

# Barriers in language

[Linguistics](#), [Language](#)



‘Foe’ by J. M. Coetzee is the story of Susan Barton who lost her daughter and has gone searching for her – until she was jumped ship because of a mutiny. She became alone and a castaway and was washed ashore to an island. There she saw and met earlier inhabitants, Crusoe and Friday. Crusoe is an Englishman and he is in his mid-sixties. Friday is Crusoe’s manservant. He is a slave of African descent. Friday has a speaking disability as his tongue has been cut by slave traders.

Both Crusoe and Friday does not intend to leave that island and continues with his constant activity of looking for food to eat; gathering stones and building them as terraces. After one year, Crusoe, Friday and Susan were chanced upon by a trader. They were saved by the trader and took them on board his ship. Crusoe was very ill at that time and could not do anything except to accept. However, Crusoe dies before the group reaches England. They decided to throw the dead body of Crusoe to the sea. It is only Susan and Friday who successfully made it back to England and decided to stay together as master and servant.

In England, Susan looked for Daniel Defoe (or simply known as Foe), a publisher, who she thought would help her publish her memoir entitled “The Female Castaway”. Susan thought that the money she will earn from the publication will help her and Friday to sustain and support their needs. Susan and Foe eventually became lovers, but Foe takes Susan for granted and in the end could not really help Susan as he had to face so many problems of his own. Susan “Foe” is a novel that is considered as archetypal and post-modern. It illustrates a creative technique in languages of narration, of telling stories.

The novel triggers the issue of whether there is a possibility of a true and right story - depending on who is telling it. Susan Barton as a survivor who lives to tell the tale about her life as a castaway with Cruso, deems to possess the authority about the truth of the story. However, as Foe is commissioned to assist in writing the story of Susan, the issue of how Foe interprets the story will create a difference. Foe considers zeroing-in on the story and characterization of Friday. Foe even believes that Friday can nevertheless be taught how to communicate, despite his tongue is cut.

Friday can therefore "tell his story", despite his inability to speak. Foe enlightens Susan that the struggle to tell a story can be surpassed in many other forms beyond speech. Susan on the other believes that her recounting and evaluating her analysis of Cruso would be the better part of the story in her memoir. Furthermore, Foe believes that the year long, boring experience of Susan in the island does not carry "much meat" to a story of struggle. Foe considers the incessant pursuit of Susan on her lost daughter in Bahia as a more forceful human element in narrating a story.

Therefore, there is the reality of how stories can change as it is perceived by the narrator or the story teller or the writer. Much as Susan wants to pursue writing her memoir by herself, she on the other hand acknowledges that she does not bear the flare and flow and fancy of the writing style of Foe. She is then faced with a compromise, yet a compromise that is nevertheless moot and academics Foe cannot continue helping Susan due to his personal and financial problems. "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy is an Indian novel of perpetual struggle towards pursuit of truth by a fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha.

From their deplorable childhood in Aymanam, Kerala, India, until they were reunited in their adult years, theirs is a story of emancipation from their deplorable past. Rahel and Estha are the children of Ammu and a Tea Estate Manager, whom Ammu marries as a way to escape the violence and injustices of her father, Pappachi Shri Benaan John Ipe. Eventually through the course of the marriage of their mother Ammu and father, the man becomes an alcoholic and becomes abusive and violent. Ammu left her husband and took her twins and she had no choice except to go back to her father, Papaachi.

One day, Ammu became friends with a factory worker, Velutha. He belongs to the untouchable caste level of India's society. And, they found that they are in love with each other. Definitely the family of Ammu highly deprecates the arrangement. She was locked up in her room to prevent her from continually seeing Velutha. Rahel and Estha were so sad and affected by the state of their mother and asked her to explain to them why their situation is as such. Ammu in her anger tells the twins that they are the reason why she is in such situation.

Ammu shouted at the twins and told them to go away. Thus, the twins did run away. However, the twins have a cousin Sophie, who is the daughter of Margaret and their Uncle Chacko. So, Sophie was the one who convinced the twins to go with her. During the night as they were escaping, the boat they were using capsized. As they were struggling to save themselves, Sophie drowns. The twins tried to find Sophie and/or her body but to no avail. They instead found a way to reach the other side of the river and sought refuge in an abandoned house and they fell asleep.

Rahel and Estha did not realize that in the other side of the house was Velutha for apparently that abandoned house is the secret meeting place of their mother Ammu and Velutha. The twins have an aunt, Auntie Baby Kochamma, the sister of Ammu. Auntie Baby Kochamma was the one who told the police that it was Velutha who caused the death of Sophie - when her body was eventually found. Auntie Baby Kochamma also told the police that Velutha tried to rape Ammu and he kept on threatening their entire family and that Velutha wanted to kidnap the twins. The twins got frightened as to what their Auntie has been falsely telling the police.

So they told the police what they really know about how Sophie died. The police saw how the complication is building up. As a communist, Velutha has many supporters. These supporters will rally against the authorities if the truth about the accusations were revealed. So the police told Auntie Baby Kochamma that until she forces the twins to change their story, the blame about the wrongful accusations will fall on Baby Kochamma. What Baby Kochamma did was to further complicate the situation by telling the twins that if they did not change their story, they will all go to jail - the twins and their mother.

As their mother is endangered by all of the circumstances, Rahel and Estha decided to change not push thru with their real story with the police. And they likewise testified that Velutha caused the death of Sophie. Ammu learned of what transpired and was deeply affected by the false accusations. She told the police look for the truth as what Baby Kochamma said are lies. Baby Kochamma and Ammu have a brother, Chacko, the husband of

Margaret. Baby Kochamma convinced Chacko that Ammu and the twins are instead the real cause of the death of Sophie.

Chacko got so mad at Ammu and sends her and her twins away from their house. Ammu sent Estha to her Tea Estate Manager father and Rahel stayed with her. Ammu eventually dies in poverty. Rahel as a grown up adult goes to the United States and gets married. When she likewise ended up in divorce she returns to Ayamman and she gets reunited with Estha. "The God of Small Things" is glaringly exposing the magnanimous possibilities of abuse and corruption of children. There are things that adults sometime take for granted that leaves an indelible mark on children.

Indeed as the story is a first person narration from the young eyes of Rahel, one of the twins - the events and the reaction of the twins are truly palpable. What they went through how one lie leads to another lie until everything that is happening to them becomes a perceived truth - i. e. , all because of the consistency of lies. And considering that the only thing the twins were hoping for is the safety of their mother that they can eventually be safe with her and enjoy her love and that they can work towards a bright future.

In one simple truth of a story to be twisted and turned and aggravated without them knowing why, they all of a sudden saw the bleakness and the defeat of all possibilities in their lives. Dwelling so profoundly on human nature, "The God of Small Things" illustrate the basic need of love and respect and the desire for basic happiness. Yet, the simplicity of such seemingly small things can be brutally ruined by malice and manipulations. Foe and The God of Small Things - are definitely about struggles.

The common thread that the two stories share is about the challenges and tests of time that Susan Barton and even Friday (as a slave being traded) and the twins Rahel and Estha encountered in their lives. Both stories excruciatingly illustrate the desire of the characters to survive. To win over their challenging circumstances - which in the first place, especially in the eyes of the children are so undefinable and unexplainable as to why they were happening. The difference becomes distant because the approach and the effect of the struggles of Susan and Friday who are already in their adult age, becomes manageable.

As Susan encounters the twist on her opportunity to have her memoir written, could figure a way out to achieve her goal. On the other hand in the case of the twins in "The God of Small Things", they encountered their most diabolical circumstances at such tender age of innocence. Everything that transpired utterly confused them. Unknowingly and beyond their comprehensive and control, the twins were surrounded by utter Dysfunction: a country and a government struggling between democracy and communism; abusive and violent elders; immoral relationships among levels of society; due process of law that can be corrupted.

Therefore, the glaring difference between the struggles of Susan and the twins is the very profound, palpable and heartwrenching sadness that the experience of the twins went through. "The God of Small Things" is a very sad story that can even linger with the reader for sometime. There is always the tendency to deeply sympathise with the struggles of children. However, both Foe and Small things are stories that bear very profound and strong

lessons on humanism and sensitivity towards the truth. Part of winning or being victorious about any struggle is to achieve the truth.

When Susan was deterred from having her true story told because Foe could not help her, she still stays intact and determined to find a way for her truth to be told. The extreme dire case of the twins kept them at bay with their truth. The twins do not even eventually get to conclude and understand what the truth is. It can therefore be gleaned that stories are not just events and words. Choosing the right words to be said at the right time contribute to the betterment of narration and eventually the achievement of truth.

Stories are likewise characters of conviction. It is the ability to tell the story with dignity, with strength, with determination. The composite feature of the story is how the story teller, the narrator, the writer would stand by with all his strength and all his faith about the story. The role of language therefore rests on the structure of words that befit the sentiment of the story should be put to its proper place. Between " Foe" and " The God of Small Things", the determination for the stories of the characters to be told - is firm and powerful.