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Estha, Rahel to keep off the big screen

Arundhati Roy does not want 'The God of Small Things' fashioned into one film

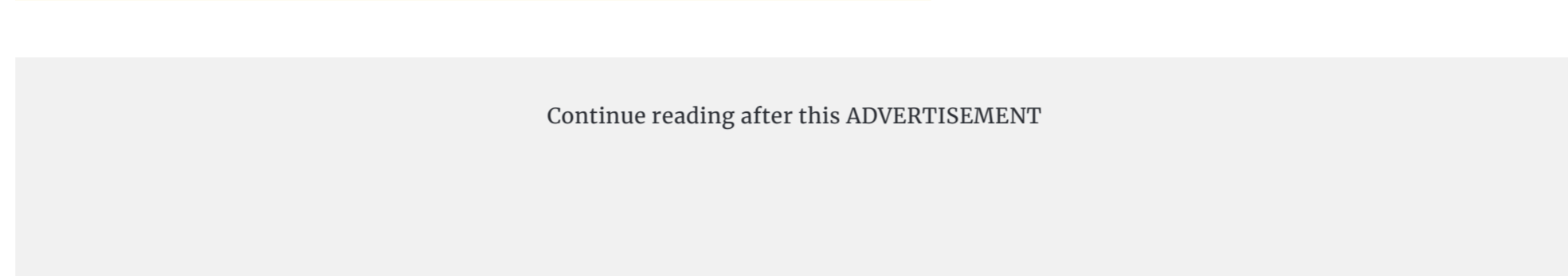
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K. SANTOSH



Arundhati Roy. File Photo: Shiv Kumar Pushpakar

Writer Arundhati Roy has said she will never sell the rights for a film adaptation of her Booker prize-winning novel, 'The God of Small Things'.



She was addressing a meeting here on Wednesday to release I. Shanmughadas' *Shareeram, Nadi, Nakshatram*, an appreciation of 'The God of Small Things'. "Every reader has a vision of the novel in his or her head and I do not want it to be fashioned into one film. A lot of Hollywood producers approached me, but I do not want to sell the adaptation rights for any amount of money. I do not want the novel to be colonised by one imagination," she said.

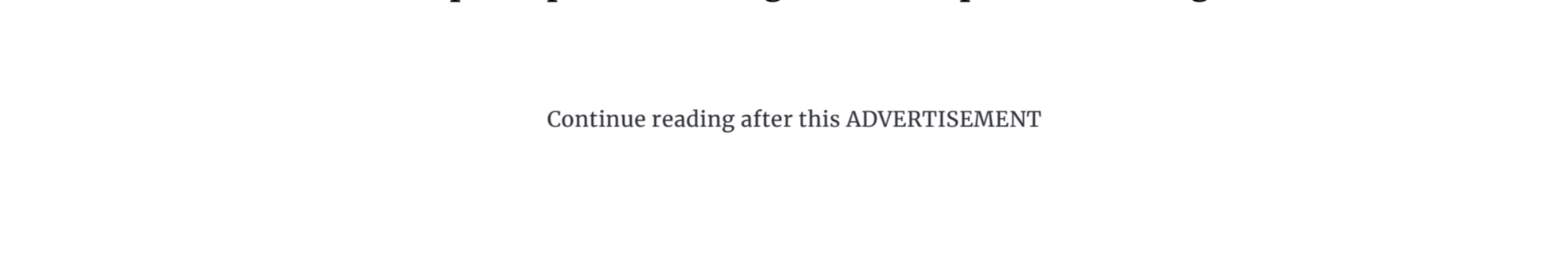
She stated that the novel was not just about Kerala. This, she recalled, had been proved by the response she got after the novel and its translations appeared in places such as Estonia, Denmark, Finland, and New York. The Estonian translator asked Ms. Roy, "How did you know about my childhood?"



Publishers in New York, many of whom were tough Jewish women, told the writer, "We all got aunts like Baby Kochamma."

A few years ago, a reader from the U.S. sent Ms. Roy letters he had written in different periods all in a single envelope. He wrote, "I am not one of those crazy fans. I want your help. I want to be delivered of the madness created by 'The God of Small Things'.

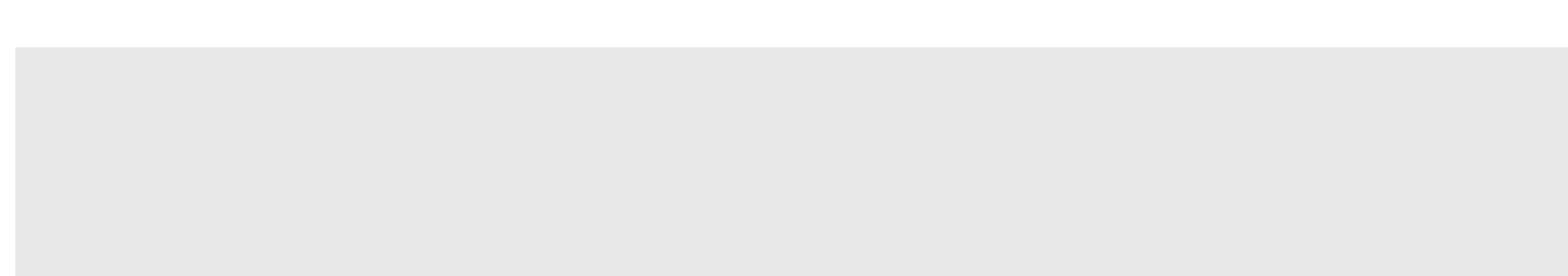
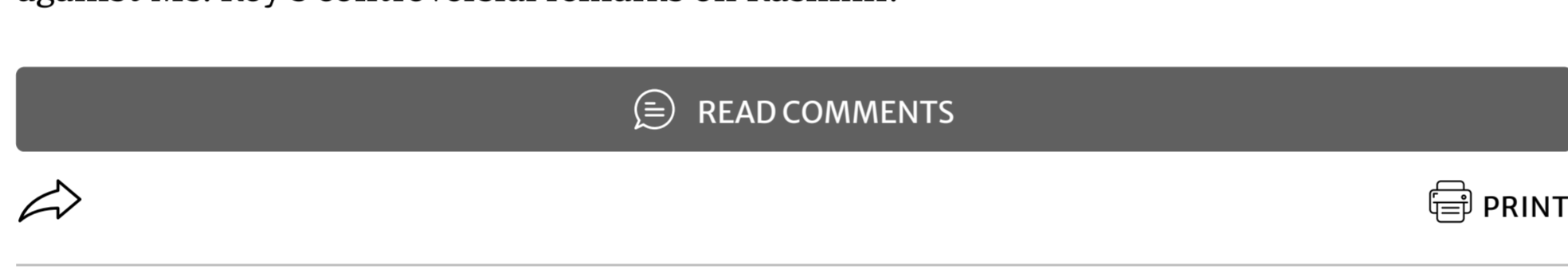
"I do not want to feel important. I do not think it is a tribute to my genius or ego or skill. 'The God of Small Things' is not mine. It is not a book that I own. It was born out of a collaboration between me and the place I was living in, the river, the insects. It was a collaboration between me and some magic over which I do not claim ownership," she said. She said the readers were perhaps connecting with the spirit of sharing in the book.



"The book was done in complete silence between me and my river (Meenachal), and (the characters) Esthappan, Rahel, Ammu and Velutha. In a way, it does not matter whether it won the Booker prize. I'm not Arundhati 'Booker Prize' Roy. The prize is a worldly thing. The real prize is the direct connection with the world and its people. The real prize is the kind of letters I got from Bastar, which stated, "After you wrote, a wave of happiness spread through the forest." For me, this is what it means to be a writer," she said.

She questioned the human-centric model of development. "Advisees know that human beings alone do not constitute the world. There are flowers, bees and fishes. We can make nuclear weapons, but cannot understand that without the honeybee there is no world. It is not a class analysis or Marxian appraisal. It is far more profound than that. I do not think Karl Marx would have understood what it means to live in today's world where 90 per cent of the fishes has disappeared from the seas, and where plastic is dumped in oceans and fishes are grown in factories."

Film director K.P. Kumaran, writers Sara Joseph, A.S. Priya, M.V. Narayanan and I. Shanmughadas also spoke. Earlier, BJP activists raised slogans at the venue in protest against Ms. Roy's controversial remarks on Kashmir.



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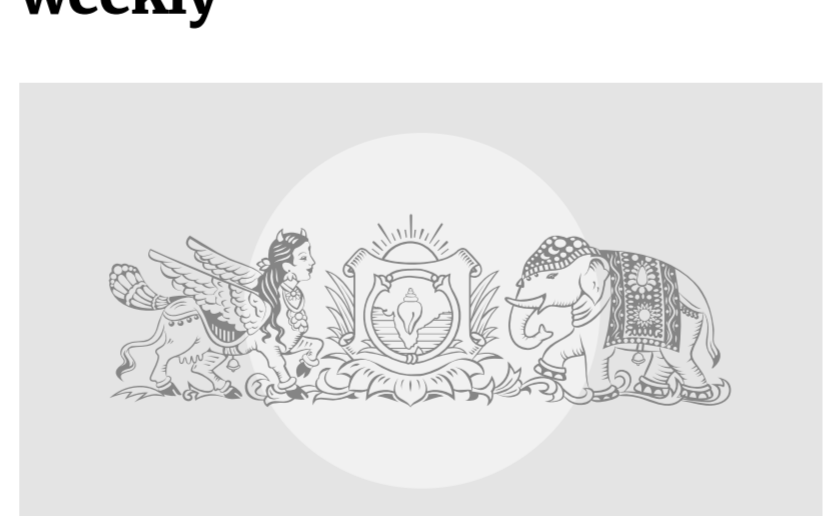
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