

Her 'Love Laws': Political Reterritorialization of Sexuality in The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy



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ABSTRACT: The article attempts to showcase the performativity of gender and nationality as elements of a subject's identity in a heterosexual matrix. Applying Judith Butler's theories regarding sex and gender to the novel *The God of Small Things* clarifies how Ammu, the most rebellious female character of the novel, subverts the expected performative desire of heterosexual respectability and is able to go beyond the limits of sexuality and thereby beyond the ideologies and performativity of national inclusion. Her subversion of imperatives reveals the gaps in the law and, thus, turns her act into a political one as well. She demonstrates political agency through re-territorializing 'phallus' and further through re-signifying her sexual desire.

KEYWORDS: Performativity of Gender, National Identity, Political Agency, Re-signification of Sexual desire, Reterritorialized Phallus

INTRODUCTION

Roy's works are mainly about "the relationship between power and powerlessness and the endless, circular conflict they're engaged in...there can never be a single story. There are only ways of seeing" (*An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* 11). The novel's major characters Ammu, an abused and divorced woman, and Velutha, an 'untouchable' member of the Paravan caste are confined by limits that determine whom they are allowed to love. In Indian society, the social status that each holds are defined by the rules of a system called the "caste system". Even though historically the discrimination caused by this system was supposed to be eliminated, some of them continue to exist and determine the boundaries of interaction between the members. Roy's novel portrays how characters' identities can be denied by the various systems of society. Therefore, contemporary feminist theories, that question the forming elements of a subject's identity, can be helpful in clarifying how the systems are acting and effective in the process of denying the suppressed ones' identity.

To read Ammu's sexual revolution as a political one in a personal zone, Butler's theories regarding desire with its tight relation to identity and the possibility of 'reterritorializing' phallus and its power or in other words re-signifying sexual desire will be applied. I am determined to show the identity and agency that Ammu (as a double-marginalized or in other words double-subaltern) looks for through her subversive sexual act. In other words, Ammu's transgression is once by her gender and once by her nationality and race which turns her subversion into a political one. Choosing the dark-skinned Velutha as her complicit, she escapes from both national inclusion and gender bounds in a heterosexual matrix.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of Roy's critics have drawn on psychoanalysis in their examinations of *The God of Small Things*. A good example of the psychoanalytic (originally Freudian) association of desire, mortality, and the gaze in feminist readings of Roy's novel is Catherine Lanone's "Seeing the World through Red-Coloured Glasses: Desire and Death in *The God of Small Things*", and psychological connections between language, subjectivity and sexual taboos such as incest, are carefully considered in Janet Thormann's paper "The Ethical Subject of *The God of Small Things*". Kalpana Wilson's article 'Arundhati Roy and the Left: For Reclaiming "Small Things"' points out that it is about Ammu's struggle against sexist social mores and that Roy's 'anger at the crushing and destructive effects of patriarchal oppression runs through the novel, making it explicitly political'. Silima Nanda in "Women as the Oppressed in *The God of Small Things*" portrays how the female characters of the novel lack guts to openly defy the social order and are torn between traditional norms and modern attitudes. "Longing for the lost (m)other – Postcolonial ambivalences in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" by Miriam Nandi, through a Lacanian reading, examines the various ways in which the political message carried by Roy's novel is embedded in and undermined by a range of such fantasies, desires, and fears. She adds that, in Roy's novel, the subaltern is portrayed as simultaneously unreachable and desirable, morally superior and physically perfect, but also as an abject criminal, mean and disgusting.

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Tirthankar Chanda's essay "Sexual/Textual Strategies in *The God of Small Things*" deals with feminist critical theory in its approach to Roy's fiction and works in generalized categories such as 'feminist discourse' and 'patriarchal oppression'. To add to the feminist category, "Complicity and resistance: Women in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" by Golam Gaus Al-Quaderi and Muhammad Saiful Islam, sees the female characters' resistance as Roy's effort to show the women of India that the resistance against gender oppression can lead towards if not instigate resistance against caste, class oppression and can spur an anti-colonial thought and action for resisting local as well as global inequities.

Another example of studies regarding Roy's style is Elisha Cohn's article named "Radical Aesthetics: Arundhati Roy's Ecology of Style" which examines whether the re-emergence of aesthetics can usefully alter the terms of political engagement. For Anna Clark in "Language, Hybridity, and Dialogism in *The God of Small Things*" the linguistic playfulness and the lack of narrative certainty in Roy's novel can be read as a radical literary strategy that evades and challenges society's 'monologic' tendency to control narrative meaning, and structure our perception through forms of linguistic order. In "The Structures of Memory" Baneth-Nouailhetas traces the narrative patterning of *The God of Small Things* – which she envisages as cyclical rather linear – and reveals how the story is assembled around the process of recollection and 'rememoration'.

Michell C. Smith's honor thesis with the title of "A case study of events and examples: history in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" treats Roy's novel as an instance of narrative theory about history, and situates *The God of Small Things* amongst the reigning philosophies of history. Anuradha Dingwaney Needham's "The Small Voice of History" argues that Ranajit Guha's 'The small voice of history' and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* are defined by, and help define, the contemporary 'historical-political conjuncture' that locates the motors of social, disciplinary, and epistemological transformation in the inherently or potentially resistant properties of the oppressed subaltern subject. J.A. Kearney in "Glimpses of agency in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*" suggests that Roy creates situations in which historical class and caste prejudice seems to have an inexorable and deterministic force. On the other hand, however, she celebrates a variety of forms of individual agency which are argued in relation to three prominent concerns in the novel: history, story, and play (both in the sense of spontaneous action and in the sense of drama).

Padmini Mongia's 'The Making and Marketing of Arundhati Roy' discusses the marketing of *TGST* and examines the promotion of Roy and her novel as a type of exotic postcolonial commodity or 'product'. Alex Tickell in 'The Epic Side of Truth: "Storytelling and Performance in *The God of Small Things*"' asks whether Roy dramatizes the predicament of her marketability in the novel itself. It further outlines Roy's fascination with pre-novelistic 'storytelling' modes and argues that through these older narrative forms she rethinks both the role of the author and the political potential of the Indian English novel.

Aijaz Ahmad in his essay 'Reading Arundhati Roy *Politically*' associates Roy's work with a type of transnational 'postcolonial' politics, inimical to Marxist theorizing. He characterizes Roy's preoccupation with moments of private (sexual) pleasure as indulging in the theme of a 'utopic' transgression that takes the place of actual politics.

To Desire Other, To Gain Identity

By going after her desire, Ammu asks for subjectivity and identification in a patriarchal society. She looks for a position in society where she has got power and agency and her voice can be heard. Butler's words regarding 'desire' and its tight link to 'identity' will clarify the point. She calls desire "a permanent principle of self-consciousness" (*Subjects of Desire* 7). Elaborating on Hegel's statement that "self-consciousness in general is Desire" (7), she goes on to talk about "the reflexivity of consciousness" and the necessity of becoming "other to itself" (7). In other words, the issue of identity is tightly connected to the issue of desire. This desire, according to Butler, is satisfied when the subject finds a relation to something outside itself and its consciousness which is "discovered to be constitutive of the subject itself" (*Subjects of Desire* 8). Then the pursuit of desire will pose the problem of identity; "when we desire, we pose the question of the metaphysical place of human identity- in some pre-linguistic form- and in the satisfaction of desire, the question is answered for us" (9). She calls the desire an "interrogative mode of being" that questions of identity and place. The satisfaction of desire is fulfilled when the difference is transformed into identity: "the discovery of the strange and novel as familiar, the arrival of the awaited, the emergence of what has been absent or lost" (9).

By desiring the 'strange and novel' and letting the 'absent or lost' Velutha emerge into her upper-class realm in a differentiating caste system, Ammu 'poses the question of metaphysical place' of her identity. She enters such a subversive sexual act to satisfy her desire and thus be identified. Velutha, as a politically subversive subject, is able to become the "expanded version" (*Subjects of Desire* 34) of her agency. She chooses the path though it leads to the annihilation of herself and Velutha as well. As Butler puts it, "in desiring something else, we lose ourselves, and in desiring ourselves, we lose the world". In other words, the subject comes to know itself through the other but this process of recognizing the self requires the desire for an "enactment of negativity" during which the "consuming desire seeks to annihilate the independence of some living object" (37).

Ammu, as a subject, cannot bear "the stasis of its own negativity" and attempts to put her given negative subjectivity into motion. By putting her negativity into action, she finds a definition for her identity "without intentionally challenging the presumption of ontological exile" and becomes "an agent of nothingness, an actor whose role is to negate" (37). She becomes "an agency of death" (37) for her object of desire, which is Velutha. Their transgression leads to Velutha's unfair death. The sense of

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nothingness that the subject, Ammu, ascribes to the object, Velutha, helps her to feel an "agency of accomplishment". She finds a certainty about her reality through Velutha. He becomes the Other or part of the self of Ammu since both are infuriated against suppression as if they belong to the same consciousness, that is the consciousness of subversion and resistance. Hegel characterizes these two 'halves' of consciousness as "unequal and opposed . . . one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is lord, the other is bondsman" (Cited in Salih, 27). Ammu is the 'independent' half of the consciousness of resistance since she initiates the sexual act as an upper-caste 'touchable' and makes the lower-caste Velutha as her bondsman, the 'dependent' half of the same consciousness. Hegel's philosophical base helps Butler to reason that, freedom is an exclusive characteristic of the individual, and that it can inhabit a particular embodiment only as that embodiment's exclusive property. Thus, insofar as it is the body of the Other that is seen to lay claim to freedom, it is that body that must be destroyed. Only through the death of the Other will the initial self-consciousness retrieve its claim to autonomy. (*Subjects of Desire* 49)

Therefore, we can see that there is a life and death struggle between the two in which each half tries to gain autonomy by eliminating the other, "each self-consciousness seeks to destroy the determinate boundaries that exist between them; they seek to destroy each other's bodies. Violence to the Other appears as the most efficient route by which to nullify the Other's body" (52).

Ammu's desire for destruction and violence goes beyond bodily limits and is enacted when it leads to Velutha's death. It tries to overcome the body altogether and "become an abstract identity without corporeal needs. Endeavoring to rid the Other of its determinate life, each self-consciousness engages in an anti-corporeal erotic which endeavors to prove in vain that the body is the ultimate limit to freedom, rather than its necessary ground and mediation" (52). He dies both in his body and soul. Ammu is able to bring about Velutha's physical death and his phallic death, that is the phallus power in their sexual act does not belong to Velutha anymore. Ammu desires Velutha to gain identity, autonomy, and reality by taking the phallus power away from him and re-signifies or "reterritorializes" the phallic function by being the initiator of their shared sexual transgression.

Ammu's Masculine Status through her Subversive Performance

Velutha becomes the marker and the disguise of Ammu's aggressive wish for masculine authority and identification. In the dream, which the feminist Joan Riviere connects to the fantasies the subject had as a child growing up in the American South, the subject has killed her parents and sits waiting for retribution: "the a negro [comes] in and [finds] her washing clothes, with her sleeves rolled up and arms exposed" [sic]. The subject "resist[s] him, with the secret intention of attracting him sexually, and he beg [ins] to admire her and caress them and her breast" (37). The intruder, who appears as a bearer of masculine retribution, is distracted by the dreamer's bare arms, which, along with her breast, signify her femininity and seem to have the power to neutralize his phallic threat. Riviere shows that a critical part of this woman's strategy of deception is her plan to turn the black man over to a white sheriff. The subject relies in her dream on racist prejudices and laws that guarantee the success of her performance of white femininity over black masculinity. Her power is secured through her participation in the racial scapegoating practiced by her nation. In Ammu's fantasy, her social superiority as a touchable and less-black over the low caste and more-black untouchable Velutha in a racist society affords her masculine status and feminizes the man. He is the figure of castration that secures her authority. In a racist culture, the untouchable man becomes symbolically available as a site of masculine identification for the queerly gendered woman of the upper caste.

What consolidates Ammu's masculine status is how she subverts performative sexuality. To understand this, we need to have a look at the notion of gender as an element of the law. Based on her Lacanian observations in *Gender Trouble*, Butler adds that,

"Being" the Phallus and "having" the Phallus denote divergent sexual positions, or nonpositions (impossible positions, really), within language. To "be" the Phallus is to be the "signifier" of the desire of the Other and to appear as this signifier... This is an Other that constitutes, not the limit of masculinity in a feminine alterity, but the site of a masculine self-elaboration. For women to "be" the Phallus means, then, to reflect the power of the Phallus, to signify that power, to "embody" the Phallus, to supply the site to which it penetrates, and to signify the Phallus through "being" its Other, its absence, its lack, the dialectical confirmation of its identity. (56)

What Butler is saying is that to "be" the Phallus, one needs to desire and reflect the power that is ascribed to the Phallus. A woman must provide the locality of its power. Butler also argues that gender depends for its intelligibility on the difference it supposedly creates and on exclusions it seeks to hide (*Bodies That Matter* 39). In other words, the 'subject' is constructed on the violent exclusion of these 'Others' who in some way do not conform to the heterosexual matrix. Thus sexuality and other dimensions of identity, such as nation and race, are seen performed through gender, and gender is seen as performed through them (Hovey, 397).

Ammu's sexually subversive performance, that is her love relationship with the low caste untouchable Velutha, strikes a balance between contesting and adopting the identity constraints both of nation and caste and of gender and heterosexuality. In other words, she critiques the caste and heterosexual matrix with a forbidden love affair. She uses racially and sexually foreign subject to explore the ambiguous national and social identity of a queerly gendered third-world divorced woman. What she tries to do is to

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make herself as a respectable and stable heterosexual subject by displacing her transgressive sexuality onto a racial other, thus masking her masculine-identified literary and sexual desires.

Reterritorialized Phallus: Decolonized Sexuality

Reading Ammu's transgressive act reminds the reader of Butler's 'lesbian phallus'. As the novel reads,

In the dappled sunlight filtering through the dark-green trees, Ammu watched Velutha lift her daughter effortlessly as though she was an inflatable child, made of air. As he tossed her up and she landed in his arms, Ammu saw on Rahel's face the high delight of the airborne young. She saw the ridges of muscle on Velutha's stomach grow taut and rise under his skin like the divisions on a slab of chocolate. She wondered at how his body had changed— so quietly, from a flat muscled boy's body into a man's body. Contoured and hard. A swimmer's body. A swimmer-carpenter's body. Polished with a high-wax body polish. He had high cheekbones and a white, sudden smile...The man standing in the shade of the rubber trees with coins of sunshine dancing on his body, holding her daughter in his arms, glanced up and caught Ammu's gaze...That she had deep dimples when she smiled and that they stayed on long after her smile left her eyes. He saw that her brown arms were round and firm and perfect. That her shoulders shone, but her eyes were somewhere else. He saw that when he gave her gifts they no longer needed to be offered flat on the palms of his hands so that she wouldn't have to touch him. His boats and boxes. His little windmills. He saw too that he was not necessarily the only giver of gifts. That she had gifts to give him, too. (81-2)

This time a woman, that is Ammu, watches a man with 'the ridges of muscle' on his stomach. She takes the power of gazing and trots over Velutha's 'swimmer-carpenter...polished' body. The object and place of desire and gaze is not a woman anymore. In return, Velutha could see "that he was not necessarily the only giver of gifts. That she had gifts to give him, too" (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 82). She revolutionizes or in Butler's words 'the performativity of the phallus' is challenged by desiring Ammu (*Bodies that Matter* 80). In other words, Ammu re-signifies the discourse of being gazed at, to desire, and to 'have' or 'be' a phallus. For Butler, both penis and phallus are retroactively constructed by and in discourse – in short, they are performative and thus can take different forms of performance and acts. Having a deeper look at Butler's definition of penis and phallus will provide insights into these concepts' performativity.

Butler and Lacan do not meet an agreement over the issue of the phallus. Whereas Lacan installs the phallus as a privileged signifier that confers meaning on other bodily signifiers, Butler regards the phallus as 'the effect of a signifying chain summarily suppressed' – in other words, it does not have a privileged status on a signifying chain that does not make itself evident (*Bodies That Matter* 89). However, Lacan and Butler concur on one point: for both of them, penis and phallus are not synonymous, since the phallus is what Butler calls 'the phantasmatic rewriting of an organ or body part' (89). More simply put, the phallus is the *symbol* of the penis, it is not the penis itself.

Butler de-privileges Lacan's privileged phallus signifier. In other words, she disconnects the phallus and penis. Thus, the phallus is no more than a symbol and it could symbolize any other part of the body and those who neither 'have' nor 'are' the phallus can 'reterritorialize' this symbol in subversive ways. To put it clearly, Butler removes the phallus from a male domain and collapses Lacan's distinction of 'having' or 'being' the phallus. Ammu's active desire approves Butler's claim that the phallus can be displaced; that is, its ability to symbolize body parts or body-like things other than the penis. Ammu, as a penis-less subject, can both 'have' and 'be' a phallus, which means that they can suffer from penis envy and a castration complex at the same time; moreover, since 'the anatomical part is never commensurable with the phallus itself', Velutha may be driven by both castration anxiety and penis envy, or rather, 'phallus envy' as well (*Bodies That Matter* 85).

Ammu takes the power of phallus and carries its signifier in her body parts. Watched by Velutha, she was able to both 'have' and 'be' a phallus by her 'deep dimples...her brown arms' and 'her shoulders'. In their lovemaking relationship, Velutha's 'phallus envy' can be satisfied as well. Their unheard voices, which are the voice of a divorced woman in an Indian patriarchal society and the voice of an untouchable in an Indian caste system, can find a way out of the suffocating box and be heard. The communist Velutha chooses to satisfy his political desire by having a love relationship with the upper touchable Ammu. Both choose to go through an 'aggressive reterritorialization' (*Bodies That Matter* 94) and de-privilege the phallus as both symbol and signifier, as well as revealing its status as within a bodily schema, which, like language, is a re-signifiable signifying chain with no 'transcendental signified' at its origin. As Butler puts it, the phallus is a transferable phantasm, and its naturalized link to masculine morphology can be called into question through an aggressive reterritorialization. That complex identificatory fantasies inform morphogenesis, and that they cannot be fully predicted, suggests that morphological idealization is both a necessary and unpredictable ingredient in the constitution of both the bodily ego and the dispositions of desire. (*Bodies That Matter* 94)

The deprivation of the phallus from its privileged status provides a chance for its resignification and gives it the capability for being reterritorialized. This 'aggressive reterritorialization' of desire and thereby phallus by the female character Ammu calls for a political perception of her forbidden sexual act with the untouchable Velutha. In other words, she 'reterritorializes' the territory of sexuality; that is the once-colonized woman becomes the colonizer this time in the realm of sexuality. To put it in a better way, the whole process of sexual act is decolonized. Colonialism is not just about the conquest of geographical territories, but rather

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about the subjectivation of Foucault. She creates the chance to speak of herself outside the limits she has been put into and given an image and a role which are merely contrived and imposed on her by two powerful systems, the system of patriarchy on the one hand and that of colonialism on the other. Ammu may take the power of colonizer Velutha as a man in a patriarchal society but she goes on to reinforce his situation of being colonized in a caste-dominating society. Decolonization has been described as “the surrender of external political sovereignty” over colonized peoples plus “the emergence of independent territories” where once the colonizer had ruled, or “the transfer of power from empire to nation-state” (Sprinshall 2). In the description given to decolonization, it is mentioned that it is conceptualized as an elitist process (Green 2), whereby the power is transferred to indigenous leaders. This time, the power of male touchable is transferred to a domesticated female elite colonizer Ammu to colonize Velutha, where an independent territory of Ammu's desire appears.

Her Political Desire

Fanon, while talking about “the creation of new men” (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 36) in the process of “decolonization”, addresses men only since the rehabilitation of masculinity was the necessary step to emancipation. The focus on men's suffering tends to mask women's oppression, which took distinct forms. In addition, Fanon's addressing men excludes women's political activity in the process of decolonization. Cynthia Enloe, in her book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* has stated that women have been treated as symbols during this process, and putting them in the realm of iconography brings about consequences that limit them merely to roles of nurturing and reproducing. What Ammu succeeds at, despite all odds, is her political involvement in the decolonization of sexuality in their bodily and spiritual territory.

To read the novel's sexual transgressions politically on another level, one needs to accept that politics can involve interpersonal relations as well. Robert J. C. Young in the book *Torn Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*, while discussing the development of literary theories, puts the idea that sexual transgression can be called a political act: New literary theories consistently alternated around the same division: seeking to cross the boundary to the social (hence Mikhail Bakhtin's popularity), by using history (New Historicism) or culture (Cultural Materialism) or the history and culture of colonialism, or *sexuality (which necessarily, according to this model, invoked the notion of 'transgression', the crossing of the law as supremely human and therefore political act) ... (my italics, 12)*

The representation of personal as politics is something that has been reiterated and looked for in women's writing, particularly in the postcolonial ones:

In literary representations of ‘the personal as political’, postcolonial women writers explore the personal dimensions of history rather than overt concerns with political leadership and nation-states as in the work of their male counterparts. This does not make women writers' concerns any less political; rather, from a feminist standpoint of recognizing the personal, even the intimate and bodily as part of a broader sociopolitical context, postcolonial women writers enable a reconceptualization of politics. (Katrak 234)

As for post-colonial writer Roy, her novel's character, Ammu, goes on to domesticate the political violence and aggression of the Communists out there in her secret hidden erotic with the communist Velutha. She chooses Velutha since both are subjugated, one in a patriarchal colonized society, the other in a caste system. As Brinda Bose puts it,

Ammu is not dismissive of Velutha's red politics, but sees in its inherent anger a possibility of relating to Velutha's mind, not just his body. Her own politics are embedded in her ‘rage’ against the various circumstances of her life, and it is through this sense of a shared raging that she finds it possible to desire the Untouchable Velutha. It is not only sexual gratification that she seeks; she seeks also to touch the Untouchable. There is then no reason why Roy's (personalized/individualized) interrogation of the caste/class/gender/sexuality nexus should necessarily be seen as soft politics, while an intervention of communist ideology into the same nexus should raise its status, in some kind of arbitrary measurement of radicality. (125)

Their shared experience of being suppressed and shared anger against it is the very thing that justifies Ammu's desire for an untouchable. Her personal political act of re-signifying and reterritorializing desire and the phallus chain is not out of the public world; instead it is embedded in it.

Butler calls the process of reterritorialization an aggressive one. One that needs revolution, violence, and rule-breaking courage. Ammu is courageous enough to go beyond the performative desire expected from her and break the very ‘love laws’. Ammu's act is a political one though a mass movement does not proceed it. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse words, in 1987 on the ideology of (sexual) conduct in literature and history, will substantiate the political claims for Ammu's sexual relationship with Velutha: “the terms and dynamics of sexual desire must be a political language ... we must see representations of desire, neither as reflections nor as consequences of political power but as a form of political power in their own right” (2). Roy's comments on the process of her composition bring to the foreground the politics of gender and the logic of basic, ‘biological’ differences:

the talk of a noble working class seemed very, very silly to me... like other women I would be brutalised [*sic*] so much by men. It made no difference whether they were proletarian or not, or what their ideology was. The problem was the biological nature of these men. The only real conflict seemed to me to be between women and men. (*Frontline* 107)

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She talks of Kerala as a place where biology has been overcome, where men and women cannot cross the barriers of caste and class in desiring one another despite their obvious physical beauty. Roy's novel focuses on the lines that one cannot, or should not, cross – and yet those are the very lines that do get crossed, if only once in a while – and then that makes for the politics of those extraordinary stories (Bose 123).

Ammu by going after her 'biological' desire for a man who is outside the boundaries of touchability and being the initiator of the sexual act attempts to transgress gender/caste rules and once again shows how the real conflict for Roy has been between men and women since the biological nature of men tends towards dominating and subjugation. Roy's concern with the women's subject position in relation to the biological nature of men is not a momentary one since it carries a history within itself; a history that repeats itself through the solidified systems of a society. Thus, as Brinda Bose puts it, we can say "that Roy's own (historical) experience of communism in Kerala has been subjectivized in her fictional (re)constructions, which in itself constitutes a conscious act that is essentially political" (126).

CONCLUSION

Ammu's transgressive desire is called a 'Madness' in 'History' (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 100) which crawled through it. But these ruptures are those moments that can reveal the constructed nature of history and its performativity. The revolutionary transgression and subversions happen through these mad moments. The moments that enable Ammu to desire the Other strange and untouchable Velutha as the other half of her resistant consciousness and to reach an identity and reality of her own. Her 'Madness' or, in better words, subversion of gender and national performativity is a political one that leads to Velutha's destruction and death. The 'mutual authorship' of these halves of the same consciousness is fulfilled when Velutha gives up to her transgressive desire as well and enters the personal political act of 'reterritorialization' of sexuality. The 'phallus' power is taken away from him by an elite upper-caste woman who is able to decolonize the process of sexuality and be the initiator of desiring. In other words, the realm of desire and sexuality is re-signified in a rebellious aggressive political manner.

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