POST-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVES IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **'Postcolonial Perspectives in *The God of Small Things*'** written by me under the supervision of Dr Ashok Thorat, Director, I.A.S.E, Pune, is original and has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

March 2018

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **'Postcolonial Perspectives in *The God of Small Things*'** submitted by Lumbini Shill was carried out by the candidate under my supervision. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

March 2018

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ABSTRACT

Post-colonial studies are the most divergent and eclectic of theories that have come to monopolize the Western, or the non-Western academics of present day. These studies encompass an immense and wide range of concerns. This theory can be quite distinctly traced to have originated from the works of Edward Said and to have reached a significant destination with the doctrines of Homi Bhabha. Other imminent post-colonial theorists such as Gayatri Spivak, Bill Ashcroft, Aijaz Ahmed, Ania Loomba, Frantz Fanon, and a few more, have immensely contributed to the theory in their own capacity.

The present dissertation aims to analyse Arundhati Roy's Booker-winning novel The God of Small Things under the post-colonial lens. Roy's work is a severe critique of the imperial systems and the colonial influences left with the natives in a post-independent country. This dissertation proposes to delve into the analysis of Roy's text as being post-colonial, in content and form.

The first chapter establishes the purpose of investigation of the novel as a post-colonial one. This chapter includes an introduction that describes the problem under investigation, its relevance to the fields of study, the hypothesis, the assumptions, a note on the author and a few other sections to justify the purpose of this study.

The second chapter discusses the theoretical framework applied to the study, in details. This chapter recognises the major concepts and theories involved in post-colonial discourse. It also focuses on the key terms that are rampantly used in the study of post-colonialism.

The third chapter identifies, interprets and evaluates the beliefs that support the dissertation's formulation of the research problem, the research

question and the significance of the study. This chapter analyses Roy's work thoroughly and elucidates it as being post-colonial in nature.

The final chapter lists the major findings and pedagogical implications of the study. It also states other lines of investigation related to the topic, for further research.

CONTENTS

Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preliminaries

This dissertation investigates the cases of post-colonial, social and cultural implications that Arundhati Roy employs in the writing of her magnum opus, *The God of Small Things*. This novel holds the title of being a critique of the post-colonial attitudes that exist in the middle-class milieu of the post-independent Indian society. This book that states the story of a fractured family from Ayemenem took the world by storm and went on to win the Booker Prize in the year 1997. The author created a brilliant post-colonial masterpiece which provides scholars and researchers with subjects that can be investigated and re-investigated under the post-colonial lens. The present dissertation is an attempt to club together issues such as subalternity, patriarchy, rootlessness, childhood trauma, oppression, cultural amnesia, multiculturalism, hybridity, post-colonial remembrance and other such myriad topics to prove the novel to be a classic post-colonial piece of work.

1.2 Hypothesis

It is being hypothesised that the characters in this novel continuously explore the consequences of being placed in a post-colonial world where they struggle to embrace the idea of cultural hybridity.

Infinite instances in the novel show glimpses of the post-colonial India, where 'colonial' does not only mean the natives being superseded by

the white race, but also of assuming a power position by the natives themselves among their own people.

1.3 Aim

This thesis aims at highlighting the post-colonial and cultural implications that exist in *The God of Small Things*. The author, while penning down the story, uses many distinguishing features of post-colonial theory such as the issues of mimicry, hybridity, identity, untouchability and oppressive superiority to draw a portrait of the post-colonial, chaotic India.

1.4 Objectives

1. To expose the ideology of patriarchal oppression as well as the hegemony of socio-political systems.
2. To interpret the myriad ways in which the dominated classes try to safeguard themselves against their potential oppressors on the subversion of their human rights.
3. To witness the debunking of moral and political ethics to give way to oppression and violence.
4. To show the after effects of appropriation of the western values by the mimicking natives.
5. To represent the state of the marginalized or the less empowered and the exposition of the hypocritical power structure.
6. To analyse the acceptance of hybridity as an effective solution to post-colonial angst.

1.5 Methodology and Technique of Study

The God of Small Things has been selected as the primary source of study. The text has been analysed from the post-colonial perspective. This analysis is being made after the primary reading of the novel that depicts innumerable instances of the theory being juxtaposed in its layered storytelling. Moreover, notable work and theories of renowned post-colonial authors have been taken into consideration to justify the analysis.

Throughout the past few decades, post-colonial texts have risen to prominence in India following its independence. Such texts not only study the relationship between the now-gone coloniser and colonised but also the effects that it has on the people of the newly independent country. *The God of Small Things* is a striking example of such a discourse that explores the post-colonial India, during the 1960s through the lives of the fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha, and their family in Ayemenem in south India.

The postcolonial study, in this novel, especially deals with the effects of colonization on the characters in its aftermath. Most of the characters are hybrids, and most of the cultural images used are foreign, yet the characters who are native Indians, consider such images to be an intrinsic part of their lifestyle. Therefore, the present study, as mentioned in the aim, makes an effort to highlight the post-colonial perspectives in the novel.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

This research not only adds to the post-colonial analysis of the natives in newly independent India but also depicts the subtle cast biases and issues such as untouchability that exist in the new post-independent India. Also, scholars have hardly studied the characters as hybrid mimics of the now gone westerners. It is fascinating to explore such aspects of the novel too wherein the natives are read as people adopting or mimicking the positions of superiority to dominate on their less powerful brethren. The study finally reveals the truth of all of us being a conscious or an unconscious hybrid of our past. Accepting this truth can be a relevant solution for achieving peace with oneself and one's surrounding.

1.7 Postcolonial Prospects in The God of Small Things

The God of Small Things undoubtedly presents and reflects the issues of the post-colonial period. Arundhati Roy was born, grew up and was educated in India. Roy in her celebrated novel The God of Small Things tells the story of a Syrian Christian family living in the southern province of Kerala, India. The novel critiques the aftermath of the colonial phase of India, the working of colonial forces even after the independence of the country, nevertheless this allows the possibility of correspondence with the West. Roy employs a similar theoretical perspective that reverses the identity of the 'Other'. She depicts the post-colonial 'Other' in newer forms of cultural, patriarchal, and political oppression that result from colonization.

The plot revolves around a family that includes few members such as Pappachi Kochamma, father of Ammu, who had worked under the im-

perial power as an entomologist and had retired by the time the story of the novel begins. His retirement also marked the end of the imperial power after which he returns to his hometown, Ayemenem, in Kerala along with his family. In this novel, this incident is recounted in hindsight when Pappachi's daughter Ammu too returned to live with her parents in Ayemenem, along with her two children, Estha and Rahel, after walking out of an unhappy marriage by divorcing her husband. Pappachi's son, Chacko had gone to England, to study at Oxford University wherein he meets his prospective wife, Margaret. They get married in England and have a daughter named Sophie Mol, but unfortunately, their marriage comes to an end within a year. This tragedy brings Chacko back to his parents' house in Ayemenem, leaving his daughter and divorced wife behind.

The main plot that connects all the other plots floating in the novel begins when Sophie Mol, along with her mother, comes to visit her father in India, and the consequent catastrophic event of her drowning which augments the dismantling of an already disintegrated family. The incident of Mol's drowning entails exceedingly to the immense amount of grief and bewilderment that the family experienced. Their misery is further elevated when they become aware of Ammu and Velutha's love-affair. Velutha is the family's carpenter and an untouchable of a lower caste. The deeply entrenched notion of segregation and discrimination that the caste system propagated in India, prohibited close contact with an untouchable. Therefore, quite obviously, having an affair with an untouchable was altogether a forbidden terrain.

In her attempts at interaction and intimate contact with Velutha, Ammu transgresses the rigid boundaries of caste. This causes the family to fall apart and consequently leads to the separation of Ammu's twins, Estha and Rahel from each other. The seemingly simplistic plot, when unfolds in a gradual progression via its peculiar narration, lays bare the

deeply rooted post-colonial discourse and various post-colonialist features that are intricately working within the text. (Nayar 165)

1.8 A Perspective on the Author

Suzanna Arundhati Roy's individual experiences are as alluring as her narrative. Roy came of age in Kottayam, a province in Kerala, which also served as the setting for her novel. She is the daughter of a Hindu Bengali father and a Christian mother. She led an unconventional life since early adolescence. Roy grew up with her mother in Ayemenem after her parents got divorced in her childhood. One can identify her autobiographical adoration for Ayemenem all through the novel. Once school got over, she enrolled herself in Delhi's architectural college, similar to what Rahel does.

She confessed in an interview that this experience did shape up a large portion of her aspiration to write a novel. She began to write scripts for television and won a national award too for some of her work. She chose to write privately after an escalating controversy regarding the movie Bandit Queen, the screenplay of which was drafted by her. Later she went ahead to work as an aerobics instructor to take a breather. She mentions in her interviews that it was her inner calling that inspired her to write The God of Small Things that chartered her career as an established writer.

Her style of writing displays the literary texture of Ayemenem. On being asked why she chose Kerala as her setting, she says, "it was the only place in the world where religions coincide, there's Christianity, Hinduism, Marxism and Islam and they all live together and rub each other down…I was aware of the different cultures when I was growing up, and I'm still aware of them now. When you see all the com-

peting beliefs against the same background, you realize how they all wear each other down." (Talwar and Shashi 36) Roy later became a political activist and apart from writing fiction, continues to work at the literary front too. She appeared as a distinguished author after her monumental work The God of Small Things hit the market. It is an unprecedented novel in manner and matter. It was her linguistic ingeniousness that brought her the prestigious Booker Prize. Her biography is as enthralling as her novel.

1.9 What Does the Text Carry?

A close reading of the novel reveals that the entire development of the book has been unfolded in gist in the first chapter itself. She declares, "I would start some where and I'd colour in a bit, and then I would deeply stretch back and then stretch forward. It was like designing an intricate balanced structure." (34). The novel consists twenty-one chapters sewn together in the form of fragmented memories and ruptured imaginings, being narrated by the thirty-one-year-old Rahel who returns to her hometown after ages. The text magically interweaves the past and the present through the use of flashback consciousness. The Booker commendation focuses on Roy's use of history which is undoubtedly a paramount factor in post-colonial writings. It says, "With extraordinary linguistic inventiveness Roy funnels the history of South India through the eyes of seven-year-old twins." (Abraham 47).

About narrating the novel or the world of adults from a child's perspective, she says it was a conscious decision as she had an unprotected childhood. She perhaps wanted to intensify the drama by depicting it through a young narrator's vision. She explains in one of her interviews:

> "I had an unprotected childhood…Two things happen. You grow up quickly. And when you become an adult there is a part of you that remains a child. So the communication between you and your childhood remains open." (47)

Penning down a novel from a child's perspective should only associate it with more authenticity at a symbolic level because children are believed to be authentic regarding conveying their emotions. It attempts to break many taboos still persistent in a post-colonial, post independent world.

1.10 Major Postcolonial Themes in the Novel

The novel aims to raise social consciousness by exposing the injustice and tyranny inflicted upon the untouchables. It focuses on the tribulations and insults experienced by the defenceless and the deserted in the police custody. It features the class distinction prevailing in the society. Roy portrays the harsh irony of the male's domination over the female. She shows how the male not only objectifies or belittles the female but, on the contrary, can also worship her to possess. What's problematic is that the men in the novel can rarely consider women to be their equals. The novel is a satire on religion, power and politics too. There are allusions to dormant characters, like Velutha's grandfather, who have undergone a change of religion just for avoiding the evils of untouchability. Similarly, the police act as a plaything in the hands of politicians. Most of the times the politicians act against the motto that they stand for.

The novelist has eruditely put in her work two significant metaphors, 'Laltain' and 'Mombatti'. While both can be classified together as being used for similar purpose, one has a well-covered protective layer

while the other burns defenceless. A sudden surge of wind is enough to succumb the latter. Through such symbolic connotations, Roy kindles the reader's sympathy for the defenceless. Roy as a Nineties' writer is an archetype of the present scenario of Indian writing in English. She has come through as a relentless disapprover of the process of clutching on to a traditional Indian way of living life. She is postmodern in her thoughts and applies that to her art.

This novel of struggle and protest against the downtrodden includes Dalits and women in its sphere. Their lives are intertwined with patriarchal norms and caste corruption. It highlights the exploitative nature of the norms that smother the Dalit's aspirations. Roy constructed the structure of the novel keeping the suffering of the women as a pivotal point. The plot has been set in 1960's post-independent India to highlight the ironical position into which the subjugated classes are put after freedom. Outwardly the country seems to be governed by modern democratic principles, but internally the rule is imperialistic. Externally the façade of communistic harmony reigns in the public sphere, but man is a capitalist, imperialist and a patriarch, intrinsically. The consequences of such a system are obvious, the repression of the already downtrodden. The novel is a representation of a continuous struggle between the worst transgressors and the authoritarians that keep the dynamism alive.

Chapter Two
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Preliminaries

As mentioned earlier, the focus of this dissertation is to apply the post-colonial theory to the study of the novel, The God of Small Things. The present chapter covers the ideas and philosophies introduced by some major post-colonial theorists. The understanding of the mentioned theories and ideas will help the reader to get a grasp of the present literary work in an improved manner. The entire novel can be reviewed through the lens of some or the other theory proposed by the gamut of post-colonial authors.

2.2 Mapping the Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial studies, in broader terms, attribute to the analysis of such approaches of discourse that refer to the former colonies of the age-old European imperial powers. Such discourses are generally included in the study of culture, history and literature. The term 'post-colonial' is commonly associated with the work created at any point after colonisation had first struck a given country. Occasionally it is used more specifically for the analysis of cultural discourses and literary texts that were composed in the aftermath of the colonial period. A few scholars such as Aijaz Ahmad and Arif Dirlik have advocated that the term 'post-colonial' seem baffling or rather misleading because it is being used to refer to, both, works written during, and after the end of the colonial regime in various countries. Such discourses have been found to

concentrate especially on the then newly formed Third World countries such as Asia, Africa, the Caribbean Islands and South America. Neo world critics such as Bill Ashcroft and a few others, however, extend the scope of the study of these discourses belonging to countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand which were white-settler colonies but achieved independence much earlier than the above mentioned Third World countries. Occasionally the post-colonial studies also include aspects of British literature from the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, studied through a perspective that focuses on the colonial motives in the economic and social life represented in literature.

The extent of topics that post-colonial criticism focuses on, facilitates it to envelop a variety of approaches and critiques. On the one hand, it encompasses the pan-national movement targeting to celebrate Negritude in the post-colonial nations and societies. On the other hand, the attacks on the ideas of pan-nationalism itself, as levelled by Frantz Fanon, are also viewed under the post-colonial genre.

The field of post-colonial studies is expanding rapidly. Consequently, it cannot be taken as a unified movement with some individual methodology or approach. The major post-structuralist influence on the exponents of post-colonial theory, Edward Said (Foucault) Homi Bhabha (Althusser and Lacan) and Gayatri Spivak (Derrida) has given it a post-structuralist bias. Moreover, there are other critics who are inspired by the historical approach and Marxist methodologies, such as Aijaz Ahmad, Benita Parry and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Post-colonialism is presently applied in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of various institutions of European colonialism, European territorial conquest, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourses, the discursive operations of the Empire and the resistance of their subjects. In short, it analyses the effect of the colonial legacies in, both, pre and post independent nations and societies.

Bart Moore-Gilbert has theorised that recently there has been a growing distinction between post-colonial theory on the one hand and post-colonial criticism on the other. According to him, the post-colonial theory can be defined as work which is shaped primarily by the methodological amalgamation of French post-structuralist theories of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan. In practice, this is generally understood to constitute the work of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. It is this inclination to post-structuralist theorists that has propagated critical debates provoking extremes in, both, approval and disapproval. Robert Young's *White Mythologies* (1990) suggests a new logic of historical writing that is to be found in the works of these post-colonial theorists. Young propagates that Said, Bhabha and Spivak have facilitated a radical, re-conceptualisation of the relationship between culture, nation and ethnicity which has major cultural and political connotation.

However, a few other theorists like Derek Walcot, Aijaz Ahmad, Chandra Talpade Mohanty boycott this bias towards theory. Bart-Moore Gilbert has later admitted that his aim is not to essentialise the division between the two kinds of analysis because such distinctions can never be proved to be absolute. There will always remain thematic and methodological concurrence between these two fields of study.

As John McLeod has propagated, in order to comprehend the variety and range of the term post-colonialism, we have to assign it in two different contexts. The first deals with the historical experiences of decolonisation that have taken place mainly in the twentieth century. The second applies to the significant intellectual developments that happened in the later part of the twentieth century, with a special focus on the shift from the study of Commonwealth literature to post-colonialism.

At a crucial juncture of the twentieth-century European colonial rule

used to cover an enormous area of the world that included parts of Asia, Africa, Canada, Australia, the Caribbean and Ireland. As a consequence of the pervasive national liberation movements, colonial empires had started to crumble. In brief, the twentieth century has witnessed the beginning of colonial demise or decolonisation for innumerable people who were once subjected to the atrocities of the imperial power. Yet, the imaginative and material legacies of both colonialism and decolonisation remain essentially important elements in a variety of contemporary discourses, such as Economics, Anthropology, Global Politics and Literature.

Presently we can direct our attention to the nature and role of colonialism of the modern era. Colonialism is now seen as a definite form of exploitation of the subject countries that advanced with the expansion of capitalism in Europe over the last four hundred years. Initially, colonialism was part of the commercial enterprise of the western powers that sought development during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It slowly became a lucrative commercial venture that brought magnanimous wealth and riches to the colonial nations through the economic exploitation of the colonised ones. Colonialism was eventually pursued economic gains, rewards and riches. Hence, it can be stated that colonialism and capitalism shared a mutually symbiotic relationship with each other. The term 'colonialism' is often used interchangeably with 'imperialism', but, many believe they mean different things. Noted post-colonial theorist Edward Said offers the following distinction:

> Imperialism means the practice, theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; colonialism which is almost always a consequence of imperialism is the implanting of settlement on distant territory (Said, *Culture and Imperialism*).

According to the theory, Imperialism is an intellectual concept which endorses the legitimacy of military and economic control of one nation by another. However, Colonisation is a form of practice which is a by-product of the ideology of imperialism. It categorically concerns the settlement of a group of people in a new locale. Imperialism, on the other hand, is not strictly devoted to the concept of settlement. It does not necessitate the settlement at different localities. Therefore it is concluded that many view colonialism as a historically specific experience. It proves how imperialism can make its way into power play through the act of settlement, but it is definitely not a unique way of pursuing imperialist ventures. Hence it can be stated that while colonialism has fundamentally died over the centuries, imperialism progresses apace as many western nations are still engaged in imperial acts to secure wealth and power through the military and economic exploitation of other nations. Mapping the history of decolonisation to the rise of the intellectual discussions on post-colonialism, we see the emergence of two discourses, the Commonwealth literature and the theories of colonial discourses. These two are presently considered as the bedrocks on which the modern post-colonial studies have developed and has assumed its present form.

2.3 Commonwealth Literature

Commonwealth literature can be broadly understood as the literature concerned with the former British empire and the Commonwealth. The term has often constituted literature written in local or vernacular languages. The emergence of the study of national literature began with the study of American literature. However, those work of literature that came to be collectively studied as 'Literature of the Commonwealth', rose from the late 1940s. They were the initial ones to be considered

as the discussed discourse, within their own national contexts. Present day post-colonial studies are a culmination of commonwealth literary studies and the contemporary colonial discourse theory. Commonwealth post-colonialism primarily focuses on the literary text, but it inclines to represent imperial documents and discourses related to the Empire. Commonwealth literary studies include the works of writers belonging to the essentially European settler communities. They also incorporate studies of writers from those countries which were then in the process of struggle for independence from the British rule such as the Caribbean, African and the South Asian nations. Scholarly critics began to categorize a growing body of literary work written in English by authors such as George Lamming (Barbados), R.K. Narayanan (India), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria) and Katherine Mansfield (New Zealand). The building up of commonwealth literature as a distinctive area of study was an attempt to locate and identify it as a literary activity. It also brought forth a comparative approach to the common attributes that these myriad literary figures might have. Surprisingly neither Irish nor American literature was included in the formulation of this field of study. Therefore, Commonwealth literature was initially associated essentially with selected countries that had a colonial past.

After the first half of the twentieth century, a different meaning of 'commonwealth' came into existence. Britain no longer held any political authority over the Commonwealth nations, and the term 'British' was abandoned altogether.

As McLeod suggests, this phenomenon changed the status of the colonised countries from subservience to equality (McLeod 12-15). Commonwealth literature is often considered to have been created as an attempt to assimilate together writings from all around the world. Yet, the assumptions stayed that these literary texts catered primarily to a Western English-speaking readership. The term "commonwealth" in com-

monwealth literature could never be fully free itself from its older and imperious connotation of the term.

One of the basic assumptions viewed by the initial western critics of commonwealth literature was concerned with the relationship between literature and nation. Critics often agreed that the new ideas and interpretations of life as portrayed in commonwealth literature were inspired much by personal experiences of the writers. In a way, they were portraying their own sense of the national and cultural identity. This was undoubtedly one of the major functions of the texts created under commonwealth literature. However, many believed that this kind of alleged nationalist purposes of works under commonwealth literature had only a secondary role to play as contrasted against the abstract concerns which swayed attention away from other national contexts. A number of critics were initially preoccupied with focusing on a common goal shared among writers of the colonised nations that went beyond the 'local' affairs. Corresponding to the idea of building a Commonwealth of nations that suggested bringing together of diverse communities with a common set of concerns, the Commonwealth literature, whether produced in Australia, India or the Caribbean was believed to reach across national borders and deal with universal affairs. Commonwealth literature essentially dealt with social, national and cultural issues but some of the extraordinary literature produced under its aegis possessed the mysterious power to transcend the local issues. Since the discourses produced as Commonwealth literature were written evidently in English, they were often evaluated in relation to English literature, assessed with similar criterion used to analyse the literary value of the archaic English 'Classics.' Many believed that Commonwealth literature was comparable with the English literary canon which often functioned as the means of measuring its value. Commonwealth literature, therefore, was legitimately a kind of sub-set of canonical English literature, appraised in terms that

were derived from the traditional study of English that stressed on values of universality and timelessness. Ethnic differences were undoubtedly important, but in the end, they were secondary to the integral universal meaning of the work.

In the present day, this kind of critical approach is often described as A liberal humanist approach. For Liberal humanists, the 'literary' discourses must tend to transcend the local contexts in which they are produced and deal with universal, moral concerns relevant to people of all ethnicity. In hindsight, most critics of commonwealth literature have similar traits to that of liberal humanists. They are often being accused of not analysing the texts as universal and timeless, and legitimatising them just as 'good writing.' Indeed, one of the fundamental differences that many post-colonial critics today have from commonwealth predecessors is their insistence that historical, geographical and cultural specifics are vital to both the writing and the reading of a text and cannot be easily bracketed as secondary in nature or mere background. However, to many critics of Commonwealth literature, these texts were in accordance to a critical status quo. They were not examined as radical or contradictory, nor did they challenge the western criteria of excellence that was used to read them. The new experimental focus and local elements made them appealing to read and brought out a clear picture of the nation they were concerned with. However, later in the day for post-colonial critics, the difference in the contexts of discourses was to become more meaningful than their alleged abstract similarities. In the late 1970s and 1980s, many critics discarded the liberal humanist bias and endeavoured to read literature in new ways. Modern post-colonial studies are generally considered to be the coming together of Commonwealth literary studies and what is now referred to as the colonial discourse theory. Ashcroft Bill et al. have mentioned:

> In fighting for the recognition of post-colonial commonwealth writing within academies whose roots and continuing power depended on the persisting cultural and political centrality of the imperium, and in a discipline whose manner and subject matter were the local signs and symbols of that power—British literature and its teaching constantly refined, replayed and reinvested the colonial relation—the nationalist critics were forced to conduct their guerilla-war within the frameworks of an English critical practice. In so doing they initially adopted the tenets of Leavisite and/or new criticism, reading post-colonial text within a broadly Euromodernist tradition. But one whose increasing and inevitable erosion was ensured by the anti-colonial pressures of the literary texts themselves. Forced from this new critical hermeticism into a socio-cultural specificity by such local colonial pressures. Commonwealth anti post-colonialism increasingly took on a localised orientation and a more generally theoretical one, bringing it closer to the concerns of what would become its developing 'sister' stream, colonial discourses theory. (Ashcroft 53–54)

2.4 Colonial Discourse Theories

Colonial discourse theories are of great relevance in the development of post-colonialism. These theories aim to analyse the discourses related to colonialism and highlight the concealed aims, political and material, of the colonising nations. They also bring out the ambivalence in the way the colonised and the colonisers are constructed. We may take the liberty to say that this theory exposes the stereotypical modes of perception that the colonial power uses to subvert the position of the colonised subjects. Colonial discourses mirror the complex relationship

between nations focusing on social relationships. Such discourses have been found to try and approximate the prominence of Europe. They brainwash people to adopt the European language and internalise the logic propagated through them as theirs. It is a complex system of power, beliefs and knowledge about the world within the domains of which colonisation take place. One extraordinary feature of such a discourse is that though it is produced within the society and cultures of the colonisers, it becomes a domain within which the colonised may also begin to view themselves. Under this, a selected value system, usually European, is preached as the finest worldview. Colonial discourse has often been accused of advocating European imperialism by trying to substantiate the colonised as an inferior race. They have been found to exclude statements about the multiple ways of exploitation of the colonised. In fact, such exploits are often concealed under the statements about the inferiority of the colonised. The cultural values of the natives are portrayed as primitive or 'uncivilized', from which they must be safeguarded. They constantly showed that the colonised societies are in the barbarous depravity and it is the prime obligation of the imperial power to lead the native colonies through administration, trade, moral improvement and culture. Thus, it is often observed that the colonised subjects are rarely aware of this duplicity in the colonial discourses. Therefore, critics believe that the colonial discourse constructs the coloniser as much as the colonised.

2.5 Prominent Works in Post Colonialism

2.5.1 The Emergence of Frantz Fanon's Theories

By 1950s, a gamut of relevant work emerged that endeavoured to record the psychological impact on the sufferers, or the colonised, due to in-

ternalizing of the colonial discourses. Frantz Fanon became one of the prominent psychologists who passionately and widely wrote about the adverse impact of the French colonialism on millions of people who were subjected to atrocities. Born in French Antilles in 1925 and educated in Martinique and France, Frantz Fanon's experience of racism had affected him deeply. He published two books after being inspired and influenced by his contemporary philosophers such as Jean Paul Sartre and Aime Cesaire.

Black Skin, White Masks and *The Wretched of the Earth* are his phenomenal books that expose the mechanics of colonialism and its adverse effects. Fanon explored the lives of the individuals who live in a world where he or she is discriminated against due to the colour of skin. Fanon's discourse is inspiring as well as distressing at once. *Black Skin, White Masks* elaborates on the consequences of identity formation of the colonised people who are forced to internalise their selves as 'other'. The black people are regularly portrayed to epitomise cultural symbols, unlike the colonising French. The colonisers are generally characterised as rational, civilised and intellectual. The black people are depicted as the 'other' to all these qualities against which the colonisers develop their sense of normality and superiority. *Black Skin, White Masks* narrates a story of the colonised subjects under French imperialism. It focuses on their traumatic beliefs rising from an inferiority complex. An easy way out to avoid such trauma is to try to escape it by owning the civilising ideals of the colonisers. However, the inconvenience in such an adaptive system is, even if the colonised try to accept the values, education and languages of the coloniser, they are never accepted on equal terms. Therefore, for Fanon, the end of colonialism did not only mean political and economic change but psychological change as well. He believed colonialism could be tackled only by challenging the way people, including the natives themselves, have been thinking about iden-

tities of the colonised.

The striking difference between the coloniser and the colonised is further analysed in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Here Fanon proposes the idea of ontological ambivalence. Under this theory, the coloniser and the colonised, the empowered and the subjugated are fixed in a symbiotic relationship in which it gets impossible for the former to escape the consequences of his relationship with the latter. Through this discourse, Fanon, as the spokesperson of the victims, calls for a united struggle by the African continent against all sorts of stereotypes.

2.5.2 Edward Said's Theory of Post-colonialism

In his much-acclaimed book *Orientalism* (1978) Edward Said explored the methods in which the colonising countries had concocted false images and myths about the developing, Third World nations. These portrayals and myths, stereotypical in form, have conveniently advocated exploitation and domination of the Orientals. Said observed that the discourse of Orientalism was widespread and deep-rooted in European thought. It blended slowly as a form of academic discourse and a style of thought based on the epistemological distinction between the "Orient" and the "Occident" (Said, *Orientalism*). Said recognised, this disorienting relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, from a wide perspective. Like Fanon, he too explored the ways in which colonialism forced a new way of seeing the world. *Orientalism* is inspired by Marxist theories of power, like the *Political Philosophy* of the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci and French post-structuralist philosopher Michel Foucault. Said exposed how the knowledge that the imperial powers spread about their colonies, is just a medium to justify their subjugation. Western powers such as France and Britain purposely produced biased discourse about the lands they dominated. He elabo-

rated the colonial representations of Egypt and the Middle East in innumerable texts and concluded that the Western travellers visiting these regions hardly ever made an effort to learn the cultural habits and the reasons why such habits came into existence, from the natives. Instead, they made common assumptions and recorded their observation assuming the Orient as a mystic land, some place of exoticism, of moral laxity, sexual degeneracy, and propagated similar ideas. *Orientalism* had a colossal impact on the then newly developing post-colonial thought, and for decades to come. Leela Gandhi rightly sums up as:

> Commonly regarded as the catalyst and reference point for post-colonialism, Orientalism represents the first phase of post-colonial theory. Rather than engaging with the ambivalent conditions of colonial aftermath õr indeed with the history and motivations of anti-colonial resistance — it directs attention to the discursive and textual production of colonial meanings, and concomitantly the consolidation of colonial hegemony. While colonial discourse analysis is now only one aspect of post-colonialism, few post-colonial critics dispute its enabling effect upon subsequent theoretical improvisations. (Gandhi)

Orientalism's success opened the doors for new kinds of discourse on the operations of colonial power. An entirely new generation of scholars turned to working on more such theoretical materials with their work. It was a turning point for post-colonial theory as it marked a major divergence from the previously popular humanist approaches which dealt with the criticism of Commonwealth literature. We can, in fact, mark this point as probably the systematic beginning of the study of post-colonialism. A series of new forms of notable discourse on post-colonialism emerged in the 1980s. They were mutually inclusive of interdisciplinary approaches and took insights from philosophy, feminism,

politics, psychology and other academic disciplines. Concepts such as colony, race, nationhood, empire were gaining momentum as the modes of knowledge production, and intellectual creativity of the Occident was now strictly scrutinized. Such concerns were addressed with a new perspective, with better representation in the discourses. Said's surveillance led to a thorough analysis of the ways in which the discourses were being constructed for readership, as well as the proofs or observations on which they were intellectually produced. It was long since the anti-colonial critique had been examining imperial constructions of the coloniser and the natives, of centre and the periphery. They had now started to challenge the dualism in the thoughts that shaped the world's knowledge in areas such as psychoanalysis, literature and history.

The problem that arose with such texts was that most of their underlying thoughts were identical to the structures they were keen on dismantling. For instance, they questioned the binary distinction between the construct of the master and the slave, but failed to question the necessity of such duality. It displayed the idea of nationalism as a threat to colonialism and portrayed it as an important function for decolonisation. However, the post-colonialists claim that modernity, notions of Enlightenment and ideas such as freedom and democracy, gave rise to the idea of a modern nation. Postcolonial theory, on the contrary, problematises the idea of the nation-state. It tends to reject both, the nationalist project and the Western imperialism.

Another theoretical and textual analysis that found prominence is based on the post-structuralist thought of Derrida, Foucault and Lacan. Post-colonial criticism, with a strong influence of poststructuralist orientation, slowly started to appear in the post-colonial texts.

The Occident created knowledge about other people, especially the Orient, just to prove the latter to be inferior. The question that slowly

gripped the world was whether the wrongly represented colonised subject resisted such literary oppression. This query was dealt with conviction by two of the leading and controversial post-colonial theorists, namely, Homi. K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak. Scholars predict that the study of the oppressive power or misrepresentation in colonised societies had already begun in the late 1970s with texts like *Orientalism*. Similar concerns with diverse form were later developed as colonial discourse theory in the works of Spivak and Bhabha.

2.5.3 The Contributions of Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak

The presently popular term "post-colonial" was not in vogue in the early studies of the power politics of the colonial discourse. Gayatri Spivak first used it in her collection of recollections and interviews published in 1990 called *The Post Colonial Critic*.

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak is a modern day, prominent, post-colonial critic whose work has been closely inspired by deconstruction. She received her initial public acclamation for translation of the preface of Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1976).

She has since then specialised in applying deconstructive strategies to various theoretical and textual analysis. From Marxism, Feminism and Literary Criticism, to the most recently popular Postcolonial Criticism, she is widely cited in a huge range of disciplines.

Spivak's work consists of volumes of dense, theoretical writings with her insights peeking out in flashes now and then. They also have a decent collection of published interviews. Her ideas seem to be continuously evolving in her style of writing and avoid a straight path of textual analysis, following the deconstructive genre. Along with the transla-

tion of *Of Grammatology*, her work consists of the deconstructive reading of Marxism, post-structuralist literary criticism, Feminism and post-colonialism. She presently resides as the Avalon Foundation's professor at Columbia. One of her major concerns has been the limitations of cultural studies. Her work is an uneasy amalgamation of theories such as Feminism, Marxism and Deconstruction.

Spivak's major works on post-colonial issues include *The Post Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues (1990)*, *Outside in The Teaching Machine* and *A Critique of Post Colonial Reason: Towards the History of The Vanishing Present*. Her much-acclaimed essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) gave her the required spotlight to make her immensely popular. The essay is a narrative of the circumstances that stimulates a young Bengali woman to commit suicide after her continuous failed attempts of self-representation. The mentioned attempts to voice out her concerns were not supported, or simply disregarded, by her immediate patriarchal surroundings. It was then that she concluded that the subalterns could not speak. Through this essay, she also articulates the idea of neo-colonialism in the various domains of life. She talks about political domination, economic exploitation and cultural erasure. Her work makes the reader question himself if post-colonialism is a specific, first world, male privileged, institutionalized discourse that classifies the East in the same manner as the modes of colonial dominance it attempts to dismantle. The term 'subaltern', meaning of 'inferior rank', is endorsed by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in the society who are subjected to the authority of the ruling classes. The subaltern classes may represent the workers, peasants and other groups that are denied access to hegemonic power. The issue of the subaltern became a concern in post-colonial theory when Spivak analysed the presumptions of the Subaltern Studies group in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She claimed that this question is a prominent one that the group must ask.

2.5.4 Homi Bhabha's ideas of Post Colonialism

Homi Bhabha is considered to be using the poststructuralist mode for his analysis of post-colonial criticism for colonial discourse. His collective work in *The Location of Culture* (1994) promotes ideas of "colonial ambivalence" and "hybridity". According to Bhabha, the colonial discourse is inaccurate and flawed. The technique of civilizing and domesticating the native population is established on the ideas of imitation, repetition and resemblance. In his essay *Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse*, Bhabha explores the psychological and ambivalent approaches by which colonial subjects are created through representation.

Homi Bhabha made exceptional use of the following terms in his notable work, and in the process often redefined them in his own way

Ambivalence: This term was initially developed in the study of psychoanalysis to describe an inconsistent fluctuation between desiring for something and concurrently the opposite of it too. It is also used to denote a simultaneous love-hate relation or attraction-repulsion reaction towards some idea, person or object. Bhabha widely adopted this term while working on his colonial discourse analysis to illustrate the complicated relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. He says that the relationship is ambivalent in nature as the colonised subject can never completely oppose or resist everything about the colonised. Therefore, 'ambivalence' suggests a complex relationship of acceptance and resistance that exist in the way the colonial subject receives the colonised.

Mimicry: This concept holds pivotal importance in Homi Bhabha's works related to colonial discourse. He has analysed mimicry as the process in which the colonial subject is reproduced as almost the same,

but with a hint of difference. The theory of mimicking shows when the colonial subject mimics the coloniser after being encouraged by the colonial discourse, the consequence is not a mere reproduction of the mimicked traits. This is because mimicry by the colonised is an amalgamation of mockery and menace. The term 'ambivalence' is often used to describe this oscillating relationship between mimicry and mockery. Ambivalence might not be totally disempowering for the colonial subject, but it creates a sense of disturbance in the power position of colonial discourses.

Homi Bhabha's theory of post-colonialism mostly analyses the interdependence between the coloniser and the colonised that leads to the construction of their subjective beliefs about each other. He argues that cultural theories and systems are constructed in the third space of enunciation (Bhabha 37). He suggests that cultural identity is a product of this ambivalent and contradictory space.

Hybridity: Bhabha used this term to refer to the ambivalent cross-cultural identity formation of the natives. This term has been in vogue since then in post-colonial theory and denotes cross-cultural exchange. The usage of this term has faced flak as well as it is often considered to imply negating the ills of power relations such as inequality and imbalance.

The turn to 'theory' made another mode of literary study popular too. This was the analysis of the various new literature from countries that had a colonial past in the light of the discourse created by Said, Bhabha, Fanon and Spivak. They were considered to be pieces concerned with 'writing back' to the imperial centre.

These works were looked upon as concerned with "writing back" to the centre. According to this argument, these works are actively engaged in the process of questioning colonial discourses in their work. With this shift of focus, the term "Commonwealth literature" was re-

placed by "post-colonial literature." This new reading is in stark contrast to the liberal-humanist reading of the earlier, popular, Commonwealth critics. The new reading, engendered by post-colonial theory, is politically regarded as more radical and is considered to be situated locally, rather than universally. According to this perspective, post-colonial literature begins to pose direct challenges to the colonial centre from the margins.

2.5.5 Neo Postcolonial Theorists

Postcolonial literature, towards the bend of the modern centuries, aimed to decolonise the minds of the natives. This new technique was first used in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989) co-authored by three Australian authors Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin.

It expresses the view that literature from the once colonised countries was fundamentally concerned with challenging the language of colonial power, unlearning its worldview and producing new techniques of representation. After surveying the history of the English language in the countries that had a colonial past, the theorists concluded that the writers from such countries were consciously refashioning the language to express their own sense of identity. The contemporary philosophy, art and literature produced by post-colonial authors are by no means a continuation, or adaptation of European models. *The Empire Writes Back* substantiates that a much more erudite appropriation had taken its course in the modern era. This literary decolonisation has radically dismantled the European codes, subverted and re-appropriated the dominant European discourses:

This dismantling has frequently been accompanied by the demand for

an entirely new or wholly recovered pre-colonial reality. Such a demand, given the nature of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised, its social brutality and cultural denigration, is perfectly comprehensible. However, as we have argued, it cannot be achieved. Postcolonial culture is inevitably a hybridised phenomenon involving a dialectical relationship between the 'grafted' European cultural systems and an indigenous ontology, with its impulse to create or re-create an independent local identity. Such construction or reconstruction only occurs as a dynamic interaction between European hegemonic systems and peripheral subversion of them. It is not possible to return or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible to create national or regional formations entirely independent of their historical implications in the European colonial enterprise. (Griffiths, Tiffin, and Ashcroft 195-96)

2.5.6 Feminist Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial and the Feminist theory began on similar terms of inverting the prevalent hierarchies of culture, race and gender. Said has himself conceded of *Orientalism* lacking adequately in its portrayal of the resistance of the non-European countries, to colonialism. He has further stated in *Culture and Imperialism* that the reconception of the colonised society needs reform. The realisation that dawned was concerned with the rights of oppressed women of all classes along with men. Postcolonialism, therefore, urged to consider the importance of covering everyone under the liberational movements in a colonised world.

Following this concept, post-colonialism and feminist theory mapped a parallel evolution. Both the theories have made it a priority to focus on the study and defiance of the marginalized section of the society against the repressive power position of the dominant. In this process,

both the theories have followed a similar ideological trajectory. These theoretical projects have reached a dubious partnership with the inclusion of theorists such as Julia Kristeva and Gayatri Spivak. This is so because, their theories make the discourses continuously aware and confront their limits, and promote partial inclusions into each other. Leela Gandhi suggests that there are three main areas that break the harmony between these two theories. They include- the debates concerning the position of the 'third-world women', the dubious history where women have been found as imperialists themselves, and the 'civilising mission' that feminists deploy which seems quite similar to what the colonisers did. The contentious image of the Third World women brings about a huge clash between the theories. A few feminist post-colonial theorists argue that the Third World woman has been a victim of patriarchy as well as imperial ideology. Anti-colonial nationalism and gender blindness are now being challenged by feminists and post-colonial theory alike. The Third World women were generally looked upon only as marginalised commodities in the past. Feminists often associate Third World women with the term 'double colonisation' to highlight their political immaturity in contrast to the superiority of the western feminists. Hence, the former is often represented as tradition-bound, poor, uneducated and ignorant whereas the western women, in contrast, are portrayed as modern, educated, having more control over their selves and sexualities. Postcolonial feminist critics have raised quite a number of political, methodological and conceptual problems at the level of theory regarding such representation. Such problems are often specific to the lacunae of the feminist theory. For instance, issues such as striking a fellowship between the Third World and the First World women, who should be given the right to speak for whom, or nurturing a rapport between the critique and the subject of criticism, were scrutinised. It is an observed fact that the issue of gender difference has brought about a groundbreaking, influential and thought-provoking insight into the post-

colonial theory.

The feminist study is a crucial addition to post-colonial discourse as the common issue of domination exhibited by patriarchy and imperialism over the subordinate class is the crux of the matter in both theories. The experiences of the subjects, namely the women in a patriarchal structure, or the natives in a colonised society can be correlated or compared in an innumerable way. Both theories oppose oppression on the dominated. Distinctly, the Empire was considered to be much more of a man's world than in feminism's patriarchal society. This masculinity of the western Empire established the nature of the activities that were performed in a colonial set up. There have been rigorous debates over whether colonial oppression, or patriarchal dominance, has affected the lives of women more. So much so that this topic has often been a constant source of conflict between the western feminist and post-colonial theorists from colonised countries. Both theories have been concerned with the effects of representation and language use that are essential for identity formation. Language has been an important tool used by both theories to subvert imperial and patriarchal power. Both groups concentrate on devising a more appropriate form of language than the one imposed by the colonisers.

An array of feminist critics like Sara Suleri and Chandra Talpade Mohanty contested the ideologies on which the feminist post-colonial theory is based. They say that Western Feminism that had a major contribution towards feminism, often assumed universal categories for the problems faced by women and had a Eurocentric bias. The cultural differences were often overlooked while framing the discourse. Consequently, the Third World women's problems remained unaddressed. There has always been a difference of opinion regarding priorities between the First World and Third World women in terms of politics, patriarchy, economic or racial oppression. This is so as critics often argue that coloni-

sation encompassed men and women quite differently. Women experience 'double colonisation' under colonial rule as they are subjected to women-specific discrimination first and then as colonial subjects. Anti-colonial nationalist movements, even in post-independent countries, aren't free of gender bias as even there the participating women are generally offered a subordinate or passive position.

2.6 Problems in Postcolonial Theory

The usage of the term 'post-colonial' has such varied significance for analysis that some critics have questioned its efficiency. The complication rises as the term has been applied to diverse phenomena such as geographical region, historical moments, reading practices and cultural identities. Consequently, there have been moments where certain periods, regions or socio-political experiences have been found to not adhere legitimately to the post-colonial discourse. Critics have always disagreed on the subject of post-colonial analysis. Some believe not only the colonised but also the coloniser should be focused on as an important subject in this discourse.

Apparently, a few post-colonial philosophers such as Aijaz Ahmad, Terry Eagleton and Arief Dirlik have time and again contested the fundamental tenets of the theory as practised by Said, Bhabha and a number of other theorists. In his recently revised book, *Literary Theory: An Introduction (1996)*, Terry Eagleton defines post-colonial discourse as being derived from various historical developments in the global world, including the destruction of the European Empire and the reinstating of the American authority, along with the rise in the migration and the development of multicultural societies. He further argues that, as a lacuna, the post-colonial discourse has created a politics where similarities between the ethnic groups in terms of language, identity or race often

get overlooked.

Aijaz Ahmad addresses the shortcomings of the post-colonial theory in *In Theory* and *The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality*. His arguments on the topic can be summarised as follows. *In Theory* analyses the significance of the affiliations and institutional location of post-colonial critics. He observes that mostly this theory is being practised by a privileged group of critics who hardly have any first-hand experience of the Third World problems. Moreover, in an attempt to lay more stress on the bygone period of imperialism, the attention often shifts from the present state of neo-colonialism which perhaps has more burning issues and is most relevant for modern citizens.

Ahmad has judiciously stated in his book that there has been an influx of authors from the Third World countries who constitute as the migrant intelligentsia, reside in the west but are favoured contributors of the post-colonial theory. Said and few other theorists have been strongly criticized for assuming writers like Salman Rushdie to be an authentic representative of the countries from which they belong. Ahmad observes that such authors rather belong to the small fraction of dominating class in the countries where they reside presently. Eventually, he comments on the methodology adopted for criticism by such authors. He says such discourses are politically regressive, often follows the Euro American model and has many lacunae. He believes that western criticism, with time, has become far removed and detached from building any concrete theory with real-life post-colonial or neo-colonial issues. He concludes by saying that poststructuralism has superseded post-colonial theory in many discourses as it offers the readers a better and an appropriate scope of seeing the present political scenario.

2.7 Conclusion

Despite various debates and reservations, research is continuously thriving in Postcolonial Studies because the discourse allows for a wide array of investigation of power relations in diverse contexts. This theory actively addresses the atrocities of colonialism and critically reflects upon its after effects. Research in post-colonial theory demands that we excavate, through studies, all that was lost by the colonized in terms of culture, religion, history, language and ancestral traditions to honour their bygone presence, and if possible restore them. Through this discourse, we can make the future generations recognise and esteem the diversity created in the present society and inspire them to become more inclusive in accepting migrant as well as indigenous culture alike.

The present study aims to apply the above mentioned selected theoretical models for the analyses of Roy's *The God of Small Things*. The attempt is to judiciously restrict the analyses to the chosen parameters and make a comprehensive study of the novel under the post-colonial lens.

Chapter Three
POST-COLONIAL DIMENSIONS IN *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*

3.1 Preliminaries

The God of Small Things pursues to narrate stories of such characters whose lives have been influenced and affected by the 'superior' powers of the society. This chapter will examine an array of the social and cultural implications in the novel that steers it towards being essentially post-colonial in nature. When we associate the term 'post-colonial' with a novel, it means that it surpasses the local ventures and contains such components that have global implications. It can be now associated with the nuances of being a part of the experience of a world in the aftermath of the Western colonization. Roy deals with issues of a newly independent country that is encompassed with problems such as exploitation, social segregation, power politics, violence and political agitations. A brief account of the plot of the novel should serve as a link with the theoretical analysis that will follow.

The God of Small Things narrates the tale of a Syrian Christian family located in Ayemenem, Kerala. The main plot is surrounded by the lives of the family members of the fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha. Pappachi Kochamma and Mammachi Kochamma return to their hometown after the former's retirement with their children, Ammu and Chacko. Several years later Ammu experiences a bitter divorce and returns to Ayemenem with her twins, Rahel and Estha. Since then Chacko, Ammu, the twins, Mammachi and her sister in law, Baby Kochamma steer the post-colonial tale within the novel forward. Chacko, during his Oxford

days, while staying abroad, married Margaret and fathered Sophie only to be divorced later. He later returned to his hometown alone and pursued the family business.

3.2 Prominent Subaltern Perspectives in the Novel

The term "subaltern" is broadly used to refer to individuals whose voices have been subdued, lost, immensely reinterpreted or simply neglected. The individual stories of most of the characters of *The God of Small Things* seem to have been redrafted by people who are superior to them, in terms of power position. The problematical cross-cultural instances are located in post-colonial Kerala. It seems, Roy purposely gave more importance to the 'small' things in life through her narration, as combat against the superficial superiority that is thwarted upon the powerless. This idea is portrayed with the novelist's efforts of dictating a major part of the story through the memories of the junior characters, during their childhood, against the trend of stories being narrated by adult characters. Even the narration, or in broader terms, the language, stresses on the minute details and reconstructs a story out of 'small' memories of the past against the use of didactic lines.

Ayemenem has been constructed as a smaller version of this bigger catalytic world where cruelties of marginalization and domination thrive under corruption and bureaucracy. Power politics of every kind, be it at the home front, or in the outside world, has found equal focus in the novel. It can be almost concluded that Roy perhaps wants to suggest that the idea of our being automatically brings in prejudices regarding power positions in any society, located in any space. Acquiring power is roughly shown to be an innate and instinctive quality of human nature. For instance, the Paradise Pickles & Preserves company has been used as an emblem for the imperialism that was once propagated by

the British Empire. Similar to the promises often made by the British Empire to the colonies, the pickle factory symbolises to be an assurance of a modern and industrial future. However, we eventually see that none of these promises materializes for the low-income workers or the 'Dalit' working in the factory. On the contrary, the women and the Dalits are constantly exploited in some or the other way by the dominants in the factory.

3.2.1 Reflection of Other Post Colonial Interpretations

In Saidian terms, the characters serve as the subaltern "other" in the entire scenario. However, in post-colonial reading, it is not always the governed who are seen as the "other". In Frantz Fanon's (2001) opinion, "The governing race is the first and foremost, those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants, 'the other"'. Therefore, the owners of the factory, Mammachi, and later Chacko, are as much of "the other" as the natives. They are the governing 'other' who have been shown to regulate, dominate, appropriate and exploit the subaltern 'other' in the text. The owners symbolise the colonial power as their forefathers were not natives of the land but were Syrian Christians who later settled in Ayemenem.

The author strategically designs the plot in such a way that the characters could be cast as depicting divergent angles on the theme of subalternity. The novel is brimming with post-colonial occurrences and instances associated with foreign culture, movies and educational values. This happens to an extent where even in death there seems to be a glorification of the British born Sophie Mol against the irrelevant demise of Ammu or Velutha. The author makes it noticeable through the contrasting funeral ceremonies held, or not held at all, in remembrance of some of the characters.

At one point of time Chacko describes the post-colonial natives as the "prisoners of war" whose "dreams have been doctore" and they "belong nowhere". He elaborates and says that the people "have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made them adore their captures and despise themselves" (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 53). In *A Dying Colonialism* (1965) Frantz Fanon suggests that "the challenging of the very principle of foreign domination brings about essential mutations in the consciousness of the colonized, in the manner in which he perceives the colonizer, in his human states in the world" (Gandhi 130). The colonized, thus, tries hard to imitate the practices, values and ideas of the coloniser as they consider themselves to be inferior to the latter, subconsciously. The same phenomena is narrated through Chacko's following recital to the twins:

> Chacko told the twins though he hated to admit it, they were all anglophile. They were a family of Anglophiles. Pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history, and unable to retrace their steps because their footprints had been swept away. He explained to them that history was like an old house at night. With all the lamps lit. And ancestors whispering inside. 'To understand history, 'Chacko said, we have to go inside and listen to what they're saying. And look at the books and the pictures on the wall. And smells the smells.' (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 52)

The superiority of something or someone foreign over their native counterparts is clearly proven when Chacko's half English daughter Sophie Mol arrives at Ayemenem. The entire family and even a few neighbours seem to be impatient to receive her or catch a glimpse of her. Sophie, her 'foreign' aura, and her mannerisms have been portrayed as

a striking contrast to the 'nativeness' of the twins. The following lines illustrated by Roy in a scene supports this idea:

> The twins squatted on their haunches, like professional adults gossip in the Ayemenem market.
>
> They sat in silence for a while. Kuttappen mortified, the twins preoccupied with boat thought.
>
> 'Has Chacko Saar's Mol come?' Kuttappen asked.
>
> 'Must have Rahel said laconically.
>
> 'Where is she?'
>
> 'Who knows? Must be around somewhere. We don't know.'
>
> 'Will you bring her here for me to see?'
>
> 'Can't,' Rahel said.
>
> 'Why not?'
>
> 'She has to stay indoors. She's very delicate. If she gets dirty she'll die.' (209, 210)

A similar hint of appreciation is reported to be seen in the gestures of the Orangedrink Lemondrink man at the cinema on knowing that the family has relatives in London who would visit them soon.

3.3 Post-colonial Perspective on Casteism

Casteism is a cultural and social construct. The untouchables have always been suffering the worst by being bound to do menial and manual jobs against the superior forms of work bagged by the dominants in the Indian society. Consequently, they suffer economically as well.

Roy has cited references to a number of caste conversions in the novel. This includes Velutha's grandfather and his contemporaries who had joined the Anglican Church with the hope of escaping the cons of untouchability. However, such conversions hardly helped them circumvent the misfortunes that their caste brought along. Discrimination continued at many levels, including religious places. They were given access to separate Churches and not the regular ones. Even the national Independence could not provide the untouchables with complete freedom on humanitarian grounds. Indeed they were given reservations for jobs but bureaucracy existed even for the allotment of such opportunities as only the privileged, or educated, or comparatively affluent managed to bag them first. Roy seems to be asking how "post" colonialism brought any change in their status, or did it at all? The workers of the higher caste sneer at Velutha's presence in the Paradise Pickle company as their caste consciousness made them believe that Paravans are to be banished from being carpenters. Despite being the most eligible worker at the factory, Velutha is not treated or paid appropriately by Chacko as the latter discriminated by caste. Such incidents slowly unfold the moulding of the untouchables into subalterns in the wake of independence.

The text also presents inspector Mathew and Comrade Pillai, the latter often referred to as the 'crusader of the oppressed', ally with Baby Kochamma in a scandalous plot to lodge a false FIR against Velutha only because the latter did not belong to their caste. The joint solidarity against the untouchable can have no other legitimate interpretation. Comrade Pillai conveniently dismisses the idea of Velutha being a member of the Communist Party. Another episode portrays a few comrades discussing with Chacko the idea of dismissing Velutha from the factory. It shows how untouchables have been failed even at the political level by their immediate society. Such instances depict the spreading of the

adverse effects of pseudo-colonialism by the higher class natives in a newly independent country. A new power structure always replaces the previous one, and the class hierarchy never gets outmoded.

When Chacko gets informed about Ammu and Velutha's love affair, he threatens the former with physical assault and driving her out of the home. More than being a class issue, this is a striking example of a caste issue as Syrian Christians thought of Paravans to be of a derogatory caste. They are equated by the high caste people to 'Pariah dogs'. Caste cognizance has always been so ubiquitous in India that the people belonging to higher castes can always be found to assert their supremacy over the others. Kochu Maria, the housemaid, adorns her ears with kunukku as a signifier of her caste so that people understand and treat her as a touchable (70).

Velutha has been treated not only as an individual entity but also a symbol for many other youths who belongs to his caste in the novel. His dreams or talents remain latent due to the pressure of being a Paravan. Roy defines his abilities at a point as "…that if only he hadn't been Paravan, he might have become an engineer." (48). This description unveils the barbarity of casteism. Few other graphic details in the novel reveal how the Paravans or the subaltern other were denied access to public roads. They were expected to keep the upper halves of their bodies uncovered. Use of umbrellas was banned for them. It was obligatory for them to cover their mouths to re-direct their breath elsewhere while speaking to the superiors. They were refused entry into the homes of Syrian Christians of Kerala owing to their caste. In a demeaning incident, Roy shows us Velutha's treatment in the hands of Mammachi that typifies the mistreatment of the colonized in the hands of the colonizers. This occurs when the Velutha visits Mammachi to claim his innocence and deny the fake charges of abduction that were put against him. The image of physical abuse that Velutha goes through

is explicit of the colonizer-colonized relationship in this context. Mammachhi hurled inaudible abuses and spat at him during the meeting:

> If I find you on my property tomorrow, I'll have you castrated like the pariah dog that you are! I'll have you killed!...Mammachi spat on Velutha's face. Thick spit. It spattered across his skins. His mouth and eyes. He just stood there. Stunned. (284)

3.4 Marginalization

The question may arise as to what extent and what form the characters could be understood to be as marginalized. The most obvious case is that of Velutha who has been depicted as subordinate or marginalized from the beginning itself. Being a Paravan and an untouchable, regarded as unclean and inferior, he is already subtly ostracized from his immediate society. Roy drew a euphemistic analogy of the caste barrier through Ammu's dream when she wrote, "He left no footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors" (206). This dream particularly symbolises the subordinate position of the untouchables in the older times that Mammachi describes to her grandchildren, "[p]aravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint" (71). Velutha is encouraged to attend school but not with the Touchables. However, he tries hard in life to grow beyond the opportunities generally allowed to the Untouchables. He learns to read, write, teaches himself craft, gets trained and later joins the communist party and participates in marches. Eventually, he surpasses the most forbidden territory, that of getting into a relationship with an upper caste woman. However hard he may have tried, society ultimately failed all his efforts as he paid

heavily for transgressing his boundaries.

3.5 Patriarchal interludes on post-colonialism

Patriarchy is a social and a psychological concept that has received lots of breathing space in the post-colonial world. Dictating and subjugating the weaker sections, be it the males or the females, is perpetuated using different means in society. Unlike old school beliefs, toxic patriarchal behaviour by the dominant classes affect women and men alike. No longer patriarchy is a concept where the sufferer is only the womankind. According to many modern theorists, this term has been broadened in its use and can now be applied to cases of subjugation against men as well as a wholesome approach. More than being gender specific, it has now become case specific. To begin with, considering the various kinds of patriarchal subalterning that Roy projects in her novel, the male members have definitely been shown to call the shots since the beginning. Reverend Ipe has always fascinated himself with monopolizing his desires as the most sacred and legitimate one against the women's aspirations.

Rahel and Estha's grandfather, Pappachi, is another tyrannical character in the novel. He is referred to as the "Anglophile" by his son Chacko and has been shown to have held the position of "Imperial Entomologist" in Delhi during the British colonial period. Such descriptions are, often, purposely declared for the reader to assume and associate certain characteristic traits to the character in question. Moreover, Roy specifies certain professional disappointments that Pappachi's career endure which adds to his abusive demeanour. He is a propagator of discriminatory beliefs. His bitterness and jealousy can also be related to the success that his wife achieved in her business. Consequently, he has been shown to beat her up regularly, as a release for his frustrations,

owing to his failures in life.

Pappachi has been portrayed as a negative and hostile character with overtly strong colonial attitude. He is symbolic of the abusive bent of patriarchy. Despite his misdeeds, he never seems to have met with any legit punishment throughout the novel. In fact, he has been considered to have earned the status of a model citizen in the public eye. Even Mammachi assumes the characteristics of a typical native under his brutal oppression. She never complains about his abuses and agrees with the idea that society condones such domestic offences. The discovery of Pappachi's moth and the credit that he was denied about it leaves an unchangeable impression on his future life. The moth here is symbolic of fear and unhappiness that soon overshadowed the Ipe family. Typically, a moth represents transition or metamorphosis from one phase to another, similar to how the insect undergoes a change from being a caterpillar to a cocoon, then to a moth. In a larger stream of events, it ends up being symbolic of Pappachi's transformation into an abusive personality. Nonetheless, it is thought-provoking to observe that Mammachi had embraced the idea of abusive matrimony conveniently and was capable of mourning on her husband's death despite being mistreated all her life. The episode proves that accepting to be the dominant is somehow ingrained in the minds of the married Indian women.

3.6 Temporal Hybridity in *The God of Small Things*

The novel's most mortified figures, Ammu and her children, the twins, expose Roy's thoughtful portrait of temporal hybridity. It is a mixture of flashback and amnesia, suspended time and incessant return. For instance, the most functional of the trio, Rahel, remembers a lot about her past despite everything. She is visited by recurring remembrance. Sophie Mol's death by drowning lives on conspicuously in her thoughts.

As the author ironically reports, “It is curious how sometimes the memory of death lives on for so much longer than the memory of the life that it purloined. Over the years, as the memory of Sophie Mol…slowly faded, the Loss of Sophie Mol grew robust and alive” (17). The “Loss” is animate for Rahel perpetually, following her, and even charging her, through linear time, from one school to another, from childhood till youth, a moment frozen in time and yet one that is ceaselessly on the move.

This passive omnipresence of tragic events emerges in a lucid, though starker form in the recurring image of Rahel’s toy watch, which always displays the same hour, ten to two. Towards the climax, the watch is left buried at the site of Velutha’s torture and Sophie Mol’s death, as if permanently recording the time and space when two lives were altered forever, and concurrently implying that the moment will always be alive. The author adds another coat of temporal complication as Rahel is shown to remember events she did not experience herself but has a vivid memory of, being tied telepathically to her twin brother. For example, she knows, of his abuse by the Orangedrink Lemondrink man, though he never directly reveals it to her. The blend of flashback and amnesia in this context is shown to occur in parts, in two different people, with Estha forgetting, but Rahel experiencing the flashback. For Rahel, these experiences do not occur as an individual phenomenon, but get entangled with other moments, each housing out the others, refusing to be mingled. Time is portrayed as ambiguously hybrid, made up of separate interwoven pieces. It is represented as incomprehensibly separate memories of the past that are re-membered distinctly and collectively, refusing to be ordered serially. The memories are shown to be failing to remain contained in the past.

Ammu struggles with a mirror image of such temporal hybridity. Frozen time acts as a sign of trauma, also a possible defence in her case.

She tries to control time as a way to safeguard herself against the past trauma. After the narration of the major traumatic events of the novel, Ammu had to send her son away and simultaneously leave her daughter too for a job. During her next visit to her daughter, she brings the eleven-year-old Rahel gifts that would have been suitable for her at the past age of seven. "It was," the narrator mentions, "as though Ammu believed that if she refused to acknowledge the passage of time, if she willed it to stand still in the lives of her twins, it would…[Ammu] seemed terrified of what adult thing her daughter might say and thaw Frozen Time" (152-153). Ammu's endeavours to suspend time conflicts with the evidence of dissolving or thawing it. She wrestles to ignore time's passage while she is faced with her incapability to force time to "stand still", a struggle that, ironically, caters to paralyze her additionally. Despite her best endeavours, time evolves as a hybrid. Her desire to clutch on to a past before the upheaval is in constant conflict with her present alliance with Rahel. This means the memory of the past trauma is automatically triggered whenever she comes in contact with Rahel in the present. In the novel, time cannot be ordered sequentially but is experienced all in ensemble. Various moments have been shown to fuel each other in a temporal, symbiotic loop. Roy advocates that, in the end, Ammu be overcome by this overwhelming struggle to keep time frozen, and is able to stop time only through her own death.

Estha, the twin most distressed by the trauma, uses another strategy to escape temporal hybridity, that is, through amnesia. Instead of suspending time at one moment, his mind blacks out memory, becoming anaesthetized to the present in an endeavour to obliterate the past:

> Once the quietness arrived, it stayed and spread in Estha…It sent its stealthy, suckered tentacles inching along the insides of his skull, hoovering the knolls and dells of his memory…It

> stripped his thoughts of the words that described them and left them pared and naked. Unspeakable. Numb…[Estha] grew accustomed to the uneasy octopus that lived inside him and squirted its inky tranquilizer on his past. Gradually the reason for his silence was hidden away, entombed somewhere deep in the soothing folds of the fact of it. (13)

Estha pulls himself into a paralysed world where time not only stands still at the moment but simply ceases to be. The "unspeakable" event continues to remain so, and yet it remains and gains agency, involving in violent and desperate attempts to strip, or hoover, or hide, or spare, or entomb, or numb, or pacify the persistent memory. For Estha, the only way to break away from this hybrid time of the past to confine the present as well. Since the present can invariable provoke the past, just as the past can invariably trigger the present, he can partially dodge both only by being captivated by a monstrous silence. Thus, Estha's strategy appears to allow compromised survival.

Along with the characters, Roy depicts varied forms of temporal hybridity in the structure of the novel too. Content is given more prominence and form follows. The author describes the effects of traumatization concurrently while she exhibits them within the narrative. She structured her novel in a way that makes the readers feel as if they themselves are encountering post-traumatic stress disorder. The narrative presents phrases, images, and sensory experiences like the watch, the sickly sweet smell of blood, a recurring image of a rose, exhibiting, both, a textual presentation of the paralysis suffered by the characters, as well as offering the reader an adventure of flashback. While the reader can apprehend from the novel's opening the consequences of the traumas, only at the conclusion is he offered the circumstances from which the diverse phrases and images have been drawn. The narrative

thread encompasses, and then finally steers towards a thorough description of the dominant traumas at the end of the text, wherein the reader can finally associate the fragments together. For most of the read, however, the reader must encounter these fragments as much as the characters do, with their memories that emerge out of context to disconcert and unnerve.

3.6.1 Other Aspects of Hybridity in the Novel

The God of Small Things is an ingenious piece of writing that enthusiastically embraces hybridity as a new classification and praises it as a revolutionary act despite the significant dangers it is believed to convey. The most striking episode that represents hybridization in the novel is the amorous relationship that is displayed between the twins. They evidently rebel against the social etiquette that controls their lives when they secretly involve in sexual intercourse despite being siblings. Ammu's affair with an untouchable also challenges the binary opposition of morality, that is between rights and wrongs, regarding incest, sexuality and caste system. It conceives a new hybridized model of love that thoroughly violates all conventional laws. She disregards the rigid religious and cultural dogma by cultivating a romantic liaison with Velutha, an untouchable, someone who is believed to belong to the basest rank within the caste system. Their relationship cannot be classified or defined as it entirely fractures the binary opposition between purity and defilement that designate what is admissible within a society. They, themselves are illustrated as equally sinister.

It is noteworthy that the adulteration of the colonized is not their adoration for the English or their endeavour to imitate them, but their incapability to belong to neither the conventions of the colonized nor that of the colonizer. Consequently, they suffer an identity problem. The

colonized feel estranged from their own culture by emulating the culture of the colonizer, but concurrently their skin colour, or their nationality estrange them from the English. Thus, they acquire a hybrid identity, a blend between colonial and native identity, neither entirely one nor the other. Approximately all of the problem about hybrid identities lie in its presence, which is, as Bill Ashcroft highlights, "the cross-breeding of the two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, 'hybrid' species". (Ashcroft, 118). Homi Bhabha's logic, when applied to the given situation, would assert that this ambivalent cultural uniqueness does not correlate to the world of the colonizer or the colonized. It is conferred with an 'other' from either of the cultural identities. This mixed identity, termed as hybridity, has found suitable affiliation with the work of Homi Bhabha, whose reasoning of colonizer/colonized emphasizes their interdependence and the mutual metamorphosis of their subjectivity.

The members of the family in Roy's description are mostly Anglophiles. They can be considered as a kind of hybrid as they are Indians who mimic the English people's demeanour. They exhibit a kind of elitism that subserviently transmits the European beliefs and opinions. The hybridity of character is found in abundance in the novel. According to Baby Kochamma, Rahel and Estha are "Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would even marry" (44). Their vulnerable footing makes Ammu vigilant towards them, and though she is "quick to reprimand" them, she is "even quicker to take offence on their behalf" (42). Though Ammu is neglected and perhaps even detested by her family, she is often feared by them because they can anticipate an 'unsafe edge' about her, being "a woman that they had already damned, now had little left to lose, and could, therefore, be dangerous" (44). This apprehension makes them maintain a respectable distance with her, especially on the days that the "radio played Ammu's

songs" (44). Rahel meditates over this 'unsafe edge' and this 'air of unpredictability' that envelops Ammu, "It was what she had battling inside her. An unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber" (44). This quote highlights the conflicting forces that Ammu nurtures inside her. As a mother, she strains to love and insulate her children at all cost, but as a woman, she is frenzied to break free from and combat against the 'smug, ordered world' that encompasses her. Ammu is, like Velutha, a trespasser of boundaries, a woman uninclined to submit to the role models presented to her, yet embracing them in unconscious ways. This casts upon her a hybrid identity.

In the novel, Ammu, Estha and Rahel do not develop any cardinal psychological identity to opportunely infiltrate the symbolic system of Ayemenem or even in their own family. Their short-coming is indicated by Baby Kochamma's reference to the children as "Half-Hindu hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry" (45). They do not even possess the basic identification marker of a family name or a surname. Estha recounts that their naming has been "postponed for the Time Being, while Ammu chose between her husband's name and her father's" (150).

Roy, impeccably presents her twin protagonists, Rahel and Estha, as hybrid characters. Although the twins, try not to replicate the English ideals and language, they cannot dodge from feeling subordinate when they equate themselves to their half English cousin, Sophie Mol, since they are nothing but the mimicry of English, not authentic ones. Roy emphasizes the difference between Sophie Mol and the twins throughout the novel. She depicts Sophie Mol as one among the "little angles" who "were beachcolored and wore bell bottoms", while Rahel and Estha are sketched as two evil beins when we are told: "Littledemons were mudbrown in Airport fairy frocks with forehead bumps that might

turn into horns with fountains in love-in-Tokyos. And backword-reading habits. And if you cared to look, you could see Satan in their eyes." (179).

Baby Kochamma, the twins' aunt, also discriminates on the difference between them and Sophie Mol. She exemplifies Sophie Mol as "so beautiful that she reminded her of a wood- sprite. Of Ariel. Ariel in Shakespeare's play The Tempest." (144). However, while describing the twins she asserts, "'They're sly. They're uncouth. Deceitful. They are growing wild you can't manage them" (149). This incident shows that the family was able to appreciate the children as long as they could emulate the principles of the other culture, and counterfeit to be a member of their own.

Another character who displays traits of being hybrid is Pappachi Kochamma, the grandfather of the twins, who nurtures strong interest to adopt English mannerisms. Despite Pappachi's admiration for English, he is not able to completely adopt it in his persona. Despite his endeavours to be identical to English, he can do it just in appearance, not in his demeanour, attitudes and his way of thinking. For instance, he is strongly against his daughter's education and "insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl" (38), thereby, he compels his daughter to wrap up her school life the same year that he retires and moves to Ayemenem. He treats his wife abominably too. Launskuy Tieffethal, her violin teacher during their short stay in Vienna, made the mistake of appreciating her talents in front of Pappachi, just to make him more indifferent towards her. To conclude, Pappachi could not tolerate any amount of success she ever achieved, whether it was the smooth running of the pickle factory, or the success of the violin lessons. Upon his recognition that the pickle is sold quickly and his wife's business was getting better, he becomes irked. Consequently, he not only chooses not to help her with her business

but also hit her every night.

The portrayal is same for Chacko, Pappachi's son. He suffers from the process of hybridization by not being able to belong to either the culture of the colonized or that of the colonizer. His Anglophile status, or marriage to an English woman to adopt supremacy, could not bring any inner peace. Roy, being a post-colonial writer, tries to focus on the adversities of the colonized that originate from the interaction between the dominant and the subservient characters in her novel.

The mode of expression employed in the novel itself demonstrates post-colonial hybridity. The author builds upon Malayalam intonation and brings about an atypical linguistic experience in a multilingual text. Roy applies Indianism and the hybrid structure of English to depict the realistic social setting. The use of pronunciation that reveals mother tongue influence, the progressive form of the verb, the use of Malayalam words without footnotes and the snobbery of parading one's knowledge of English, are all linguistic tactics tried out in the novel. Other strategies used in the novel are misspelt words, italicization, strange capitalization and reversal of composition of letters.

The God of Small Things reveals an ongoing hybrid identity struggle in a post-colonial context. Characters such as Chacko feel authorized to criticize Indian society for adopting British ways of life, but are often at fault themselves for imbibing such culture subconsciously. Chacko's claims about his family's Anglophilic structure are ultimately inconsequential, because he practices Anglophilia as well. Unless Chacko and his family converse only in Malayalam and refute western amusements such as watching *The Sound of Music*, they will continue to live a paradoxical life of a combination of Indian and British influences.

One can debate that hybrid identities ultimately result from the defeat

of colonialism to "civilize" the colonized and to affix them into constant "otherness" (Loomba 145). The habits of the twins could have been portrayed similar to their uncle Chacko's, an Oxford graduate, who continuously asserts his knowledge of English language and literature. However, neither of them celebrate their English or Indian cultural influences. They simply articulate or read English literature to their elders when ordered to do so. Roy promotes a hybrid perspective in *The God of Small Things* by first addressing the real anxieties and risks of acting from the third space. However, she herself narrates from the third space, using language to exemplify how it is paramount to embrace hybridity to subvert the dominant colonial repercussions that continue to exist in society. She openly acknowledges and discloses the means through which her people have been invaded by the Imperial social network. She dauntlessly decides to defend this act by creating a text that is hybrid in itself and contributes to the evolution of a new paradigm that is no longer perceived in binary terms.

3.7 Eco criticism

Eco criticism is an analytical study that takes into account the representation of landscape and nature in cultural fiction. It pays special attention to the novelist's disposition towards ecology, and the language employed when referring to it. Nature and the characters compliment each other in this unique novel. This novel has tried to depict exploitation of the ecology by humans in the name of modernization and progress. Also, through the character of Velutha and his affinity towards nature, the author suggests the reader adopt sustainable development.

Towards the opening of the story, the river Meenachal is represented as lively and teeming with life: "The Meenachal. Graygreen. With fish in it. The sky and trees in it. And at night, the broken yel-

low moon in it" (193). Rahel and Estha consider the river as a companion: "They knew the slippery stone steps [. . .]. They knew the afternoon weed that flowed inwards from the backwaters of Komarakom. They knew the smaller fish. The flat, foolish pallathi, the silver paral, the wily, whiskered koori, the sometimes karimeen" (193). The twins even dream of "their river", "of the coconut trees that bent into it and watched with coconut eyes, the boats slide by. Upstream in the mornings. Downstream in the evenings. And the dull, sullen sound of the boatmen's bamboo poles as they thudded against the dark, oiled boat wood. It was warm, the water. Graygreen. Like rippled silk. With fish in it" (116). The coconut trees are personified too as it is closely located near the river. There is a suggestive psychosexual relationship between the river and the children. The area encompassing the river is described as being flourishing with life: "The path, which ran parallel to the river, led to a little grassy clearing that was hemmed in by huddled trees: coconut, cashew, mango bilimbi" (195). The river acts as a source of human's connectivity with nature.

The growth of the river begets even more life, more compatibility. The twins develop a rapport with Meenachal by learning to swim and fish in it. The children even "learned the bright language of dragon flies" (194). The river is a bedrock of productivity as illustrated by the white boat-spider's egg sac which burst open causing a hundred baby spiders move to the sea. Velutha too refers to the river as alive, wild, "she," feeding on "idli appams for breakfast, kanji and meen for lunch. Minding her own business. Not looking right or left. [. . .] Really a wild thing . . . [. . .] rushing past in the moonlight, always in a hurry" (201). The river is robust at the beginning of the novel as India was before colonization, living a prosperous life, and has been symbolised as a productive female.

The flourishing, impregnable riverbank is also the spot of the consum-

mation of Ammu and Velutha's relationship, emblematic with the imagery of birth. Velutha skims on the surface of the river in a womb-like peaceful experience and then swims upstream until the "detonation" of noticing Ammu awaiting his arrival makes him hit the embankment (315). Velutha's ascending from the river indicates hope like what builds up during the birth of a new baby. It is an anticipation of a new life, autonomous and free from the burdens of history and their hierarchical ranks within that history. The reader is told that "the world they stood in was his. That he belonged to it. That it belonged to him. The water. The mud. The trees. The fish. The stars" (315-316). Velutha is represented as an unadulterated product of nature. The fruitfulness of nature is described in terms of the consummation of the sexual encounter between Ammu and Velutha. For fourteen nights they get together to rejoice the approval of nature, initiating on the impregnable riverbank, being with the ants, beetles, caterpillars, praying mantis, fish, and spiders reiterating Glotfelty's theory of connectedness of the physical world with human civilization (xix). The entire Ayemenem ecology is discreet in the fulfilment of natural desires: "the river pulsed through the darkness. Shimmering like wild silk. Yellow bamboo wept. Night's elbows rested on the water and watched them" (317). The author employs personification to make the relation between nature and man seem more lifelike.

Roy draws a stark contrast with the previously mentioned lush image of Meenachal to what welcomes Rahel in the 1990s post destruction caused by World Bank's fraternization and neo-colonialism. Ammu and Velutha had died by then. Withal when Rahel returns to her town twenty-three years later, Meenachal "greeted her with a ghastly skull's smile, with holes where teeth had been, and a limp hand raised from a hospital bed". (124) The dynamism and vibrancy of the river had subsided.

To take into account some of the instances that prove Roy has consciously or unconsciously alluded to ecocriticism. She mentions that despite it being the month of June and the monsoon on, the stream resembled a swollen drain now. A meagre ribbon like thick water tapped wearily at the mud banks on each of two sides, adorned with the irregular silver of some dead fish. It was congested with succulent sprout, whose hairy brown roots spread like hair-like tentacles under water. The river which was initially thought of something that evoked fear is now "a slow, slugging green ribbon laws that ferried garbage to the sea now" (124). Estha realised that the stream "smelled of shit and pesticide brought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had dried. The ones that survived suffered from fin–rot and had broken out in boils." (13) It is further contaminated by defecation by children who lived on the other shore of the river. The mixing of factory waste and soapy water that was released due to washing of clothes, as well as pots, adulterates the river. The loss of Meenachal's potential is in resemblance to the loss of the twin's innocence who had once dreamed of it. It also symbolises Ammu's annihilation who discovered contentment on the bank of the river. Such episodes prominently suggest and emphasize the interconnectedness between man and nature. The tempestuous river had to be constrained, could not be left outside bound to be of use. Julia Kristeva's perspective on the anxiety that women suffer from befittingly applies to the mother/river: "Fear of the archaic mother turns out to be essentially fear of her generative power" (77). Roy's novel definitely speaks of eco criticism, raising the attentiveness of readers to the degradation done to nature by neo-colonialism in a post-independent India.

Roy also addresses the issue of the ruination of nature and the repercussion it has on women. The eco critical perspective seems to be substantially important in the mind of the novelist. Man can authorize his

dominance over nature only at his own vulnerability. The writer foregrounds human's increasing banality towards inherited ecology. Most of the conflict evolve with nature in the backdrop. Meenachal is equipped with a significant personality and becomes an integral character in *The God of Small Things*. Human's tendency to subjugate nature for self-seeking needs is caricatured throughout. However, a speck of optimism is exhibited at the end with the prospect of a better tomorrow- *nale*. The source of optimism, the idea that conservation of nature is possible and closeness to ecology is attainable.

Roy narrates how Baby Kochamma abandoned her fondness for gardening for her love of watching TV when a dish antenna is connected. Twenty-three years ago her passion for floriculture had encouraged her to earn recognition in ornamental gardening. She kept herself engaged in planting such variety of blooming plants and trees which was incompatible with Ayemenem's weather condition. Her botany had become so notable that people from Kottayam came to see it. However, as the vegetation plot is neglected, exotic vegetation is subdued by the growth of a weed called patcha:

> Like a lion–tamer she tamed twisted vines and nurtured bristling cacti, she limited bonsai plants and pampered rare orchids. She waged war on the weather. She tried to grow Edelweiss and Chinese guava. (26-27)
>
> However, after a span of twenty-three years it has grown knotted and wild, like a circus whose animals had forgotten their tricks. The weed that people cal communist patcha (because it flourished in Kerala like communism) smothers the more exotic plants. (27)

Through these lines, the author has expressed the problems of interfer-

ence with the ecology of an area. The inclusion of endemic species like weeds can threaten the very existence of exotic breeds and can lead to extinction. The entire description alludes to the suppressing of astute individuals by counterproductive dominant forces. Rahel draws comparisons between the abandoned garden while watching toads and snakes with a calm atmosphere, to a busy life in Washington. At Washington, she toiled till late night and witnessed smoke of vehicles and industries spread pollution.

The God of small things is no one other than Velutha in the novel. He is connected to nature innately and has been shown to have mastered the art of creating a new craft from naturally available things such as wood. Roy describes him as making "tiny windmills, rattle, minute jewels boxes out of dried palm reeds; he could carve perfect boats out of tapioca stems and figurines on cashew nuts." (74)

Nature is more of a companion and confidante for Velutha. His attachment towards ecology reiterates William Wordsworth's ode to nature in *Tintern Abbey*, where he advises Dorothy, his sister, to trust nature most. Unlike humans, Nature never betrays. After being driven out of his own home by his mother, he takes refuge in the embankment of Meenachal and sustains himself by eating fish and resting on its bank. Swimming in Meenachal is his daily dose of inspiration. When in the climax he is wrongly accused and betrayed by his family, his leaders and the society at large. Velutha he finds solace in its banks again. In fact, he probably does not realize how subconsciously his feet draws him towards this location after being betrayed by Comrade Pillai.

Roy does not hold herself from speaking about the hazards that urbanization or modernization has on the life of fauna. She presents vivid imagery of the death of a temple elephant due to electrocution. Chacko's impassivity on this death is astonishing too. However, the

irony is brought out as she portrays people mourn the death only after the tragedy has struck. Then she describes Estha's indifference towards an innocent pup who tries to be friendly towards him but only to be disregarded.

Another episode of eco criticism occurs with Pappachi discovering a special species of moth during his professional life. It was an accidental discovery as the moth plunges into his drink. He works to classify its variety. It is only after his retirement that the moth was declared as a discovery. He seems to be indignant about this episode all through his life and inflicted unnecessary torture on his wife to find a release. The point that Roy tries to make here is how humans care only about their personal glory and success. The conservation or discovery of a new species does not excite them as much as the prospect of self-appraisal does.

The author has endeavoured to propagate the study of eco criticism studied under the lens of post-colonial domination through her vivid imagery of natural and physical features. The loans that are distributed to developing countries by World Banks are in turn degrading their ecology. Consequently, the biodiversity of such countries is threatened. Sustainable development is the only solution to such oppression on ecology. Nature does give humans a second chance which has been symbolically depicted by the rain imagery used towards the end of the novel. Roy has made a brilliant attempt to create awareness and propose working positively to achieve a sustainable future. Colonizing nature will only lead to degradation of humans eventually.

3.8 Migration and Return in *The God of Small Things*

Migrations and returns have been happening since the inception of our history. Though the purpose of deserting a place differed, the challenges experienced by the migrants remained similar over the years. They were, homesickness, un-acceptability in new surroundings, unaccomplished dreams, and in the twilight years, maybe the desire to return.

Moving, as understood in the concept of migration, generally takes place between two separate spaces that are contrasting to each other in terms of language, culture or race of the inhabitants. Furthermore, the space that is abandoned was the native home of the migrant as he aspires to seek a new space to address as home. Technically a migration does not necessarily intend a point of returning. Another dominant feature under migration is the presence of a border or boundary that intends to separate the two spaces, and that needs to be crossed. The frontier is generally artificial, like borders between two countries, but can also be natural, like a river, or an ocean, or a mountain range, or just symbolic between the source and the destination.

The reader can identify several potentials, figurative or symbolic, as well as ineffectual migrations in *The God of Small Things*. For instance, Ammu moves to Assam, where her husband resides, but later has to retreat to Ayemenem with her two children after an estrangement with her husband. She lodges at different locations in the south of India after being expelled by Chacko, once her amorous relation with Velutha is exposed after Sophie Mol's death. Ammu's journey is rather aimless and can't be sorted under the banner of migration as it is aimless without the quest of any particular destination.

Concurrently, Estha is separated from Ammu and Rahel and sent to

Calcutta to settle with his father. It took twenty-three years for him to be "re-Returned" (9) to his childhood home Ayemenem, where he meets his sister again. Rahel's journey is significant because it does not happen according to his choice. He was sent away from Ayemenem house on the orders of Baby Kochamma and returned later due to his father. Rahel, on the contrary, acts more autonomously. She moves to Boston after marrying of her own accord and returns to her primitive home to see Estha, again uninstructed.

Chacko seems to be the only legitimate migrating character by Indian standards. He travels to England, a place supremely adored by Anglophiles in India, and attempts to establish a family with an English woman. However, similar to Ammu's, his marriage aborts and he is compelled to return to India. After his daughter, Sophie Mol's untimely death, he migrates to Canada. It is amusing to observe that though the journeys undertaken by the various characters differ, they keep coming back to their roots, Ayemenem, to rejuvenate.

The idea of finding a home for oneself is an inherent thought while migrating. It starts with the place from where the person migrates to his new destination, that now he wishes to settle in. Rosemary Marangoly George mentions in *The Politics of Home*:

> What then, is home? [...] One distinguishing feature of places called home is that they are built on select inclusions. The inclusions are grounded in a learned (or taught) sense of a kinship that is extended to those who are perceived as sharing the same blood, race, class, gender, or religion. Membership is maintained by bonds of love, fear, power, desire and control. Homes are manifest on geographical, psychological and material levels. They are places that are recognized as such by those within and those without. They are places of vio-

> lence and nurturing. [...] Home is a place to escape to and a place to escape from. Its importance lies in the fact that it is not equally available to all. Home is a desired place that is fought for and established as the exclusive domain of a few. It is not a neutral place. (George 9)

Considering this as the background definition of 'home' there seems to remain just one option to where the characters repeatedly return, Ayemenem. The inhabitants here share what George mentions in his book: class, race or, in this case, religion and caste. The place is tied together with the lives of the characters by either love as in the cases of Ammu, Rahel and Estha or control, as exemplified by Baby Kochamma, who is the major force of domination after Sophie Mol's death. Ayemenem is a nurturing place too until Sophie Mol arrives and the tragedy befalls upon the family.

Margaret's and Sophie Mol's visit to India depicts another feature of 'home'. Most members of the Ipe family, especially elderly women like Mammachhi, it is a homecoming. Probably because according to traditional Indian customs, a wife always moves and settles with the husband's family and not vice versa, like Chacko initially did after marriage. Therefore, when Sophie Mol visits India, "Mammachi play[s] a Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol melody on her violin." (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 183). They consider Sophie, as per George's explanation, a family member as she shares the same bloodline.

Migration also takes the shape of escaping. When everything fails, the characters escape back to Ayemenem to find solace. For instance, Chacko and Ammu do so after a failed marriage and Estha after being returned by his father. However, it is the phenomena of escape from the location that induces great tragedies in the lives of the characters and causes devastation for them. For instance, the twins' and So-

phie's attempted escape bring calamitous consequences for all. There's significant meaning hidden behind this attempted escape. It reminds us that Ayemenem being a safe home for children is only a facade. Estha's abuse by the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man makes him apprehensive and anxious to escape to a place where he can be searched for. As a little child, he feels betrayed and wants to migrate.

A few episodes show that Ayemenem is a good home to the children as long as nothing too serious happens. However, when Estha is abused by the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man, he does not feel safe anymore because the man knows where Estha lives. Not to feel safe in his own home with his own family is a very serious circumstance for a little child. Estha comprehends that his present home does not offer him the security that a home should offer: "I'm going Akkara, [...] To the History House. [...] Because Anything can Happen to Aynone, [...] It's Best to be Prepared." (198). Therefore, he emigrates to find a safer home in the History House, across Meenachal.

Post Ammu's death, Rahel, who is now as good as being an orphan, is left under the guardianship of Chacko, Mammachi and Baby Kochamma in Ayemenem. However, Roy reports how she remains deprived nevertheless. "In matters related to the raising of Rahel, Chacko and Mammachi tried, but couldn't. They provided the care (food, clothes, fees), but withdrew the concern." (15). She frequently changes schools and later migrates to America in the quest for finding a good home for herself, but essentially stays homeless until she returns to her birth town when "...Baby Kochamma wrote to say that Estha had been re-Returned. Rahel gave up her job at the gas station and left America gladly. To return to Ayemenem. To Estha in the rain." (20).

Speaking of transgressing borders, Meenachal is probably the most fathomable, yet, the most fatal border that surfaces in *The God of Small*

Things. It symbolically separates the two worlds, the Ayemenem house and the History House, entices Estha to migrate from one end of it to the other, and stands witness to the illicit relationship that Ammu and Velutha have. It is also a spectator to sinister acts such as Velutha's violent and misconstrued arrest as well as Sophie's death.

The transgressions that Meenachal witnesses are not only topographical in nature, but figurative too. Velutha's and Ammu's illicit relation that transpires on the other side of the river is described as the worst form of breach as per Indian standards as it violates and discards the punctilious caste system prevalent in the society.

Alex Tickell conveys how exactly this transgression is significant:

> As a paravan, Velutha in TGST belongs to this stigmatized 'untouchable' group, and it is this fact that makes his affair with Ammu – and their mutual erotic 'touching' – such a transgressive act." (Tickell, *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things* 23).

Rahel, Estha and Sophie Mol breakout from their family, in an expedition to find a new home. Estha does not go in for this adventure to be regained, or teach Ammu a lesson like many children of his age does. He is beyond childlike callowness. He actually wishes to live on his own and leave Ayemenem. This is evident when he has a serious chat with Rahel. She asks "'Are we going to become communists?' 'Might have to.' Estha-the-Practical." (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 200). He even lies to Velutha, who helps them fix the boat, in order to remain unrestricted while going for the adventure. "[Velutha:] 'I don't want you playing any silly games on this river.' 'We won't. We promise. We'll use it only when you're with us.'" (213).

A migrant generally does not leave with the intention to return. One generally returns, though, when they have not been successful in inhabiting the new place. Returns take place in the novel several times. For instance, Rahel returns desperately to meet her brother. Ammu and Chacko return after encountering failure in marriage. This brings us to brainstorm the question as to why certain characters consider returning to their original space. People leave homes to find a better one, and when that prospect fails they remember their past lives and consider returning to find solace. Their new abode turns out to be worse than their previous one and they decide to embrace it back. However, they fail to analyse that the homes that they had left must have undergone tremendous temporal changes and so does their own characters owing to the new experiences. This is a significant reason for the native's, or the once-migrated-returning-native's unhappiness, throughout their lives.

Heraclitus of Ephesus, a pre-Socratic Greek philosopher, and a native of the city of Ephesus had proposed 'panta rhei' in 535 BC. It means time flows. It cannot be constant. One cannot step into the same river twice as the second time when the person attempts to dive in, the river changes and so does the person. Going back to the original space is still a possibility, but the disposition changes as the space is continually blended with time to consider a holistic approach. Time cannot be undone, the arms of the clock cannot be turned.

According to a common post-colonial construct: "[M]ultitudinous as movement in space is, it is visibly surpassed by one of a different kind: movement in time. This journey no one can avoid: we are all 'migrants' from our past." (Santaollalla 164). Equivalently, most of the characters in *The God of Small Things* are migrants who desperately wish for a reconciliation with their past lives but fail to get the hang of it. Salman Rushdie associates this idea to his understanding of home:

> The past is a foreign country," goes the famous opening sentence of L.P. Hartley's novel The Go-Between, "they do things differently there." But the photograph [of my childhood house] tells me to invert this idea; it reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the past is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time. (Rushdie 9)

A few characters reach the point of no return in their course of lives. For them, it becomes implausible to return to their starting point, a point from where they had begun their journey. For instance, Baby Kochamma is mostly depicted as the evil force which steers the course of action towards a disastrous ending. She wrongly accuses Velutha of kidnapping the children but later gets entangled in the unfavourable proceedings.

Kochamma wrongly directs her hate towards Velutha after feeling humiliated post her encounter with the protestors of the communist march. One of them has forced her to wave a red flag which she abhorred. "In the days that followed, Baby Kochamma focused all her fury at her public humiliation on Velutha. [...] She began to hate him." (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 82). She gets an opportunity to manifest her fury when she gets to know about Ammu and Velutha's affair:

> Baby Kochamma recognized at once the immense potential of the situation, but immediately anointed her thoughts with unctuous oils. She bloomed. She saw it as God's Way of punishing Ammu for her sins and simultaneously avenging her (Baby Kochamma's) humiliation at the hands of Velutha and the men in the march – the Modalali Mariakutty taunts, the forced flag-waving. She set sail at once. A ship of goodness ploughing through a sea of sin. (257)

It is post this incident that the point of no return commences. “They did what they had to do, the two old ladies. Mammachi provided the passion. Baby Kochamma the Plan.” (258). Baby Kochamma approaches the police and cooks up a story about Ammu being raped by Velutha and the children being abducted. However, she fails to evaluate that the twins would testify “that they had gone of their own volition” (314).

A turning around is inconceivable at a juncture when Baby Kochamma gets informed about herself getting into trouble for “lodging a false FIR” (315). Inspector Mathew is an accomplice and perpetrator of violence who also fears the possibility of getting into trouble for illegally defiling the rights of Velutha. Consequently, he compels Kochamma to brainwash the twins to identify Velutha as the miscreant. The police fail to consider Ammu’s love for Velutha as a peril which is then taken care of by Baby Kochamma. “Baby Kochamma knew she had to get Ammu out of Ayemenem as soon as possible.” (321). She gets Ammu expelled and arranged for Estha’s return to his father.

The form or the structure of the novel also suggests the theme of migration and return on a linguistic level. There are innumerable repetitions of the same line or thoughts with slight alterations. It seems the author intends the reader to migrate and return to the same thought after a period of time. As change is evident after migrating, the reader encounters changes, almost unnoticeable at times, in the same thoughts each time he re-returns. For instance, the following reflection on the love laws appear thrice in the novel, but always with meagre changes:

> That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much. (33)
>
> Where the Love Laws lay down who should be loved. And

how. And how much (177)

Only that once again they broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much. (328)

Migration and return have been dealt with in a diverse manner in the novel. They are either actual or physical ones where the characters cross the borders, or figurative ones wherein they transgress the rules that they were bound to follow. It is also depicted while structuring the form and content of the novel, by repeating or coming back to the same episodes over and over again, crossing boundaries of space and time.

3.9 Globalization

The God of Small Things has countless instances that compel the reader to contemplate about the ill-effects of Globalisation. Colonisation, acting as financial aid, seems to be the leading concern. Life-sustaining ecology and ethnic culture have been shown as being commodified as a by-product of globalisation. The mutual acceptance between first world and third world countries are unequal. Roy proposes that development attempted at the cost of ecology is detrimental to humankind at large. Global help in the name of preservation only seems to be a pseudo act of ravishing nature. Erosion of values and cultural transgression are other ill effects of globalisation that has been cited marvellously in the novel. The author endeavours to transform Euro centrist impression of Global industrialisation and wish to highlight the adversity generated by the ideologies deep-seated in globalisation. In *The God of Small Things*, the author deals with the binary ambiguity which states that Europe and the United States is rational and pure while the alien and 'orientalised' world is barbaric and illogical. Such a world is inadequate and

cannot manage its own concerns. She also discusses the binary dissimilarity of contemporary as compared to underdeveloped, categorically the repercussion of neo-capitalist techniques of economic advancement and progress on supposedly underdeveloped people.

Arundhati Roy's multi-timeline chronicle is principally aimed at the lives of a set of bi-zygotic twins. In the beginning, the reader experiences the power structures and politics of an external, mature world through the medium of the pre-politicized gaze of an adolescent. Later again via their more experience adult eyes. The subject matter dealt with is generic, examining the external authority of power on all facets of cultural segregation after colonialism. The characterization of loss in this novel is, both, the failure to develop connectedness to the organic world and the deficiency of developing the fundamental connections that crystallize rational human intercommunication. The ideological standards of growth as per globalization is responsible for affecting all members of the society at a local, national and global level.

The novel showcases characters on a quest for a genuinely cosmopolitan and global reality. A reality which offers plenteous benefit to all people who are active in the globalized cultural sphere but is handcuffed by the philosophical battle at the root while accepting universalist ideologies. Those that embraced globalization willingly are caught in a state-sanctioned contest of values that inescapably results in further degeneration of human beings and ecology. Roy exposes the localized consequences of this counteraction of values, concurrently raising the perspective and status of narration by pro-globalised eyes.

3.10 History

This section concentrates on the investigation of definite post-colonial tropes in the novel, including the portrayal of history as a tool of power and the concept of epistemic violence. The mentioned tropes are an elemental aspect of Roy's novel and are found in abundance in the text. Characters like Rahel, seem to re-affirm or re-inscribe concrete history over and over again like a post-colonial native who was once colonised. The author quotes John Berger's message: 'never again will a story be told as if it is the only one' [Roy (1997)] at the introduction of her novel. She, probably, is making a statement that debunks the system of appropriating history as an authority to validate social supremacy. Edward Said illustrates why the novel is such an essential agency in questioning the legitimacy of engraved truths made up or constructed by the historical narratives:

> The appropriation of history, the historicisation of the past, the narrativisation of society, all of which give the novel its force, include the accumulation and differentiation of social space, space to be used for social purposes (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 93).

According to Said, the novel in its quintessential form serves as a means to challenge certain deep-rooted ideologies of power by displaying historical information, contextualising them and planting them within a social frame. The author, however, has adopted a rather postmodern interpretation of the form of the novel to disclose the meta-textuality of 'history' as a decentralized or local societal construct. She has used the portrayal of her characters and their personal experiences of 'history' as the fundamental pointer for her readers. For instance: As Chacko edu-

cates both Rahel and Estha about their personal history, the reader gets a peep into a 'history' that is a murky yet also a ludicrous representation of their situation:

> The History House. [Chacko:] 'With cool stone floors and dim walls and billowing ship-shape windows. And when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war. A war that we have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and redreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves.'
>
> 'Marry our conquerors, is more like it,' Ammu said drily, referring to Margaret Kochamma. Chacko ignored her. He made the twins look up *Despise*. It said: *to look down upon; to view with contempt; to scorn or disdain*.
>
> Chacko said that it was the context of the war that he was talking about – the War of Dreams –*Despise* meant all of those things. 'We're prisoners of War,' Chacko said....
>
> When he was in this sort of mood, Chacko used his Reading Aloud voice. His room had a church feeling. He didn't care whether anyone was listening to him or not....
>
> Ammu called them his Oxford Moods...
>
> While other children of their age learned other things, Estha and Rahel learned how history negotiates its terms and collects its dues from those who break its laws. They heard it's sickening thud. They smelled its smell and never forgot it.
>
> History's smell.
>
> Like old roses on a breeze.

> It would lurk for ever in ordinary things. In coat hangers. Tomatoes. In the tar on the roads. In certain colours. In the plates at a restaurant. In the absence of words. And the emptiness in eyes. (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 53-55)

Roy, in this previous extract, attempts to deconstruct the murkiness of history by situating it in the frame of a homely atmosphere within family relationships. Chacko being educated from Oxford understands the potential of historical facts. Rahel and Estha's pre-political minds understand history not by living through the wars but by forming intuition by experiencing the world around them. Therefore, 'History', as an experience, eclipses the reading of their surrounding. It turns into the paramount signifier for experiencing everyday objects. Roy employs meta-textuality that is essentially in sync with a post-colonial theory for rejuvenating past references of degradation and loss.

3.11 Epistemic Violence

An additional post-colonial trope in *The God of Small Things* is the concept of epistemic violence. It is an open secret that the desire for classification and scientific objectivism, while India was colonized, was on the rise. This was so because the reputed Western institutions endeavoured to map human history to claim intellectual dignity that subjugated people to racial dehumanisation. Roy adopts a politicised approach to depict instances of colonial epistemology in the following extract:

Pappachi had been an Imperial Entomologist at the Pusa Institute. After Independence, when the British left, his designation was changed from Imperial Entomologist to Joint Director, Entomology. The year he retired, he had risen to the rank equivalent to a director. Roy reports, "his life's greatest setback was not having had the moth that he had

discovered named after him…". (47)

In the years to come, even though he had been ill-humoured long before he discovered the moth, Pappachi's Moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. Its pernicious ghost – grey, furry and with unusually dense dorsal tufts – haunted every house that he ever lived in. It tormented him and his children. (49)

In the above lines, Roy is revealing the techniques that Western scholarly institutions have adopted to propagate their own form of epistemic violence. This phenomenon only reiterates or reaffirms what Bhabha has proposed as 'power knowledge equation'. Pappachi's moth is an emblematic representation of seized knowledge. The colonial institution where Pappachi was employed denied him appreciation for his discoveries or the supremacy over his own episteme, that is, 'advanced' knowledge. Enrique Galvan-Alvarez further explains:

> Epistemic violence, that is, violence exerted against or through knowledge, is probably one of the key elements in any process of domination. It is not only through the construction of exploitative economic links or the control of the politico-military apparatuses that domination is accomplished, but also and, I would argue, most importantly through the construction of epistemic frameworks that legitimise and enshrine those practices of domination (Galván-Álvarez 11—26).

The chapter *Pappachi's Moth* thus bolsters the thought that European institutions forcefully legalize their authority by claiming control over knowledge. As mentioned under the section 'Globalisation', earlier in this dissertation, it is re affirmed that Eurocentric powers legitimize themselves as superior and assert themselves to be more civil and modern. By default the non-Eurocentric world, as Alex Tickell suggests

appears to be 'Belated Enlightenment subject' (Tickell, "The God Of Small Things: Arundhati Roy's postcolonial Cosmopolitanism"). Aijaz Ahmad proposes, in his work *In Theory*(1992), that there are various difficulties in the classification of the so-called contemporary or modern and pre-modern culture that has happened as a consequence of Western classifications:

> This classification leaves the so-called Third World in limbo; if only the First World is capitalist and the Second World socialist, how does one understand the Third World? Is it pre-capitalist? Transitional? Transitional between what and what? However, then there is also the issue of the location of particular countries within the various 'worlds. (Ahmad 100)

Therefore, most of the knowledge is constructed by the Westerners, according to their experiences of life and location. Such knowledge, which is highly revelled, might not hold true for all communities located globally at different geographical locations. The developing communities or nations will forever remain in a transient state as the Eurocentric world will repeatedly assert their supremacy by dominating over knowledge. Pappachi's moth, therefore, becomes a symbolic and effective anthropomorphised entity in the text. Roy mentions it as the 'pernicious ghost' (p.49) that instils fear in Rahel and is instrumental is steering Pappachi's anger towards creating trauma through oppression.

3.12 Objectification of Female Characters as a Postcolonial Trope

Roy chose to portray the devastating effects that female objectification can cause through her novel. It has been ascertained earlier that Post-

colonialism is much closer to feminism in its form and content as both deals with major, common issues like domination by an oppressor. Dorit Naaman comments on another element of female objectification that is especially applicable in the post-colonial context:

> Postcolonial discourse often compares patriarchy with colonial power, the imperial gaze with the male objectifying gaze. The colonized nation is thus compared to a woman, not quite an independent subject; the bearer, not maker of her own meaning. (Naaman 333-342)

Naaman is emphasizing upon the trouble of formulating the feminine object once it is pre-subsumed by patriarchal objectification. Her views are mirrored by Elleke Boehmer's thoughts: 'The majority of post-colonial writers are read with reference to a national matrix' (Boehmer 170-81), however, the more relevant point that comes up is that the female subject, similar to that of a post-colonial nation, is considered to be handicapped or incompetent of being 'the maker of her own meaning'.

In *The God of Small Things*, Roy attempts to portray the difficulties incurred by the womankind when they are being objectified. It is arduous for the female subject to materialize their dreams or act out of their own will under constraints. Mammachi has been characterized as the object of Pappachi's feelings and thoughts. It is in her that Pappachi finds his release of pain and agony that he suffers at the hands of his symbolic colonizers, that is, his employers. Mammachi bears the brunt of Pappachi's alcoholism and grief. She is starkly objectified when Pappachi expects her to philander with the tea plantation owner to save his job. Chacko's invalidating of Pappachi's designed objectification of Mammachi makes the latter unleash his annoyance on the next object in order available nearby, which is a chair. Additionally, Mammachi herself

offers resistance with the aid of an object, a vase, to curb Pappachi's assault on her objectified state of being. This destroys her domestic tranquillity.

Roy questions female ownership, or its absence in her own way through her text. Meaning Mammachi's self-started cottage industry develops into 'Paradise Pickles' as it is encouraged to compete to better itself by the patriarchal community. The business acquires commercial identity only after being appropriated by the males. Mammachi's status is that of a 'non locus standi' meaning without sufficient claim to the business because of her gender. The business is later sold for credit. Mammachi's state is, therefore, demonstrative of Spivak's concept of 'credit baiting' wherein proprietorship is snatched from the local labour for an exchange with the ideologically established procurement of global capital. Jean Baudrillard justifies why the procedure of Westernised credit accretion is socially reductive:

> In sum, credit pretends to promote a civilisation of modern consumers at last freed from the constraints of property, but, it institutes a whole system integration which combines social mythology with brutal economic pressure. (Baudrillard 162)

The point worth noting here is, that many women suffer exclusion from joining the credit based economy as their ability to develop their personal objects of resistance, like a business, is essentially subjected to ideological competition with the Western industry.

Antonia Navaro-Tejero compares Roy's female characters to the Dalits who are of lower caste:

> Roy equates Dalit's and women's labour to capital in the sense that they help in the increase of capital, either by getting lower

> wages, by serving as a political instrument, and by being used for sexual favours (Navarro-Tejero 104)

Navarro-Tejero's point discusses how, in a patriarchal society, its improbable for subalterns like 'untouchables' and women to procure personal property. However, Spivak states that subalterns can be considered as a valuable source of knowledge:

> First, the relatively homogenous dominant Hindu culture at the village level keeps the ST [subaltern] materially isolated through prejudice. Second, as a result of this material isolation, women's independence among the STs, in their daily in-house behaviour ('ontic dom') has remained intact. It has not been infected by the tradition of women's oppression within the general culture. (Spivak, The New Subaltern: A silent interview 335)

Spivak and Roy pose the same question regarding educating the subalterns in the modern lingo. They seem to question the need of educating them with modern education or concepts just so their pre-globalised mind can be a subject of study once they learn to communicate in the educator's language. This is a subtle form of colonization through the use of language itself. Spivak has been found to appreciate the position of the subaltern women though as being inside the domestic sphere strictly, she says, they have hardly been colonized in the pre-independent period. In *The God of Small Things*, the subaltern position has been obviously occupied by most women characters and the 'untouchables' too who have often been effeminized. For instance, Velutha's painted fingernails are suggestive of such effeminism.

Post-colonialism often harps on relevant essential characteristics, like the loss of masculinity. Characters such as K N M Pillai who tries to

define his fake sense of superiority over his docile wife, Kalyani, has been otherwise portrayed as meek and submissive outside the sphere of his domestic space. This is a typical post-colonial attribute wherein the dominant adopts the autocratic position in front of a humble subject.

Roy gave voice to her subalterns, mostly through their action. She could risk naming the entire novel on Velutha, the 'untouchable', the subaltern, who is undoubtedly the God of small things. Physical labour is also shown in a different light by the author as most of the subalterns, be it the women or the 'untouchables', find their voice or achieve success by engaging in work that involves physical labour. This could be Roy's own way of challenging intellectual colonization of the west wherein the white collar jobs have always been represented as most respectful than work that essentially requires physicality. In fact, one can draw a Christ-like allusion when Velutha is appreciated for his outstanding carpentry skills through narration.

3.13 The Novel as a Critique of Subalternity

Roy's novel is undoubtedly a criticism on subalternity. She has composed characters who on the one hand are voiceless, demonstrative of their subaltern position, but occasionally make valiant attempts to defend their truths against the oppressor's tyranny. For instance, Velutha's subalternity is an exemplary caste based subalternity. His position had only earned him denial since early childhood when he was strictly warned not to involve in any physical contact with his upper caste neighbourhood. He is allowed entry into the Ayemenem house only for repairing jobs, though he is outstandingly skilled. His marvellous craftsmanship secured him a favourable position in his work field, but he earned much less than his colleagues as the employers feared a caste-based outrage otherwise from them. The discrimination is blatant when Marx-

ist leader K N M Pillai, who is expected to think beyond caste and creed, wrongs him too despite the fact that Velutha is a great craftsman and a noble labourer.

Velutha selflessly offers help to the twins whenever sought. He probably knew the ominous consequences of his illicit relationship. However, had the courage, for once and for all, to celebrate his primitive soul, his carnal desires that makes someone a human. It is unfortunate that he was unjustifiably booked in the History House. Again, a symbolic act of how history has been treating subalterns like him and how it is still the truth of post-independent India. Velutha is undoubtedly the 'God' of smaller things. He signifies the change among the destitute of the society and how it is unbearable for the society to accept such growth. He is sacrificed for no apparent reason. His killing almost reminds of the treatment of the Jews by Adolf Hitler during the Holocaust, without any dialectic. However, the fact that he attempted to confront the guidelines framed by the upper caste society speaks volumes of the efforts that the subalterns make in order to pick themselves up from the vast abysmal darkness that they were left in. Though in vain, they at least try to show courage in the face of atrocities.

Unwittingly, Velutha's torturous death involves the participation of few other characters who can never come to terms with the betrayal that led to this fatal incident. It is another striking characteristic of power play very commonly viewed among army men. Overpowering other forces using power requires immense hysteria on the part of the annihilator. It leaves a scar in the psyche of the colonizer as well which often results in tropes such as the 'white man's burden'. Speaking of subalterns, the children were not spared either, and were subalternised in their own capacity by the adults. They were forced to encounter such circumstances that initiated a troubled conscience in them almost killing their childhood with a slow poison. Such acts proved that the society never

sheds its colonial characteristics that reside in the dark recesses of its mind. Like any colonised person, the subalterns in the novel develop a disoriented identity wherein their idea of superior normative gets distorted. This happens as their idea of culture, history, beliefs, culture and language gets coloured by the instructions of the colonizer. Most characters in the text are in awe of the western practices and strive to become westernized natives. Margaret Kochamma, being an English, is revered for her skin colour by the members of the Ayemenem house who adopt the colonized's position unconsciously on her arrival. Kochu Maria, the housemaid, becomes passionate while imagining Sophie Mol as her future Kochamma. She never thought of Rahel in a similar fashion before.

It is entertaining to see people extending a servile attitude to westerners or towards them who have a better grasp of the 'English' language. Roy perhaps makes a desperate attempt to Indianize or individualize her use of language to prove to the readers that she does not worship this western form of expression, though, by default she must use it to communicate her thoughts in her post-colonial magnum opus. She develops the character of Chacko as a mockery to revolutionists as he verbatim quotes English phrases to lure children into an anglicized life. Someone as inconsequential as Mammachi is shown troubled at the failed attempts of the children to initiate western accent. Leela Gandhi quoted Mahatma Gandhi's observation regarding such behaviour as "The slave's hypnotised gaze upon the master condemned this figure to a derivative existence" (Gandhi 21). Gandhiji further elaborated the situation thus: "that we want the English rule without the English man. You want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger…" (30)

The authorities are the by-product of colonial brainwashing. Characters who dare to transgress them are dealt with severe punishment. Baby Kochamma, Inspector Thomas Mathew, K N M Pillai symbolise the

major power structure in the novel. They got off-limits to punish the transgressors such as Velutha, Ammu, Estha and Rahel. The colonial customs followed and retained by such oppressors are superficial beyond measure. This is so because they seem to adopt bits and pieces of the western ideology only till it awes them. Open-mindedness, in terms of treating the partner equally or raising the girl child as equal to the male heir, finds no place in their rigid patriarchal psyches. This becomes evident in the way Pappachi's treats his wife and Rahel. Despite being employed in a western firm and having served the western powers professionally, he fails to shake off his patriarchal Indianisms and becomes a wife beater.

Mr Hollick is the objective correlative for the colonizer. Father Mulligan represents the liberated decolonizer in the novel. The imperial invasions and conquers have always been correlated to rape. Hollick is shown expressing his illegitimate desires as "well, actually there may be an option. Perhaps we could work something outyou are a very lucky man wonderful family, beautiful children and extremely attractive wife" (Roy, *The God of Small Things* 41). The representation of Hollick, a British, as a gold digger, is in unison with post-colonial impulses. Father Mulligan, contrastingly, being the liberated decolonizer, does not capitalize on Baby Kochamma's devotion to him. Almost all native characters depicted in the novel display signs of subalternity under various circumstances. Such traits make the novel in spirit, a post-colonial endeavour.

The novel flourishes in all forms of subalternity. Besides the caste subalternity experienced by Velutha, Kuttappan and Vellya Pappan and Kuttappan, Roy sketches child subalterns in the characters of Rahel, Estha, Comrade Pillai's children. They, at their position, lose what they are capable of losing, their sexual dignity, innocence and simplicity. The vicious impulses of the patriarchal society carve gender subalterns out

of the female characters. In fact, the iron clutches of patriarchy pulls Ammu back, who tries hard to free herself, into victimization. Baby Kochamma, Mammachi, Sophie Mol and her mother Margaret, all female characters have had their dreams shattered at some point or the other. The study of subalterns necessitates that they are being silenced in some way or the other, in a way that they find themselves inadequate in expressing their desires. Post colonialists have, for long, speculated about their representability. However, contrary to Spivak's theory of subalterns being completely silenced, Roy's characters do develop effective survival strategies occasionally.

Estha in the chapter 'Paradise Pickles and Preserves' is portrayed as someone who's completely silenced. This act can be compared to the subaltern's symbolic act of lack of expression. "Estha had always been a quiet child, so no one could pinpoint with any degree of accuracy exactly when (the year, if not the month or day) he had stopped talking. Stopped talking altogether, that is. The fact is that there was not an exactly when. It had been a gradual winding down and closing shop" (10). This incident can be studied as a survival strategy for Estha as he is shown to have adopted silence towards the end of the novel, to bar himself from lying about a crime. However, the guilt of it has fossilised his psyche, and he seems to be unable to recover from it. It results in complete silencing of him within a few years. He embraced this subaltern technique to emancipate his soul from damnation.

Subordination and subjugation find weird ways of affecting human psyche. Thereby, it affected Estha and Rahel in distinct ways. Estha somehow became gagged and suppressed for his entire lifetime. He chose to stay indoors and participate in domestic chores as a grown up. Perhaps it is a survival strategy too to avoid any further assault by the exterior world. Contrary to his behaviour, his sister became headstrong after encountering the same sets of violence. She turned into an ungovernable

and vehement adolescent. In school, where she was later sent, she got blacklisted due to her regular misdemeanours. As defiance, she decorated a knob of cow dung with flowers at the front door of her house mistress. She intentionally slammed against her seniors to confirm her doubts regarding physical anatomy. Roy reports:

> Six months later she was expelled after repeated complaints from senior girls. She was accused (quite rightly) of hiding behind doors and deliberately colliding with her seniors. When she was questioned by the principal about her behaviour (cajoled, caned, starved) she eventually admitted that she had done it to find out if breasts hurt. In that Christian institution breasts were not acknowledged. They were not supposed to exist and if they did not, could they hurt? (16)
>
> All the younger years of pseudo servitude made her rebellious and whimsical to the point that the other students, particularly the boys were intimidated by Rahel's waywardness and almost fierce lack of ambition. They left her alone. She was never invited to their nice homes or noisy parties. Even her professors were a little wary about her. Her bizarre impractical building plans presented on cheap brown paper, her indifference to their passionate critiques (18).

Therefore it seems that the levels of absurdity that servility had manifested in, both, Estha and Rahel, are of the same intensity, only different in form. Roy observes, "That the emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other that the two things fitted together. Like stacked spoons. Like familiar lovers' bodies." (328). Baby Kochamma had her own approach of revolting against the society laid love laws. To Rahel, she seems to be living her life backwards as in youth she had forsaken material life, but at eighty she had started

to adorn them. Her pursuit to attract Father Mulligan appears to be a novice's short-sighted plan to revolt against the society laid rules. As a survival technique, she adopts ingenious methods to get rid of her convent thereby proving that Ammu and the twins are not the only transgressors. Arundhati Roy rightly symbolises the position of the subalterns as in-between that of jam and jelly.

The position that the subalterns adopted in the novel are that of a middle one, a one that's undergoing a transformation. For instance, Chacko verbatim quotes phrases from English books just to camouflage his innate emptiness. Otherwise, there's no justified use at all for someone to raise such subjects impromptu in abrupt occasions. Such trivial, anglicized recitals only appear to be an effort to create an impression on the fellow people to gain signification. Ammu made her attempts at finding a voice by divorcing her indecent husband and embracing the arduous Ayemenem life back. Roy pronounces about Ammu's self-appropriated decision, "There was only Ayemenem now, a front veranda, and a back veranda, a hot river and a pickle factory" (43). Ammu confronted multiple marginalization as she had defied caste while marrying and later was divorced with two children.

Pappachi was subalternised at his own capacity by his place of work. The same man who appears to be an indomitable tyrant at home adopts the role of an inarticulate workhorse at his office. Apart from him, there are some undisguised references to subalterns such as Kochu Maria or Vellya Pappan. However, on applying Spivak's idea of pure subalternism one finds no correct classification of the term in Roy's characterization. According to Spivak, the moment a person learns to communicate in any which way about his distress or can find plausible ways to combat it, he sheds the banner of subalterniety. On applying such narrow definition of the term, one cannot find any proper example of a subaltern in the text. Not even Velutha, as he occasionally did make

arrangements to validate his presence, despite the fact that he was ultimately victimized. Only Velutha's brother, Kuttappen resembles the pure subaltern that Spivak propagates.

Kuttappen lies paralyzed "from his chest downwards" after suffering a fall from a coconut tree. He has been represented as the "good, safe Paravan" who could "neither read nor write" (197). He is, in fact, the fundamental symbol of ineffectiveness and non-agency. The narrator expresses his thoughts as:

> On bad days the orange walls held hands and bent over him, inspecting him like malevolent doctors, slowly, deliberately, squeezing the breath out of him and making him scream. Sometimes they receded of their own accord, and the room he lay in grew impossibly large, terrorizing him with the spectre of his own insignificance. That too made him cry out (197).

Kuttapan's scream epitomizes inarticulateness and silence associated with subalterns. He is physically and mentally, a pure subaltern who will depend on others for his entire life. Apart from him, most other characters, do not touch the bar of being a pure subaltern in Spivak's terms.

3.14 Agencies of Oppression

Critic Julie Mullaney recognizes Roy's novel as a strong critique against the homogeneity that third world women are boxed into by first world feminists and post colonists. She additionally outlines how the author "carefully delineates not their false homogeneity as representations of oppressed 'third world woman' but the range of options and choices, whether complicit, resistant—or both—to the dominant order" (11). It is

through her vivid characterization and detailed representations that Roy conveys to her audience what all exactly could be the myriad varieties of marginalization that a third world woman might encounter. Roy goes ahead to show how the social and cultural agencies, outside the purview of an individual, can work as a factor to undermine his growth. However, Jonathan Culler argues that humans always get the chance to make a choice, even if it is an existential one. Therefore, agencies cannot be the sole reason held for someone's experiences. Nevertheless, factors such as patriarchy, colonialism, caste system, politics and religion also act as strong reasons to define the state of being of the characters. A major area of focus of the novel is to emphasise on the voices in the margin, which is to what almost every character is reduced to under different existential circumstances.

3.15 Conclusion

Arundhati Roy, who aptly won the Booker Prize for *The God of Small Things*, has significantly stressed upon social consciousness along with style innovation in her work. The novel is relevant for a multicultural and power dominated country like India, especially in the post independent period. The milieu created in the novel is a space where big and small, relevant and irrelevant, culture and nature, co-exist. Post-colonialism is brought out due to the constant conflict between these co-existing, contrary beliefs. Any reference to a 'small' thing or incident is necessarily accompanied by the mention of a 'big' thing. The author places the two Gods concurrently:

> The big God howled like a hot wind and demanded obeisance. The small God (cosy and contained, private and limited) came away cauterized, laughing numbly at his own temerity (19).

Roy shows the reader how the idea of smallness is relative in a post-colonial world. It is undeniable that every person is simultaneously 'big' and 'small' in his own capacity to this fellow world. Estha and Rahel are 'small' for Ammu. She, in turn, is 'small' in front of Baby Kochamma who herself becomes 'small' in front of Father Mulligan. Similarly, Chacko is 'big' for Ammu but 'small' for Margaret Kochamma. The philosophy of this dominant position IS skilfully carved out by Roy. It is a critique of the post-independent Indian scenario, wherein the natives are struggling to cope with embracing modernism and grasping on to traces of traditionalism. Roy finally does seem to bestow peace upon the characters who learn to accept their hybrid selves as it has become. She concludes the novel with a hint of peace after continuous turmoil by portraying Rahel and Estha finally acknowledging their hybrid selves. The same happens to Ammu and Velutha in the flashback mode. It is only when the individuals can recognize and approve of what they have become as a consequence of this post-colonial world, they are finally seen to be able to embrace tranquillity.

The God of Small Things materializes as a work of protest. It is an assertion of the hybrid self, the subaltern voices, the marginalized races, the wronged females and other such oppressed classes of the society. It protests against customs, traditions and love laws. The author mirrors the root and subtle forms of colonial oppression that still mars the healthy development of the new generations. She seems to suggest that embracing one's hybrid individuality is the need of the hour. Being on an endless, internal quest to somehow forcefully grasp the fading old customs while appearing to be modern from the exterior can never benefit anyone. The opposite of this holds equally true. One must not force modernity or westernization on oneself while still being the favourite child of tradition internally.

The novel inspires the readers to find one's voice in the midst of op-

pression and develop means to retain it. Roy's masterpiece initiates confrontations between the privileged and the denied. She also brings to the limelight the oppression caused on ecology by human's overwhelming desire for more. Even politics seems to disappoint her as she portrays how the leaders of such parties themselves fail the system. She uses her thoughts typographically, culturally, structurally and psychologically to build up a powerful, universal story. The author ends up creating a post-colonial masterpiece with an avant-garde blend of language. *The God of Small Things* undoubtedly carries post-colonial traits. Almost all the characters switch between being the colonizer or the colonized and develop strategies to sustain themselves by resisting domination.

Chapter Four
MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

4.1 Preliminaries

The novel chosen for study is *The God of Small Things*. Arundhati Roy has undoubtedly acquired her stature in the canon of Indian English fiction as a post-colonial writer. The analysis in the previous chapters seeks to establish the post-colonial idiosyncrasies in Roy's work. Roy's style can be traced even in her recent work *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. It is also heavily populated with post-colonial innuendos. She merges the political and the personal harmoniously to narrate a story of domination and denial, a fundamental concern in a post-colonial world, similar to *The God of Small Things*. It has been established that she is relevant today as a post-colonial writer for the post-colonial themes that she chooses and for the treatment of her techniques. The assessment of *The God of Small Things* began with an inquiry as to whether the condition leading to post-coloniality actually exists in the novel. The in-depth analysis reveals that the writer created incidents, characters, and situations that indicate of these attributes to the extent of supposing that Roy wrote with a predetermined mindset.

4.2 Major Findings

1. The text is placed at Ayemenem, in the year 1969, when Estha and Rahel are quite young. However important the theme of migration might be for Roy, the novel's most important moments occur in this setting. Ayemenem in 1969 seems to be enduring a state of

change, which we can interpret through the generational differences of opinion or behaviour among the characters. The community is beginning to embrace Communism, which pursues to empower the impoverished and working classes, and to eliminate class and caste discrimination. The older characters, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and for that instance even Vellya Paapen, who is a scapegoat of the caste system, don't seem to be gratified with the changes that are starting to happen. They yearn for the time when people's position in society was firmly spelt out for them on the basis of their caste. On the other margin of the spectrum, Roy draws the characters of Rahel and Estha, who are minors, seven years old and quite oblivious to social rules. For instance, when Rahel observes Velutha swaying a communist flag, she sees it more as a splendid accessory than a symbol of the socio-cultural unrest existing in their community.

2. Roy has created a fictional world that reflects the complications of the post-colonial realm. She knits together several strands of history to create a gripping narrative. Fascinated by the fertile land, great rivers and the Indian ecology, the hegemony had occupied various regions of India. There was abundant wealth which is presently lacking in the country. Roy confronts a number of changes that seem irrevocable - the devastation of Ayemenem's ecology that once nurtured a pristine river, the corrosion of cultural forms of art like Kathakali, and the slow demise of a vibrant civilisation that is incapable of accepting their hybrid existence. This text calls attention to details, description and exposure to the myriad Ayemenem ecosystem along with species of fauna. The rain imagery towards the end of the novel suggests that despite human ravaging which is symbolic of colonial atrocities, wilderness persevere and a lot of this is due to nature's own resilience and brilliance.

3. Roy's characters, mostly hybrid, either by birth or by experience, can be inferred as an evidence of the contamination that arrived with the colonizer. The day Sophie Mol came to India is seen, metaphorically, as the coming of the colonizers. Complications start when Sophie Mol, with her British mother Margaret, comes from England to meet her Indian father, Chacko. Her coming to India is important because it brings immense dread and suffering for people in the colonial territory, symbolically. Roy explains throughout the novel the disturbing impact of Sophie Mol's visit and how it disturbed the tranquillity of a peaceful place. The life in Ayemenem before her arrival has been mentioned as peaceful and tranquil. Roy, while illustrating, reports "Here, however, it was peace time, and the family in the Plymouth travelled without fear or foreboding" (35). Sophie Mol's arrival representing the colonizer's, disrupts the peace in Ayemenem. This is obviously suggestive when Roy portrays the situation as, "You couldn't see the river from the window anymore…and their has come a time when uncles became fathers, mother's lovers and cousins died and had funerals. It was a time when the unthinkable became thinkable and the impossible really happened" (31).

4. The novel depicts portraits of natives who still are not entirely liberated from the colonial hangover. They continue to adore the Brown Sahib in place of the white colonizer. The author reiterates that decolonization of the mind is an extremely challenging procedure. Roy seems to be of the view that it is crucial at this juncture to promote the subaltern expressions so that a strata of society can communicate with people.

5. The novel investigates contemporary problems, penetratingly, to establish that the Indian power structures comprise of continuous domination. This compels the depraved subalterns to design drastic strate-

gies for survival. The study reveals that the novel deals with other associated issues like cultural pollution, environmental pollution and issues concerning women. Arundhati Roy asserts in the course of *The God of Small Things,* marriages as sheer facilitators for female enslavement and suffering. Marriages in India are seldom performed for the sake of love. What one misunderstands as conjugal affection is nothing beyond habit formation.

6. The author has a clear plan in characterizing the subaltern's strategies in a classified manner. The child subalterns try to disclose their anguish in the novel and obviously go ignored. The adults are unaware of the harm that they cause by turning a deaf ear to the concerns raised by the children. The novelist even indicates that the grownups undermine the innocence of children by indulging them in a soul-damning misdemeanour.

7. Roy has brought about a radical change in the way English fiction has been written in her novel to resemble the changes that have been brought about in the life of the natives in the post-colonial era. She experiments to bring about a substantial paradigm shift in its context and content.

8. Roy advocates that the caste system create a bias based on inequality created by the luck of one's birth and their work. This particularity is perpetuated and sustained by a societal ethos that bars inter-caste relationships. As a result, the social and cultural life of people belonging to different castes is mostly spent in outright isolation of one another. People who belong to different castes try to live unconnected, in separate areas, restrict contact with each other according to the hierarchical order created by society, and observe divergent social etiquette with people of different castes. Roy minutely specifies the lives and customs of these heterogeneous communities that exist in our society.

9. Estrangement from the roots, seeking an identity in the adopted land, cultural dislocation, conflict between the native and exotic land, nostalgic memories, problems of adjustment in the changed social milieu are the dominant concerns carried out in Roy's novel. Her work reflects upon the colonial and the post-colonial society, subaltern consciousness, patterns of history and characteristics of the diaspora in her own distinctive style. Her work deals with the tangled fate of the individuals, societies and cultures.

10. The impact of collision of cultures and the resultant ramifications or ambiguities that humans endure during the post-colonial period are brought out. The emotional upheaval that the natives undergo in their own country, or a foreign land, serves as reconciliation and rediscovery of their selves. The internalized violence against the subalterns restructure not only the lives of the tortured but also the oppressors. The author does not betray the quintessential modernist alienation but stays rooted in conventions even though this rootedness is bristling with complexities. The assortment of multifarious Indian identities in the novel is presented as the mirror of the country itself. Indian migrants often tend to neutralize their culture or family patterns as much as possible but remain unsuccessful in their attempt. This is depicted through the character of Chacko whose marriage fails miserably despite him trying his best to adopt the western ideologies. The novel, thus, reflects that in a post-colonial world no culture is absolute, and no culture can prevail in isolation.

11. The climax manifolds the analysis of the lives of people belonging to different social margin and brings to centre a historical analysis. The lives of the characters are viewed against the backdrop of history. The British-like cruel act of punishing, use of political power to dominate, and the perverse suffering of the captives, in-

digenous communities and indentured labourers are brought to the fore. Roy, like a skilled craftsman, has beautifully knitted threads of history, space and time for the creation and designing of *The God of Small Things*. The events which transpired decades ago are technically represented in an avant-garde fashion by deconstructing the past and present concerns, thus making the history immortal and eternal. The novel takes the shape of a perfect post-colonial historical fiction where lost time is convincingly recreated through memories.

12. The novel is a tribute to accepting hybrid variety and inducing survival. The text is profusely illustrated with descriptions of landscape as a reminder of what the native needs to protect and cherish in his country to protect it from colonial invasions before it gets too late. Colonialism has been applied to ecology as well as the author constantly reiterates the risks being endured by the pristine habitats due to human's barbarity.

13. The book holds up a historically descriptive golden Kerala in front of a global community of reader. The author successfully makes her determined attempt at highlighting the confluence of human insights and history by analysing the social, cultural and political framework of the fictional and historical characters in his fiction. This novel is most significant in the present context because the author successfully draws a fine balance in the craft at every step, between tradition and change, between men and women or between reason and emotion. There is ample evidence of the existence of human compassion across foreign as well as ethnic lines. All such elements make the understanding of natives in a post-colonial world as the novel's most important theme.

14. Roy powerfully writes about the relationship between the oppressors and the oppressed. The Christian influence on the country and

the resultant chaos is well reflected. Roy's abiding concern is on the impact of broad historical movements within which the individuals are caught up, and their lives become beyond their control. The relevance of connection between the past and the present, and the desire of finding a channel for communication with the 'other' expose nationalistic manias. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are women who are neither completely oppressed nor entirely defiant. Like most characters, they hold a hybrid position regarding exercising power over theirs's and others' lives. They occupy a middle zone, act by taking cues from what their lives offer at different phases and transgress boundaries when the time is opportune.

15. Roy remodels the disappearing cultural heritage and traditions of the communities she has come into contact by exploring a kaleidoscopic range of people. Through the story of Velutha, Vellya Paapen and Kuttapen she explores the tribal community's connection with society. The novel becomes significant, not only because it uses personal memories and narratives to create an alternate space for the post-colonial subject, but also broadens the span of the term 'nation' beyond its actual political boundaries. It sketches the collective journey of history, memory and personal narrative as they progressively become a reality for the living subject.

16. The second chapter "*Pappachi's Moth*" analyses displacement which is an influential factor in the present world. As the world is boundless and infinite, it is impossible to restrain or hold back a man within a set boundary or limit. Additionally, his inherent impulse to migrate, to wander, directs him to do so. Further to this in the globalised realm, it is imminent that people migrate for innumerable reasons. Most of the novel focuses on the amorphous borders and depict how people transcend these boundaries in the process, modifying not only just their personal histories over a span

of time, but also the narrative of the world as well. The contrast between migration and exile is brought out in the same chapter. The agony brought about by the necessity to leave one's terrain is brought out. Most of the major characters in Roy are provoked by myriad reasons to move. A life of continuous movement and incidental violence has made Ammu incessantly whimsical. She moves without hesitation, almost mechanically, whenever life requires her to do so. It could be for money, fortune or intellectual pursuit. Rahel seems to have inherited this eccentrical trait from her mother. Journey serves as a symbol, as a metaphor that advocates the ever–moving, rejuvenating process. The phenomena of dislocation and displacement subconsciously lead to a psychological crisis and an inquest for identity. This holds true for Chacko too. Gradually they arrive at awareness and understanding about the world at large and try to adapt to accommodate. They yearn for a world without any imaginary borders, strictures or lines to separate one from the other. Migration is an essential theme in Roy's novel. She suggests that constantly moving for survival is a reality of human life. To put in Bhabha's words, "'unhomely' is a paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition" (Bhabha 13). The novel highlights stories of individuals resisting or overcoming the conditions in which they are settled, and eventually either succeed, or fail to withstand the change. The author makes a magnificent exposition of the Indian landscapes, scenarios and characters. The migration of the various members of the Ipe family is well documented with the primary focus on the psychological impact such experiences have on the migrants, be it within the country or abroad. The lives of the priests, foreigner bosses and untouchables record their own stories. Despite their dominant or subaltern status, they seem to have left fragmentary traces in the archives of time that perpetually affects the lives and behaviour of the characters.

17. For Roy, writing this novel is a recalling of her life in this nation. Though she closely resembles other post-colonial writers in employing the multiple narrative schemes, her method of storytelling, the back and forth journey in time, her comfort and brilliance in applying these devices makes her novel outstanding. This format is in harmony with the novel being an extended memory. In short, the phenomena of migration is a constant reminder of the past, and this novel is an excellent account of the history, geography and the political economy of post-colonial India. Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, comments about the state of the post-colonial writers in his memoir *Istanbul: Memories of a City* as, "…these writers are known for having managed to migrate between languages, cultures, countries, continents, even civilisations. Their imaginations are fed by exile, a nourishment not drawn through roots but through rootlessness…" (Pamuk 6). Their personal experience of rootlessness, like Roy's, is expressed blatantly in their post-colonial works.

18. Some of Roy's major characters dislocate from one stage to another from one locale to another in a seemingly endless quest. In the novel outsiders, like Margaret Kochamma or Sophie Mol, comes into the picture, often dispossessed, or needy, and the existing order of things is often changed. The theme of immigration, at times voluntary, and sometimes forced, along with its bitter- sweet existence, runs throughout the novel. There is a conflict between tradition and modernity or westernization. Roy's empathy, however, seems to be with the hybrids.

19. The vivid, graphic description of various landscapes where the characters travel or stay offers a fresh impression of post-colonial India in the mind of the reader. *The God of Small Things* is an attempt to recall the political history of India post independence through a fictional set of episodes, events, and characters. Roy has stream-

lined numerous unique issues and trends which focus on the events of history which are more than history. She expresses the disappointments and defeats of colonized people as they scrutinize their place in the world. She remaps the country, drawing connections across the boundaries of the states and professing that power play is omnipresent. It is absurd to discover how the hunter becomes the hunted under a different set of circumstances in a post-colonial environment.

20. The family members' journeys orbit around Ayemenem even though practically all of them move away from it and then take a homecoming journey. The most extrusive homecomings are those of the natives Rahel and Estha. For them, the location of return is not so relevant as much as what they represent for one another. Other characters such as Chacko and Baby Kochamma migrate from India to pursue academics, but they too end up returning in Ayemenem. When Margaret Kochamma and Sophie arrive in Ayemenem, they are celebrated as though they are returning home. The family sees their homecoming as an intrinsic part of the clan, making a legitimate return. The author uses the theme of homecoming to suggest that one cannot escape history and one's roots. Axiomatically tragedy befalls, and Margaret returns to her roots. Despite everything, two characters who do not return home before their deaths are Velutha and Ammu. They die outside their birth homes, in foreign rooms. The fact that they do not take a homecoming journey is an exemplification of the point that though they suffer for their actions by sacrificing their lives, they do manage to escape the constraints of their roots, in other words, their castes.

21. We often wonder why do the characters want to return to the place they once migrated from. When they migrated, as it is true for any migrant, they were looking for a superior state of existence.

However, the new home proved to be worse than the home they left. So they consider their past state of being and unwisely believe that they can return to their old life. What they forget to analyse is that meanwhile their homes, including the socio-cultural surrounding, have changed, and that they themselves might have undergone change, or have become a hybrid version of their past selves too. Heraclitus' acclaimed saying *panta rhei*, meaning everything flows, fits aptly in this situation. One cannot step into the same river twice, because the second time one steps, the river and the person both has changed. Consequently, while going back in space can easily be accomplished, one cannot rewind a clock and time cannot be undone. Roy applies a typical post-colonial concept: "[M]ultitudinous as movement in space is, it is visibly surpassed by one of a different kind: movement in time. This journey no one can avoid: we are all 'migrants' from our past." (Santaollalla 164). The migrants, in *The God of Small Things,* hope to return to their old lives just to find out that it is improbable.

22. The blending of different cultures leads to syncretism. According to it the concept of having a pure culture is deceptive for no culture is unadulterated or pure. The culture of any nation is palimpsestic in nature. The influx of new cultural phenomenon does not dislocate or erase previous ones but simply amalgamate. The Indian culture has been thoroughly transformed by its successive invaders, each of whom has contributed something to the vast potpourri that comprises Indian civilization. The native culture always receives something precious from the foreign culture and in return transforms it too. So the idea of a pure, indigenous culture, is a chimaera. What remains of such culture is a hybrid variety of its native form which should be accepted wisely to lead a contented life.

23. A detailed and thorough analysis of Roy's novel reveals that she is not at all fascinated by the division of any community on the basis of culture, border, caste and race. She professes everyone to be unified discarding any barriers. Through this personal narrative, she has raised to limelight many unknown historical details of India and the struggle in the lives of natives after independence. Roy, as a proficient craftsman, has magnificently interwoven threads of history, space and time for the formulation and designing of her novel. The episodes, which took place decades ago are textually represented by conjecturing the past and present concerns, thus making history eternal and immortal.

24. The author celebrates India, as well as points out the imperfections prevailing in the country. She praises the rich heritage, naivety of the Indians and but also mocks the far-flung caste system, problems of unemployment and the religious disharmony. Though she travels abroad often, she seems to be well connected with the historical facts of the country. According to her, a migrant designs a different reality. She seems to appreciate travelling a lot in order to explore various cultures. She voices this out through her characters. Though her characters move quite often, she prefers them to welcome their hybrid existence rather than being in a constant struggle between modernism and tradition.

25. The dominant theme which gives this novel shape of a post-colonial narrative is the struggle of the characters against imperialism, or to be more precise, authoritarian forces. Roy elaborates on the internal conflict and predicament encountered by the Indian employees or students in the non-indigenous environment. Amusingly, they inflict the same kind of misery over their subordinates, like Velutha. Pappachi expresses his scepticism and distrust of the very idea of a business enterprise. The trace of his suffering makes him disregard

even the small business that his wife starts later. The characters often face existential questions regarding their loyalty and if it has earned them any recognition. Chacko, too, finds himself confounded and emotionally distraught, caught between two worlds.

26. Colonial Inclination and Hybridity are perennial themes that can be found in Roy's fiction. With the application of Hybridity, Roy commits to the post-colonial labour of seeking political and social justice for the oppressed by encouraging the revising of history. However, she concurrently foregrounds the opinion that memoirs of the past are contextually formulated within definite political, social and historical structures. It is paradoxical to contest historical knowledge and simultaneously acknowledge or accept the rewriting of subaltern's history as a means of liberating them from the ordeals of their colonial past. The term 'colonial' applies to internal or indigenous subjugation where the more powerful natives adopt the role of the imperialists in a newly independent country.

27. Roy, however, does not attempt to resolve the paradox mentioned in the previous finding. This kind of open-endedness causes frustration in the reader. Such paradoxes, as Mondal declares, 'reflects our desire for 'closure of ethical, political and imaginative possibilities in order to pursue a politics that gives us the satisfaction of appearing to do something' (Mondal). In other words, the dissatisfaction caused by an inept closure emphasizes the reader's urge to hold a straightforward stance towards the episodes. It is perhaps Roy's objective to establish this sort of knowledge to highlight alternate historical representations so that readers can acknowledge the voices that have been silenced for so long in the past. Roy's representation of alternative histories surpasses traditional historical and ethnographic representation.

28. Arundhati Roy is compassionate towards the contributions of her fe-

male characters, who might not have achieved great stature in society but are ordinary and middle class. She showcases the contributions of the women characters too, seeking a balance between men and women. She is conscious of their dilemma, nervousness and determination to make themselves heard, through speech or otherwise, she provides them with a platform to make their voices heard. She gives them the importance they never received despite their participation and involvement to create a meaningful past. By lending voice to the women and their individualistic opinions, Roy provides an alternate vision of India's past. Her women characters may not enjoy the position of being the protagonist of the novel, as clearly suggested even through the title of the book, but they do play very crucial roles. They cannot be annihilated nor can they be ignored. Through a re-reading of the past, via the female characters, Roy engages in a post-colonial re-interpretation of life itself.

29. The novel is about the past. It interweaves the Christian influence, independence, partition, the birth of modern Kerala, sexual exploitations and love-making. It is developed in different locales and deals with colonial exploitation after independence. Roy is free from the British mode of using English. She feels no restrictions while writing her spelling or sentence structures or using grammar. She, experimentally, twists and turns vocabulary. All this hints at her silent rebellion against the language of the colonizer though she cannot completely discard it. Therefore, the structure of the text in itself earns a hybrid identity.

30. The real protagonists in this novel are not eminent personalities but the commoners like Velutha or Ammu. Roy writes about how their aspirations and fears lead to their dislocation under the oppressor's domination. The clash of cultures is exposed through various incidents in the novel. The booming of Communism and the threat

to the indigenous imperialists like inspector Thomas Mathew are the indicators of the transfer of power and the transformations that take place in a culture.

31. Roy has endeavoured to represent nature through river, trees, mountains, animals and insects. She indirectly points how the increase in population has led to intense pressure on natural assets. The loans that are granted to underdeveloped countries by World Bank for improvement have resulted in devastating the ecology of underdeveloped countries due to the insensible exploitation of nature. Through her novel, Roy suggests, that there should be sustainable development. Human beings should use natural resources only to such an extent that it can regenerate. The author has tried to create awareness among her readers towards ecology so that it remains conserved. She, thus, blends the theme of post-colonialism with eco criticism in her work.

4.3 Pedagogical Implications

This section of the study attempts to examine why *The God of Small Things* should be read or analysed by the connoisseurs of English Literature. Any novel that's a Booker Prize Winner is a magnum opus in its own right, and Roy's novel, winner of the 1997 edition, is no exclusion. The storyline is utterly unconventional, offbeat and individualistic. The dissertation brings to the limelight some of these traits that can assist the new readers of the novel to interpret it in a more erudite way. The present study helps the students identify the post-colonial traits in innumerable ways. For instance, how Roy has played with language and style. The author employs a non-sequential and disjointed narrative style that replicates the process of remembrance, especially the resurfacing of a previously suppressed, painful memory. Such traits are

conveniently exposed through this study to the students seeking to establish a post-colonial relationship between the novel and the theory. An extensive cultural perception, and an understanding of gender roles, as well as power politics existing in post-colonial India, can also be acquired from this study. The treatise establishes compliance to hybridity as a crucial solution that many new students of post-colonialism might find intriguing. Finally, it endeavours to serve as a database to various post-colonial themes reiterated by the author repeatedly throughout the novel.

4.4 Scope for Further Work

1. There is every scope for further research on this for Ph. D. Students can compare the work of Roy with that of Amitav Ghosh, Khushwant Singh or Manohar Malgoankar that are concerned with post-colonial themes and speculate where they meet or disagree.

2. It is worth pursuing the prospects that might have got materialized had the women characters in *The God of Small Things* been situated in a more conducive ambience.

3. A comparative study can also be made with the works of the male post-colonial writers to investigate where and how gender cuts across their fictional boundaries.

4. A study can be done focused on the Anthropological and feminist aspects present in the novel.

5. A sociological study of the novel can also be pursued.

6. Application of psycho analytical theories to the text can ensure remarkable output.

7. A further study can be made from the point of view of Post-colonial rewriting of history and culture.

8. A realistic approach, gender studies, or a study of the paradigm of social realism can be applied.

9. The issues regarding borders, globalization, repatriating, migration, assimilation, exiled refugees, and multiculturalism can be examined comprehensively and individually.

4.5 Conclusions

1. Inspired by the pioneers of Post-colonialism like Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Bill Ashcroft, Arundhati Roy has extensively applied the terms Migration, Natives, Hybridity, Ambiguity and the like to her writing.

2. Acceptance of Hybridity has been offered as a suggestive solution for the running of a peaceful society. It is a well-known nomenclature in post-colonial literature, and intends to explore the identity of man.

3. Colonization and Colonial Desire manifests itself in innumerable ways among various cultural identities, races, languages and literary genre.

4. It has been established that the novel holds conditions or situations that lead to the presence of subaltern traits, another significant feature of the post-colonial theory.

5. Colonial Desire refers to the tyrannical ideology that keeps the colonies, or in this case, individuals, indigenous or otherwise, underestimated so that the oppressors can rule and exploit them.

6. The novel has been verified to have post-colonial remembrance, one of the most indispensable features of post-coloniality. It is a memory novel, and the characters undergo the trauma of re-visiting the distressing past.

7. The study ascertained the need to look for appropriate solutions for subaltern problems.

8. This novel exhibit other post-colonial attributes like multiculturalism, globalization, diasporic agony, sense of loss, nationalism and internationalism, fragmentation of culture, post-colonial mimicry, loss of masculinity and postcolonial ecocriticism.

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