Professor

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MS in English

To

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

2011

1. Humor ; Literature

2. Parody ; Literature

PARODY AS A POSTMODERNIST TECHNIQUE TO REINTERPRET FICTIONAL FORMS: A CASE STUDY OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

By

Maria Farooq
106-FLL/MSENG/F08

Supervisor

Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Assistant Professor

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

Acceptance by the *Viva Voce* Committee

Title of the thesis: Parody as a Postmodernist Technique to Reinterpret Fictional Forms: A Case Study of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*.
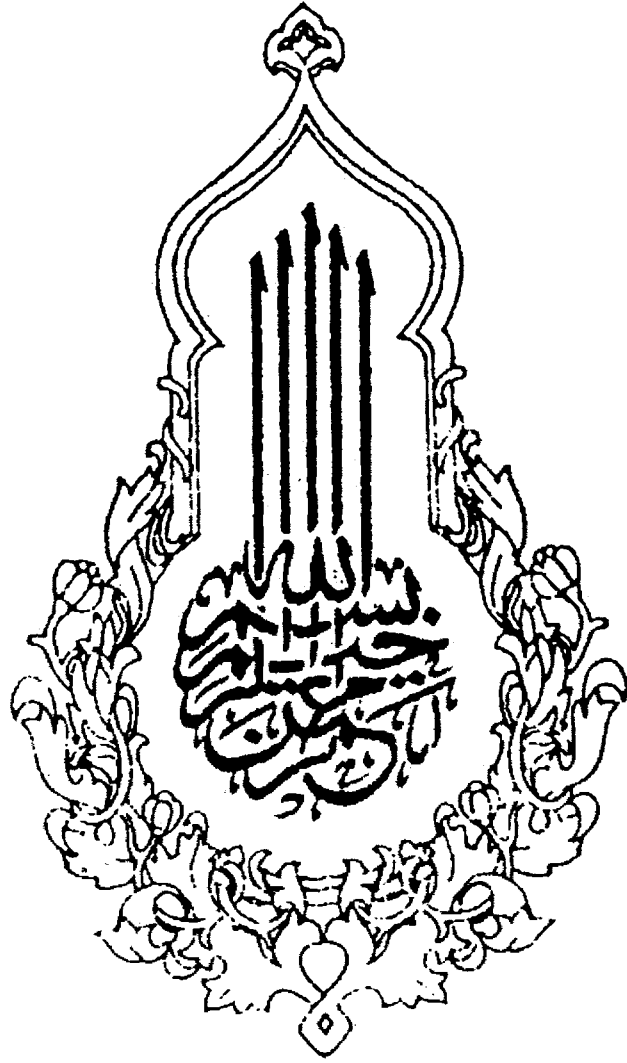
Name of student: Maria Farooq

Registration No: 106-FLL/MSENG/F08

Accepted by the Department of English, Faculty of Languages & Literature, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Philosophy degree in English.
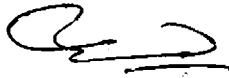
Viva Voce **Committee**

_____
External Examiner
Dr. Wasima Shehzad
Professor (Linguistics)
Department of Humanities
Air University, Islamabad

_____
Prof. Dr. Rasheed Amjad
Dean
Faculty of Languages & Literature

_____
Internal Examiner
Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad
Associate Professor
Department of English, IIUI

_____
Dr. Munawar Iqbal Ahmad
Chairman
Department of English

_____
Supervisor
Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan
Assistant Professor
Department of English, IIUI

December 16, 2011

A thesis submitted to Department of English,
International Islamic University, Islamabad as a partial
fulfilment of requirement for the award of the
degree of MS English.

To my Parents

DECLARATION

I, <u>Maria Farooq</u> daughter of <u>M. Siddiq Ul Farooq</u>, Registration # <u>106-FLL/MSENG/</u> <u>F08</u>, student of MS, in the discipline of English Literature, do hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis **"Parody as a Postmodernist Technique to Reinterpret Fictional Forms: A Case Study of Arundhati Roy's** *The God of Small Things*" submitted by me in partial fulfilment of MS degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

I also understand that if evidence of plagiarism is found in my thesis/dissertation at any stage, even after the award of a degree, the work may be cancelled and the degree revoked.

This work was carried out and completed at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.

Signatures of Deponent

Dated: 28th October, 2011

MARIA FAROOQ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

who constantly encouraged me to finish my work whenever I seemed wavering; and my father, having strong background not only in politics but also in literature, who supported me intellectually as well as materially culling the study material from Pakistan and abroad. He also kept continuous check on my work on daily-basis.

Maria Farooq

ABSTRACT

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* received a great amount of critical appreciation as regards its unique narrative structure and overall form. However, the critics missed on the cardinal aspect of its "formalistic inventiveness" which is grounded in *Kathakali* dance-drama theory of narration despite the fact that Roy herself posits the fictional theory of her novel within it. This gap in the existing critical literature has been picked up in this dissertation and studied in the framework developed through Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody. This research claims that Roy uses parody, as defined by Hutcheon, as a tool to challenge, question previous forms/conventions of fiction writing and redefine novel as a genre. In so doing, she invents forms of narration by parodic inversions of previous, whether Indian or Western, literary conventions of writing fiction. Considering the scope of this dissertation, three intertexts have been chosen to explicate the thesis statement which are: *Kathakali* dance-drama, *Macbeth*, and *Heart of Darkness*. The findings of this research cast light on the parodic inversion and reinterpretation of previous literary conventions to come up with a new, ethnic postmodern model of novel.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Study

This dissertation undertakes the task of reading *The God of Small Things* as a reinterpretation of the novel as a genre. This attempt is made by studying the role of parody as a postmodernist device in redefining the form of novel. It will also be an attempt to show through questioning the previous fictional forms it creates new forms and hence comes forward as a new postmodern model of novel. In contemporary terms, postmodernist fiction is essentially metafictional in its nature in terms of the use of formal strategies it employs to expose self-reflexivity of all the structures including itself. Metafiction is an elastic term but generally defined as a fiction that self-consciously draws attention toward itself and the process of narration. Although the term "metafiction" has been coined by William H. Gass, in a chapter entitled "Philosophy and the Form of Fiction" in his book *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (1970), Patricia Waugh in her book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984) expounds complete theory of metafiction; defining its characteristics, elaborating the formal strategies it puts to work and theorizing the metafiction keeping in view its emergence as an excessively recurrent form of novel in contemporary era. John Barth, another prominent theorist, comments on the "used-upness" of literary form in his essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967) in order to contemplate as to which strategies will renew the fictional form. Barth also ascertains that it is the ironic or satiric repetition of the earlier works that helps create a new fictional form.

Among many postmodernist literary formal devices like non-sequentiality of the plot, fragmentation of the narrative, use of pastiche and myth – the ones excessively and predominantly used in discourse – parody is one that serves as one of the cardinal characteristics that make up a metafictional work. Postmodernist theorist, Waugh, like Linda Hutcheon, is also convinced of the constructive role of parody in renewing postmodernist fiction and thus considers it as a rejuvenating tool. Hutcheon considers parody both as a ridiculing device and giving respectful tribute to what has been parodied. She thinks that parody has been excessively used in postmodern times, which is why its role is very significant in the contemporary discourse. It has been used to place "past" in a "transcontextual" relationship with present to reinterpret both and/or any one of them.

Against this background, this study seeks to investigate where and how Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is positioned in the postmodernist narrative. Keeping it in view, the first question, I raise, is which forms and practices of fiction writings (of past), in a postmodernist sense, have been employed by Roy in *The God of Small Things*? Or, in other words, to what extent the novel can be taken and interpreted as parodic metafiction? The second question is an extension of the first one but works on a broader level to recognize how the novel as a genre is being challenged and redefined employing parody as a tool by Roy in *The God of Small Things*? In short, parody being rampantly employed holds a special position as a motif in postmodern fiction. This study undertakes the task of reinterpreting novel as a genre by inculcating intertextual reference of the past using parody as a marker; using the fictional forms explicitly or implicitly in order to create a new form and yet falling prey to the same form. Considering the fact that no research has

been done on Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) from the above mentioned standpoint, my research finds its way to the literary critical discourse. However, the indication of the excessive use of intertextual references by Alex Tickle in his book titled *Roy's The God of Small Things*(2007) and Richard Lane in *The Postcolonial Novel* (2006) has been appropriately done. The intertextual references identified are: William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610–11) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1591-1595), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894), Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music* (1965) cinematic venture.

In addition to this, the critical framework used is based on the theories of parody, intertexuality, and postmodernist fiction. In my dissertation I have only focused on *The God of Small Things* as it is the first and only, until now, novel written by Roy.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Roy has employed parody as a postmodernist technique to reinterpret fictional forms, or novel as a genre, in her novel *The God of Small Things*.

1.3. Research Questions:

1. Which forms and practices of fiction writing, in a postmodernist sense, have been parodically employed by Arundhati Roy in the novel *The God of Small Things?*

2. How far can the novel be interpreted as a metafiction using parody technique?

3. How is the fictional form being challenged and redefined by Arundhati Roy in her novel?

1.4. Theoretical Framework/ Methodology

This dissertation is a qualitative study of *The God of Small Things*. Through an analysis of literary intertexts that (re)appear, it is an attempt to show how the fictional form is being challenged and reinterpreted by Roy through the use of parody. The main theoretical framework of the study is based on Hutcheon's exposition of parody as a postmodernist literary technique. However, since parody comes under the framework of intertextuality due to its excessive use of past literary references, among other postmodernist literary techniques such as pastiche and mosaic, a general framework has been developed from intertextual theory in order to analyse the intertexts exploited in *The God of Small Things* by Roy.

The primary sources are the novel, *The God of Small Things*, by Roy and Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (2000). The secondary sources include the books/articles/reviews written on and about *The God of Small Things* on the said topic.

Hutcheon has developed a model of postmodernism[1]. One of the important features of Hutcheon's postmodernist theory is that it *contextualizes* art in past and therefore never disposes it off, unlike other theorists who are engaged in the discussions of "Death of History". Hutcheon, in her ground-breaking work *A Poetics of Postmodernism,* mainly concerns herself with the inquiry of disciplines of aesthetics, narrative and history. She sees postmodernism as an "attempt to re-historicize — not de-historicize — art and theory" (1988: 225). Her main emphasis, as a postmodern theorist, lies on the viewpoint that there is a transcontextual relationship between present and past.

4

She defines postmodernism as "fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political" (1988: 4) against the backdrop of it being ahistorical or nostalgic[2]. The idea of postmodernism as an inherently paradoxical and self-reflexive phenomenon has been carried forward by Hutcheon as the "one that uses and abuses, installs and subverts, the very concepts it challenges — be it in philosophy, aesthetics theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography" (1988: 3). Hutcheon believes that postmodernism challenges both artistic subjectivity and historical objectivity without rejecting either one. It also contests binary oppositions between art and life with the aim of framing a flexible and open discourse that emphasises the constructedness of art as well as life. She believes in the dissolution of the binaries and distinctions to offer a more open approach to critical discourse. For her, postmodernism is not nostalgic; it is ironically critical of the past and in order to do so it does not destroy or undermine past but reinterprets it by (re)contextualizing it in the present. However, the past is available to us only in the form of texts (1988: 128).

Hutcheon also asserts that postmodernism functions an important part by problematizing the idea of subjectivity. According to her, the subject cannot exist to be a coherent discrete meaning-generating entity. In her view,

> ...the decentered perspective, the "marginal" and ... the "ex-centric" . . . take on new significance in the light of the implied recognition that our culture is not really the homogeneous monolith (that is middle class, male, hetero- sexual, white, western) we might have assumed. The concept of alienated otherness . . . gives way ... to that of differences, that is to the assertion of, not centralized sameness, but of decentralized community-another post- modern paradox (1988: 12).

5

In her version of postmodernism, the above-discussed thought finds expression in postmodernist fiction as what has come to be known as *historiographic metafiction*. This particular genre takes into account self-reflexivity of fiction as well as history, and in so doing, it not only challenges but also reinserts the already established truths about fiction and history both. This rewriting of history and fiction takes place through 'ironic parody' technique, which is at the heart of postmodern aesthetics.

Parody[3] has sporadically either been associated or equated with other techniques such as burlesque, allusion, quotation, travesty, plagiarism, pastiche, and satire. In all forms, with a little difference in focus, its main function was thought to be a critical one. It is here that Hutcheon's conception of parody takes a leap forward and differentiates parody from all the other techniques mentioned-above and at the same time, broadens the scope of its definition. Hutcheon asserts that it is precisely the "difference" that distinguishes parody from other techniques and it is not only the critical function that it performs in critical sense but a "combination of respectful homage and ironically thumbed nose that often characterises the particular kind of parody" (2000: 33).

Hutcheon's main standpoint from which she constructs this theory is that there is no denying the fact that earlier forms of parody have ridiculed the backgrounded text (for example, Pope's mock epic) (2000: 57) but modern art forms in general do not necessarily ridicule or mock it. Modern art uses the background text as a "weapon" to position "contemporary under scrutiny" rather than exercise it as a "target". On this foundation, she constructs her theoretical model of (post)modern art which is incessantly parodic but of a different nature. Hutcheon carries out a detailed analysis of the history of parody, its function and its relation with other forms. She emphasizes that "parody ...is

related to burlesque, travesty, pastiche, quotation and allusion but remains distinct from them" (2000: 43). She elucidates these differences, in her book entitled *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (2000), one by one to theorize the concept of modern parody.

The difference between parody and pastiche has been of significant importance in critical literary discourse. Hutcheon and Jameson[4] have contrastive definitions of both. It is significant to note that their expositions of parody and pastiche depend on their contrastive stances of postmodernism. Hutcheon repudiates the earlier differentiation between the two on the grounds of parody being associated with mockery or ridicule asserting, at the same time, that parody works more by difference whereas pastiche functions by similarity with its intertexts (2000: 38). Hutcheon concedes that both parody and pastiche are "acknowledged borrowings" (2000: 38) elucidates the difference between pastiche and parody and this is what differentiates parody from plagiarism. On the other hand, Jameson defines pastiche in total contrast to Hutcheon's conception of parody. For Jameson, pastiche is,

> …like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter. (1991: 17)

For him, then, postmodern representation is "blank," a mere imitation of an imitation and pastiche is "blank parody" (1991: 17). In other words, pastiche is the reproduction of past styles without any meaning and offers nothing but fragmentation. It may be nostalgic and reminiscent but in complete break with the past.

7

Another technique plagiarism seeks to "conceal" (Hutcheon 2000: 39) the intertexts whereas parody involves the reader to interpret the background of the parodied text. Furthermore, travesty and burlesque are differentiated on account of the "issues of intention" with parody; because parody, according to Hutcheon, may not only "ridicule" (2000: 40) but also give a respectful tribute to the parodied text. Furthermore, the characteristics which determine the difference between parody and quotation are two: one is "difference of intent" and the other is trans-contextualization repetition of parodic text in contrast to absence of "critical distancing" (Hutcheon 2000: 41) in quotation. However, quotation is "structurally and pragmatically" near to parody which is why it becomes a "form of parody in modern art" (Hutcheon 2000: 41). In general, allusion has also been confused with parody but, for Hutcheon, it stimulates the two texts concurrently "through correspondence – not difference, as is the case with parody" (2000: 43). In other words, simply put, what parody shares with all the above-mentioned techniques or genres is that "its repetition is always of another discursive text" and "its 'target' is always intramural in this sense" (Hutcheon 2000: 43). The fact that parody is "intramural" in nature is in contrast to satire's extramural (social and cultural) nature highlights the difference between the two. She explains that both parody and satire use irony as a rhetorical strategy or trope; however, if satire derives itself from the "pragmatic function of irony... one of signalling evaluation, most frequently of a pejorative nature" (2000: 53), parody depends rather on irony's "semantic" function – equivalent to "semantic inversion" or "anti-phrastic" (2000: 53). She further discusses a complex chart of overlapping between satire and parody and their dependence on irony which complicates their relationship manifesting, at times, satire as "parodic satire" where

respectful parody has been used as a vehicle for "satiric ends" (2000: 58) and satiric parody where parody at times confirms the traditional role as a ridiculing tool that further confirms Hutcheon's own definition that parody may work as a "critically constructive as well as destructive" tool as Richard Horwich affirmed as well (1988: 220).

The theory of metafiction is also significant as far as the methodology of this dissertation is concerned. Therefore, its theory presented by Hutcheon, Barth and Waugh is presented in Chapter 3. Its application also by different novelists the world over is part of the same chapter.

Intertextuality is a part of indirect methodology of this dissertation since the framework of parody is based on it. The theory of intertextuality claims that every text has a relationship with other texts, and on account of this relationship multiple meanings can be deduced. It is a complex network that forms relationships with past and future texts. Graham Allen in his book *Intertextuality* explains this relationship as:

> Texts, whether they are literary or non-literary, as viewed by modern theorists, as lacking in any kind of independent meaning. They are what theorists now call intertextual. The act of reading plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings, is to trace those relation . . . Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all other texts to which it refers and relates (2000: 1).

It is clear the meaning evolves as a result of communication between a text and intertext. The term "intertextuality" was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966 in a series of articles on Bakhtin written in *"Tel Quel."* However, the original concept has been propounded by

9

Mikhail Bakhtin under a different name called "Dialogism". Bakhtin defines "any text as

an utterance" (as cited in Morson & Emerson1990: 2). He argued that all the texts are in

dialogue with the previous social or political texts and thereby register their responses to

them. According to Bakhtin,

> "any utterance—the finished, written utterance not excepted—makes
> response to something and is calculated to be responded to in turn. It is but
> one link in a continuous chain of speech performances. Each monument
> [written utterance] carries on the work of its predecessors, polemicizing
> with them, expecting active, responsive understanding, and anticipating
> such understanding in return." (1984:72).

The other major theorist besides Kristeva is Roland Barthes. As a matter of fact, the

value or interpretation both ascribe to the concept of intertextuality differ a great deal

from Bakhtinian dialogism. Barthes maintains that "any text is an intertext" (1981: 39).

He also suggests that previous texts are always present in the present ones. He further

posits his theory of "death of the author" and 'writerly text' on the theory of

intertextuality. On the other hand, Julia Kristeva considers an inter-text a mosaic of the

previous codes and intertextuality as the transposition of an entire system of signs and

codes to the other (1980: 60).

Insofar as this dissertation is concerned, intertextuality provides a foundational

concept for the further development of theoretical framework of parody. It neither deals

with the theoretical and critical debate of intertextuality nor with what

meanings/interpretations are ascribed by various theorists of intertextuality. It simply

confines itself to the intertextual relationship of the texts with the intertexts. I take into

account the explicit intertextual literary references mentioned by Roy for the purpose of

parodic relations. She mentions names of novels/plays/movies as well as the respective characters which come into a contrast/comparison with *The God of Small Things*. She mentions *Kathakali, Heart of Darkness, The Jungle Book,* and *The Great Gatsby,* Shakespearean plays *The Tempest, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, The Sound of Music,* and *Modern Times (Charlie)*. Considering the scope of this dissertation, I will analyse *Kathakali, Heart of Darkness* and *Macbeth* only. This selection has been made on the criteria that since the overarching structure of *The God of Small Things* forms intertextual relationship with conventions of *Kathakali* tradition that has a harmonious combination of literature, music (Sangeetham), painting (Chithram), acting (Natyam) and dance (Nritham)[5], it is important to keep variety of intertexts a part of this analysis. Therefore, the selection I have made corresponds to the inclusion of various genres: drama, fiction, theatre.

Further criteria for the selection of various intertexts are mentioned below:

- *Kathakali* – theatrical play, has been chosen as representative of Indian tradition against which Roy constructs her own model, and also because it represents theatre, a different genre.

- *Macbeth* – a classical play has been chosen on the basis that, of the four Shakespearean plays, it is the most pertinent for this study because of its formal similarities/differences.

- *Heart of Darkness* – a modernist novel, has been chosen on the basis that it has been massively quoted in Roy's novel, and also because it is representative of modernist fiction.

To sum up the theoretical framework and the objective, it can be observed that this study seeks to investigate role of parody in reinterpreting *The God of Small Things* as a reinterpretation of the novel as a genre. In order to carry out the task, this study takes into consideration the manifest intertextual references (movies, plays, and novels in English) in the said novel. So in a nutshell, this study analyses how through parodic self-consciousness of literary conventions, Arundhati Roy has come to reinterpret the novel as a genre by presenting another model finding its place into the broader scheme of fictional theory.

1.5. Chapter Division

In the **first chapter** the background and rationale of the study, theoretical framework, and significance of the study is presented. The **second chapter** called "Literature Review" consists of a critical analysis of the available material on parody in general and postmodernist parody, in particular, with special reference to Linda Hutcheon's concept. Furthermore, it incorporates an analysis of existing critical work carried so far on *The God of Small Things* in relation to the above-mentioned theoretical framework in order to locate the gap which the present study seeks to fill. The **third chapter,** "Historical Overview of Fictional Forms", carries out a survey of fiction in general and postmodernist fiction in particular to determine the overall context of the postmodernist fiction and the literary techniques that it employs to construct metafiction. The **fourth chapter** called "Analysis of *The God of Small Things*" includes a detailed textual analysis of *The God of Small Things* to understand the role of parody in order to reveal the history, and reinterpretation of genre. **The final chapter** includes the outcomes of the study along with suggestions.

1.6. Significance/ Rationale

The contemporary fiction in English has defined and redefined itself time and again in the wake of experimentalism in literature. This study seeks to explore one such experimentation with the form of fiction which challenges and redefines formal techniques of novel. It is an appropriation of traditional genre from Indian culture, yet defining and reinventing it at many points. In this area of studies, Gabriel Garcia Marquez also experimented with the fictional form and came up with model of magic realism which is clearly embedded in the his own cultural foundations. His own fiction is the explication of his model of Magic realism. Similarly, Toni Morrison also experimented with the form of fiction and appropriated the model of jazz (music) in her most celebrated novel *Jazz*. This is another example of experimenting with form and appropriating it to one's own tradition. In this context, the present study holds a special significance. There has been a lot of critical debate on the structure of Roy's *The God of Small Things*, but none so far has explored the appropriation of *Kathakali*'s model.

This study is a significant endeavor in highlighting the role of form in South-Asian fiction. This study will also be beneficial to the students and instructors in South-Asian Literature in English. It emphasizes the importance of studying formal aspects of this literature which is seen to be playing significant role in shaping or representing writer's identity as a South-Asian. Moreover, it will also be helpful to future researchers, in Pakistan, as it breaks their long-held inclination to work on thematic aspects of literature and will enable them to think of research works differently. In other words, it presents a new possibility to them to look at work from formal perspective.

Notes

---

[1]Postmodernism is a highly debatable term in contemporary critical theory. Its characteristics and key features cannot be underpinned under an umbrella term since postmodernism itself rejects any such totalizing narratives. In the *Beginning Postmodernism,* Tim Woods articulates that "the origins of postmodernism appear to be completely confused and underdetermined; and perhaps appropriately so, since postmodernism denies the idea of knowable origins" (2007: 03). Not only the origins of postmodernism are intractable but its definition also experiences the same crisis that it seeks to install into every structure and metanarrative of society, politics, religion and art and so on. Among many critics Ihab Hasan also expresses the difficulty of not being able to nail down postmodernism as: "… what is postmodernism? I could propose no rigorous definition of it [postmodernism]…..for the term has become a current signal of tendencies in theatre, dance, music, art and architecture; in literature and criticism; in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and historiography; in cybernetic technologies and even in the sciences" (503). Nevertheless, there have been attempts at defining or ironically speaking 'totalizing' the essence of postmodernism by various critical theorists. Jean Francois Lyotard, Linda Hutcheon, and Fredric Jameson, are regarded as doyens of postmodern critical theory and are relevant to the theoretical framework of my research study. In this study, only their positions will be discussed for these are considered the dominant ones.

[2]See Jameson's *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism.*

[3]Parody as a technique has been a recurrent feature of literature since ancient times. Margaret A. Rose informs that parody, in ancient times, used to be considered as "comic

imitation and transformation of an epic verse work" (1993: 280) as in the case of Aristophanes who parodied the plays of Euripides. She traces a thorough perusal of the uses and definitions of parody from ancient times through modern to postmodern in the book *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Postmodern*. Traditionally, parody has also been considered parasitic of "individuality, originality and genius" (Slethaug1993: 603). Literary theorists, nevertheless, kept (re)defining parody throughout the ages. Dryden characterizes parody as the ridiculing tool; Swift ascribes it to stylistic mockery. In modern times parody further took on many different connotations and forms. Ben Johnson equated parody with the imitation of verses making it appear absurd (Rose, 1993: 281), it was further paralleled to burlesque as in the case of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* who parodied chivalric romances. Generally, ridicule and humour have been regarded the constant in the functioning of parody in works of literature/art. It was regarded a low form which was never dealt with a seriousness of purpose, however, in postmodern times, parody took a positive turn. The earlier negative lens has now been changed with a positive one to view the function and role played by parody in regeneration of literature. Rose is of the view that traditional definition of function, as defined by literary critics, has failed to analyse the broader scope of parody as a dominant tool/structure in works like *Don Quixote* and *Tristram Shandy*. Therefore modern commentators redefined the role of parody. For formalists parody has been serving as "laying bare" device (Rose 1993: 105). Bakhtin characterized parody as a "transgressive and subversive" tool – a double-voice tool (Rose 1993: 126).

[4]Fredric Jameson, another instrumental figure of postmodern theory, presents another perspective on the theory of postmodernism which has come be known as "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" in his own words. He offers an analysis of postmodern condition in the areas of politics, history and economy. He is immensely critical of the current historical situation. He presents a very pessimistic view of present owing to the loss of connection with history. Jameson believes that postmodernity has changed the historical past into a series of "blank" stylizations that can then be commodified and consumed. He asserts that the logic of late capitalism advances the effect of commodification into all areas of society and culture thereby destroying meaningfulness as a general idea. For Jameson, death of the center is equal to death of subject and it causes a crisis indicating the death of history, meaning, aesthetic inquiry, and temporality. This perspective reflects itself in many ways in key terms of Jameson's critique — simulacrum, schizophrenia, pastiche (as cited in Shirvani 1994: 292).

[5]This information has been taken from website http://www.spiderkerala.com/.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

I have divided literature review chapter into three sections. One part reviews the existing literature that applies Hutcheon's model of parody in various contexts; the second, reviews the existing literature on *The God of Small Things* relevant to the formal aspect of the novel; and the third, as part of broader aspect of novel as a genre, discusses various attempts from different regions at redefining the form and fictional techniques of novel through parody.

2.1. Hutcheon's Model of Parody in Different Contexts

A number of scholars have carried out studies on Hutcheon's model of parody. Most of them have affirmed its critical stance, broadening of the definition and the revolutionary role that parody plays in creating new forms of writing. Hutcheon's definition provided critics with framework that enabled them to view parody as a creative tool instead of destructive or mocking.

Dermot Kelly in his article "Joycean Parody and the Good Friday Accord" discusses that Hutcheon's "definition uncannily applies to the disputed territory of Joycean style in the later episodes of Ulysses where a series of public discourses – journalism, science, the law, the English novel, political orations – is relentlessly and often ambiguously spoofed" (1998: 91). Joyce is one of the most celebrated modern novelists who

17

extensively experimented with the form at all levels. Kelly demonstrates that with the help of so "undiscriminatingly" parodic (1998: 91) style, Joyce discusses the political discourses in *Ulysses*. Declan Kiberd also affirming Hutcheon theory of parody, suggests that *Ulysses* exemplifies that every distinguished piece of art/literature destroys one genre to create another. For him, "radical parody of this kind has the effect of speeding up this natural development of literary form ... a further proof that (in literature, as in politics) the urge to destroy may also be a creative urge" (1995: 324). Similarly, Douglass in his article, "Machado de Assis's 'A Cartomante': Modern Parody and the Making of a 'Brazilian' Text," articulates the view of parody as "ridiculing imitation" or "mockery" (1998: 1036) lost its significance for 20th century literature while adhering to Hutcheon's redefinition of parody. Douglass demonstrates, in this article, how the parody of Shakespearean tragedy *Hamlet* operates not only to rework the style of Machado De Assis's "A Cartomante" but the whole tradition of Brazilian literature, which is being constructively challenged and redefined by appropriating Shakespearean formal structure into the Brazilian literary tradition. He asserts that it is not a plain copying, on the contrary, it is adapting Shakespearean model to suit Brazilian literary tradition thereby implanting a fresh impulse into the 19[th]century Brazilian literature. Similarly, Allan J. Ryan in the article, "Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in contemporary Canadian Art" discusses the role that postmodern parody has played in contemporary Canadian art by turning it into a political strategy to represent "self-identity and self-representation" (1992: 59). The artists have critically reproduced images to question the historical representations of the native peoples and also to "acknowledge the aboriginal contribution to the national character" (1992: 64). So with the help of postmodern parody

what Canadian artists have attempted is to re-present the original and national cultural images to show their national identity.

2.2. Available Literature on *The God of Small Things*

A lot has been written on Roy's so far only fictional work since its publication (1997) due to its unique style and structure and also the controversial themes like corruption, injustice, child molestation, caste differences and deprivation of oppressed (women and minorities) from the social and human rights. Not only that, this novel is also a part of broader spectrum of postcolonial debate of Indian English literature. This is the reason that it has been in the spotlight up till now. The researchers have critiqued the novel from almost all major theoretical perspectives including postcolonial, feminist, psychoanalyst, Marxist, and new historic but since my concern is with the form and techniques of novel rather than theme, I discuss the perspectives from which the critics have interpreted Roy's master piece from formal perspectives.

Roy's use of linguistic devices has been appreciated much by literary critics at home as well as abroad. Gillian Beer, one of the judges of the Booker Prize, refers to it as "extraordinary linguistic inventiveness"[1]. Nevertheless, critics abroad have written full-length articles placing Roy's genius in different contexts. Prayaq Tripathi in his article "Material, Mode/Manner, Musicality with Metaphorics Multiplicity: The God of Small Things" focuses on the creative "folklorist" use of language. He also asserts that postcolonial non-native Indian writers in English like Salman Rushdie, and Anita Desai have also made a very innovative use of language. He asserts that this technique also exists in modernist writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Tripathi seems to be

defending Roy by praising the novel because of its inventive use of language, suggesting to devalue the criticism lodged against Roy on account of the novel being anti-communist. Similarly, Cynthia Dreisen in her article, "When Language Dance: The Subversive Power of Roy's Text in *The God Of Small Things*" maintains that Roy rejects conventional form with the musical structure of novel with its repeated motifs, flowing images and counterpoint techniques suggesting that her novel "presents us with a mode of female écriture" (1999: 366). She also argues that though Roy makes use of cultural motifs like *Kathakali* performances, she stresses the need of cosmopolitanism by creating and showing hybrid identities as well as images which show that she is against national boundaries and even preservation of Indian culture as she selects Kerala as the setting of novel which symbolises a feel of cosmopolitanism.

The narrative structure surrounding time has been explained in Madhu Benoita's "Circular time: A Study of Narrative Techniques in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*", who argues that Roy fractures the chronological sequence of time to bring the narrative in sync with the political markings of the book (1998: 98). Her main argument is that the novel's "fragmentary form both softens and highlights the violent contours of Roy's [didactic novel]" (1998: 106).

The role and importance of omniscient narrator and its relevance with autobiographic point of view have been highlighted by Pier Paolo Piciucco in his article "The Goddess of Small Things: Observations on the Fictional Technique of Arundhati Roy's First Novel". He elucidates that Roy, "the goddess", creates a unique and original narratorial mode of narration. He maintains that although she makes use of omniscient

narrator, it sounds like first person's view which is quite objective despite the novel being an autobiographical one. She manages to detach the reader from the emotional scenes by mixing of narratorial comments tint of cynicism and at times irony. For Piciucco, Roy is a master of small fictional techniques which in turn generate artistic impact of the whole structure of the novel.

The disruption and redefinition of tragedy has also been achieved by Roy, as David Myers suggests. He asserts that from a formal perspective Roy's novel realizes main constituents of a "true tragedy" (2005: 357). However, being a postmodernist tragedy it deviates from Greek form of tragedy but at times seems close to the concept of Shakespearean tragedy which "emanat[es] from characters and emotions that are larger and more passionate than life" (2005: 357). Myers suggests *The God of Small Things* is a postmodernist tragedy on account of the variance "from the classical Greek concept of fate" (2005: 357), having "postmodern sense of inevitability … produced by compulsive passions or by fatal character-flaws and their clash with the prevailing social system, rather than by any interaction with absconded gods" (2005: 358), and also by "mixing the genres and alternates scenes of almost unbearable tragedy with calculated play with parody, black humour, and farce" (2005: 358).

Another very important formal aspect is "spatial form" (Cavell 1993: 629). Susan Stanford Friedman argues, in context of Foucault's concept of "heterotopic spaces", in her article "Spatial Poetics and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" that Roy foregrounds space over time in the novel. She argues that *"The God of Small Things* narrativizes story as a spatial practice, one that doesn't erase time, but rather constitutes

space as the container of history and the generator of story" (2005: 203). Friedman evinces special troupes are presented as "description", "setting" or "scene" which function as heterotopical "generators of the story" (2005: 200). Being a political allegory, through these "heterotopic spaces" Roy transgresses borders and demonstrates that how gender/caste/class need to be interrogated in order to get a free nation-state (2005: 197). Hence she proves that space has been given importance over time but nevertheless has been connected to time.

Another interesting aspect of form expounded by Elsa Sacksick is aesthetics of interlacing. She deliberates upon this in her article "The Aesthetics of Interlacing in *The God of Small Things*" from the perspective presented by Jean-Pierre Richard. She examines how the principle of interlacing/crisscrossing evokes confusion and blurs boundaries of not only the form but also theme of the novel. It is maintained that, on a formal level, "several layers of time are superimposed on the same page or within a single chapter submerging the reader in a mesh of stories" to create confusion. Similarly, the interlacing of sexual relationship of Velutha and Ammu shatters "the distinction between social categories" and Rahel and Estha reveals "confusion of identities" (2005: 66). So Roy creates a tapestry; where she makes the time structure of the narrative like a fabric is interweaved, and with the help of "holes"/gaps (2005: 71) in the novel, she creates a structure like lace whereby the interlacing of form and theme occurs throughout the novel.

The most prominent aspect of postmodernist fiction is mixing of genres within one. Hari Padma Rani in her very brief note called "The Structural Ambiguity of *The God of*

Small Things" suggests that following postmodernist style *The God of Small Things* crosses the boundaries of a genre. Though it has been written like a novel, if analysed at deeper levels it is revealed that through the extensive usage of "alliteration, rhythm, repetition, figures of speech like similes, metaphors, paradoxes, and the juxtaposition of antithetical images, poetic license compel us to discern the structure" (1999: 338) of novel as poetry. She claims that self reflexively status of the novel that being a novel it also takes on the qualities of poetry which creates "structural ambiguity to the novel" (1999: 341).

On the other hand, Marta Davorak severely criticises Roy in her article "Translating the Foreign into Familiar: Arundhati Roy's Postmodern Sleight of Hand" for cleverly using stylistic motifs/techniques to make her novel marketable in the global market. She asserts that Roy has not come up with something new or unique. Rather she has mimicked Rushdie's style to a great extent in incorporating stylistic features like "... compound neologisms, extravagant capitalisation, sentence fragments and excessive paragraph breaks, intrusive parenthesis, copious metaphoric transference, Joycean "seriation and graphic" juxtaposition and heterosemiotic intertextuality" (2002: 46) in the novel. She also maintains that in order to appeal to western readership, Roy resorted to the techniques of modernist classics and also injected the element of Said's exoticism through the Indian myths. Marta also accuses Roy of appropriating the regional "Great stories" to commercialise her novel. She maintains that the themes Roy dilates upon are also worn out. It is only the posh style that helped Roy win Booker Prize and that is also because the Booker prize jury encourages and supports the efforts of the marginal and minority belonging to British former colonies (2002: 44). Similarly, Alex Tickle in his

23

article "The Epic Side of Truth: Storytelling and Performance in *The God of Small Things*" argues that Roy's use of premodern form of storytelling is a technique to appeal international market and is a marketing strategy. Tickle presumes that it is also a part of cultural politics played by Indian English novelists.

To sum up the discussion it is clear the critics have analysed the novel from different formal perspectives including its narrative techniques, use of folklore as a mode of storytelling, use of cultural motifs like *Kathakali* to make her novel more marketable in the international market, borrowing and deviating from traditional concept of tragedy, interlacing of structure of novel, and also spatial poetics from a formal perspective. However, it leaves a gap for this novel to be analysed as a reinterpretation of novel as a genre through the use of parody as a postmodernist device. This dissertation attempts to fill this gap.

2.3. Parody in Metafiction/ Unique Fictional Models

The contemporary fiction in English has (re)defined itself time and again in wake of the movement of experimentalism in literature. Fiction in English has been the most diverse area where novelists have tirelessly experimented with the form. The most important fact about experimentation is they employ parody as a tool to recreate new forms of writings/fiction. The function of parody has been creative one in the regeneration and continuous development of the fictional forms. Owing to this, most of the major theorists have affirmed the constructive role of parody in redefining form of the novel. Among the prominent ones are Patricia Waugh, John Barth, and Linda Hutcheon.

Waugh considers that parody in metafiction is a tool of positive literary evolution rather than a sign of exhaustion (1984: 63-67). Parody in itself combines two functions that of criticism and creativity; however, its former function has always been dominant in the eyes of critics. Contrastingly, contemporary theorists realise that parody has played an instrumental role in the development of novel. "It appears again and again at points of crisis in the development of novel" (Waugh 1984: 71). Jane Austen parodies the gothic novel whereby she creates a new form that is comedy of manners in *Northanger Abbey*. She explains how metafiction through parody reflects on the processes of writing which creates a new form of novel. Waugh refers to B. S. Johnson's novel *See the Old Lady, Decently* which self-consciously parodies "the conventions of history textbook and the tourist guide at a stylistics level" (1984: 72) to come up with a new form of novel that flaunts the notion of objectivity which the textbooks and guides seemed to offer. Similarly, Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* that parodically and self-consciously deliberated on the process of writing subjectively thereby coming up with a new form of novel.

John Barth, another literary critic appreciates the space for parody in fiction writing, critically remarks on the "usedupness" (1984: 53) of literary form in his essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967) in order to reflect on the possibilities of using this "usedupness" against itself to give birth to a new form. In other words, it means the fiction which ironically reflects on the process of writing fiction. For Barth, the technique of writing fiction is more important than the content. Keeping in mind this he pronounces that if any piece of art is rewritten with 'ironic intent', it equals the original work of art. This is where Barth highlights the importance of parody/satire in redefining fiction or

creating new forms of fiction. For him, his own works "*The Sot-Weed Factor* or *Giles Goat-Boy:* novels which imitate the form of the Novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author" (1984: 58) are the kind of new models of fiction. He further appreciates Luis Borges' fiction because it demonstrates composition of previous works of art (Like Cervantes' Don Quixote) in farcical mode rather than plainly copying or imitating it to create a new work of art. So Barth considers metafictional strategies with a flavor of irony or satire a possibility of regeneration or recreation of art/fiction.

In contemporary debate of preserving cultural values and traditions, form of the novel took another dimension. In the wake of the emergence of postcolonial studies, English novel has gained much importance in the third-world countries. Gayatri Spivak has consciously selected the complex style to represent Third-world identity in writing. She asserts that "one needs to be vigilant against simple notions of identity which overlap neatly with language or location. I'm deeply suspicious of any determinist or positivist definition of identity, and this is echoed in my attitude to writing styles" (1990: 38). The complexity of style has been emphasised so as to be used as a rhetorical strategy to represent the complex identity of the Third-world. As a matter of fact, writers from all over the world have chosen novel as a medium of expression and response to debates surrounding different issues. In order to deal with this, novelists have often come up with distinct forms of fiction writing. In this regard, works by Toni Morrison, Gabreil Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie are of significant importance. The fiction penned by these writers is unique in their own ways as they have followed their cultural models, specifically borrowed from music or folklores, to redefine the shapes and form of their fiction to tell their personal stories.

In this area of studies, Toni Morrison also experimented with the form of fiction and appropriated the model of jazz (music) in almost all of her fiction but especially *Jazz*. Morrison's purpose of appropriating is also a part of preservation of Afro-American cultural elements by moulding them into cultural motifs of her fiction. Being third-world representative, like other postcolonial writers participating actively in the debates, she introduced new ways of expression. The narrative techniques and organisational structure of *Jazz* is based on the principle of "improvisation" that is fundamental to jazz music. As Morrison "was very deliberately trying to rest on what could be called generally agreed upon characteristics of *Jazz*".[2] This is a remarkable example of experimentation with form and appropriation to one's own cultural tradition.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, representing Spanish literature, also experimented with the fictional form and came up with a remarkable model of magic realism which is clearly embedded in his cultural foundations. His own fiction is the explication of his model of Magic realism. Homi Bhabha also remarks that magical realism has become "the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world" (1995: 6-7). The narrative strategies, structure, use of myth and parody are all basic devices through which magical realists create their fictional worlds. Owing to magical realism's inventiveness, it can also be identified as a postmodernist technique. However, magical realism is generally believed to be an amalgamation of reality and fantasy. It has been defined by different theorists, for instance, according to Luis Leal, "… magic realism is the effort put forth by the authors to confront reality and to discover the mystery of life, especially the mysterious relationships that exist between man and his circumstances…"… "an attitude toward reality.." (as cited in Salgado 1978: 24). It is owing to the presence of 'reality' the

27

Spanish-American fiction employing this technique cannot be divorced from the representation of politics, society, and culture. The reason why it became so artistic and fresh is because the novelists got preoccupied with the transformation of "style and also the same transformation of the common and the everyday into the awe-some and the unreal" (Flores 1955: 190). The pioneers of this fictional model in Spanish literature are thought to be Marquez, and in Indian English literature Salman Rushdie.

To sum up the whole discussion, it can be stated that this study of *The God of Small Things* involves delving into the strategies that Roy employs to question and redefine traditions of fiction writing; thus, coming up with a new fictional model. It can be seen that there has been a lot of critical debate not only on the thematic but also on the formalistic aspect of Roy's novel, but none so far has explored into parodic significance of appropriating both Western and Indian traditions shaping form of the novel. This study seeks to explore the aspects of experimentation in *The God of Small Things* with form of the fiction writing which challenges and redefines formal techniques of the novel.

Notes

[1] It was remarked in Booker prize Jury. Retrieved from
http://www.sawnet.org/news/news220.html
[2] It has been mentioned in a discussion of the Novel Jazz by Toni Morrison herself.
Retrieved from (http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/nec/pici73.htm

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF FICTIONAL FORMS

The overview of fiction as a genre, and specifically in terms of its narrative techniques with reference to the concept of time, holds a direct relevance to the current research study. The drastic socio-religious changes in the late 19th and early 20th century had a profound effect not only on philosophical and intellectual thought but also a stimulating effect on the art forms. Hence, the form of the novel has been in intense flux from eighteenth and nineteenth century fiction to Modernism and then to Postmodernism. This overview will take into account only the dominant positions in the theory as well as literature, considering the element of 'fluidity' in the narratives of modernist literature taking an extreme form in postmodernist narrative techniques. The focus predominantly remains on the postmodernist literature as a metafiction; however, a short overview of modernist fiction cannot be avoided as postmodernist fiction evolved out of the former which is why a few parallels can also be drawn with reference to narrative techniques of the both. Furthermore, this brief survey of formal strategies employed in the fiction revolves around the most notably renowned novelists such as Virginia Woolf, John Fowles, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Claude Simon, Jorge Luis Borges and Robert Coover.

The most common techniques employed by modernists and postmodernists with varying intensity and different perspectives respectively include: inverted, rotating, circular, repetitive and displaced and discontinuous plots; intertextual references from past culminating into pastiche, parody, and myth as the literary devices; inclusion of multiple narrative point of views, and several narrators juxtaposed in one story, and intervention of the author into the story. These formal techniques will be elaborated in the following discussion with reference to corresponding theorists/critics and novelists which will develop the understanding of novel as a form being experimented with in order to come up with new formal interpretations and models of novel.

3.1. Realist Narrative Techniques

The form of the traditional narrative has based itself on the well-made plot, chronological sequence, and the authoritative omniscient narrator. According to David Daiches (1970), for eighteenth century novel, the expectations from the form of novel were fixed and "the standard ...was public and agreed" (1152). So the writer had to meet the expectations of the public; therefore, subsequently, their art forms had a realistic concept of plots: a proper beginning, middle and an end as expounded by Aristotle in *Poetics*. The chronological order of time, which is at the same time 'logical', had been the governing rule for fictional forms during eighteenth and nineteenth century. This view derives itself from the concept of 'singularity of meaning'. The eighteenth and nineteenth century believed in order, decorum and totalizing structures having a complete hold over the form and structure of the society as well as art forms.

Contrary to the beliefs and artistic practices of eighteenth and nineteenth century, the onset of twentieth century saw a change in fictional forms due to the impact of philosophical thought. William James and Henri Bergson have been very influential in this regard. David Daiches, in highly acclaimed book *A Critical History of English Literature,* traces the influence of both the philosophers on the plot structure of the novel:

> New concepts of time, influenced by or at least akin to William James' view of the "specious present" which does not really exist but which represents the continuous flow of the "already" into the "not yet," of retrospect into anticipation, and Henri Bergson's concept of *durèe,* of time as flow and duration rather than as a series of points moving chronologically forward, also influenced the twentieth-century novelist, particularly in his handling of plot structure." (1970: 1153)

This impact made modernist novelists question the logical sequential structure, linear narrative and logical and progressive order of the series of events in a novel. Hence, experimentation with the form of the novel started off and gave birth to variously different movements within the genre and outside the genre in the form of techniques. Imagism, symbolism, expressionism, and vorticism are among few of the literary techniques which serve as a tool to modernists to redefine the novel as genre and experiment with its form.

3.2. British Modernist Fictional Forms/Modernist Experimentation in Narrative

On a broader level, Brian McHale elucidates the differences between modernist and postmodernist fiction in his book *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987). Theoretically, he says, "postmodernist fiction differs from modernist fiction just as a poetics dominated by

32

ontological issues differs from one dominated by epistemological issues" (xii). According to McHale, modernist fiction, despite questioning Victorian form and focus of themes, still exhibits the representation of different interpretations harmonized into a totality (as cited in Mepham 1991:144) whereas postmodernist fiction offers a complete denial of it. For instance, McHale, while analysing *Ulysses* states: "the world is stable and reconstructible, forming an ontologically unproblematic backdrop against which the movements of characters' minds may be displayed" (1987: 234). Therefore, modernist fiction offers an incomplete break with the past as it seeks "recontextualization of the fragments" (1991: 142) as Mepham puts it. Corresponding to this, Patricia Waugh is also of the view that modernist fiction rejects outside reality and synthesizes itself into the reality of mind. She writes, "Modernist concerns with the mind as itself the basis of an aesthetic, ordered at a profound level and revealed to consciousness at isolated 'epiphanic' moments" (1980: 23). So, despite the fact that modernist fiction exploits metafictional strategies, it nevertheless represents the notion of the real which is akin to the eighteenth and nineteenth century worldview of a "unified whole".

One form which modernist novel took has come to be known as "the introverted novel" or in the form of technique called "narratorial introversion" as suggested by Fletcher and Bradbury in their article "The Introverted Novel". This form of novel is 'self-aware' of its fictive creation and turns its attention toward itself – toward the art of narration and the form and shape of the novel in order to reflect upon the process of storytelling. For instance, the modernist writer creates its fictive world with the help of "point of view" technique to exhibit 'the theme of the art of novel itself' (1976: 396). In this technique, novelists introduce two narrators: one is the author itself and the other is

33

the character in the novel that acts as 'a surrogate author', writing and creating the story. So the focus falls on the art of creating the fiction rather than creating a story about the outside world. Here the art of writing novel becomes the content itself (1976: 401). This technique has been widely employed by a number of writers, for example, by Joseph Conrad in *Under Western Eyes* (1911), *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and *The Secret Agent* (1907); by Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27); and by James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

Another modernist form that novel took has been theorized by Virginia Woolf, who introduced the *stream of consciousness* technique, as she could not convince her artistic genius to follow the convention of novel writing. In her famous essay, "Modern Fiction" (1919), she discusses the nature of novel and the role of a novelist in the following words:

> Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? (229: 2006)

From this concept of time as a "luminous halo", stream of consciousness technique took its birth on account of the fact that the modernist novelists were strongly influenced by Bergsonian concept of time. Woolf herself remarkably epitomised this technique into her fiction. *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) are the cases in point. She is believed to have freed modern novel of the traditional realist structures and situated it in the human consciousness which is more real and 'true to life' (Fletcher & Bradbury 1976:

408). This notion has affected all features of the novel: plot, characterisation and symbolism. Fletcher and Bradbury sum up this technique as: "We experience [in stream of consciousness] an exploration both of the aesthetics of consciousness and the aesthetics of art" (1976: 409). Randall Stevenson, in his article "Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction in Britain" (1991), carries forward the view of postmodernism as an extension of modernism which is why the techniques employed by modernist novelists are similar to postmodernist. Some of the most prominent features running parallel in both modernist and postmodernist fiction are: fiction about the art of fiction, non-linear development of narrative structure, and fragmented form and shape of the novel. On account of this, both Virginia Woolf and James Joyce are considered as modernist cum postmodernist British novelists.

3.3. Postmodernist Fictional Theory

It is generally agreed that postmodernist "metafiction" extends modernist formal strategies to an extreme form but the point where it goes against modernist scheme is the *synthesis* of meaning along the line of consciousness. Postmodernist spirit is against any kind of synthesis in terms of theme or content which is why postmodernist metafiction is devoid of any final meaning manifesting itself in any form. Although the term "metafiction" has been coined by William H. Gass, in an article entitled "Philosophy and the Form of Fiction" in his book *Fiction and the Figures of Life* (1970), Patricia Waugh, in her book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984), expounds a complete theory of metafiction; defining its characteristics, elaborating the formal strategies it puts to work and theorizing the metafiction. It is a kind of "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an

35

artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (1984: 02). It is a form of novel which self-reflexively reflects on "fictionality as a theme to be explored" (1984: 19) as a result of which we come across fiction such as Robert Coover's *Pricksongs and Descants* (1969) in which we see author intruding in the narrative and commenting on the process of writing itself, interacting with the characters and readers; writing stories within a story.

John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968), *Chimera* (1972) and *LETTERS* (1979) are also emblematic of the kind of fiction Waugh and Barth theorized. John Barth, who is not only a novelist but also a critic, critically remarks, as stated above, on the "used-upness" of literary form in his essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967) in order to reflect on the possibilities of using this "usedupness" against itself to give birth to a new form. In other words, produce "literature of replenishment" as Barth puts it. Barth also ascertains that it is the ironic or satiric repetition or revisiting of the earlier works with awareness of the present which will help create a new form. It is interesting to note that a number of titles of Barth's critical essays are also very ironic in their tone. For example, the title of the essay "Some Reasons Why I Tell the Stories I Tell the Way I Tell Them Rather Than Some Other Sort of Stories Some Other Way", and the title of the non-fiction book itself *The Friday Book: Or, Book-Titles Should Be Straightforward and Subtitles Avoided.*

The discussion of metafictional theory of novel will be incomplete without the mention of Hutcheon's *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (1980). It is a comprehensive study of the novel as a genre for it makes a case for the evolution and

continuous flux of novel with the use of various forms, modes and strategies to redefine the shape and form of novel. This book treats narcissistic narrative as a modern form of novel writing instead of postmodern. However, this form has been generally recognised as postmodern form of fiction writing. The model presented in this book will be used in the current study. Therefore, here I attempt to explain the model and the aspect which will be taken from it. Hutcheon's book is systematic study of the novel as a genre. Hutcheon proposes a model of modern metafiction that she coins as "narcissistic narrative" due to the fact that it has turned its attention toward itself, that is, toward the processes of writing fiction. Hutcheon speaks of two aims of the *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox*. The first aim is to "investigate the modes, forms and techniques of narrative narcissism." The second aim is "to study the implications of these formal observations both for the theory of the novel as a representational genre and also for the theory of interpretative and creative functions of the act of reading" (1984: 155). The narcissistic narrative is highly self-conscious and self-reflective in its nature. Both Waugh and Hutcheon agree on the point that metafictional strategies have been part of novel genre since ever; however, the difference is that of "explicity" and "degree" of intensity. Hutcheon adds to this distinction the changed role and status of the reader that sets modern metafiction apart from traditional narrative. Generally, the self-consciousness and self-reflectiveness is visible at all levels whether diegetic or mimetic in modern novel. Hutcheon has come up with a very complex model of narcissistic narrative. She has claimed that there are two modes of metafiction: diegetic and linguistic, which can be further distinguished into overt and covert forms since both modes can be found in either form "explicitly thematized or even allegorized within the

"fiction" (1984: 23). Overt form of self-consciousness works through explicit thematization of plot allegory, narrative metaphor or narratorial commentary whereas covert form operates through implicit internalization, structuralization, and actualization (1984: 23). In overt diegetic narcissism there are three main strategies that convert fictional strategies into the theme, namely: parody, allegory, and the *Mise En Abyme*. The three levels at which parody functions are: "authorial" narration, narrative conventions ("takes the form of parodic awareness of literary conventions"), and creative process (1984: 51-53). At the broader level, according to Hutcheon, there are four models/paradigms that are found in metafiction at overt diegetic level: fantasy, the detective story, game structure, and the erotic. Hutcheon further suggests that another paradigm could be parodic model but this can be considered a generic model encompassing the four explicitly observed in modern metafiction (1984: 31-33). Hutcheon asserts that John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* can be taken to be the most representative of modern metafiction. It exhibits almost all the characteristics of narcissistic narrative.

3.4. American Postmodernist Fiction

It is generally believed that John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, and Ronald Sukenick, among others, are the doyens of postmodernist American fiction. The postmodernist American fiction has been dealing with the ontological problems and hence used this subject-matter as a shaping force of the narrative. The chaos and anarchy of the chaotic self became reflected in the structure, plot, and characterisation of the narrative. In doing so, narrative writing drew attention towards the "art of writing fiction itself"; thus a radical change in narrative strategies took place from realist to modernist and then

postmodernist mode of expression. According to Manfred Putz, "subject matter and thematic concerns [of postmodernist American fiction] are transposed from problems of fictional characters to problems of the character of fiction and from there to problems of the reader's attitude towards and participation in the act of fictional communication" (1979: 293) . David Seed, in the article, "In Pursuit of the Receding Plot: Some American Postmodernists", concedes that postmodernism is related to modernism as it is "complex" continuation of the later. He quotes Peter Brooks who affirms this notion that "[the postmodernist novel reflects] a greater explicitness in the abandonment of mimetic claims, a more overt staging of narrative's arbitrariness and lack of authority, a more open playfulness about fictionality" (as cited in Seed 1991: 36). This notion is one of the most important features of the postmodernist fiction for it opens the vistas for the free play of voice and open structure in the novel.

Seed asserts that American postmodernists have employed metafictional techniques in such a way that they consider "narration as process" which is a continuous process; never leading to synthesis of structure, plot or character. The nonsequential plot is one of the most conspicuous formal techniques in both modernist as well as postmodernist fiction. But its thrust is so strong in postmodernist fiction that it never leads to any final interpretation or meaning with respect to any feature of the novel. As Seed found out that Raymond Federman arranges his fiction in such a way that every aspect and instance of it questions its own fictionality and the "only reliable sequence becomes the narrative voice which is constantly shifting in person and tone" (1991: 40). The same structure is at work in Sukenick, Pynchon, and Barth as elaborated by Seed.

Another most important feature of postmodernist fiction is the use of parody and pastiche. John Barth's fiction is the most exemplary of this technique. According to Seed, Barth's *LETTERS* (1979), "must be his most complexly self-referential work to date. It is an attempt to reuse the fictional form [used up forms] ... that of epistolary novel" (1991: 47). The analysis of *LETTERS* proceeds in Seed's words as:

> Barth introduces seven correspondents, or rather *re*introduces them since they are all figures from his earlier works, and Barth himself is projected into the diction as an updated form of 'Mr. B.', Pamela's seducer in Richardson's novel. *LETTERS* then is a "2nd cycle" isomorphic with the " 1st "... Barth plays with multiple notions of plot: love intrigue, a character trying to find historical pattern in his family's lives; and textual ordering ... Barth simultaneously reworks texts and multiplies the dimensions to resemblances. At one point it parodies Richardson, at another it seems to realize the ambition to compose a satirical work called *The Marlandiad of Ebenezer Cook*, the author of another of Barth's proto-texts, the poem 'The Sot-Weed Factor'. (Seed 1991: 47)

The above analysis makes it clear that Barth engages almost all of the features of postmodernist fiction i.e., non-sequential plot, mixing of genres (epistolary novel and history), multiple point of views, and element of parody and pastiche which makes the text typically postmodern in spirit leading no other end than to 'radical undecidability'. Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* also exhibits the story within the story techniques, ironical rewriting of the fairytales (a kind of parody), intervention of the author into the plot, distinction between the author and the reader while writing story. This is typical of Barth critical stance on the postmodern fiction visibly pronounced through the critical essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (Nicol 2009: 76).

Since the essence of postmodernism is against erecting any kind of boundaries, another related aspect of postmodernist metafictional writing is blurring the boundaries. It comes into play in Pynchon, Federman, and Sukenick's fiction when comic element is induced into their writing to blur the boundaries between high art and low art (Seed 1991: 43). It is also observed in Federman's fiction where "the sections which resemble realistic narrative are either mocked through parenthetical comments, which reduce the passages to pastiche, or are phrased as hypotheses..." (Seed 1991: 40). This is how Federman achieves what Seed pronounces as blurring "the boundaries between criticism and fiction" (1991: 41), hence, marks mixing of genres. In conclusion, it can be witnessed that all the postmodernist self-reflexive and metafictional techniques are overtly present in the postmodernist American fiction.

3.5. French (nouveau roman) Postmodernist Fiction

The term *nouveau roman* or "anti-novel" has a vital position in French literary tradition with particular reference to novelistic forms. It is representative of the transitional phase of the "inception, development and maturity" of the novelistic forms. In this regard, the research work of Edmund Smyth and Bruce Morrissette is very significant. Edmund Smyth, in the essay titled "The Nouveau Roman: Modernity and Postmodernity" traces the historical development of *nouvea roman* movement in terms of questioning and modifying form and shape of the novel. He also authenticates, as a matter of fact, that postmodernist self-reflexive literary techniques and strategies have emerged out of modernist experimentalism (whether it was an outside influence or inside). Smyth (1991), like Morrissette (1970), informs that Nathalie Sarraute's and Claude Simon, custodians of *nouvea roman* movement, both stressed the need to shift

from a classical realist structure to modernist and then postmodernist structure. As it was felt classical realist structure was unable to represent the complex realities and experiences of the modern age. For *romanciers*, sticking to the mimetic realism was considered to be "perpetuating as a misrepresentation of reality" (Smyth 1991: 56). Resultantly, a change emerged into the thinking pattern of French intelligentsia, including critical theorists and novelists alike, which led to employing variously different narrative strategies in *nouveau roman* fiction.

The advancement and impact of the critical tradition and modification of the novelist's style were running parallel in French literary tradition, according to Smyth (1991). As critics such as Roland Barthes and Jean Ricardou from *Tel Quel* group influenced the movement with their philosophical and theoretical notions of and about language. Ricardou's belief that "materiality of the text should replace the evocations of the workings of consciousness" (Smyth 1991: 66) incited a change in the language strategies of *romanciers'* writings. They shifted from modernist to postmodernist vein of thought.

As a matter of fact, history has a very significant relationship with postmodernist theoretical underpinnings. Smyth believes that Ricardou's theoretical notions converted postmodernist fiction into an ahistorical movement focusing solely on "the productivity of the language". He not only expounded a theory but also practiced it in his most original work *La Prise de Constantinople* (1965), "in which everything — characters, plot, descriptive developments, the order of events, repetitions, variations-arises from language alone" (Morrissette 1970: 166). However, Simon vehemently repudiated this

notion in his fiction. His fiction integrated textual materiality as theorized by Ricardou with 'autobiographical/historical truth'. It depicted a "return to 'History" "in simonian terms", as Smyth puts it. Simon's *Les Georgiques* (1981) and *L'Acacia* (1989) are appropriate representative instances.

Another related element is the use of myth as a literary technique. Morrissette in his article "International Aspects of the 'Nouveau Roman'" authenticates Joyce's influence on the *nauvaeux romanciers* with respect to "the structuring of the plot on the basis of a myth, usually classical, whether hidden within the work (as in Ulysses or Robbe-Grillet's *Les Gommes*) and thus tacit or unacknowledged, or openly identified by the author or his characters (as in Butor's *L'Emploi du temps*)" (157). *Romanciers* use this technique for "inner duplication" to enable the character or situations to offer multiple interpretations. In postmodernist literature, however, myth functions as parody and pastiche. But nevertheless for Smyth the use of myth amounts to parody and pastiche which "place[s] the *nouveau roman* firmly within postmodernism" (Smyth 73). Therefore, *nauveau roman* is not an exclusively ahistorical literary movement, but also a historical one in Linda Hutcheon's postmodernist theoretical footing.

So far as the narrative strategies of the novel are concerned, the most important factor remains the non-linearity of the plot due to the change in concept of time as "organic whole" as proposed by Bergson (1910). In the *nouveau roman,* the plot of the novel has undergone transformations due to the impact of not only the philosophical and critical thought but also the foreign influence of 'modernist canon'. Through an analysis of Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute and Michel Butor's fiction, Smyth (1991) tries

43

to show that the transformation of the fictional forms started from 'non-linear' but psychological narrative. Morrissette and Smyth both accede to the presence of *stream of consciousness* or "inner voice" technique, which also reflects foreign influence received from James Joyce in the French fiction authored by Nathalie Sarraute, Michel Butor, Claude Mauriac, and Claude Simon. Since stream of consciousness is a modernist technique for the reason that it still advocates the synthesis of meaning in psychological narrative. Therefore, we see that while mapping down the modernist canon, Smyth shows that "many of the Simon's novels dramatize the attempts to impose order and meaning on the chaos of reality and history ... His work is intimately concerned with epistemological questions" (1991: 63). This analysis also confirms McHale's thesis that postmodernist and modernist fiction differ on the philosophical plane. The former is concerned with ontological questions and the later addresses the epistemological concerns. So, the modernist French fiction still orchestrated itself on "singularity" of doctrine, despite, according to Smyth, the stylistic innovations of style such as "... the long and digressive sentences, the accumulation of parentheses, the sustained use of the present participle, the increasing lack of conventional paragraphing and punctuation are all deployed in order to convey simultaneity of perception, in a manner reminiscent of both Proust and Faulkner" (1991: 63).

Another shift from modernist to postmodernist narrative strategies has also been witnessed in the *nouveau roman* fiction. The most celebrated novelists, Nathalie Sarraute and Robbe-Gillet, incorporated this shift in their later fiction. For instance, Gillet's novel *Dans le labyrinth* (1959) "presents permutations and combinations of a set of elements subject to revision, repetition, and repetition with variation" (1991: 66). Further novels

including *La Maison de rendez-vous* (1965) and *Projet pour une revolution a New York* (1970) exhibited radical and drastic change in terms of their language and structure as in these novels "the linear and temporal progression of the narrative is disrupted by the non-stratified discourse of the text" (1991: 67). In conclusion, it can be observed that the *nouveau roman* explicitly exhibits the shift from realist to modernist and then postmodernist structure of the plot.

3.6. Spanish-American Postmodernist Fiction

The contemporary Spanish-American fiction is of a very rich character insofar as the narrative strategies are concerned. It can be equated to 'postmodernist' fiction on account of the novel and dynamic narrative strategies present in it; however, this term has not been employed by the critics for Spanish American fiction. James Higgins (1991), in his article "Spanish America's New Narrative", terms Spanish-American contemporary experimentalist fiction as "the new narrative" instead of postmodernist fiction and narrative. Maria A. Salgado (1978) also terms it as characteristic of "international" or "global" fiction. In Spanish-American fiction "the craft" was felt missing in the regionalist fiction because, according to Salgado (1978), it served as a didactic tool for the reform of the society. The narrative devices — composition, form, and stylistic trends, were compromised at the expense of conveying the 'moral' lesson to the readers. As a result of which the fiction was read "as socio-political documents under the assumption that they reflected with great "authenticity" a variety of problems symptomatic of backward societies" (1978: 20). But this absence was immensely felt by the new generation of Spanish American writers wherefore without compromising the

socio-political and ideological relevance of the fiction, they carved out a "new narrative" which quenched the thirst of "art for the sake of art" mood. There is variety of strategies adopted by Spanish American writers which may be termed as postmodernist in nature, despite the hesitation of critics to be labelled as such.

The most important factor repeatedly emphasized is contemporary Spanish-American fiction is deeply ingrained in tradition because it registers the quest for creating "an autochthonous expression" (1978: 23), as Salgado (1978) puts it. Spanish-American fiction has a history of its own like English, French or American. It is partly reliant on and has emerged in reaction to its "regionalist" fiction and partly influenced by European and North-American fiction (Higgins 1991: 92). The new novelists absorbed and assimilated foreign influences and came up with their own original contribution to the literature of the world. Their literature is intrinsically bound up with their own cultural history for their agenda is to represent Spanish-American identity (Higgins 1991: 92). Therefore, the desire to represent their own identity is explicitly evident in their fiction, despite having received influence from Western canon due to the impact of colonisation as well as the encounter with globalisation era.

As already pointed out that Spanish American fiction does not divorce "meaning" from its subject matter, we turn to *magic realism* as a major technique which synthesizes this essence. Magical realism has been the constant of Spanish American fiction on account of the fact that it is a home-bred technique in Hispanic literature. Owing to magical realism's inventiveness, it can also be identified as a postmodernist technique. However, magical realism is generally believed to be an amalgamation of reality and fantasy. It has been defined by different theorists, for instance, according to Luis Leal,

"...magic realism is the effort put forth by the authors to confront reality and to discover the mystery of life, especially the mysterious relationships that exist between man and his circumstances..."... "an attitude toward reality.." (Salgado 1978: 24). It is owing to the presence of 'reality' the Spanish-American fiction employing this technique cannot be divorced from the representation of politics, society, and culture. The reason why it became so artistic and fresh is because the novelists got preoccupied with the transformation of "style and also the same transformation of the common and the everyday into the awe-some and the unreal" (Angel 1955: 1905). Therefore, a change in perspective took place to make the work of art pleasurable artistically and imaginatively. This change can be seen in the fiction most notably authored by Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, Carpentier, Miguel Ángel Asturias, J. M. Coetzee and Gabreil Garcia Marquez.

Spanish-American writers make rampant use of (post)modern techniques with respect to the form and structure of the fiction. Jorge Luis Borges is one of the most exemplary of this new (post)modernist style. The questioning of the nonlinearity of the plot and mimetic realism and distrust in the "unity" of genre' is remarkably echoed in Borges' short-story "Death and the Compass". It also reflects "ontological uncertainty of contemporary man" (1991: 92). In Higgins' words the analysis of this short-story proceeds as:

> "Death and the Compass" parodies the detective story to satirize the faith
> in reason which that genre epitomizes. The story may in fact be read as an
> allegory in which the detective's attempt to solve a series of crimes by the
> use of logic represents man's efforts to decipher the meaning of the
> universe, but he himself ends up as the final victim, undone by his
> misplaced confidence in his intellect and baffled by a confusing world that
> makes a mockery of his pretensions to explain it. (1991: 92-93)

Just as Borges' narrative, Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Mario Llosa's *The Green House*, and Jose Donoso's the *Obscene Bird of Night* register the nonlinear and disruptive narrative and the questioning of mimetic realism of the traditional novel (Higgins 1991: 93).

Myth is another figurative technique employed by the new novelists which signals the fact that the relation with the *past* has not yet fallen apart. Use of myth and reinterpretation of myth into the contemporary narrative refers to another tendency within the postmodernist narrative known as use of pastiche and parody in Hutcheoneon terms. Asturia's *The President*, Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*, and Gabreil Garcia *Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude* are the best examples of this technique. To sum up this discussion, it can be observed that postmodernist tendencies are visibly recognizable in Spanish American fiction.

To sum up this discussion, it is a fact that the form of novel kept moulding itself due to the different perspectives and functions that it sought to operate on in different periods. Due to an overwhelming change in the society and its worldview, the form and shape of the novel persistently underwent changes by using the same tools but different patterning and arrangement of the formal techniques to create a particular effect. Hence, this survey will provide a background to my original study in such a way that considering the presence of these forms I will be able to examine Roy's novel as to how she creates new techniques and model of fiction writing by using some of the techniques discussed above.

CHAPTER 4

THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS AS A POSTMODERN PARODY OF FICTIONAL FORMS

This chapter deals with the analysis of Arundhati Roy's novel as a reinterpretation of novel as a genre. I propose to analyse that Roy employs postmodern parody as a tool to construct new fictional forms. The formal structure of *The God of Small Things* attracted world-wide attention. It has been internationally acclaimed due to its powerfully reverberating formal structure, which includes the use of language, myth, metaphors, nonlinear plot, parody and pastiche. Roy herself claims, in one of her interviews, that form of the novel was of ample importance to her. She took almost five (5) years to meticulously create the subtleties of the overall structure of *The God of Small Things*. She says:

> To me, the design of the book was really important ... I thought why a book shouldn't be cylindrical. Why shouldn't it go round and round? Why shouldn't you be able to open it and enter it anywhere? And so the story almost breaks the physical object of what a book is supposed to be. And the way it strolled it mattered.
>
> (Interview with Roy, June 16, 1997)

So from the beginning it is clear that the "design" of *The God of Small Things* has been carefully chiselled out. In this dissertation, I claim that reappearance of literary references have a special effect on the form of the novel considering Hutcheon's concept of parody. It is generally believed that form of the novel is as forceful and influential as the theme in *The God of Small Things*. Like the characters are breaking the "laws" at thematic level in *The God of Small Things*, the breaking of rules of fiction writing also takes place. In a

49

metafictional tradition, *The God of Small Things* draws attention toward the process of writing in various ways. Therefore, whenever Roy quotes a literary text, she enables readers to contextualise the literary past into the present (*The God of Small Things*). This warrants the analysis of the story of *The God of Small Things* through the lens of literary conventions of the past. Whether it is a movie, drama, or a novel. Roy rehandles the parodic functions of literary intertexts at thematic and structural level. This study attempts to show the significance of selected intertextual literary references of *The God of Small Things*.

Roy exploits parody as a tool to intensively play with the form of *The God of Small Things*. Both Hutcheon and Waugh, as discussed in theoretical framework and introduction of the study, assert that parody is a tool to renew the form. It has been grossly employed by contemporary writers especially novelists to break free with the traditional form of the narrative. In *The God of Small Things*, the major change in form is informed by the use of parodic intertextual references from various movies, songs, plays, and novels. Throughout the novel there is a continuous foregrounding of the literary references so looking closely at the text reveals the complex intertextual relationships between *The God of Small Things* and other literary intertexts. Every formal intervention is an inducement of a complexity of the form that is designed according to *Kathakali's* (translated as story play) narrative techniques. Every story's intersection with the story of *The God of Small Things* is symbolic of metafictionality of the novel and its parodic semblance with the past where past characters come to live in the present and in turn leave an impression on the form of the novel. This invocation is lying bare of the artifice of the novel. She has used many literary intertextual references. However, for the purpose

of this study, I have chosen three intertexts, namely: *Kathakali*, *Macbeth*, and *Heart of Darkness*.

4.1. Kathakali: Redefining the Form of *The God of Small Things*

It is an attempt to retheorise *Kathakali* into fiction. She pulls it out from its original concept and transfers it into fiction in order to establish worth of local patterns of story-telling. *The God of Small Things* is also a part of metafiction tradition of the Western postmodern novel. She refers to the metafictionality of the novel when she refers to the "Great Stories" (1997: 239)[1], *Kathakali* stories and the way they are patterned. Her comment attracts attention toward the process of writing the story of *The God of Small Things;* toward the techniques that it employs to narrate the story; and toward the grandeur of such "Great stories". Roy self-consciously glorifies her novel (story) as one of the "Great" *Kathakali* stories. She parodically and self-consciously appropriates model of *Kathakali* narrative through which penetration of the local traditional model into the tradition of fiction in English is achieved. By juxtaposing the two traditions, she harmoniously creates a new form, more often through a critique of both.

In a metafictional tradition, Roy as an author of *The God of Small Things* intervenes into the story and posits fictional theory of her own novel. She says,

> It didn't matter that the story had begun, because *Kathakali* discovered long ago that the secret of the Great Stories is that they have no secrets. The Great Stories are the ones you have heard and want to hear again. The ones you can enter anywhere and inhabit comfortably. They don't deceive you with thrills and trick endings. They don't surprise you with the unforeseen... You know how they end, yet you listen as though you don't. In the way that although you know that one day you will die, you live as though you won't. In the Great Stories you know who lives, who dies, who finds love, who doesn't. And yet you want to know again. That is their mystery and their magic. (239)

She disrupts the linear progression of the novel by inverting the rules of mystery fiction. She parodically but constructively reverses the principle of mystery. As a writer of mystery story usually withholds the plot exposition until later in the novel. Contrastingly, in *The God of Small Things* the story is revealed in the first chapter. Eventually there are no tricks or deceptions in the plot of *The God of Small Things*. No proper beginnings, no proper middles, no multiple or confused endings. However, Roy maintains the mystery by leaving one question unanswered that is *How it all happens?* This is the only mystery in the story of *The God of Small Things* and the rest of the novel is about unfolding the horrors of the death of Sophie Mol, Velutha, and Ammu; catastrophic events of the lives of Rahel and Estha that change and drive both of them into irreparable loss of their lives as well as Sophie Mol's life, Velutha's life and Ammu's life.

The overarching narrative structure of *The God of Small Things* conforms to the *Kathakali* narrative techniques. Roy disturbs the linear progression of the narrative, also defying realist tradition of narrative structure – exposition, complication, climax and then resolution – by sparingly distributing it throughout the novel. The first chapter is also a kind of exposition of the story but it is more than that (it is further discussed in the following pages). There is a forward movement of the complication — Vellya Paapen's discloses Velutha's affair with Ammu to Mammachi and Baby Kochamma; Baby Kochamma locks Ammu into the room and falsely reports Velutha as a rapist in the police station; Ammu blames children for this situation (happens in chapter 13) and Twins run away to river to row to the History House but their boat capsizes and Sophie Mol drowns (happens in chapter 16). The complication is succeeded by climax of the story - the Kottayam police finds Velutha in "History House" and beats him up till death

(happens in chapter 18); however, Inspector Mathew discovers Velutha is innocent (happens in chapter 19) Baby Kochamma tricks children to name Velutha as an abductor of the children (happens in chapter 19). However, the outcomes of climax are dispersed throughout the novel – Estha returned to his father and Ammu made to leave the house (happens in chapter 17); Chacko emigrates to Canada in chapter 1; Ammu dies in chapter 7 and Estha loses track with the reality and Rahel marries goes to America, but returns to Estha after divorce again in chapter 1. Traditionally, the story resolves in the outcomes but these incidents further complicate it by creating a huge mess in the lives of all the characters. It is a tragedy in which death doesn't lead to the resolution but further complication which has drastic effects on the lives of Ammu and her twins, Maragret Kochamma and Chacko. This kind of plot violates the convention of not only English traditional structure but also *Kathakali*'s. In *Kathakali* narratives, the hero "always emerges victorious at the conclusion of a play, the path toward that glorious resolution is always fraught with severe trials and tribulations" (Zairilli 2005: 113). It is clear that Roy challenges the traditional structure of *Kathakali* as well as English traditional fiction writing thereby creating a new postmodern form of tragedy in which people die and remain unloved; in which poetic justice is never achieved rather "end of living" happens to those who survive the physical death.

Roy employs narrative technique of *familiarization* to parodically invert the technique of defamiliarization, which is a dominant concept of 20th century art. Victor Shklovsky coined this term in an essay entitled "Art as Technique". He says,

The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. (1917: 12)

Where Shklovsky stressed the importance of making objects/symbols/techniques unfamiliar, Roy followed the convention of familiarity of tales based on the fundamental principles of *Kathakali*. The popularity of *Kathakali* dance-drama is based on the portrayal of familiar stories from Indian mythology for the audience (Zarrilli 2002:6). This is the basic premise of the model of *Kathakali*. Since the story of *The God of Small Things* is not based on the Indian mythology, Roy invents this technique to constantly familiarize the reader with incidents that are going to be narrated in the succeeding chapter(s). Roy introduces this premise parodically into *The God of Small Things* by summarizing the whole story in the first chapter, "Paradise Pickles and Preserves", hence "familiarizing" the reader. She begins the novel by summing up the core of the story, introducing every character of the novel informing beforehand and informing "who lives, who dies, who finds love, who doesn't" (239). In *The God of Small Things*, Ammu, Velutha, Mammachi, Pappachi and Sophie Mol die, Estha, Rahel, Baby Kochamma, Pillai, and Chacko continue to live. We learn that Sophie and Margaret (Chacho's ex-wife) come to India and Sophie Mol drowns in the river because their [Estha, Rahel and Sophie's] boat capsizes. Therefore Estha and Rahel are held responsible for this by Papachi's family. On account of this, Ammu has been asked to 'pack her bags and leave' and return Estha to her father. We also learn that Ammu married a Hindu out of her own volition but returns back to her father's along with twins after divorcing her husband. The

relationship of Papachi and Mammachi is also related. We also come to know that Chacko was a Rhodes Scholar, who returns to India after divorcing Margaret and after the fateful event of her daughter's death he emigrated to Canada. We also learn that Velutha is a Paravan, who falls in love with Ammu and is killed on that basis. It is a tremendous way to identify with the overarching structure of *Kathakali* and at the same time creating a new form of fictional writing. Through this technique, Roy pays tribute to the *Kathakali* tradition of narrative as Hutcheon puts forth that similarity or difference is paying homage to it.

Roy persistently exploits this new form of narrative technique throughout the novel. She incorporates the technique of foreshadowing and repetition to invent this technique. In the first chapter of the novel, Roy exploits foreshadowing to indicate future events. Afterwards, she employs repetition technique to inject the effect of familiarity by providing the crux of the succeeding event. For instance, the decisive event of Velutha's murder, on account of the cross-caste affair with Ammu, is foreshadowed in the first chapter of the novel. It is narrated in a form of memory and metaphor when Rahel recalls standing in Sophie's funeral she imagines "someone like Velutha, barebodied and shining...dropping like a dark star out of the sky that he had made. Lying broken on the hot church floor, dark blood spilling from his skull like a secret" (6) and also in a sudden shift of time and thought in *Chapter 1* recalling that "even before Sophie Mol's funeral, the police found Velutha" (31). It is repeated with concrete details in *Chapter 17* of the novel before the enactment of the actual incident in chapter 18 "the history house". In chapter 17, we are informed that the news of Velutha's murder has been reported in the newspaper as "police "Encounter" with a Paravan charged with kidnapping and murder"

55

(303). It is also informed that "a posse of Touchable Policemen crossed the Meenachal River, sluggish and swollen with recent rain, and picked their way through the wet undergrowth, clumping into the Heart of Darkness" (303). And then the actual scene of the murder takes place in chapter 18 "History House." This is how Roy achieves the desired effect of familiarity which also accentuates the trauma and tragedy of the story. Knowing that Velutha has been killed by police "yet you want to know again" (239).

Similarly, the minor and major indications and details appear in the form of memory and foreshadowing of the central event of Sophie Mol's drowning and the people responsible for it have repeatedly occurred in the novel. In the first chapter, a very elaborate hint has been given through Sophie's funeral ceremony where Estha, Rahel and Ammu are allowed to attend the funeral but "they were made to stand separately, not with the rest of the family. Nobody would look at them" (5). It was a clear indication, which appeared in the form of memory (as Rahel recalls this incident when she returns from America), that Ammu and the twins are somehow responsible for the death of Sophie which is why they are being treated with coldness at the funeral. It is also revealed in the form of foreshadowing that it is Sophie's death that has caused worst things to happen in lives of all the characters. Roy relates in chapter 1 that "it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem. Perhaps it's true that things can change in a day. That a few dozen hours can affect the outcome of whole lifetimes" (32). The 'mystery' of the known is intensified in chapter 14, when Roy familiarizes the reader that although Margaret didn't know that Estha is responsible for Sophie's death, she slapped Estha three four times. Roy again relates the crux of the actual event that will take place in chapter 16. She informs that Estha was somehow responsible for Sophie Mol's death... Estha who had

broken rules and rowed Sophie Mol and Rahel across the river in the afternoons in a little boat..." (264). And then the final enactment is narrated in the form of complete scene in chapter 16 Sophie Mol drowns. Hence, with the help of foreshadowing and continuous repetition Roy achieves the effect of familiarization technique.

There is yet another similarity at plot level with *Kathakali* tradition that in *Kathakali* performances, "at the conclusion of the main dramatic narrative, usually at dawn, there is a final dance piece, the dhanasi, that marks the end of the whole performance" (as cited in Tickle 2007: 42). In a similar fashion, Roy concludes *The God of the Small Things* with a love scene of Ammu and Velutha. Like the song in performance, the last chapter also leaves an impact of celebration of love but it actually accentuates the tragic effect of the story.

Traditionally, in *Kathakali* "gods and demons" are the characters because the stories of drama are borrowed from traditional Indian epics. Roy parodically challenges this traditional convention of *Kathakali* and redefines rules of characterisation in the novel. As a result, all of her characters are human beings. Not only this, this ironic inversion which is at once fierce goes one level further. She brings Velutha, an untouchable, at the centre of the plot of *The God of Small Things*. Roy reconstructs the theory of characterisation by defying *Kathakali* conventions. As modern novelists defied Aristotelian dramatic theory thereby creating a new genre, Roy, by challenging and questioning, also redefines the characterisation norms of *Kathakali*. Here I will analyse only those characters that question the conventions of *Kathakali* in a significant way.

Velutha is "the God of Small Things" and the "God of Loss" (265). He has been identified with the *Kathakali* character type "Pacca" (green) – "divine [heroic]

figures.....they are the most refined among the male character, being upright, moral..."
(Zarrilli 2000: 53). In *Kathakali* plays Vishnu/Krishna, and Rugmamgada fall under this
character type. Roy has made intense reversal of this in the form of the character of
Velutha. He is moral and upright but unlike Krishna he is "god of small things". He is a
devoted lover, sincere and accomplished carpenter and mechanic worker but since he is
an untouchable, he is a vulnerable human being. Despite being unprotected himself, he
provides sense of security to Ammu as a lover and to her twins as a surrogate father. This
is what makes him "god of small things". In this regard, he is heroic and divine in the
"small things". So the inversion of the character at these levels is very ironic. Inversion of
the character of god into an untouchable man who is gifted with all the best qualities of
god as a protector is of ironic nature. Roy plays intensively with *Kathakali's* norms of
characterisation.

As of the characterisation of female characters, there exist only two types in
Kathakali dramatic theory. One, 'Radiant' or 'shining' (minukku) and the other 'Black'
(kari). Either a woman is categorised as "the idealized females who conform to
standardized notions of female behavior and purity as dutiful wives and heroines ... [or]
(kari) demonesses who by nature are lustful, sexually charged, ugly, hysterical, and are
'dangerous' shapechangers able to transform themselves" (Zarrilli 2000: 56). There is no
third category for female characters in *Kathakali* theory. Roy challenges this theoretical
conception of creating extreme polarities of female attitudes. She creates a third space for
her female characters where they redefine their identities differently and in a
nonconformist way. Ammu, Rahel, Mammachi, Margaret Kochamma are very different
characters from what *Kathakali* defines a woman character to be. Since *Kathakali* is

based on the Hindu scriptures, the rules and perceptions directly come from there. Roy, being an iconoclast herself, ingrains equal amount of nonconformity into her female characters for the rules of society/religion and *Kathakali* dramatic theory.

Ammu and Rahel both are nonconformist women of the novel. Ammu does not proceed according to the norms of her family. Since her father cannot afford a dowry, she goes to Delhi to attend wedding but finds herself a husband. After having babies, she starts having issues with her husband which culminates into divorce. She returns to Ayemenem, her father's home with her twins – Rahel and Estha. Divorce is a taboo in the society. So Ammu goes against the rules of society. Her family, however, doesn't welcome her wholeheartedly, especially Baby Kochamma. After the return, Ammu forms love bond with Velutha, an untouchable. Here again she goes against the tradition of her family and society. Being a Syrian Christian, of higher caste, she is not supposed to be giving this respect to Velutha. But as Roy herself puts it "perhaps Ammu... [is] the worst transgressors" (31). She transgresses all the "laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (31). With this attitude, she doesn't conform to the *Kathakali* description of a woman character.

Similarly, Rahel, Ammu's daughter, is another character redefining the woman character. We see the events that take place in the novel through Rahel's eyes. After death of Sophie, returning of Estha to their father, and Ammu's forced leaving from the house, Rahel is admitted into boarding schools/colleges. She gets expelled from the schools three times and is an average student. She joins college of Architecture where she meets her future husband. After marriage she leaves for America but like her mother she also gets divorced. When Mammachi, writes to her of Estha's re-returning to Ayemenem,

she immediately comes back to see her twin brother. She also commits an act of adultery, "hideous grief", with her brother and becomes one of the transgressors. In short, she is also one of the woman characters that don't conform to the rules of *Kathakali* theory.

Baby Kochamma is a combination of two *Kathakali* character types which challenges *Kathakali* rules for female character types. She possesses both female "dark" and male qualities of evil characters. Two *Kathakali* characters called Kari (black) and "karunatati" (black beard) have been juxtaposed in the creation of a female character of the novel called Baby Kochamma. Kari characters are female "demonesses ... [who] are shape-changers capable of transforming themselves into beautiful maidens in order to deceive and trick their prey" (Zarrilli 2000: 55). And, *karunatati* are male characters who are "by nature schemers" (Zarrilli 2000: 55). These characteristics of being a natural schemer, and a demoness capable of transforming themselves are located in Baby Kochamma in *The God of Small Things*. She is a metaphoric demoness who appears to be taking care of the family's respect in the eyes of Mammachi by locking Ammu into the room and filing rape-case against Velutha in the police station after it is revealed to them they have a secret love relationship. But initially, she takes secret revenge from Ammu that she has been harbouring against her for no apparent reasons. But as soon as the matter gets worst, she is proven a liar in front of the police for lodging a false complaint against Velutha. She traps Estha to testify in front of police that Velutha has abducted them. She tells Estha that confessing this, he will be able to save Ammu. However, in reality she tried to save herself from being jailed. And then, to secure her reputation and in order to stop Ammu to get Velutha's case reopened, she makes Chacko force Ammu leave Ayemenem as a punishment, as Ammu's twins and Ammu herself are responsible

for the drowning of Sophie – Chacko's daughter. So she is an evil incarnate who appears to be good to others but in fact does a great harm in the lives of almost all the main characters. Velutha is murdered due to her false FIR, Ammu is ostracized from her father's house, Estha is returned to his father (who becomes quiet for the rest of his life after realising that he has been directly a cause to the loss of Sophie and Velutha's death). So the inversion takes place at metaphoric level. Also the characteristics of male *Kathakali* characters are planted into a female character. By the same token, a human character is endowed with the characteristics of supernatural character (demoness). In conclusion, it is clear that the conventions of characterisation have been parodically inverted in the novel. Like the revolts lodged by 18th century writers/modernists in the genesis of novel as a genre, it is also one of the revolts lodged to challenge and redefine the norms of characterisation.

Similarly interactions between low and high caste characters are pretty much a norm of this novel. Also, Syrian Christians (Ipe family) play the major characters in the story. It is a parodic transgression of the traditional conventions of *Kathakali* storytelling. The *Kathakali* practitioners and patronisers have been so keen in maintaining a "distance" between castes and the audience who come to watch the play. These plays used to be arranged inside the premises of temples. The "audiences at *Kathakali* performances taking place at temples or in family house compounds were governed and constrained by these rules and conventions, and did not mix across either boundaries of gender or the caste-based line of pollution" (Zarrilli 2002: 7). Roy parodically violates the principle of distance in her novel that *Kathakali* performances maintained. Roy revolts against boundaries by bringing a Paravan, Velutha, at the centre of the plot of *The*

God of Small Things. The tussle across higher and lower castes is very much a subject of this novel. Being a love story, the tragedy of Ammu-Velutha love relationship is also a portrayal of the caste tussles that transgress "the laws that lay down who should be loved and how. And how much" (31).

In a nutshell, it can be observed that Roy's attempts to "preserve" the Indian culture/tradition by appropriating *Kathakali* narrative structure into the tradition of novel in English. This novel is a self-reflexive experiment from within the Indian tradition. As Hutcheon asserts, also affirmed by Richard Horcwich that parody is a critical model that works from within to challenge and incorporate the same structure that it attempts to subvert (1988)." As a postmodern novelist, she creates a metafiction in which she not only challenges the traditional model of *Kathakali* narrative but also affirms and appreciates it by modelling her novel's narrative pattern on it. She has been able to evolve narratorial technique of "familiarization" in the genre of novel by following the *Kathakali* traditional model. In so doing, she pays tribute to the *Kathakali* tradition. She attempts to eternalise and, at the same time, critique the Indian tradition through parody thereby creating a new model of novel conforming to Hutcheon's definition that parody's "ironic trans-contextualization and inversion" (2000: 37) of the original, which "can be critically constructive as well as destructive" (*Parody* 2000:32). Here it is seen that it is "critically constructive" as a new fictional theory is being evolved through ironical inversion by Roy.

4.2. Recontextualization of *Macbeth* in *The God of Small Things*

According to Julie Sanders, the writers who adapt Shakespeare, a figure of Western culture, have two aims. Either they authenticate their own works by referring to

Shakespeare and in turn pay a tribute or they rewrite Shakespearean plays in order to "talk back" which is a part of postcolonial practices (2006: 46). Roy contextualizes Shakespearean plays into novel with the intention of demonstrating the coexistence of classical British classical literature and Indian literature/stories in Indian English literature and culture. It is part of her cross-cultural strategies, and an intensive feature of postmodernist literature. She pays a tribute to Shakespeare by parodically contextualizing his plays into her novel; however, it doesn't mean that she depends on it to authenticate the validity of her own novel.

Roy contextualizes *Macbeth* parodically into *The God of Small Things*. The character of the Witches has been pitted against the character of Estha. Formally, the supernatural characters of Macbeth have been inverted into witch-like human character in *The God of Small Things*. It is a very playful parody of the role of witches and the mantra that they chant prophesizing for Macbeth. Estha has similarities with *Macbeth*'s Witches insofar as the responsibility of the events that followed after their actions is concerned in both *Macbeth* and *The God of Small Things*. It is similar and at the same time different from the Macbethian character. One of the differences is that Estha is an innocent child whereas the Witches are evil and wicked by nature. The peculiarities of their nature are also confirmed by the inversion of 'charms'/songs in *The God of Small Things* which marks another aspect of playful parody. There is a complete inversion of the recipe and charm/wizard of *Macbeth*'s witches in *The God of Small Things* marking a parodic difference from the Macbethian character. Another formal inversion is that *Macbeth*'s prophesies take a form of presaging into *The God of Small Things*. In *Macbeth*, witches prophesize Macbeth about the future kingship. Contrastingly, in *The*

God of Small Things, Estha's witch-like appearance presages imminent catastrophe and ominosity. One of the interesting points regarding the inversion of witches' charm into the boat-song is that the former belongs to the western cultural tradition and the later to Indian cultural tradition. Roy, while suggesting simultaneous coexistence of both, replaces Western cultural tradition with Indian cultural tradition by prioritizing it.

Roy deftly contextualizes the witches of Macbeth in *The God of Small Things* in the character of Estha. In *Macbeth*, the role of the three witches has been very vital, as Macbeth's actions are predominantly influenced by their prophesy that Macbeth "shalt be king Hereafter" (Act 1, Scene 3). Samuel Coleridge confirms in the essay "On Macbeth" that "[i]n ... *Macbeth* the scene opens with superstition; ...it is connected ... with the shadowy, turbulent, and unsanctified cravings of the individual will" (2008: 212). The witches are mentioned as the "weird sisters" (Act 4, scene 3) throughout the play because they are believed to be the cause of mischief in people's lives. Indeed the mischief in Macbeth's life stems from their supernatural powers and the evil that promise to commit (Act 1, scene 1). William Wizlitt also approves that "[t]he Witches urge Macbeth to evil because of their love of mischief and because of a motiveless delight in deformity and cruelty" (2009:25). It is certain that Macbeth wouldn't have murdered the king of Scotland Duncan without the motivational push given by the witches' predictions coupled with Lady Macbeth's provocations. When Macbeth revisits the witches for further prophesies, as their previous ones come true, these prophesies also cause to accentuate the myopia of Macbeth. The witches convince him that he is invincible and thus "Macbeth is finally destroyed and his bloody career halted by a pair of prophecies: that 'none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth', and that Macbeth shall never

64

vanquish'd be until / Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill / Shall come against him" (Russ Macdonald 2002: 46-47). So the prophesies prove deceiving and the witches succeed in playing a wicked part in the fateful end of Macbeth. It is not only the prophesies but also Macbeth's will and ambitiousness that bring such an end to him.

On the other hand, Estha, a human but witch-like character, also plays a very significant role in the story of *The God of Small Things*. However, unlike the witches of *Macbeth*, he is an innocent but serious and intelligent child. He is considered to be "somehow responsible" (264) for Sophie's death. It is Estha "... – Stirring Wizard with a Puff–who had rowed jam and thought TwoThoughts, Estha who had broken rules and rowed Sophie Mol and Rahel across the river" (264). When Roy pits Estha against the witches of *Macbeth,* he is brooding over the "Two Thoughts" stirring in the "black iron cauldron" (194). Roy relates that "Estha became a Stirring Wizard with a spoiled puff and uneven teeth, and then the Witches of Macbeth" (195). This prefigures the imminent fateful event when Sophie Mol drowns on the way to the other side of river. He suffers traumatically in consequence of the circumstances leading to both Sophie's and Velutha's death. His sufferings as a child begin when OrangedrinkLemondrink Man at the Abhilash Talkies theatre sexually abuses him. It is one of the "Two Thoughts" (194) he thinks in the pickle factory, as *Macbeth*'s witch, that provoke him to seek refuge in the "History House." Had he not planned to go to the History House, Sophie Mol would not have drowned. Similarly, it is apparently Estha's "Yes" (320) to the police that brings about annihilation of Velutha. Nevertheless, Estha is a naïve innocent child who doesn't attempt to harm anyone out of wickedness of his nature or will, unlike witches in *Macbeth*. Instead he is driven by the circumstances – Ammu's anger and fear of

OrangedrinkLemondrink Man provokes him to seek refuge into the History House; and Baby Kochamma's strategy to provoke him to register Velutha as an abductor in order to save herself from "charge [of] lodging a false F.I.R. Criminal offense" (315). It is realisation of his mistakes that he becomes "a quiet bubble floating on a sea of noise" (11), abandons studies, and prefers to stay home doing household at his father's home. Estha goes to the river out of his own volition but not to cause mischief or evil. Estha's plan leads to catastrophes not only for Sophie, Maragaret, Chacko, Ammu but also himself.

The order of appearance of the witches determines its importance in the Macbeth. Since Macbeth is erected on the traditional plot structure, appearance of witches in the first scene signals that the prophesies are going to play an instrumental role in *Macbeth*'s development. As regards *The God of Small Things*, its storyline follows a postmodernist plot structure as discussed in the previous part. This scene appears late in the novel, nevertheless, Estha also has an instrumental part to play in the novel. The resemblance of Estha to *Macbeth*'s witches prefigures an ominous and fateful happening in the novel – drowning of Sophie Mol. So both are equally important but their placement is determined according to the overarching plan and intentions of both.

Roy inverts the wizard of *Macbeth*'s Witches with the boat song of Onam. On a broader level, it suggests intermingling of English folklore into Indian folklore. As the witchcraft refers back to the 16th century of British culture, when the use of witches was very frequent in the plays as it was part of their culture. Similarly, the *onam* boat song refers to Onam festival[2], which is a traditional Hindu festival in India being celebrated for centuries. It also symbolises that Roy after pointing toward the presence of English

tradition into Indian culture through Shakespearean plays, replaces it with Indian folklore suggesting a return to indigenous forms. She at first builds a connection and then ironically prioritizes one over the other. Here she seems to be exploiting cross-cultural strategies marking richness of the Indian culture/literature.

Roy inverts the frightening charm (Double, double toil and trouble/ Fire burn and cauldron bubble) (Act 4, Scene 1, 74) of the Witches with the boat song of Onam that Estha sings in "nun's voice singing" (197). The poisonous and harm-rendering charm of witches has also been ironically changed into harmless banana jam recipe signalling incorruptibility of the will of Estha unlike *Macbeth*'s witches suggesting the evil and corruption of motives to cause damage to Macbeth. The wizard of *Macbeth*'s witches undergoes inversion as "Fire burn, banana bubble" (195) where Estha is recalling banana jam recipe and stirring the cauldron containing the jam. While stirring Estha sings the Onam boat song from Snake Boat Race[3]: "thaiythaiythakathaiythaiythome" (196). He seems to invoke the river to come to his help not knowing that a tragedy will ambush him from the river. The boat gets stuck, Estha and Rahel swim through to the other side, Sophie drowns and hence a destruction availed. Estha does not instigate anyone, yet the fate turns against him while he makes effort to seek refuge. Here Roy challenges and inverts the convention of poetic justice. Those who do not commit any harm or do not take any revenge yet fall prey to fateful ends in *The God of Small Things*.

Roy also replaces the poisonous recipe of *Macbeth*'s witches (immediately following the charm in both texts) with the recipe of Banana Jam suggesting the innocence and harmlessness of Estha. The ingredients of the Witches' recipe for their spell and its powerful effect are extremely poisonous and deadly to increase ominousness

and evil in Macbeth's life. The three witches use the following ingredients: boiling venom of toad, fillet of a fenny snake, eye of newt, and toe of frog, wool of bat, and tongue of dog, blind-worm's sting, lizard's leg, scale of dragon, tooth of wolf, Witches' mummy, and cool it with a baboon's blood(Act 4, Scene 1, 75). In contrast to this poisonous recipe, Estha stirs the Banana Jam and recalls the recipe that Ammu asked him to copy in her diary. The ingredients are: banana, water, sugar, and gelatine (195). The complete inversion of the recipe and songs is done according to the context of *The God of Small Things*. The formal similarities are still there at one level such as the use of charms and songs but their purposes/intentions vary according to their respective contexts.

So it is clear, Roy parodically trans-contextualizes *Macbeth* as part of cross-cultural strategies to suggest co-existence of Western and Indian traditions in Indian English fiction. However, unlike postcolonial concerns of writing back to Shakespeare or authenticating her work, she uses past references to put "contemporary under scrutiny" (2000: 57). Hutcheon asserts that modern art forms in general do not necessarily ridicule or mock backgrounded texts, it rather uses it as a "weapon" to position "contemporary under scrutiny" rather than exercise it as a "target" (2000: 52). It is clear that Roy by prioritizing Indian tradition over Western in this juxtaposition suggests a new formalistic paradigm marking a return to Indian traditions without ridiculing *Macbeth*. Through this, she questions the contemporary practices of Indian writers in English who grossly follow the Western tradition of fiction writing.

4.3. Heart of Darkness as Cultural Critique in *The God of Small Things*

The intertextual characters and symbolism of *Heart of Darkness* throughout *The God of Small Things* leave an impact on the formal structure of *The God of Small Things*. Both the novels differ insofar as the form is concerned; however, there are thematic differences as well that are evoked through characters and symbolism. The plots of both the novels follow a different storyline but the resemblances of *Heart of Darkness* echo at various points in *The God of Small Things*. These resemblances appear in the form of inversions of characters as well as symbols. It is interesting to note that Roy violates the narrative structure of *Heart of Darkness* at all levels, which is suggestive of questioning western tradition of novel writing. By incorporating *Heart of Darkness* into the novel, Roy suggests that European cultural values are embedded in 19th century Indian culture, but the inversion suggests overthrowing of those values. In so doing, it becomes a parody which doesn't make intertext a target but a weapon to put Indian cultural under scrutiny. Let us analyse at what points does the *Heart of Darkness* intersects with the story and form of *The God of Small Things*.

Heart of Darkness recurs at many crucial points in *The God of Small Things* and has been parodied at various levels. Roy has deftly contextualized the symbolism and the characters of *Heart of Darkness* in *The God of Small Things*. The symbols and characters of *Heart of Darkness* run parallel and at times intersect with the symbols and characters of *The God of Small Things*. As we shall see the parody of the characters and *"Heart of Darkness"* as a symbol takes place at semantic as well as metaphoric level in accordance with Hutcheon's opinion that "in modern parody, another context can be evoked and then

inverted without a step-by-step, pedestrian signalling of the entire form and spirit" (*Parody* 19). The nuances of similarity and difference of *Heart of Darkness* with *The God of Small Things* are very subtly juxtaposed and distributed throughout the text. In the case of characters, Kurtz has been pitted against and in parallel to Kari Saipu and Baby Kochamma; Marlow has been identified metaphorically with Margaret Kochamma, Rahel and Estha; the colonial mission with the Police in Ayemenem; and "Heart of Darkness" as a symbol with India, Ayemenem, and the History House. Most importantly, the symbol *Heart of Darkness* is inverted into "Dark of Heartness"; a playful parody.

The symbolism, characters and geography are intrinsically linked to each other. Mysteriousness of the region enters as a theme and a point of similarity into both the novels through the characters of the novels; and is further connected to the places. As Walter Allen asserts that "the heart of darkness of the title is ... the heart of Africa, the heart of evil ..." (1954: 291). "Heart of Darkness" as a geographical metaphor runs parallel to three territories through its symbolic relevance into *The God of Small Things*. It is metaphorically suggestive of India, Ayemenem, and the "History House". Here I discuss the point of similarity and difference between History House and "Heart of Darkness" as a geographical symbol.

The "History House" and *Heart of Darkness* are likened to one another at pragmatic level in *The God of Small Things*. Both are a symbol of mystery for the characters. Marlow and Estha and Rahel both feel curious to enter into Africa/Heart of Darkness and History House/Heart of darkness. Like Marlow, the fear of darkness and unknown engulfs Estha and Rahel's hearts but despite this they feel compelled to visit the

"History House". For Rahel and Estha the "History House" (*Heart of Darkness*) is a place of refuge as well as an object of inquiry, a mystery that has to be solved but this mystery doesn't get solved ever. It can be said to be repetition with critical difference because the same fear has been reintroduced into this story but their intentions and aims are totally different. Like Marlow, the sense of adventure and mystery of history draws them toward "the History House". Chacko instils this quest into the twins to know the unknown when he refers to "the History House" while discussing Pappachi's past which is related to the colonial history of India.

The horrendous effects of *Heart of Darkness* are reintroduced into *The God of Small Things* but its intensity has been increased in the novel as annihilation of Estha takes place. He continues to live but in his subconscious mind. He never recovers from the deep scars, on his mind and heart, of the secrets that "History House" reveals to him. Slowly, his subconscious mind takes control of him and he starts living quietly in his father's home when he is returned as a punishment to have Sophie drowned in the river. So *Heart of Darkness* of *The God of Small Things* proves more damaging for Estha. He is an innocent child who has to go through the brutalities of life in India/history house. The geographical territory doesn't let him grow into a normal human being. It has an evil effect on him. On the other hand, *Heart of Darkness* incurs madness, wilderness and happens to be a damagingly influential place for Marlow as well as Kurtz. However, Marlow escapes the horrors of Africa/the Congo in *Heart of Darkness*. It doesn't bring about annihilation of Marlow; however, it does leave an impact from which he soon recovers.

Furthermore, one of the differences is that *Heart of Darkness*/Africa has never been suggestive of refuge/protection for any of the characters. It is a place which Marlow and Kurtz want to conquer and colonize. Contrastingly, "History House" is a place of refuge to Velutha when he senses danger after Mammachi directly voices disapproval of the relationship to him; Rahel and Estha also seek refuge in here after the drowning of Sophie Mol; the forbidden love affair of Ammu and Velutha grows there.

As suggested *darkness* is not only limited to the outer and physical level it also seeps into the minds and hearts of the characters in both the novels. It diffuses into multifarious connotations of darkness as we see that Marlow starts seeing darkness in African people's skin, morality and standard of their mind/knowledge as he labels them 'barbarians' and 'monstrous' as Watts (1996) maintains. Walter Allen also asserts that "the heart of darkness of the title is at once the heart of Africa, the heart of evil — everything that is nihilistic, corrupt and malign — and perhaps the heart of man" (1954: 291). This symbol is further ascribed to the moral character of imperialists along with Mr Kurtz. It will be analysed that how the moral darkness of "Heart of Darkness" reveals into two characters in *The God of Small Things*, which find direct or indirect semblance with Kurtz.

Kurtz, being an imperialist finds its counterpart in the form of Kari Saipu; and Baby Kochamma reflects the moral dark side of Kurtz. The Europeans came to this dark continent with the intention of civilizing African with their "torch-bearing" force. However, it is later revealed in the novel through the character of Kurtz and the company Manager that it is only a garb. In point of fact, their basic purpose is to collect the ivory

from the region as well as take Africans in their bondage. This wicked purpose most vividly unfolds itself in the character of Mr Kurtz and his relationship with the Company in the novel. Kurtz as well as the Company come to Africa with noble intentions of bringing civilization but turn demonic afterwards. The dark side of Kurtz reveals itself when he appears in a god-like figure brutally treating Africans. So the apparent positive side/whiteness of Kurtz is overwhelmed by the negative/darkness of his nature after getting power over the Africans. Kurtz has been assigned the duty of caretaker of Africans in the Congo. He is an Englishman — a representative of the Company (Europeans) in charge of a trading-post, a very important one, in the true ivory-country, at 'the very bottom of there" (35). He is a "petty tyrant, a dying god, an embodiment of Europe" (Moran 2000: 44). Earlier he used to worry as to how to bring the light to the Congo but as soon as he enters Congo his objectives change. His greed and lust for ivory and all things luxurious drives him into the madness. He uses force to collect ivory. He is known as a very powerful and strong person because he "sends in as much ivory as all the others put together" (35). Africans are either "brutes" or "noxious fools" for him.

Roy recalls Marlow's Kurtz in *The God of Small Things* by placing him in contrast to and in compliance with Kari Saipu. She writes,

> "To understand history," Chacko said, "we have to go inside and listen to what they're saying. And look at the books and the pictures on the wall. And smell the smells." the river, in the middle of the abandoned rubber estate where they had never been. Kari Saibu's house. The Black Sahib. The Englishman who had "gone native." Who spoke Malayalam and wore mundus. Ayemenem's own Kurtz. Ayemenem his private *Heart of Darkness*. (52)

The point of similarity highlighted here between these characters is that Kari Saipu is an English man who has "gone native" like Mr. Kurtz. Kurtz and Saipu relate to one another at another level and that is their obsession. However the objects of their obsession are ironically different. Kurtz is obsessed with authoritatively ruling over the natives. Contrastingly, Kari Saipu wants to remain connected with his beloved (the boy). Kurtz was also a homosexual like Saipu but it never became an obsession for Kurtz . But Saipu's obsession made him take his own life. Here Roy inverts the characters on semantic level but they seem to resemble to one another metaphorically at some points. Kurtz's presence was felt throughout the novella on account of his association with the imperial company. He used to collect ivory for the Englishmen due to which his character is quite influential for both Englishmen and the natives. He served as a link of relationship and communication between Englishmen and the natives. In the similar way, Kari Saipu dominates the story through his house, "the History House". The destinies of all the characters hinge on "the History House" as they are intrinsically connected with the happenings at the "History House". All the major incidents of *The God of Small Things* took place around and inside the "History House". The forbidden love affair of Ammu and Velutha nurtures in it; it serves as a refuge to Velutha after Mammachi as well as to Rahel and Estha after the drowning of Sophie Mol; Velutha was also murdered at the same place by police whose affect remained on Estha and Rahel throughout their lives and also on Ammu till her death. The difference here is that Kurtz' presence is felt throughout the novel due to his own personal characteristics. However, Kari Saipu's dominates the novel through his property – History House.

On the other hand, the darkness of moral side of Kurtz – the evil, the shrewdness, and corruption of the soul – finds itself reflected in Baby Kochamma (Navomilpe) in *The God of Small Things*. Baby Kochamma is an insecure, selfish, and ruthless person throughout her life. Owing to the rejection received from Father Mulligan, she turns all the more bitter, spiteful and cruel towards people in general and women in particular. She despises Ammu, her divorced niece, along with her twins: Estha and Rahel. Kurtz's comment on Africans, the lowest race, "exterminate all the brutes" resounds at the deepest level in Baby Kochamma's character. She insidiously convinces the twins to condemn Velutha to death to put under the cushion her own mistake of misreporting to the police officer who kills Velutha on information of rape assault on Ammu. She alone manipulates Chacko who drives Ammu out of their house and Estha is made to return to his father. This incident leads to catastrophic ends to the lives of all the important characters in the novel. Estha turns quiet for the rest of his life, Ammu loses the love of her twins, Velutha – the untouchable, and ultimately loses her own life only because she is an touchable untouchable – being a woman, being a divorcee, being a Christian falling into forbidden love with Velutha, being mother of the twins who lead Sophie Mol to her stoic death on the fateful day. Like Kurtz, Baby Kochamma wants to bring light of light/knowledge/etiquettes/morality into Ammu's twins yet ironically goes against herself becoming an evil incarnate. Roy simply evokes the corruption of Kurtz in Baby Kochamma so that the reader can relate this character in a playful manner. It is a very parodic intertextuality without aiming at ridiculing of the backgrounded text.

In the chapter "the History House", Roy invokes the theme of hypocrisy of imperialism as portrayed in *Heart of Darkness*. She evokes the dual purposiveness of the

colonialist enterprise revealed in the novel but contextualises it in *The God of Small Things* in a different way. The context, situations and characters are totally different from that of *Heart of Darkness*; however, the similarity of the theme finds expression in the novel in a parodic way.

In *Heart of Darkness*, apparently, the colonizers are "torch-bearers" on purpose of civilizing the uncivilized in Africa; however, privately they have set up a mission collecting and transporting the wealth (ivory) under the supervision of Mr Kurtz – the cruel and exacting representative of the Company. An implicit reference also appears in the novel suggesting the whole British colonialism deputed in different African countries for the sole job of collecting ivory. Kurtz as well as the Company come to Africa with noble intentions but later on turn demonic. Kurtz with the use of force draws ivory out of the Congo by slavering the natives. Instead of civilizing the culture, they succumb to coercive measures for material gains. For Marlow as well as Kurtz, African are only objects. Marlow considers his helmsman a piece of machinery while Kurtz's African mistress is a piece of statuary.

In the similar way, Roy invokes the similarities of brutality of the "civilized" police in *The God of Small Things*. Like the Company, the police of Ayemenem is justice-bearer as well as protector, as opposite to the torch-bearers as well as civilizers in *Heart of Darkness*, of the people in general. Both of them have the knack of asserting racial/caste superiority. Both harbour implicit purposes that invoke their actions in the novels. Both "exorcise fear" in order to gain what they want; ivory in the case of later and death of Velutha in case of the former. When Vellya Paapen (Velutha's father) himself

reveals the meetings of Ammu with Velutha, Mammachi locks Ammu out into her room while Baby Kochamma hatches a plan to unrelentingly punish Velutha as well as Ammu's twins who became the reason of Sophie's drowning into the river. The "shabby khaki crowns. Dark of Heart. Deadly purposed" touchable police beats up the untouchable Velutha to death so that the Syrian Christian family doesn't incur a bad name upon it. The police executes the task with "[i]mpelled by feelings that were primal yet paradoxically wholly impersonal. Feelings of contempt born of inchoate, unacknowledged fear–civilization's fear of nature ... power's fear of powerlessness." (308). This materialises the hypocrisy displayed due to the superiority of caste by Police as well as Baby Kochamma, who shrewdly reports Velutha as a rapist and the police brutally beats him up to death only because he is a Paravan – the untouchable. Therefore he doesn't deserve a fair trial but on the spot execution. Here the police in *The God of Small Things* is acting like the company and Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*. The difference is that the former deals with a social drama, the later the political.

In order to suggest the different context in this novel, Roy parodically inverts the symbol "Heart of Darkness" into "Dark of Heartness". It suggests that Indian police has become "dark" of love, mercy, and indiscrimination toward both gender and caste. The object of critique through this inversion is indian culture/politics/institutions, not the text *Heart of Darkness*. So it is evident here as Hutcheon puts it that the contemporary has been put under scrutiny by Roy.

"Heart of Darkness" surfaces as theme of imperial superiority, a meaning that Margaret Kochamma and Marlow bring forth in both the novels. There are expressions of

imperial superiority transformed into symbolic darkness of Africa/India as a region. India, for Margaret, is "Heart of Darkness" and Africa for Marlow. The similarities and differences are drawn between Marlow and Margaret Kochamma on the basis of their attitudes toward Africa and India respectively. The similarity between Marlow and Margaret Kochamma is the fact that both are outsiders. Marlow is an outsider journeying toward Africa in *Heart of Darkness* whereas Margaret journeying toward India/Ayemenem. Both being representative of superior nations have the same perspective toward Africa and India. Marlow at first denies the imperialistic preconceptions and attitudes toward Africans. Marlow partly exposes the darkness that imperial Company has brought over Africa to attain ivory cushioning it under "bringing civilization" intention. However, he himself dehumanizes Africans. They are merely parts of "machinery" for Marlow. It reveals that dual attitude, "sympathetic and derogatory" of Marlow toward the natives.

Like Marlow, India is *"Heart of Darkness"* for Margaret Kochamma. Her colleagues remark:

> Take everything, her colleagues had advised Margaret Kochamma in concerned voices, you never know, which was their way of saying to a colleague traveling to the Heart of Darkness that (a) Anything Can Happen To Anyone. So (b) It's Best to be Prepared.
> (1996: 267)

However, unlike Marlow, Margaret is a naïve woman. She comes to India/Ayemenem in search of peace but agony continues to stalk her as uncouth India/Ayemenem swallows Sophie Mol, her daughter (263). India/Ayemenem proves to be a real "Heart of Darkness" snatching the most precious possession from her. It presents India as a symbolical darkness for Margaret which is why it is *Heart of Darkness* for both of them.

So both outsiders share the superiority of imperial identity placed in contrast to the inferior natives.

In conclusion, it can be seen that Roy employs *Heart of Darkness* as a constructive parody which aims at critiquing Indian cultural values that probably have been borrowed from their colonial masters through parodic inversion of symbols and characters in *The God of Small Things*. It is implicitly suggested by contextualizing a canonical text from Western culture. The overlapping of different characters and symbols, as discussed above, their inversions are suggestive of cultural critique lodged by Arundhati Roy. It is interesting to note that Roy violates the narrative structure of *Heart of Darkness* at all levels, which is suggestive of questioning Western tradition of writing and by following *Kathakali* model of narrative structure she conforms to and prioritizes Indian tradition/convention of writing.

Notes

---

[1] All the textual references of *The God of Small Things* have been taken from the version released by Harper Perennial (1997).

[2] The Onam festival is one of the most representative of rich cultural heritage of Kerala, India. It is celebrated during the Malayali month of Chingam (Aug - Sep) and symbolises the homecoming of King Mahabali. The decorated Pookalam (flower tray), ambrosial Onasadya, spectacular Snake Boat Race and interesting Kathakali dance are some of the most remarkable features of Onam.

[3] There is an interesting legend behind Vallamkali or the Snake Boat. The story is that once 10 kilometers up the river Pamba from Aranmulla, the head of the KatoorMana, a Nambudiri family, offered his prayers and was waiting to feed a poor man to complete the ritual. After waiting for long, he started praying to Lord Krishna and closed his eyes. When he opened his eyes he saw a dirty and hungry boy standing in front of him. The Brahmin gave a bath and new clothes to the boy, and also a meal. After having the meal, the boy vanished. He searched for the boy and spotted him at the Aranmulla Temple but the boy disappeared again. Namboodari resolved that it was not an ordinary boy, but God himself appeared to him. Therefore in order to remember the during the time of Onam he began to bring food to the Aranmulla. He used to accompany the entourage to protect the food from the river pirates, Kovilans or snake boats. With the rise in popularity of this tradition, the number of snake boats increased leading to the custom of a grand carnival called Snake Boat Race. The most remarkable feature of the Snake Boat Race is the depiction of the great team spirit and the importance of being united and to be in harmony

with nature. (Society of the Confluence of Festivals in India: Onam Festival. (n.d.).

Retrieved July 27th, 2011 from http://www.onamfestival.org/vallamkali-boat-race.html)

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find out how Arundhati Roy came to redefine fictional forms by using parody as a technique to reinterpret novel as a genre. It sought to examine and present how the writer through critique and appreciation has been able to revise the conventions of telling stories in writing. The foundation of the theoretical framework of this study is Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody which is at once constructive and destructive as opposed to the single-lined orthodox definition of parody. The questions that have been raised in the context of this research are: one, which forms and practices of fiction writings, in a postmodernist sense, have been parodically employed by Arundhati Roy in the novel *The God of Small Things?*; two, how is Roy challenging and redefining the fictional form?; and lastly, as a whole, how far the novel can be interpreted as a parodic metafiction? These questions are inter-related and hence cannot be answered separately.

In the preceding pages it has been observed that Arundhati Roy borrows from and questions both Indian and Western traditions of storytelling/fiction writing. She chooses *Kathakali* dance-drama marking her choice from Indian tradition; and *Macbeth* from Shakespearean classics and *Heart of Darkness* from modern English fiction marking her choice from Western tradition. Using parody as a tool, by ironically inverting the traditions, she comes up with a new model of novel writing in the form of *The God of Small Things*. Her novel conforms to the tradition of metafictional writings of

postmodern era as it is experimental, self-reflexive, and draws attention towards its own process of creation.

First, I subsume how *Kathakali* as parodic intertext helps Roy challenge the fictional forms and create a new form of novel. Roy develops parodic intertextual relationship with *Kathakali* in order to redefine the overall form of the novel. *Kathakali* dance drama's narrative structure plays most defining role in the formal shape of the novel. It is part of her cross-cultural strategies whereby *Kathakali* is not only a symbolic but also structural element. She incorporates elements of the genre of *Kathakali* as a way of both honouring Indian modes of expression and cultural production, as well as creating new, hybrid forms of expression.

The God of Small Things is experimental in that it challenges the conventions of the canonical literary narrative. It is representative of metafictional tradition of fiction writing as Roy self-reflexively critiques the corruption of *Kathakali* stories by modern performers in the chapter, Kochu Thomban. It is a self-reflexive act as she is also 'corrupting' the *Kathakali* tradition by juxtaposing the *Kathakali* narrative tradition not only with the Western tradition of novel writing but also pulling *Kathakali* theatre out of its own context and transferring into the written text. That for Roy, however, is eternalizing the *Kathakali* narrative structure into the English fiction and creating an ethnic model and representation rather than following western ones. However, she also substitutes and redefines some conventions of *Kathakali* in *The God of Small Things*.

She parodically challenges *Kathakali* conventions of characterisation whereby the self-reflexive questioning of *Kathakali* theory also takes place. However, as part of

83

paying tribute in Hutcheon's conception, she invents the technique of familiarization based on the principle of "familiarity" of *Kathakali* and also changes the plot structure of the novel in accordance with Kathakali theory. In so doing, she also challenges principle of defamiliarization in Western fictional theory. It is clear that she challenges both Western and Indian traditions of fiction/writing following an eclectic approach to come up with a new parodic metafiction of her own derived mainly from ethnic fabric.

Secondly, I summarize how Roy utilizing Shakespearean intertext *Macbeth* is able to challenge tradition of novel writing and establishes itself as a parodic metafiction. Roy establishes intertextual relationship of *Macbeth* with *The God of Small Things* to challenge conventions of novel writing as well. Being a classical drama *Macbeth* aligns itself with *Kathakali* – the overarching fictional theory; however, Roy defies conventions of classical Indian as well as Western drama at formal level. Roy incorporates English literary tradition because Shakespearean tragedies have also been a part of Indian culture due to the colonisation practices. Also, the presence of Shakespearean play in this novel is, at a formal level, characteristic of postmodern metafiction on account of simultaneous coexistence of different genres in novel. She challenges convention of characterisation of classical plays with regard to supernatural characters. She replaces the Witches of *Macbeth* with Estha, the human character, in the novel. Moreover, she also prioritizes Indian folklores over Western ones. Inclusion of Western plays is unavoidable owing to the fact that India has been occupied by British colonizers for almost a century. Therefore, presence of Western folklores and Shakespearean culture has become a part of Indian culture. Yet Roy's ironic and "conscious" replacement of Witches' charm with

Onam boat song in the story is symbolic of a "call" to return to Indian tradition of narration/expression. Here through this strategy, Roy has been able to critique contemporary postcolonial Indian writers writing in English who are following English narrative models for fiction writing whereby they ignore their own rich cultural heritage.

Thirdly, I recapitulate how the third intertext *Heart of Darkness* functions parodically to challenge and redefine convention of writing fiction by Roy. She incorporates a novel, *Heart of Darkness*, in *The God of Small Things* to rewrite convention of novel writing. She violates traditional conventions of novel as well as the form of *Heart of Darkness*, which is a rejection of modernist paradigm of novel writing. She achieves it by aligning the conventions of novel with the theory of *Kathakali* dance-drama narrative structure. Not only this, She also inverts the characters and symbols of *Heart of Darkness* to put Indian cultural values under scrutiny.

From the discussion, it can be concluded that Roy has actively involved herself with redefining conventions of fiction writing through parodic inclusion and critique of intertexts such as *Kathakali* dance-drama, *Macbeth*, and *Heart of Darkness*. The novel is representative of postmodern metafictional tradition on account of drawing the attention toward the process of writing not only through its apparent mode of narration and structure but also through authorial intrusions where Roy posits her own theory of narrating stories/writing fiction. It is interesting to note that Philip Zarrili records Roy's redefinition of *Kathakali* in his theoretical and historical work entitled *Kathakali: Dance-drama where Gods and Demons Come to Play*. It shows the recognised importance of Roy's retheorization of the way stories should be told in fiction writing. Therefore, as

asserted in the thesis statement, Roy employs parody, in a postmodernist sense and as defined by Hutcheon, as a tool to redefine the shape and structure of the novel. For this purpose, she blends Western as well as Indian traditions and conventions to come up with new and hybrid form of novel. It appreciates and at the same time critiques *Kathakali* as well as Western Classic and Modernist traditions. Roy attempts, very much, to create an ethnic postmodern narration style in choice of characters, symbols and plot structure conforming to Hutcheon's postmodern model of parody.

Works Cited List

Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality*. Great Britian: Routledge.

All Things Considered. (June 16, 1997). God of Small Things. [NPR] Retrieved from

http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1039096

Bakhtin, M. (1990). *Creation of a Prosaics*. Gary S. M. & Caryl E. Stanford University

Press.

Benoit, M. (1999). Circular time: A study of narrative techniques in Arundhati Roy's the

God of Small Things. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 38: 1: 98 –106. Retrieved

fromhttp://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17449859908589315?journalCode=rjp

w19

Bilton, A. (2002). *An Introduction to Contemporary American Fiction*. Edinburg:

Edinburg University Press.

Cavell, Richard. (1993). "Spatial form". In I. R. Makaryk (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of

Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms* (pp. 629-631).

Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Chawla, Nishi. (1999). Beyond Arundhati Roy's "Heart of Darkness": A Bakhtinian

Reading of *The God of Small Things*. In Dhawan R. K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The

Novelist Extraordinary* (pp. 342-355). New Delhi: Prestige.

Coleridge, S. T. (2008). On Macbeth. *Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont And Fletcher:

Notes and Lectures*. Liverpool: Gutenberg Project. Retrieved from:

www.gutenberg.org/files/25585/25585-pdf.pdf

Daiches, D. (1970). *A Critical History of English Literature*. San Francisco: John Wiley

& Sons Inc.

Davorak, M. (2002).Translating the Foreign into Familiar: Arundhati Roy's Postmodern

    Sleight of Hand. In Carole and Durix J. P. (Eds.), *Reading Arundhati Roy's The*

    God of Small Things (pp. 41-62). Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Bourgogne.

Douglass, H. E. (1998). Machado de Assis's 'A Cartomante': Modern Parody and the

    Making of a 'Brazilian' Text. *Comparative Literature* 113: 5: 1036-1055.

    Retrieved from http://muse.jhu.edu/login?uri=/journals/mln/v113/113.5douglass.html

Dreisen, C. (1999). When Language Dance: The Subversive Power of Roy's Text in *The*

    God Of Small Things. In Dhawan R. K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist*

    Extraordinary (pp. 365-374). New Delhi: Prestige.

Fletcher, J., & Bradbury, M. (1976). The Introverted Novel. In Bradbury, M., &

    McFarlane, J. (Eds), *Modernism: 1890 – 1930*. London: Penguin.

Flores, A. (1955). Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction. *Hispania*, 38: 2: 187-

    192. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/335812

Gass, W. H. (1970). Philosophy and the Form of Fiction. *Fiction and the Figures of Life*.

    Boston: Nonpareil Books.

Hassan, I. *(1986)*. Pluralism in Postmodern Perspective. *Critical Inquiry. 12.3: 503-*

    520. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/pss/1343539Horwich, R. (1988). I Sing

    but after You" Shakespeare's Internal Parody. *Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*,

    28. 2: 219-240. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/450549

Hari, P. R. (1999). The Structural Ambiguity of *The God of Small Things*. In Dhawan R.

    K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary* (pp. 338-342). New Delhi:

    Prestige.

Higgins, J. (1991). Spanish America's New Narrative. In Smyth, E. (Ed.),

Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction (pp. 90-104). London: Batsford.

Hutcheon, L. (1988). A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction. Cambridge:

Routledge.

Hutcheon, L. (2000). A Theory of Parody: the Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art

Forms. New York: Methuen.

Hutcheon, L. (2001). The Politics of Postmodernism. New York: Tailor and Francis.

Jameson, F. (1984). Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. Durham:

Duke University Press Books.

Kaiser, M. (1994). Fairy tale as sexual allegory: Intertextuality in Angela Carter's 'The

Bloody Chamber. The Review of Contemporary Fiction, Vol. 14. Retrieved from:

http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=5000258755

Kristeva, Julia (1980): Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.

New York: Columbia University Press.

Lane, R. (2006). The Postcolonial Novel. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lyotard, J. F. (1984). The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. (G.

Bennington & B. Maussami, Trans.). USA: University of Minnesota.

Makaryk, R. I. (Ed.) (1993). Spatial Poetics. Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary

Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms. Toronto, University of Toronto Press.

Mepham, J. (1991). Narratives of Postmodernism. In Smyth, E. (Ed.), Postmodernism

and Contemporary Fiction (pp. 138-155). London: Batsford.

McEachern, C. (Ed.) (2002). The Cambridge Companion to Shakespearean Tragedy.

Cambridge: CUP, 2002.

McHale, B. (1987). *Postmodernist Fiction*. London: Routledge.

Morrissette, B. (1970). International Aspects of the "Nouveau Roman". *Contemporary Literature*, 11: 2:155-168. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/pss/1207530

Myers, David. (1999). Contemporary Tragedy and Paradise Lost in *The God Of Small Things*. In Dhawan R. K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary* (pp. 356-364). New Delhi: Prestige.

Nicol, B. (2009). *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*. New York: Cambridge.

Piciucco, P. P. (1999). The Goddess of Small Things: Observations on the Fictional Technique of Arundhati Roy's First Novel. In Dhawan R. K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist Extraordinary* (pp. 319-327). New Delhi: Prestige.

Putz, M. (1993). *The Story of Identity: American Fiction of the Sixties*. Stuttgard Germany: Metzler.

Rose, M. A. (1993). *Parody: Ancient, Modern and Post-modern*. Cambridge: CPU.

Roy, A. (1997). *The God of Small Things*. London: Harper Perennial.

Ryan, J. A. (1992). Postmodern Parody: A Political Strategy in Contemporary Canadian Art. *Art Journal* 51: 3: 59-65. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/pss/777349

Sacksick, E. (2002). The Aesthetics of Interlacing in *The God of Small Things*. In Carole and Durix J. P. (Eds.), *Reading Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things* (pp. 63-74). Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Bourgogne.

Salgado, A. M. (1978). Trends of Spanish American Fiction since 1950. *South Atlantic Bulletin*, 43: 1: 19-29. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3199160

Sanders, J. (2006). *Adaptation and Appropriation*. GB: Routledge.

Seed, D. (1991). In Pursuit of the Receding Plot: some American Postmodernists. In

Smyth, E. (Ed.), *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction* (pp. 36-53). London:

Batsford.

Shakespeare, W. (2005). *Macbeth*. San Diego: ICON Group International.

Shirvani, H. (1994). Postmodernism: Decentering, Simulacrum, and Parody. *American*

Quarterly, 46: 2 (pp. 290-296). Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/2713344

Smyth, Edmund. (1991). The Nouveau Roman: Modernity and Postmodernity. In Smyth,

E. (Ed.), *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction* (pp. 54-73). London:

Batsford.

Spivak, G. (1990). The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues. Sarah H.

(Ed.). New York: Routledge.

Stevenson, R. (1991). Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction in Britian. In Smyth, E.

(Ed.), *Postmodernism and Contemporary Fiction* (pp. 36-53). London:

Batsford.

Tickle, A. (2007). *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small* Things. Oxon: Routledge.

Tripathi, P. (1999). Material, Mode/Manner, Musicality with Metaphorics Multiplicity:

The God of Small Things. In Dhawan R. K. (Ed.), *Arundhati Roy: The Novelist*

Extraordinary (pp. 307-318). New Delhi: Prestige.

Volosinov, V. N. (1986). *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. (L. Matejka, & I. R.

Titunik Trans.) . Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Woolf, V. (1990). Modern Fiction. *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature. The*

Twentieth Century and Beyond. Joseph Black et al [Eds.]. Canada: Broadview

Press.

Wilputte, E. (2005). Parody in Eliza Haywood's A Letter from H—G—g, Esq.

 Eighteenth- Century Fiction, 17. 2 : 206-230. Retrieved from

 http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/eighteenth_century_fiction/summary/v017/17.2.wilp

 utte.html

Wizlitt, W. (2009). On Macbeth. *Characters of Shakespeare.* J. H. Lobban. (Ed.)

 Cambridge: CUP.

Woods, T. (2007). *Beginning Postmodernism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Zarrilli, B. P. (2000). *Kathakali: Dance-drama where Gods and Demons Come to Play.*

 NY: Routledge.