

## Peeking into Collective Unconscious through Personal Unconscious: A study of *The God of Small Things* and *The Kite Runner*

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### ABSTRACT

*Art always reflects artist's knowledge accumulated in his unconsciousness whether personal or collective and makes the unconscious conscious. Likewise we always carry this collective memory since olden times unconsciously that asserts its intrinsic worth through our conduct, outlook and way of thinking. We are tightly entangled in this web of archetypal patterns that every attempt to liberate from it makes us more knotted. Every one follows these patterns of accepted wisdom blindly and unknowingly; "Because history isn't easy to overcome" (Hosseini, 22). Thus we construct our beliefs, social norms, cultures and ideologies obeying these universal prototypes. My paper endeavours to employ Carl G Jung's theory of unconsciousness on two novels; *The God of Small Things* and *The Kite Runner*.*

**Keywords:** Collective unconscious, personal unconscious, archetypes, powerful, outcastes, scapegoat

### INTRODUCTION

Carl G Jung broadens the conception regarding unconscious given by Sigmund Freud that the unconscious is just the accumulation of repressed or forgotten memories and the desires and instincts present there are personal and individual. In this regard Jung differs from Freud on the idea of Id which is unconscious part of psyche, theorizing that man's unconscious doesn't only contain personal suppressed memories but also collective memory shared by all human beings. He divides the unconscious mind into personal unconscious and collective unconscious. Jung (1981) elucidates it;

*'A more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal ... and this personal unconscious is similar to the unconscious described by Freud. That personal conscious rests upon a deeper layer which does not derive from personal experience and is not personal acquisition but is inborn... this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal.'* (Collected Works of C.G. Jung Vol.9.i, 1981, pg. 3)

Philippe L. De Coster(2010) further enlightens this theory in "The Collective Unconscious and its Archetypes "as *'The contents of the collective unconscious have never been in conscious and therefore have never been individually acquired but owe their existence exclusively to heredity'* (De Coster,2). Jung calls the contents of the collective unconscious "archetypes". *'The contents of the collective unconscious are called "archetypes," which means they are original (i.e., primal), inherited patterns, or forms of thought and experience'* (De Coster, 5).

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*(1997),is widely read and interpreted from different perspectives. It is a story of a Syrian Christian family who claimed itself the Brahmin Christians. The forefathers inhabited Kerala a thousand years before and converted to Christianity when St. Thomas visited this locale after the resurrection. Though they were Christians but they retained Indian cultural consciousness because they had been living since

centuries. The main characters are Ammu, Rahel, Estha, Velutha and Mammachi. Ammu eloped with Baba and bore two non identical twins but later she divorced him and returned back to his parents' home in Ayemenem located in Kerala. Later she developed physical relationship with an untouchable, Velutha and paid a heavy price for such relationship prohibited by the social norms.

It is Rahel who peeps into her personal consciousness and extracts the memory related to her childhood, her twin brother Estha, her Mother's sufferings, her power of uncanny, her life without Estha, Velutha's involvement in CPI(M) and his lower status in the society. First she delves into her personal conscious as *'the contents of the personal unconscious are chiefly the feelings-toned complex ... they constitute the personal and private side of psychic life'* (Jung 4) and she brings to mind the funeral of her cousin Sophie Mol, who died accidentally at the age of probably nine when Estha and Rahel were seven. It is not only an aching memory buried in her mind but a history of centuries is revealed how much Mammachi, their grandmother was grieved on her death because she was only child of her only son and of course his (Chacko's) always "devastated her". This thing is engendered from the beginning of the history that son is always dear to the mother because he is '*Vaaris*' of the family and daughters are less adored. Likewise son's grief, pain and happiness always matters and that of daughter's is overlooked. This archetypal pattern is encoded in the unconscious layers of our mind and we inherent all patterns unknowingly. *'This collective unconscious does not develop individually, but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents'* (De Coster, 3).

We get understanding of diverse notions regarding rich, poor, beautiful, ugly, strong, weak, authoritative, submissive, etc. through key patterns or prototypes. These concepts dwelled in the psyche since ages and understood automatically through their keys, Archetypes. *'Mythological research calls them "motifs"; Adolf Bastian long ago called them "elementary" or "primordial thoughts." literally a pre-existent form'* (De Coster, 3). When any idea strikes to our conscious we just apply these mathematical formulae and solve the equations related to the issues of life. In this sense we approach meaningfulness to our philosophy. When anybody defies these patterns or equations, he/she just is expelled from the societal interior and pushed towards the periphery. The hierarchal pattern is always present through times in the collective unconsciousness and what we do just match our ideas to those existed ones and refute those which oppose archetypal patterns. The individuals are closely knit into these constructions and their characters, entity, identity, class, gender, race, rights, obligations, thus everything is defined by these structures.

When Rahel looks into her unconscious and recollects her memory which was repressed or forgotten, it is just personal unconscious which belongs to Rahel but the memory shared by Estha is collective unconscious because both twins represent whole humanity or race in harmony and could share collective ideas. She at the age of thirty one revisits Ayemenem house at Kerala and resumes reminiscence of the days passed with Ipe family. She remembers each and every thing how Estha got a furious dream and other memories which were shared. Which she didn't experience by herself yet could feel as her own due to her uncanny faculty and feel through her senses as when Estha was molested by Orange drink, Lemon drink man. In the earlier times when the human beings lived in harmony this uncanny sense was strong and served as an umbilical bond between the humanity.

*'She has other memories too that she has no right to have. She remembers, for instance (though she hadn't been there), what the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man did to Estha'*

*Abhilash Talkies. She remembers the taste of the tomato sandwiches...And these are only the small things' (Roy 1997,2-3).*

The concept of big things and small things is deeply rooted in the underneath layer of personal consciousness. "It is identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one" (Jung 4). The god, religion, social constructs, caste system, etc are big things which can never be compromised even the life of the people is least significant before such societal categorization. Individual perspective, woman perception, children's standpoint, low caste people's life, untouchables, etc. are small things and have no standing in the record of history but mattered a lot for Rahel. The social laws are very big thing which can never be crossed and if anybody wants to disobey it, he/she must be doomed forever. These social laws are most important that sometimes religious codes are amended to preserve such great system. Rahel was unable to understand the guilt carried by her mother that she was responsible of Velutha's death. But later with the help of archetype, "untouchable" she perfectly understood the circumstances that how much a woman was free in making love with an untouchable who was excluded from the fundamental narrative and moreover the across-caste relationship between a Syrian Christian and a Paravan could never be tolerated at any cost. She remembers the brutality and cruelty of the police how they beat Velutha to death. She recalls the inspector refused to take statement from Ammu and his attitude toward her was excruciating as he said; '*Police didn't take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children' (Roy, 8).*

These words not only unmasked her personal conscious but also the configuration of the collective conscious as the children's philosophy of love, respect and neutrality is not given any significance in the social codes and likewise female perspective regarding liberty, love, honour, individuality is not welcomed. Such patterns are deeply rooted in the minds of the human beings that just accessing the key we automatically understand the outlines associated with an archetype. The attributes related to these patterns can never be resisted or rebelled, if a woman went beyond such established models, she had to pay a heavy price and even she was pronounced "Veshya". Similarly the attributes linked with a man already established in our unconscious. The "man" is authority and patriarchal. His status is raised above a woman, no matters how much she is intellectual and pious; she is always inferior to a man. When Ammu was caught in an affair with a Dalit, now had no right to resist this authority when Inspector '*he (authority)tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently. Tap tap. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket' (Roy, 8).*

The "man" is never punished for his side affairs or extra marital relationships but the woman. Chacko represented those males who don't tolerate the mistakes committed by women but never admit their own mistakes. He is the opposite archetype of "woman" and always free in the society. Who constructs different laws to run the society. The rules for women are different to those of children and no rules and no moral codes for male authorities thus the morality is relevant for them. When Chacko brought Margret (ex wife) to Ayemenem house, nobody inquired anything even Baby Kochamma didn't dare to ask him who had become alter of his dead brother by that time. She thought herself the only protector of the moral, social and religious values. She welcomed them whole heartedly. BINAYAK ROY (2009) explains such unfairness in *The Title of The God of Small Things: A Subversive Salvo*;

"Mammachi makes all arrangements for the satisfaction of Chacko's sexual needs with Paravan women. However, she becomes furious at Ammu's affair with the Paravan Velutha, believing that by her action "she defiled generations of breeding and brought the family to its knees (258)."

Woman had been a home maker and had no part in the financial matters as per knowledge from the collective unconscious. Mammachi had been running business of Pickles and jams for many years but never given praise. Even when his son Chacko took over her business and christened it a name of Paradise Pickles, she could not refuse to accept any more. She was turned into a sleeping partner from a sole owner. She worked hard to raise the sales of her production but later she had to surrender before the hierarchy as it was the only truth acquired through centuries. She could not pronounce her own business as “my work, my factory, my pineapples, my pickles. (Roy, pg. 57). When Ammu finished schooling she had to move to Ayemenem because her thought, “College education was an unnecessary expense for a girl, so Ammu had no choice” (38). As a wife she had always been expected to resign before her husband; as a daughter before father and as a sister before brother. Mr. Hollick proposed Baba, Ammu’s husband to go away for his treatment and for the period “Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be “looked after” (42) when Ammu resisted “he lunged at her, grabbed her hair, punched her and then passed out from the effort” (42).

This was the fate of man-less woman who was always expected to surrender before the patriarch of the family because a woman has no home, where she was brought up that was her father’s home then went to husband’s and at last went to her brother’s home. She had no possessions because the possessions or property always belonged to the male members of the society. And after the tragic incident of Sophie’s death she was held responsible and was left to die helplessly in a hotel because she was expelled by Chacko. She couldn’t defend her against such hierarchal pattern because she was well conscious of the scheme which was designed in the psyche since centuries that as a woman, she had no ‘Locusts Stand I’ (57).

Rahel recollects the memory of her friend Velutha, which was a shining diamond in her personal conscious. She recalls the days when she was cared by him and had been carried on a that paravan’s black back. Who made her fishing rod and taught both twins to fish. This Dalit with Vellyapapen was not allowed to enter in the Ipes’ house from the front gate but ‘*would come to the back entrance to deliver the coconuts*’ (73). Why they were not allowed because they belonged to low caste, untouchables. The Syrian Christians, who possessed Indian collective consciousness, inherited these archetypes without human intervention. They believed in the high and upper ranks of the casteism where Brahmans were on the top and shudras at the bottom. The very notion of touchable and untouchables and their associated attributes was preserved in the minds through history. Where whole sensibility, civility, manners are entitled to the touchable and the untouchables are what the touchable are not.

*‘They were not allowed to touch anything that Touchables touched. Caste Hindus and Caste Christians... Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmans or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan’s footprint’ (73-74).*

When Velutha was charged of the murder of SophyMol, the police beat him inhumanly to death because he deserved such treatment due to his low caste. In this regard there is no need of any written law or rule that who should be treated how, it is the truth which is travelled through ages and shared by all human beings. Binayak Roy states; ‘*Hindu casteism has all the overwhelming qualities of a primordial force. Pappachi, Mammachi and Baby are Syrian Christians. Nevertheless, their ancestral Brahminical contempt for the Paravan Velutha is implacable.*’ Even in our society a child could understand that a fellow poor or ugly child should be treated viciously because these people have no voice and are marginalized.



In Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003), it is Amir Jan who peeps into his personal unconscious and digs the deep embedded secrets of his life regarding his guilt, his betrayal, his friendship, his prejudice and his sin. He was the only son of a wealthiest and a powerful merchant Baba and had a most beautiful house in Wazir Khan District. Baba had a servant named Ali in his house who was brought up by his father in the same house. Baba and Ali passed grown together as Amir and Hassan did. *'But in none of his stories did Baba ever refer to Ali as his friend'* (22). This was the case with Amir, when Amir attends call of Rahim Khan from Pakistan, he just arrested by his guilty conscious as it was his 'past of unatoned sins' (1) and invites the readers to get hold the knowledge preserved in collective unconscious. It is given;

*'In our psychological makeup, the patterns that shape our perceptions of the world, the furnishings that are present in our psychological home from the moment of birth. We inherit the same forms, but each of us fills in the content by the way we experience our lives'* (De Coster 5).

Amir and Hassan passed their childhood together and played together like Baba and Ali. They used to climb the trees and 'took our first steps on the same lawn in the same yard. And, under the same roof, we spoke our first words. Mine was \_Baba. His was \_Amir (10). They made mischief together but always Hassan was held responsible like his father Ali. He was the servant and Amir was the master of everything. Hassan considered Amir, his brother his friend. In the historical record a master and a servant could never be friends. Amir admitted this collective thought; *'Because history isn't easy to overcome. Neither is religion. In the end, I was a Pashtun and he was a Hazara, I was Sunni and he was Shi'a, and nothing was ever going to change that'* (22). It is proficiently designed in the makeup of our unconscious that all rights are entitled to the masters and all obligations to the servant. *'Humans are the same way. Archetypes that exist in humans include Male and Female, God and the Devil, Goddess and Witch, Father and Brother, Mother and Sister...'* De Coster 5).

Amir being a master could command anything from his servant even his life. On the other side Hassan was not a native to that land so could not demand anything. The indigenous people had been on Taking side and the Diasporas on the Giving end. According to this knowledge Amir and Baba were native of Afghanistan and were pashtoons who were strong and most warlike. On the other hand Hassan and Ali were diasporic settlers in Afghanistan and both could never be the same. *'They are Turko-Mongol... Some scholars speculate that they are descendants of the warrior Ghengis Khan.'* (Who are the Hazaras? n.d.)

Amir and Hassan were Hazaras who were rootless people and had suffered identity crises in Afghanistan. They were not expected to possess any respect, self esteem and ego because all these attributes were entitled to the Afghans who were never ready to accept them (hazaras) at any cost even if they would sacrifice their life. The children cracked jocks of their flat nose and Chinese like faces and they had been persecuted and violated by the natives.. In this sense Hosseini mirrored how the narrative of the Diasporas had been erased from the pages of the written discourse. Hassan was a loyal and sincere servant but he considered Amir his brother and friend more than a Master because they used to spend time with each other. They spent whole winter in kite flying. One day Amir carved the names *'Amir and Hassan, the sultans of Kabul'*(24) on the pomegranate tree where they used to play. Sometimes Amir read Hassan stories from ShahNama. Hassan misunderstood this courteousness as friendship. He was incapable of understanding the tricks of that aristocratic that he just passed time with him when nobody was available or around. Amir treated well him but it was out of pity and not

out of friendship because he was well aware that the gap between them could never be bridged up. That relationship could never attain the status of friendship.

Assef the son of an Airline Pilot detested Hassan and his community and reminded him his low status in Afghanistan by saying, *'Afghanistan is the land of Pashtuns... the pure Afghans, not this Flat-Nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our watan. They dirty our blood'* (35). He repeated him that their community of 'kassseef Hazaras' (36) was nonentity over there and they should be exiled. This class difference and discrimination ingrained in the mind was innate that the weaker would always resign and show submission. The Hazaras were minority and powerless people there so they hadn't had any kind of privileges or civil rights and majority is always authority. He also inquired Amir that how he could call him a friend. "How can you talk to him, play with him, let him touch you?" (36). He, on the call of his collective unconscious Amir instantly withdrew his friendship and said, "But he's not my friend! He's my servant!" (36)

Now Hassan had got the status of a "servant" and this word served as an archetype because all the associated characteristics of a servant are deep seated in our minds. A servant is weaker, powerless and a slave who can never claim his rights. Hassan was a slave belonged to Diaspora community therefore had lost his sense of self, Ego, identity and surrendered him before authority and finally he became a scapegoat. When Assef seemed to raise a wrangle and targeted both, Hassan collected his whole energy and asked Assef to leave them alone and he pronounced him, "Agha". when Hassan was declared a servant, it stands for his whole community as losers and the other binary opposite is Agha which means master/lord so it was inherent in the psyche of Hassan that he was lower and and Assef, Kamal and Wali were superior. He robotically confirmed the *'ingrained sense of one's place in a hierarchy'* (37). *'We humans automatically inherit the outlines of these archetypes, fill them in with colours and details of our individual experiences, attach meaning to them, and project them into the outer world'* (De Coster 5).

Assef retreated a step that day but he paid his account on the day of WINTER OF 1975, whose memory had set roots deep in the personal unconscious of Amir as a monster the day when he lost his innocence and integrity. Earlier when Amir tested Hassan's obedience as Hassan claimed, *'I'd sooner eat dirt'* (47) if he ever would lie to him. That day Amir ordered him to eat dust and Hassan did so. Hassan in turn threw a challenge to test his integrity whenever he would intend to toy him next time. The kite tournament of winter 1975 was held in Wazir Khan and Amir; an expert kite flier won this tournament. His kite was flying triumphantly in the sky when every kite was cut and flickered. The last kite which Amir cut was a blue kite and Hassan wanted to run this blue kite for Amir because he got another chance to show his unconditional love for Amir and tried his best to run that blue kite for him as he was to secure his words; *'For you a thousand times over!'* (59). When he didn't come back for a long, Amir ran up to every nook to look for him but all in vain.

Then as he moved by the trees he heard various voices coming from a blind alley, for me this alley represents collective unconscious where Amir peered into. When Assef demanded that blue kite from Hassan, he refused to by saying it was Amir Agha's kite. Assef, kamal and Wali violated his honour, raped him and Amir was left just watching Paralysed. The only information received from the collective unconscious is that the superior have authority over inferior; the powerful could violate the honour of the powerless; the strong triumphs over weak and the outcasts are always violated. The only truth found was the words of Assef, who unswervingly taught the accepted wisdom confirmed through the times gone by that a master and a servant could never be friend and Amir would never stand up for him. It happened same as the salve showed unconditional love for his master and sacrificed

everything. Hassan represents those scapegoats who have lost their “Locust Stand I” and have no voice recorded in the history so their privileges are not yet documented in the universal format of collective unconscious.

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