DEVIANTE PATTERNS AND MARKED THEME IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S FICTION
“THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS”

Prasanna Lakshmi N

Department of English, GITAM (Deemed to be University) Hyderabad Campus

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ABSTRACT
Arundhati Roy is one of the established writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Githa Hariharan. She has created history in the genre of fiction with her first novel “The God of Small Things” (1997). As is obvious, scholars have interpreted her book for its linguistic inventiveness and style. Regarding her use of language in the novel, she becomes independent in the same way as some noted Indian English novelists. Roy, in her novel, makes a distinctive use of English. She occasionally uses spoken language, with a bit of Malayalam at times, as direct or indirect speech to present her characters. The aim of this study is to explore the stylistic patterns that are used by one of the post colonial creative writers and to understand thus the specific effects or functions.

INTRODUCTION
Indian English has been recognised as a distinct variety like any other established variety. Raja Rao, in “Kanthapura” comments English as ‘not really an alien language to us’. Mulk Raj Anand, G.V.Desani, Raja Rao, Salman Rushdie have used English as their own. We come across backward spelling and punctuation, in her direct narration, the use of correct English and then suddenly now and then, changing to unusual combinations or constructions of words or a sentence without a verb etc. An interesting stylistic feature of the novel is the use of Verbless sentences. The following are the examples in the text of “The God of Small Things”.

Grammatical categories
Verbless sentences
These follow a full sentence with a verb in it. Look at the description of the History House:

It was a beautiful house.


A series of verbless sentences is used to provide details to the description of the History house. At places, the verbless sentences can provide ‘metaphoric restatement of what is said in the previous statement’ in the narrative (Tiwari 1999: 141). For instance,

In the Hotel Sea Queen car park, the sky blue Plymouth gossiped with other smaller cars. Hslip Hslip Hsnooh - Snah. A big lady at a small ladies’ party. Tailfins aflutter (GST 113).

Similarly, the sequence of verbless sentences can be used to add abundance detail to the description. Such sequences involve avoiding repeated sentence elements. We can notice this in the following lines:

The History House.

With cool stone floors and dim walls and billowing ship-shaped shadows. Plump, translucent lizards lived behind old pictures, and waxy, crumbling ancestors with tough toe-nails and breath that smelled of yellow maps gossiped in sibilant, papery whispers (GST 53).

There was only Ayemenem now. A front verandah and a back verandah. A hot river and a pickle factory (GST 43).

Chacko said these lines in the context of the war with many details about it.

‘We’re prisoners of War’, Chacko said. ‘Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore. Our sorrows will never
be sad enough. Our joys never happy enough. Our dreams never big enough. Our lives never important enough. To matter’ (GST 53).

In the following description of ‘Colonel Sabhapathy’ several verbless sentences are followed by a full sentence. These prepositional groups are used as a foregrounding choice to add important details: An I’m sorry, Colonel Sabhapathy, but I’m afraid I’ve said my say. And crisp banana chips for the children (GST 63).

He said it was a lucky leaf, that made the monsoons come on time. A brown leaf on a black back. An autumn leaf at night. A lucky leaf that wasn’t lucky enough (GST 73).

A similar sequence can be observed in other examples too as in the following:

Rahel watched Estha with the curiosity of a mother watching her wet child. A sister a brother. A woman a man. A twin a twin (GST 93).


Rahel was like an excited mosquito on a leash. Flying. Weightless. Up two steps. Down one. She climbed five flights of red stairs for Baby Kochamma’s one.


Interrogatives /Questions

Like other Indian writers, Roy also uses these formations abundantly. Here are some examples from the text: ‘Ariel in the Tempest?’ (GST 144), “In a cowslip’s bell I lie?” (GST 144), ‘And how was your journey?’ (GST 142), ‘And Thankyou?’ Margaret Kochamma said to Sophie mol. (GST 143), “Orkunnilley? Comrade Uncle?” (GST 128), ‘but otherwise in Amayrica, I suppose?’ (GST 124), ‘Punnyan Kunju?’ he asked. (GST 129), ‘Chacko, do you love Sophie Mol Most in the world?’ (GST 118), ‘No?’ Ammu said. (GST 108), ‘Really?’ the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said, and looked at Ammu with his teeth. ‘Really? you don’t look old enough!’ (GST 109), ‘Mon says you’ re from Ayemenem?’ (GST 109), ‘From London?’ (GST 110), ‘Going then?’ he said. (GST 111), ‘Now WHAT?’ The WHAT snapped, barked, spat out. (GST 107), Okay? Okay. (GST 107), And his twin sister? Tiliting upwards with her fountain in a Love-in-Tokyo? Could you love her too? (GST 106), ‘Porketmunny?’ the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said with his teeth still watching. (GST 102), ‘So your grandmother runs a factory?’ the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said ‘What kind of factory?’ (GST 103), ‘How would you like that? A written complaint?’ (GST 102), A glowing halo appeared around Baby Kochamma’s head. ‘See?’ She said (GST 90).

Tag questions

This is a characteristic feature of Indian English. In this pattern. ‘isn’t it’ as a sort of common purpose tag is used in Indian English. For example: ‘Ower, Ower, Ower. In Amayrica now, isn’t it’. (GST 129), Paradise pickles, isn’t it? (GST 109).

Premodification

Like several other Indian English writers, Roy prefers Premodification to Post - modification. The most striking feature is the use of pre-modifiers in the place of a relative clauses, which otherwise would turn out to be too long. For example, The Torch man opened the heavy Princess Circle door into the fan-whirring, peanut-crunching darkness (GST 98). The Pre-modifiers are derived from the relative clauses such as.... where fans were whirring ....

Yet another sentence of this type is: ‘It’s his eye’, Kochu Maria said loudly to Mammachi, her own eyes bright with onion tears (GST 254), (tears which were caused by onions).

Similarly, the relative clause is modified and the word vase-hand is put in the pre-modifier position. For example, Chacko strode into the room, and caught Pappachi’s vase-hand and twisted it around his back (GST 48).

Sometimes, the pre-modifier can be understood only with reference to some earlier sentence or paragraph, for example, Then he smiled his portable piano smile (GST 108). The modifier portable piano is used with the reference to an earlier sentence where the Lemondrink Man is described:

He had an unshaven Jowly face. His teeth, like yellow piano keys, watched little Elvis the Pelvis (GST 102).

Figure 1 Use of Premodification in “The God of Small Things” (GST)

Figure 1 shows Roy’s use of premodifiers in the text of “The God of Small Things”. There are ‘137’ occurrences and ‘130’ different tokens present in the text. The frequency of each token is represented in the above graph. Its occupancy is 12.21% in the entire text.

Parenthesis

Another stylistic feature is the use of parenthesis in the novel. The purpose of the parenthesis would be to add on and on the more elaborations to description. Some examples are: He was tall, and underneath the mess of clothes (inappropriate tie,
shabby coat), Margaret Kochamma could see that he was well built (GST 241).

Here the use of parenthesis elaborates the lengthy process of pickling:

The pickling (and the squashing, the slicing, boiling and stirring, the grating, salting, drying, the weighing and bottle sealing) stopped (GST 171).

As the marchers approached, Ammu put up her window. Estha his. Rahel hers. (Effortfully, because the black Knob on the handle had fallen off) (GST 65).

Captain von Trapp and some questions of his own.

a) Are they clean white children ? No. (But Sophie Mol is.)
b) Do they blow spit-bubbles? Yes. (But Sophie Mol doesn’t.)
c) Do they shiver their legs? Like clerks ? Yes. (But Sophie Mol doesn’t.)
d) Have they, either or both, ever held strangers’ soo-soos ?

N... Nyes. (But Sophie Mol hasn’t.) (GST 106)

In the description of various objects Roy extends the use of parenthesis for clarity. For instance, The airport shop, run by the Kerala Tourism Development corporation, was crammed with Air India Maharajahs (small medium large), sandalwood elephants (small medium large) and papier-mâché masks of kathakali dancers (small medium large). The smell of cloying sandalwood and terry-cotton armpits (small medium large) hung in the air (GST 137).

Ungrammatical sentences

Roy employs grammatical deviance as one of the powerful foregrounding element for functional purpose. For example, We can’t not go to school (GST 250).

Topicalization

This involves the shifting of some elements of the sentence to the sentence initial position. For example, In the Hotel Sea Queen car park, the sky blue Plymouth gossiped with other, smaller cars. Hslip Hslip Hsnooh-Snail. A big lady at a small ladies’ party. Tailfins aflutter (GST 113). A normal grammatical order of the sentence would be: The sky blue Plymouth gossiped with other smaller cars in the Hotel Sea Queen car park. In the above line the prepositional phrase In the Hotel Sea Queen car park ... has been brought to the sentence front position for focus the place.

Capitals

Another noticeable feature is the use of capital letters in the text. In her use of capital letters, she is like Emily Dickenson and E.E. Cummings, and Roy does in fiction what they did in poetry. Emphasis has been put on words by the deliberate use of capitals within sentences:

Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits have appeared like a team of trolls on their separate horizons. Short creatures with long shadows, patrolling the Blurry End. Gentle half-moons have gathered under their eyes and they are as old as Ammu was when she died (GST 3).

Baby Kochamma’s secret love and fear of outsiders is brought out by the use of capitals. She opened the windows only For a Breath of Fresh Air. To pay for the Milk. To Let Out a Trapped Wasp (GST 28).

The purpose could be to put an emphasis from the view of the character at the point in the narrative and to catch the attention of the particular elements in the story. We can notice this in the following examples;

‘Look, this is my Resting Time. Soon I’ll have to wake up and work. So I can’t have you singing English songs here. Stop it’ (GST102).

Also capitals are used to bring out certain special features. For instance, The Man with the steel Eveready Torch said that the picture had started, so to hurry (GST 97). Here Eveready Torch captures the brand name of the battery cells.

Similarly, certain words Touchable and Untouchable are always used with capitals, probably as this theme is the crux of the story. Other examples are:

And now, twenty-three years later, their father had re-Returned Estha (GST 4).

The red sign on the red and white arm said STOP in white. ‘POTS’, Rahel said.

A yellow hoarding said BE INDIAN, BUY INDIAN in red. ‘NAIDNI YUB, NAIDNI EB; Estha said (GST 58) ‘AMMU?’ he said.

‘NOW WHAT?’ The WHAT snapped, barked, spat out (GST 107).

‘Coca-ColaFanta? IcecreamRosemil?’ (GST 109)

Deviant Patterns

Deviant Patterns are the result of violating selectional restrictions. The following are the examples: Inspector Thomas Matthew’s moustaches bustled like the friendly Air India Maharaja’s, but his eyes were sly and greedy (GST 7).

A Wounded Machine.

He had a greenwavy, thickwatery, lumply, seaweedy, floaty, bottomless-bottomful feeling (GST 107). In the given examples, Roy uses human characteristics to non-human objects and vice versa.

To describe the jostling and hurrying around at the railway station the author uses a group of present participles: Scurrying hurrying buying selling luggage trundling porter paying children shitting people spitting coming going begging bargaining reservation – checking (GST 300). The gerunds are placed without any punctuation mark. This deviant pattern in orthography helps the reader to visualize the scene at the station and depict the social reality.

CONCLUSION

Several literary and aesthetic aspects of Indian English writing have been studied by various scholars. From the linguist’s view Indian writing in English offers rich data. It is necessary that linguistic studies of Indian English literature must concentrate on those stylistic, syntactic, lexical, and semantic features, which distinguish it from writing in native varieties of English.
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