



MOTHER MARY COMES TO ME- A NOSTALGIC VOYAGE OF ARUNDHATI ROY

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Abstract:

Arundhati Roy, winner of Booker Prize in the year 1997, has been an innovative novelist with compelling themes. Her recent memoir **Mother Mary comes to Me** establishes the standards of classical memoir. Her memoir visualizes her physical journey from Ayemenem to Delhi and her nostalgic voyage from Delhi to Ayemenem. The book mirrors her transformation from naive woman to the renowned author, her love of her mother, Mrs. Mary, the bond she has with her brother. The memoir also displays her era, challenges faced by her being a lonely young woman in Delhi, her growth as a prolific writer etc. The book also provides prominent collection of events happened in her life and critical decisions that are taken by her.

The era Postmodern witnessed various exceptional writers working with predominant themes and experimenting on the techniques of writing viz. pastiche, historia-graphic meta-fiction, time as a vehicle across the narration, beginning the story at the end, re-visioning, transtextuality, memoir etc. Though the tradition of writing memoir started in 15th century by Margery Kempe (1436-38) **The Book Of Margery Kempe** didn't come into lime light. The book focuses predominantly on her religious experiences, mystical conversations with God and her vow of charity after bearing 14 children.

Memoir as a literary technique completely relies on several principal strategies transforming life experiences into compelling art. Memoirists narrow their scope to a specific era, career or elucidating experience a time of trauma, an adventure, or a period of intense discovery or transformation. The transformation of the personality from naive to older, mature introspecting back with reflection, hindsight and emotional resilience and stability. Memoirists dive deeper into their nostalgia instead of merely telling the reader what occurred, crafting fully realized scenes complete with sensory details, actions to immerse the readers employing the fallibility and emotional resonance of human recollection. They prioritise their own subjective truth and internal emotional journey dominating objective, chronological list and dates and facts. Later classical memoirists Tara Westover, Trevor Noah, Teannette Walls, and Maya Angelou with their works **Educated**, **Born A Crime**, **The Glass Castle**, **I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings** respectively brought fame to memoir- as a literary technique.

The latest memoir of Arundhati Roy's **Mother Mary Comes To Me** published in the year 2025 established the classical standards of memoir as her predecessors mentioned earlier and attained international reputation. The work focuses on the bond between her and her mother Mary, rightly called latter as 'my mother and my storm' (Cover Page, **Mother Mary Comes**



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To Me). The memoir is just not looking back her life but her transformation as a girl to woman, an architect to an English author, her journey from Kerala to Delhi, and the most importantly her voyage of self - discovery. The memoir consists of forty two chapters. These chapters were knitted magnificently; readers learn more about Mrs. Mary, Arundhati Roy's mother, her struggle with life and asthma, the bond between them, etc.

In 1976 Arundhati Roy left Ayemenem and reached Nizamuddin railway station, New Delhi to attempt her entrance exam in Delhi School of Architecture. She left her home at the age of eighteen; she was studying her third year of Architecture. She couldn't forget her mother as she rightly mentions, "I left my mother not because I didn't love her, but in order to be able to continue to love her." (**MMCTM**, Page 4) She dedicated her magnum opus **A God of Small Things** to her. Dedicating her first best book till date is an ample proof of her love on her mother.

Initially both Mrs. Mary and Arundhati Roy were living in Assam with her father who was an Assistant Manager of a tea estate in Assam. As the war broke out between India and China in October 1962, the whole family was moved to Calcutta. Then from Calcutta they travelled across the country taking Arundhati Roy's brother Lalith Kumar Christopher Roy who was four and half year old. Hither to they didn't see or hear from our father again till they were in twenties. Mrs. Mary always wanted to be a teacher for what she was qualified. They settled in Ooty taking the help of Mrs. Patmore- an English lady. Mrs. Mary started her career as a teacher in a local school Breeks. Asthma and medication both made her really ill and bad tempered. As a result Arundhati Roy was beaten but her brother escapes from the situation and reaches home after dark. Kurussammal was called by Mrs. Mary to take care of her children who showed them the care and love for which they always wished for.

The whole family moved from Tamil Nadu to Kerala. "As our train crossed the border from Tamil Nadu into Kerala, the land turned from brown to green. Everything, including electric poles, was smothered with plants and creepers." (**MMCTM**, Page 16) Above expression clearly elucidates Arundhati Roy's love towards the nature, shows her authority on the language and observation. They reached Arundhati Roy's grandmother's older sister Miss Kurien in Ayemenem. Mrs. Roy assured her that she lives with her until she gets a job. At this point one can observe being a lonely mother children were her primary importance. It is conspicuous that after Mrs. Mary's every fall, she raised and battled her life.

After graduating from the Delhi School of Architecture, Arundhati Roy found a temporary job in National Institute of Urban Affairs. Her salary was so meager that she would borrow two hundred rupees from her friend and high priest Carlo in the last week of every month and returns it the day she got her salary. At this point of time she was alone building her career and her family doesn't know how to contact her. Later she got a chance to work in a short film *Massey Sahib*. Her roommates puzzled listening that she is working in a film. Pradip who was the director of the film is the husband of her boss who shared her room in National Institute of Urban Affairs.



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Arundhati Roy uses time as a vehicle across the narration. She recollects her childhood memories that made her forget the world except reading did. Her mother Mrs. Roy employs one of the foundational practices called 'free writing'. This practice of writing helped her to become a versatile writer. She needed emotional support, "To train, I needed shelter. Not physical, but emotional- somewhere to sit down, even for a little while. I didn't have that. I had never had that." (MMCTM, Page 145) As the months passed by the attraction towards Pradip raised intensely. She was reluctant to work in an architectural firm. At once after years she felt herself lonely because Pradip spent weeks away in Bombay editing *Massey Sahib* to present in National Film Development Corporation. At this point of time she realized that she loved Pradip a married old man with all his heart. The emotional bond she has with him is realized in his absence.

Mrs. Roy was in Delhi to see her lawyers about her petition in the supreme court of India against the Travancore succession Act. Meanwhile she met her daughter Arundhati Roy after seven long years. Arundhati Roy wanted to kiss her mother to tell her how much she loves her but she didn't. Mrs. Roy bought Arundhati Roy's old typewriter. Arundhati said thank you but the exact meaning of thank you is "thank you for knowing that your daughter has a writer's heart." (MMCTM, Page 153) Arundhati Roy met her brother after seven years. He brought their father- Mary Roy's husband i.e. Mr. Mary Roy. She accepted the compromise. She met her father almost after two decades. Micky Roy met his family in New Delhi after their scrambled twenty years before in Calcutta.

Rashid Talib, a renowned journalist from Delhi reached Kottayam to make a documentary about the Mary Roy's case. He interviewed Mrs. Roy is a beautiful unplastered brick Laurie Baker Home. Arundhati Roy always feels that Ammal, Mariamma, and Kurusammal including Mrs. Roy's students a family, a complete family without her but emotionally she says she is incomplete without Mrs. Roy. **The God of Small Things**, the magnum opus till date of Arundhati Roy at last published in India in 1997 and the launch of the book took place in Mrs. Roy's school. Kamaladas the prolific Indian writer in English was invited to the function. Mrs. Roy followed Arundhati Roy's writings regularly not missing single article. Later Arundhati Roy got an invitation from Ministry to spend time in Dandakaranya which she happily accepted.

The final pages of the book or about Mrs. Roy are truly emotional. After her demise she was carried up the hill to cremate her. The Kottayam police Band marched alongside the hearse as it drove slowly back up the hill. She got a 21 gun salute. Arundhati Roy put her ashes in the Meenachil River, some in the ocean and some buried under the base of the clump of a tall bamboo behind her house, where a grove was made by Arundhati Roy.

The title of the each chapter is labeled magnificently viz. *Laurie Baker and the Bald Hill* *Mama Bear, Papa Bear, A Home of My Own*, The shift from one chapter to the other makes reader takes a new theme, new place, and new incident. In one chapter she speaks about her life of New Delhi, in the other chapter she talks about her childhood in Ayemennem. The book talks about her life in various places like Italy, Ayemennem, Ooty, New Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir etc. Every chapter initiates a new enthusiasm to complete the book. There are



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pages written about Arundhati Roy's love of Mrs. Roy which disclosed to the readers that couldn't express to her mother.

Mother Mary Comes To Me is a memoir displays Arundhati Roy's unflinching honesty, showcases intimate and inspiring nostalgic voyage and fervent emotional bond with her mother, Mrs. Mary Roy. Mrs. Mary Roy is truly a warrior as single mother fighting with situations, circumstances and asthma. The memoir is a true tribute to Arundhati Roy's mother.

Abbreviation: MMCTM: Mother Mary Comes To Me

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