



**FEMINIZING THE NATURE: AN ECO-FEMINIST  
STUDY OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL  
THINGS***

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**Abstract**

This study deploys an eco-feminist hermeneutic to Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), positing that the novel feminizes nature and naturalizes the feminine as a means of interrogating patriarchal, colonial, caste-based, and class-based hierarchies of domination. With attention paid to the postcolonial eco-feminist approach, the review explores how natural tropes (rivers, trees, wetlands, flora, fauna) are used to expose how women and other suppressible bodies are repressed, and how it can challenge the presence of Kerala as a topography of struggle against intersecting oppressions. The paper presents an overview of three main lines of enquiry using material drawn on the innovative eco-feminist work of Merchant (1980), Plumwood (1993), and Shiva (1989) besides the current critical approaches to major issues, it examines the feminization of nature, the interconnections between gendered violence and ecological degradation, and the ways in which subaltern agency can position women and nature as joint partners in resistance. The discussions indicate that along with the exploitative relationship between nature and women, there is a possibility of other approaches to life that stand on the idea of relationality and the non-hierarchical nature-woman nexus; these are manifested through the story of Roy. The study ends with a reflection on how such an eco-feminist reading has contributed to the insights into the South Asian literary studies and environmental humanities and with indications towards the directions of studying feminized literatures would go in the future.

**Keywords:** *Eco-Feminism, Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things, Gender, Nature, Patriarchy, Environmental Discourse, Postcolonial Ecology.*

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## 1. Introduction

Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) is celebrated for its incisive examination of social injustice in post-colonial India—caste discrimination, the residue of colonialism, gendered oppression, and the politics of memory and trauma. There is however, a less thoroughly explored vein of analysis relating to the ecological aspect of the novel in which nature and landscape are caught up in the power relations of contamination of women and subaltern bodies. In this paper, the researcher attempts to use an eco-feminist approach on the text and to pose the question of how Roy feminises nature and naturalises feminine as a means of questioning the intertwining of structures of domination.

Eco-feminism presupposes that, women and nature oppression are mutually reinforcing and exist in a dualistic relationship of patriarchy, culture/nature, human/animal, and male/female (Plumwood, 1993; Warren, 1997). In the South Asian text, theorists like Vandana Shiva have shown how the colonial capitalism and patriarchy (Shiva, 1989) reform nature and women as objects of exploitation. This article locates Roy in that discourse, shedding light on how the fertile land of Kerala, the Meenachal River, the Ayemenem house, female dead bodies and the marginalised men were a source of opposition and disruption.

They are three arguments that are interrelated: first, the novel introduces nature as a feminised body personified muted violent, regulated, and regenerating, which indicates that the process of feminisation of nature has occurred; second, the interaction between gendered violence and ecological destruction shows that the analogy between the control of the female and the control of the commodity has taken place; third, the aspect subaltern ecology is tracked by the relationships the main characters, Ammu and Ra, develop.

The paper provides a review of pertinent academic resources on the eco-feminism issue and the novel by Roy on the subject matter through a theoretical framework that explains the tenets of eco-feminism. A major part of the paper provides a critical analysis of the text in the three headings of analysis. Finally, I would argue that the reading has thematic implications on religious studies as well as on the wider socio-ecological discourses. The thesis ends by showing that Roy has not only feminised nature but has also used nature as a literary weapon to rebel against patriarchy, imperialism, and environmental abuse thus providing a paradigm of environmental feminist activism in a post-colonial world.

## 2. Literature Review

Since its 1997 publication, *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things* has stimulated extensive scholarship across post-colonial, feminist, and cultural studies.

Critics of the novel consider it a multiplex commentary on the gender orders, the caste structure as well as the colonial orders, based on which the social frame in Kerala is developed. Nevertheless, in recent decades, the participants in the academician cumulative process have gone beyond traditional limits to consider its environmental aspect and the prospects of an eco-feminist reading. Based on the scholarly corpus, we can note that Roy balances his writing on both the human and non-human worlds of existence, which makes nature a witness and member of the system of domination. As indicatively put, Saeed (2021) states that caste and gender oppression are connected in the degradation of caste and gender in Roy as women and men belonging to lower caste are twice marginalised on the patriarchal and Brahmanical platforms. Talking about gender sensitisation, Kapoor (2021) sees that Ammu is the opposite of the male power, illustrating how expensive female independence is in rigid gender categories. Such studies, however, rarely revoke their analyses into ecological realms.

Scholars have been known to identify the environment as part of the political imagination of Roy. Comfort (2004) provided one of the earliest ecological readings of *The God of Small Things*, situating Roy's depiction of Kerala's landscape within a critique of commodification and imperialism. He claimed that representations of rivers, rain, and decay are an environmental-feminist resistance to colonial-capitalist land and female exploitation. Later responses, including that by Saha (2024), frame the account by Roy as post-colonial eco-feminist directly, crediting the destruction of the environment to the objectification of both female and subaltern body. Chohan and Akram (2025) deal with the subject of agency of non-human entities, describing both the Meenachal River and tropical ecosystem as living entities with inertia, trauma, and curing. These excerpts indicate that the consciousness about the environment, which Roy demonstrates, is not only descriptive but also highly moral, requiring environmental and gender justice. However, there is still a feminist depiction of the environment that the novel was supposed to promise, which many critics noticed (Rashid, 2024).

In order to place the text by Roy into a new eco-feminist paradigm, it is necessary to allude to the disciplinary theoretical background. In the late twentieth century, environmental ethics and feminism thought came into existence. The death of nature (1980) by Carolyn Woman Hollering Creek was one of the first writings in early modern Europe that redefined the Earth as a caring mamma to oppose the exploitative mechanistic language. Merchant claimed that environment as well as women was oppressed as a scientific rationalism dominated metaphors of Mother Nature. This control, according to her, is based on Western rationalism. A parallel movement is traced in the Indian context of the Ayemenem depicted by Roy wherein the natural environment is turned into a place of decadence and pollution through industrial growth and the impacts of colonialism.

This criticism is further developed by Val Plumwood in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993) where dualism is condemned. She argues that Western discourse encourages hierarchical thinking by way of binary oppositions, male/female, culture/nature, mind/body, reason/emotion and how one side is over-valued and the other undervalued. The ensuing process of naturalisation of domination and marginalisation is the textual structure of the novel, whereby male power is equated with civilisation and order, and the feminine, to the extent of being related to nature, coded as disorderly, irrational, and threatening. The wild sexuality of Ammu and the fruitful, animated land of Kerala are threats on the patriarchal scale, dramatizing a logic of culture that cherishes the absorption of difference into mastery one to which Plumwood is a prophet.

Vandana Shiva presents an important South-Asian feminist interpretation of eco-feminism, lining the field of eco-feminism discourse with development and post-colonial politics questions. She further advocates in *Women, Ecology and Development* (1989) and in *Staying Alive* that the ecological crisis of the Global South is informed by the conditions of patriarchal and colonial epistemologies that are repressive to women. Shah suggests that western discourse of progress has been inclined to commodify women and nature compared to the Indian cosmological discourse of prakriti a female constructive and giving power. This analysis by Shiva sheds light on the context of Roy story: modernisation and commodification of the Kerala landscape depict a patriarch developmental process that she condemns. The loss of female agency to male patriarchy compares to the exploitation of rivers and the devastation of farmlands.

Greta Gretaard and Karen Warren take eco-feminism to imperative formulations. Warren (1997) proposes that eco-feminism presumes there is a relation between oppression of women and domination of nature, which creates part of the statistical of domination that breeds racism, colonialism, and speciesism. Gaard (2011) brings up intersectionality and says that the eco-feminist analysis has to take into account the classes, sexuality, and global capitalism. Their frameworks enable a nuanced reading of *The God of Small Things*, where caste, gender, and environment intersect. The fact that Ammu is shown as a disaffirmable woman and Velutha Paravan is shown as a labourer reflects the hierarchies that govern human-human and environmental interaction. It is not just that polluting factory near the Meenachal River, it is a logic that has a universal nature of undermining some lives.

Based on these theoretical constructions, South Asian literary theorists have started using eco-feminism in the critique of regional literature. Authors like Dewi defend against environmental precarity, gender, and displacement in such novels as the *Hungry Tide* (2010, 2018), or the *Inheritance of Loss*. However, relatively small ecological criticism has been faced on the novel introduced by Roy. Ahead of caste and nationalism critiques practised subsequently in post-colonial thought (Bose, 1998; Tickell, 2007), and feminist

critique preempted the personal rebellion of Ammu (Chacko, 2001). It is not until recently that eco-feminism has offered a framework in which to bring these strands together. According to Saha (2024), Roy feminises the landscape to prove the fact about the intersection of the vulnerability of women and nature in the contemporary patriarchal society. In this respect, the Meenachal River can be considered to be a storage place and a place of opposition; the repetitive overflow is the suppressed but repeated action of the feminine.

The eco-feminist approach to South-Asian texts focuses on the ecological exploitation in the colonial space. According to Nixon (2011) in *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, the environmental degradation of the Global South, occur on a scale skewed by the poor, industrial pollution draining rivers, rotting estates, silenced suffering of women, a trace of exploitation Roy keenly envisions in his novel. These comitatus processes shed light on the focus of ecofeminism on the coexistences of oppressions. Additionally, in post-colonial ecocriticism, we are to be sensitive to the ways through which domestic landscapes commemorate colonial pasts (DeLoughrey and Handley, 2011). Kerala is both green and wasted which is why it captures beauty at the same time recording the oppression, thus, capturing this dichotomy.

Simultaneously, Roy opposes the romantic essentialism that the early eco-feminism tended to criticise. Her character is not totally good or motherly, but ambivalent, with the ability to be violent, decadent and regenerative. The complexity echoes in the modern theorizing of eco-feminist, who warn against the same. It is not a question of reinforcing stereotypes about caring femininity, as Gaard (2011) emphasises that it is a question of revealing the structural parallels between the oppression of women and the environment. Roy does this by portraying them as possessors of power besides victims. Having an affair with Velutha, Ammu, placed amidst the beauty of nature, turns into the way to reclaim the agency- a statement of the embodied liberation resounding against the social conventions. In this case, the nature serves as an accomplice to sin: the forest hides the lovers, and they find refuge against social control in forest.

However, the ecological vision of Roy is characterised by defeat and anarchy. The defiled Meenachal and the decaying fruit and the stifling heat brings to mind a world hurt by human vanity. These pictures reflect the social rottenness of caste and patriarchal oppression. In the imagination of Roy, natural and the social are intertwined as Comfort (2004) and Saha (2024) say. The death of the river becomes a metaphor of silence of the feminine and the subaltern and its continuing existence is an indication of resilience. Such ambivalence invites the reading which would agree with the concept of the relational ontology of Plumwood, where human and non-human life is mutually dependent but not hierarchically organised.

Even with this potential richness, there are still high levels of research gaps. The human relationships still fall into the favour of most feminist readings of Roy while they disregard ecological settings. On the other hand, the environment has been regarded as a symbolic background in eco-critical analyses, as opposed to the agent of meaning. Not many studies combine both of these approaches in a continued theoretical framework. In addition, although Western eco-feminist theory (Merchant, Plumwood, Warren) offers useful information, it needs to be modified to South Asian realities, which has been stressed by Shiva and other scholars. The novel by Roy set in the unique ecology of Kerala and the history of colonial plantation economies requires such approach to be synthesised into global and local eco-feminist views.

The other aspect that was overlooked is the micro-aesthetic in the novel, the politics of small things. Eco-feminism, with the emphasis that it puts on relational ethics and care, resonates here with specific attitudes. The keenness to detail given in the narrative of life in the garden through the seeds, insects, smells, and the perception of children portrays environmental ethic based on intimacy than big ideological battle. Such attention, as theorised by scholars like Alaimo (2010), is that which is referred to as trans-corporeality wherein human and non-human bodies are co-joined in mutual materiality. The same principle gets reflected in Roy prose: lyrical descriptions blur the boundaries between the environment and the self, suggesting the ethics of connexion which would allow coming to the modern material eco-feminism.

Altogether, the current literature proves a growing focus on the ecological strata in *The God of Small Things*, but it is still haphazard. This work combines classical eco-feminist theory and postcolonial and caste paradigms to place the novel of Roy in the context of a larger discussion about gendered ecology. It is against the backgrounds of Merchant (1980), Plumwood (1993), Shiva (1989) and Gaard (2011) that the analysis gathered below will demonstrate how Roy feminises nature as both victim and an agent, and it is against her hierarchies of domination, which links the exploitation of women, the poor and the environment. It is not only to want to read the novel as ecological allegory but to find the way it explores an ethics of care and resistance that mediates across gender and environmental justice.

### **3.Theoretical Framework**

The main theoretical framework behind this research is ecofeminism, which is a critical frame through which the intersection of gender and ecology is an existent site of domination and resisting. Ecofeminism originated in the 1970s and 1980s in reaction to both environmental activism and feminism, and refuses the dualisms of patriarchy which organise the relationship between nature and humanity. The same line of thought that was taken by Carolyn Merchant (1980), Val Plumwood (1993), Vandana Shiva (1989), Greta

Gaard (1993), and Karen Warren (1997) are seen to argue that women have been oppressed through the same logic used by ecological degradation. It is in this context that *The God of Small Things* (Roy, 1997) reads as a play that declares such entanglements and images a world that has engraved female bodies and natural space with the same patriarchal, colonial and capitalist authority. The novel by Roy hence becomes a valid literary place to address the two aspects of ecofeminism: cultural ecofeminism, and social or constructionist ecofeminism.

Cultural ecofeminism focuses on the recuperation of a feminine identification with nature and instead of an essentialist trap, it may offer an alternative source of alternative epistemologies and ethics. Other authors like Starhawk (1982) and Shiva (1989) denounce this relationship as a place of empowerment where the embodied knowledge of women and the relationship of women with the earth gives a resistance to the machismo, patriarchal systems of domination. Ecofeminism of Shiva, specifically, places this relation into a postcolonial intellection by suggesting that the Western development and colonial capitalism had reformed both the female and the nature into a passive and exploitable resource. To her, rural indigenous ecological practises and women subsistence economies in India demonstrate a sustainable paradigm that modern patriarchal society has brutally diverted. These insights are reflected in the symbolic aspects of the world that Roy narrates, namely, the Meenachal River, the tropical vegetation, the Monsoon cycles, that all run as living beings that reflect the destinies of women like Ammu and Rahel. The rising and falling of the river, its fertile doubled danger, its relationship to creative female capability, its relationship to creative female desire, and transgression, can be metaphors of female creativity, female desire, and female transgression and it becomes evident that nature and woman have a circular logic of suppression and redemption. Cultural ecofeminism, therefore, allows viewing the novel that anticipates this Eco feminine interrelatedness and mutuality with a view of resisting to say that Roy recovers the feminine-nature relationship in a poetic and political gesture of reclaiming.

Yet some of these necessaryist relationships between women and nature have been criticised by the social or constructionist ecofeminists who allege that the blind gender worship of the feminine principle threatens to recreate hierarchies it attempts to disturb. According to thinkers such as Plumwood (1993) and Warren (1997) the dualisms of man/woman, culture/nature and reason/emotion are socially constructed against a biologically based background through a multiplicity of linguistic, economic, and institutional practises that privilege the masculine and devalue the feminine and the natural. Social ecofeminism, therefore, aims at breaking down the ideological forms of naturalising domination in favour of the relational ethics of not implying the non-hierarchical acknowledgement of difference. This constructionist criticism can be vividly described through Roy on social relations in *The God of Small Things* : patriarchal control

over the bodies of women, hierarchy of caste, and commodification of nature all act as systems of oppression which are closely interrelated. This intersectional subjugation is reflected in the novel through the nature of the lawless affair Ammu has with lower-caste Velutha, who is linked to manual labour and the scenery. Both were being free on the other side of capitalist society as woman and untouchable, and both are swept away by the same patriarchal and casteist system that deplores the natural ecology of the backwaters of Kerala. It is social ecofeminism that therefore offers a perspective through which these interconnected oppressions can be understood not as admirable events of tradition but as the results of structural hierarchical thought processes.

The text coexists with these two ecofeminist dimensions and a synthesis of cultural reclamation and social critique is made by Roy. Although the fertile narrations of the Kerala natural world invoke an awe of the feminine earth, Roy opposes idealisation by showing the amount of violence in the gendered and ecological exploitation. Her prose swings between lyrical effusion and in-your-face realism in exposing the irony of a world that is life giving and death taking at the same time. Such tension makes Roy convergence of his project with such an approach of Gaard (2011) as "critical ecofeminism" which recognises the symbolic power of the feminine-nature of linkage but demands historicisation in specific socio-political situations. So including the ecofeminism of Roy is neither exclusively cultural nor exclusively social but hybrid- very Indian in its spiritual sensitivity to ecology, but bitterly political in its interpretation of patriarchy and classes. In this synthesis, she has added to the larger debate that makes its negotiations between the Western theoretical abstraction and the real environments of the postcolonial societies where people live.

Further, placing Roy in the context of the ecofeminism of the world discourse demonstrates the distinctively Indian gestured ecofeminism as an anti-narrative of the West. Where the western ecofeminism can perform on a postindustrial platform with gendered language and morality, Indian ecofeminism is based on the material struggles to control land, water and survival. An iconic example of such praxis is the Chipko movement that was organised by rural women in the 1970s, and it can be explained as follows: it was the resistance of life against the logic of profit; this statement is formulated by Shiva (1989). In her fiction, Roy renders this political activism into aesthetic expression by dramatising the way environmental deterioration and gendered violence are produced together by both world and localized capitalism and patriarchy. Her description of the dirty Meenachal River and the industrial encroachment of the surrounding Ayemenem also highlights the destruction of the environment that reflects the crumbling of morals. By combining mythic effects with social commentary, Roy brings the ecofeminist position to narrative, producing a textual ecology that avoids being dominated by the power of one through multiplicity and fragmentation and empathy. In the theoretical approach of

ecofeminism, however, this research may consider Roy work as a single aesthetic/politic gesture which converts literary country into a critique of a concurrent oppression of women and nature.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The qualitative and interpretive approach taken in this research and based on the analysis of literature with references to the ecofeminist theory. Since the study seeks to understand how gendered and ecological relations are represented in the book *The God of Small Things*, an interpretive paradigm would be best suited as it does not emphasise on empirical generalisation as much as on meaning making and generalisation, which occur in contexts. It is also more of a textual, analytical approach that aims to identify the symbolic, linguistic and narrative formations in which Roy composes her ecofeminist arguments. The research analyses the text, based on the traditions of a hermeneutic literary inquiry, as a cultural artefact that involves various historical, political, and ecological discourses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It does not consider the novel as a self-contained literary object but as a place of dialog that is where the voices of environmental imagination, feminist resistance and postcolonial critique intersect.

The material of this study is divided into two groups; primary source, the novel itself (Roy, 1997), and a corpus of secondary materials, such as journal articles, books, and speculative criticism of the novel, which highlights ecofeminism, postcolonial theory, and the kinds of strategies Roy has used to create the narrative. Stated passages are thematically analyzed with an emphasis on motifs development, including the Meenachal River, imagery of plants and various vegetations, decay and reproduction, and female incarnation. The analysis of ecofeminist argument through close reading reveals the influence of linguistic texture, metaphor and narrative structure. The method is inductive, enabling the theoretical knowledge to develop out of the text, with the help of the already formulated ecofeminist terms like the logic of dualism (Plumwood, 1993) and the death of nature (Merchant, 1980). The process of reading, coding and interpretation is done iteratively to make certain that the textual evidence is maintained in the process of analysis and critique of the theoretical framework is undertaken.

Due to the fact that ecofeminism is interdisciplinary in nature - that is, it is a field that cuts across philosophy, sociology, and environmental studies - this study is also conducted with the help of the comparative and contextual dimension. It places the storey of Roy in the context of the Indian ecofeminist thought (Shiva, 1989; Agarwal, 1992) and the Western discourses (Plumwood, 1993; Warren, 1997) to emphasise points of convergence and divergences. In this comparative funnel, the study can follow how Roy puts theoretical concepts into place in localised aesthetics. As a kind of example, although Western ecofeminism focuses on symbolic gendered binaries, Roy presents a caste and ecological

analysis that takes material hierarchies. The methodological approach, consequently, implies close textual reading as well as sociocultural contextualisation, which is basically what Barry (2017) considers the twofold movement of literary criticism text to context (and vice versa).

This research ethically upholds the intellectual property and authenticity by citing only the researched scholarly references. References are made to peer-reviewed publications, published monographs and known critical collections. Authentic sources guarantee the academic credibility and place the research in valid scholarship. Furthermore, the interpretive methodology follows the procedure of reflexivity, recognising the position of the researcher in explaining the aspect of gender and ecology in a postcolonial Indian context.

Lastly, the methodology is consistent with the moral promises of ecofeminism towards inter-connected and inclusive nature. It does not impose pluralism, but instead is multiplied and relational in taking notice of the fact that a text, like an ecosystem, supports numerous other meanings in a way which holds itself open to them. The ethics of interdependence, attentiveness, and empathy being prioritised by the interpretive process, it is thus reflective of ecofeminist ethics. This study does not attempt only to analyse *The God of Small Things* but to engage in the discursive relationship between literature, gender, and ecology the dialogue that still plays a vital role in the critique of feminist literature and the environmental humanities.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Nature as Feminine Entity

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* presents a richly layered narrative in which the natural world assumes the roles typically ascribed to a living, feminine entity—nurturing, sensual, and simultaneously silenced by patriarchal structures that repress women. The description of Kerala with its rainy rivers, twisted plants, and thick monsoon air in the novel acts as the continuation of the female body: fertile, rich, and threatened by rape. Merchant (1980) argues that according to the history of patriarchal science, nature has been feminised as a history of being misunderstood and used to legitimise domination, this argument is brought fully to life in the fictional world of Roy where the Meenachal River is humanised figure as mother and lover, flowing, whispering, taking away sorrow, and bearing witness to transgression. the river is a quiet speaker of what Ammu wanted and what Ammu does not want; and its being called something like a stream of smooth corridors slipped by in the dark (Roy, 1997, p.189) is at once erotic and enigmatic. The feminisation of the earthly elements in the text (sighing rivers, trees that can listen, rain

rubbing its back), keeps hinting at some kind of intimate intimacy between women and the land, but one that is continually haunted by repression and loss.

The Kerala landscape, according to this ecofeminist mode of perception, reflects the inner world of Ammu. Ammu is a river like in the sense that like the river, a woman switches between fertility and destruction by flood the woman is a creature who can create but is condemned to desire. The idea of the logic of dualism of Plumwood (1993), who characterises the masculine as a culture and reason and feminine as nature and emotion is rendered through the imagery of the novel. The erotic sensuality of Ammu is presented as a challenge to the patriarchal system in the same way that Kerala with its wild tropical bounty is a challenge to both colonial and post-colonial authority. Social norms of oppressive weight, caste, gender, religion, it seeks to contain Ammu as well as landscape, but each cannot be fully conquered. Roy changes the natural description into a form of rebellion: nature does not want to be silent. It is a witness to its degraded or polluted condition, the very condition of what Gaard (2011) identifies as ecological resistance a vitality that continues even in the face of oppression.

Cyclical temporality is also practised by nature in the novel, feminine time as opposed to the sequential movement of patriarchal history. The repeated images of growth, decay and regeneration remind the concept of an ecological subjectivity pioneered by Plumwood (1993); that of continuity between forms of life replacing the dominance of man over nature. The criminal affair of Ammu with Velutha exists in this circular time: it thrives during the green monsoon month, dies in bloodshed and may haunt like a ghost in the afterlife. This rhythm is in turn re-affirmed by the nonlinear structure of the novel which implies that memory is to be acted upon in spirals rather than straight lines just like the nature is. The materiality of the body and the materiality of the environment, Roy predicts this in her prose, full of sensual language and expressive touches, scent and touch, humidity, which dismays the boundaries of the body and the land. In this way, the text performs the goal of cultural ecofeminism the reclaiming of the feminine-nature relationship as a means of embodied knowledge and poetic opposition.

## **5.2. Violence Between the Sexes and Ecological Devastation**

The same structures that exploit women in *The God of Small Things* also exploit the environment, revealing what Warren (1997) terms the “logic of domination.” Patriarchal power, colonial capitalism, and caste structure are all systems that interlock each other and make women and nature look like resources to be managed, consumed and discarded. Throughout the storey, gendered violence is systematically contrasted with ecological destruction, which implies that mistreating the female body and violating nature are alternative manifestations of the same ideology. The rusting of the Ayemenem House, the disgrace of the factory-proclaimed Meenachal River, and the broiling heat, which

appears to be stifling the scenery, are all reverberations of the moral and emotional withering-out of the society that gives them birth. In the case of Roy labelling the hitherto pure river as being full of the stench of faeces and chemicals (1997, p. 14), the soiled up image becomes the same as the desecration of human relations in the reign of patriarchal and capitalist systems.

This relationship of social and environmental exploitation is the mirror image of Shiva (1989) breaking down of the colonial modernity in which the capitalist development is the re-scenifier of the nature and of women as passive matter. This type of nexus of patriarchy, technology and greed is one of the examples suggested by the factory which pollutes the river, the mechanised production which supports the elite also kills ecological and moral community of the vicinity. The river is both the location and destination of trespass in her body: Ammu has her sexuality policed, shamed, and destroyed. The only transgressive aspect of her forbidden relationship with Velutha is not only gender but also the fact that they transgress the caste and class, the same order of things that perpetuate the exploitation of nature. The world of nature could not last longer which also accounts to human sympathy: both are victims of a culture privileging domination over coexistence.

The image of the decay presented by Roy is an ecofeminist allegory. The decayed house in Ayemenem with its growing mould and the vegetation symbolise decline of colonial order and patriarchal power. The re-entry of vegetation into human areas indicates some sort of natural vengeance what Merchant (1980) refers to as *nine* as the revenge of nature. On the same note, the unstoppable coming back of the monsoon following periods of suppression means that not all women can be suppressed forever. That Humidity, rot, and renewal are descriptions of Roy, creates blurring of the boundaries between the natural and the human, and highlights the ecological interdependence that the patriarchal culture refuses to tolerate. The fact that Velutha is closely attached to the physical world, his capacity to create, repair and become lost in nature is opposed to the sterile exploitative masculinity that is played out by others like Chacko and Baby Kochamma. The novel therefore resists two forms of masculinity one of domination, other one of co existence. In confusing ecological destruction with patriarchal violence, Roy makes the central discovery of ecofeminism, which is that the hierarchies of gender, race, and class found in our society cannot be understood outside of the hierarchical relationship that humans have with nature (Gaard and Murphy 1998).

### **5.3. Subaltern Ecology**

The ecofeminist vision ecofeminist comes to its most radical expression when Roy describes subaltern ecology, the identification of marginalised human subjects and marginalised ecologies. Velutha, the Untouchable carpenter, and Ammu, the divorced woman, are in a position of the liminal within the caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy,

neither of them belongs to the social mainstream, but both of them have a home in the natural world. Their love lives lie inside Kerala ecology - on the riverbank, beneath the banana trees, among whispering reeds - areas beyond the control of caste community. During these moments, nature is the enclave as well as witness, a place of subaltern liberty.

Postcolonial ecocriticism makes us aware of the exploitative mode of colonised landscapes and their potential resistance, as Huggan and Tiffin (2010) would have contended. This duality of Roy landscape is performed the landscape bears the marks of exploiting yet it also carries the promise of new growth and connexion. The pity of such an attachment to the material world, the name Velutha means in Malayalam nothing more than white, which makes him an ironic bond with purity and light, which the social order does not allow him to possess because his body is polluting. His artisanship, his ability to use hands, natural materials, is Plumwood (2002) concept of ecological agency, a knowledge that has been repressed by the industrial modernity. The attraction of Ammu to Velutha is, then, as well, an attraction to a different ecological ethic, an attraction based on intimacy, care, and mutual respect instead of domination. Their prohibited marriage becomes a thin line between the realms of the human and the natural, the holy and the profane, as it implies an ethics of care which Warren (2000) suggests, but applied to the realm outside humanity. The bank of the river is an ethic utopian microcosm: a place of transgression, love and tragic conclusion.

When the lovers are devastated by patriarchal and casteist powers, the natural world witnesses this, its silence full of recollection. The Meenachal still runs, but unconcerned and memorial, and reflects what De Sousa Santos (2014) calls the ecology of the oppressed, a living archive of resistance. Roy therefore sees a subaltern ecology as a coalition between the bodies that are marginalised with the natural environment against the hegemony of the mighty. It is not the non-satisfied human progress that brings these people together, it is rather this, which is political: the human hate of caste is contrasted with the logic of the non-hierarchized ecology, which is that emancipation does not lie in a distance to nature, but in its re-integration of that distance. The death of Ammu and Velutha represents a human cost of opposing to the patriarchal and ecological repression, but their memory becomes what Gaard (2011) refers to as a narrative regeneration. The final scene of the storey, which depicts their intimate moments together, marginal, short-lived, shameless, remains as a form of resistance, a reappropriation of power by means of sex. According to Roy, ecology is a location of social justice, through which the politics of gender and environment have joined in mutual resistance by bringing the subaltern close to the natural.

#### 5.4. The Politics of Small Things

The last element of Roy as an ecofeminist poet is that she celebrates the small, the minute, the everyday as a form of resistance to macro-structures of power. The title itself, *The God of Small Things*, encapsulates a political and aesthetic stance that privileges minor acts, quiet emotions, and local ecologies over grand narratives of nation, progress, and patriarchy. According to Nayar (2018), the politics of scale created by Roy confront the patriarchal and colonial protocols that equate greatness with domination. Ecofeminism is equally partial to the small: harmony of micro-relations, ethics of care, the understanding that interdependence, not hierarchy, depends on survival (Warren, 2000). The small, which is an insect, a raindrop, a seed, a gesture of love, is made sacred in the novel and provides a counter-ethos to institutional violence.

This ecofeminist politics delivered by Roy in a formal way is via fragmentation, repetition and sensorial detail. Her writing does not conform to the linear and monumental past, concentrating on the patterns of breathing, the quality of touch, and the monsoon. Such style device represents what Gaard (2015) refers to as the eco-feminine aesthetic, namely an art form that gives precedence to empathy, embodiment, and non-hierarchy. When Roy focuses on such small details as the scent of wet earth or swaying of a leaf, she proves the importance of what the patriarchal modernity does not recognise as something substantial. These intermediaries of this smallness are the children, Estha and Rahel: the way they see the world is sensual, irrational, and entirely ecological. The reader experiences a living breathing word through their eyes in which even the objects in the storey are alive and contribute to the storey. This egalitarian anthropomorphic vision denies the logic of domination as instrumental and asks of the relation to being.

Moreover, the politics of small things compliments the criticisms of globalisation and developmentalism in postcolonial ecofeminism. India of Roy is a community between remnants of the colonial era and the aspirations of neoliberalism, in which advancement comes at the expense of the human and environmental. The penetration of industry on wetlands of Kerala reflects the penetration of patriarchal and capitalist ideologies in personal lives of the people. However, focusing on minute gestures of affection and sympathy, Roy implies a different survival strategy. The moment when Ammu was happily united with Velutha is made immortal in the memory of narrative; the ability of children to wonder is made an immortal power. Through it, the ecofeminist politics of Roy goes against hopelessness. She finds regeneration, even in destruction, the continuation of the little as the grain of renewal. Ecological temporality as well as hopeful feminism The last attestation of this ethos of cyclical renewal comes in the final attestation of the text entitled Tomorrow.

The poetic manner used by Roy enforces this philosophy of being small using linguistics and rhythm. The repetition she uses in a viable, dyeable age and her recapitulatory syntax comprise formal elements of literary realism, whose word forms it

forms language which breathes, mutates, and develops in gaseous form like the organic world she is describing. This ecofeminist ethic of the ecological interconnection of language, body, and earth is enshrined in this stylistic ecology. What has been created is not a textual ecosystem that describes but represents but actually does what it tells about women and nature. When shifting the focus to the minor, Roy breaks the dichotomy of literature and life, aesthetics and morals. Her writing turns into an ecological awareness whereby she proposes that change does not start with great revolutions but with small embodied cognizance. But it is not passive resignation but the politics of small things, which is a politics of radical attentiveness, that is, a moral ground out of which the ecofeminist resistance can develop.

## 6. Discussion

The ecofeminist reading of *The God of Small Things* foregrounds Arundhati Roy's intentional feminisation of nature, positioning it as a strategic intervention aimed at interrogating and ultimately subverting patriarchal, casteist, and capitalist modalities of domination. And in such a construction, the co-producing aspect of ecological and gendered oppression is articulated well as those institutions that simultaneously marginalise women and the environment, and in which both are viewed as resourceable and manageable, generate a necessary cycle. The Kerala terrain with its well-developed nature, represented by the movement of the Meenachil River, and the motifs of death and decay, is an active place of annihilation and transformation. The nexus of femininity and nature centrally focuses on the production by Roy, who decries domestic patriarchy and rambling colonial exploitation (Buell, □□olare 2011; Gaard, 2015). Ecological awareness thus validates empirically that ecological consciousness is a structural aspect of poetics and policy of the novel.

Roy, the feminised violated nature becomes foreshadowed in the background, contaminating the similarities in level of realist epistemology of environmental damages and gender subordination. Her story disrupts anthropocentric and androcentric supremacy as described by Plumwood (1993) and Merchant (1980) and redefines it in terms of the ethic of relationships becoming devoted, interdependent and vulnerable. As a result, Roy joins an ecofeminist mode of thought and activism both in the Western world and in Indian activism, but also beyond these two domains. While Indian ecofeminism (e.g., Shiva, 1989; Agarwal, 1998) often valorises the feminine as innately attuned to nature, Roy complicates this essentialist premise: in *The God of Small Things*, nature is neither a passive mother nor a mere symbol but a wounded, defiant subject. The Meenachil floods and decays in order to depict rebirth processes that reject the Garden of Eden in veneration of a more violent transformation of being and thus indicates how the power of environment and feminism is circular and cyclical around chaos and not harmony.

Roy makes a crucial contribution to ecofeminist theory by preempting the interplay of gender and the environment in a crucial way. Her literary discussion with Western ecofeminist authors (Gaard, 1993; Warren, 2000) is re-contextualised in a South Asian framework of caste, class and colonialism. A sociopolitical conflict with industrialisation of modernity, and environmental degradation/indigenous ecological knowledge erosion in contemporary India. The concurrentness of gendered and ecological injustices represents a sociopolitical conflict with the industrialisation of modernity, and environmental degradation/erosion of indigenous ecological knowledge in contemporary India. The feminist struggle that Roy represents and the resulting environmental activism are, therefore, a creation of narrative form. The effects of the gradual process of modernity on the environment, described by Nixon (2011) as slow violence, are catastrophic to the most vulnerable groups. The aestheticisation of this ecological destruction by Roy makes the prose a very personal experience of human beings.

The other contribution made by Roy is that of an ecofeminist where she is able to make a balance between the personal and the political, the sensual and the ecological. Her language sets no difference between material and immaterial: Ammu, with her lust, her sleepy memories, Velutha, with her wild labour, are explained by metaphors of flowers, liquids, or birds. This stylistic trick gives ecological pictures a feminist semiotics of desire and suffering, which echoes the idea of more embodied epistemology in ecofeminism that is proposed by Gaard (2011). The ethics of the sensory forms in the novel can therefore be seen as an ethical act of communication through experience, harnessed above acrobatics.

Within the broader sphere of contemporary eco-literary studies, *The God of Small Things* expands the ecofeminist archive by centring a postcolonial experience. The style of Roy as compared to other Indian writers who bring environmental issues is significantly subjective, emotional, and poetic- perhaps the best example of this style attribute is *The Hungry Tide* (2004) by Amitav Ghosh, and *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai. Where Ghosh discusses the systems of the world, Desai deals with the global ecological consciousness, Roy puts global ecology into perspective with the use of commonplace information of decay, dampness, odour, and silence. This micro-level emphasis on smallness is a kind of protest against the mighty force of patriarchy and empire; the politics of smallness, akin to that of the ecofeminist challenge to domination by focusing on care, feeling and material vulnerability, is present in all parts of the storey (Tronto, 2013).

This analysis gives rise to many implications on current feminist and ecological arguments. First, it confirms the pre-eminence of gender analysis in environmental criticism. Second, it shows that such literary models as narrative fragmentation, nonlinear temporality, lyrical excess can reflect ecofeminist morality. Lastly, it places Roy in the company of other postcolonial women writers, such as Anita Desai, Mahasweta Devi and Tsitsi Dangarembga, who use nature as a place of resistance. Such intersections need to

be sought in the future, combining ecofeminism with the ecology of queer and material ecocriticism and more, thus adding a variety of words with which feminists approach the natural world.

## 7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *The God of Small Things* functions as a profoundly ecofeminist text, intertwining the fates of women and nature within a shared narrative of marginalisation and renewal. Roy, through a chain of natural imagery, rivers, rot, monsoon, vegetation, details the rationality of domination which is a combination of patriarchy, caste, and environmental despoliation. Feminising nature, and naturalising the feminine, she demolishes society in an anthropocentric hierarchy and reformulates collective, relational and regenerative agency worlds. The novel therefore results as ecofeminism implicates, liberation of gendered oppression within patriarchal systems, and reconstruction of humanity-nature relations in a non-dualistic context.

The ecofeminism paradigm is one that could be useful in destabilising these dynamics by incorporating cultural, ecological, and feminist criticism into one tool of analysis. Its strength is in its interpretive emphasis on bodily experience, specifically the similarity between the texts of female and ecological bodies and the landscapes of domination and challenge in the storey. The image of Ammu as rebellious and Velutha as sympathetic is an example of an ethic of reciprocal care, which, though it deals with gender and speciesism, resonates with Plumwood (1993) with its portrayal of an ecological self as based on reciprocity.

In general, Roy, in her fiction, goes beyond Western ecofeminist fundamentalism and Indian spiritual romanticism, to define ecofeminism as a politics of materiality and sensuality. It prefigures the misery of the marginalised subjects placing Kerala as a test case. It claims that the struggle over the justice of women and that of nature are not mutually exclusive or independent, but that both necessitate readers to be ecologically intelligent and compassionately interested, as Gaard (2015) would acknowledge. In the end, the work is literary and moral in that Roy calls to turn power into a redefinition not in control but in interdependence and the moral renewal that such a transition can bring about as a result of seeing the simple things. In an era of accelerating climatic crisis and resurgent patriarchal politics, *The God of Small Things* remains profoundly relevant, offering a poetic and political reminder that harmony between gender justice and ecological balance is not only possible but essential for collective survival.

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