



# SUBALTERN WOMEN IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS

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## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the representation of subaltern women in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. The study aims to discover the representation of subaltern women in *The God of Small Things* novel by Arundhati Roy. This study is a library study and it used qualitative method. To collect the data, the instruments used were the researcher as the main instrument and notes taken from acquired data of the object, which then analyzed with the subalternity concept of Gayatri Spivak by tracing the author's representation on the women characters of the novel. The study found that Arundhati Roy represents female characters who live under the same discourse of patriarchy and postcolonialism, which subjugates them with layered oppression, whether racially or gender based discrimination. However, Roy also tends to give them diverse construction of voices and choices despite the muteness that they finally meet.

**Keywords:** Subaltern women, patriarchy; independent women; feminism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy wrote her first novel *The God of Small Things* in 1997 as a critic towards the caste system and gender-biased tradition in Kerala, India and how the system creates social stratification through many aspects of social life. Additionally, Roy criticized the patriarchal culture that dominates women as it broadly happens in India. Through the female characters, Mammachi, Ammu and Baby Kochamma, she depicted their life's struggles and resistance towards system that never takes side with them as women in postcolonial and patriarchal circumstances. As the issue of subalternity

sharply appears in the novel, this research aims to trace the representation of subaltern women as voice given by Roy herself- a subalternized woman in the ex-colonized India.

The God of Small Things can be an example of colonialism depiction and the result of its subordination including the issue of subalternity since it shows the unequal power relation between colonizer and colonized. Further, it gives depiction of postcolonial nation condition and how colonialism affects colonized people's mentality. In the novel itself, by using the general definition, all of the people in Ayemenem can be categorized as subaltern since they - both the low caste and the Brahmins and Syrian Christian are colonized (Makelesi, 2019). Even though they gain independence from the British occupation, the inhabitants still are colonized through language and culture. Fanon in Makelesi (2019) pointed out that colonialism is not only about physically oppressing natives but also to change their past, falsifying and demolishing their history. In colonial discourse, whilst oppressing indigenous, it also creates an inferiority complex in their mind through the characters of Pappachi and Baby Kochamma as anglophiles and Indian's hybridity in postcolonial situation. The second, the Untouchable (people of the lowest caste) such as Velutha and his father who places the lowest layer of caste system. The third, women both from the higher caste and lowest can be categorized as subaltern since they face colonized patriarchal Indian society.

The main idea of this research itself is to trace the subaltern women group representation in The God of Small Things novel through the lens of subalternity concept by Gayatri Spivak. As it is written by a female author, it is very interesting to find out how Roy represents subaltern women as a way of criticizing and resisting her born place, Kerala with its social hierarchy that oppresses women doubly from gender-based discrimination and racial discrimination.

### *Postcolonial Feminism*

Postcolonial studies focus on the texts from colonialization discourse appears from nations such as India, Africa, South America, Australia and Indonesia. The study uncovers the traces of colonialism towards different race or nation which significantly influencing human's history (Nugraha, 2015). In colonialism discourse, according to Aschroft et al (2007) both different identities establish binary opposition which places one identity as dominant and the rest as subordinate such as violence in the hierarchy of man over woman. Thus, indigenous as subordinate brought into position where they are forced to put aside their culture or identity or land which brought them into slavery, trauma, lost of identity and any kind of oppression. Only after the occupation the colonized realized and started to think and write about the pressure they felt, the work takes its place as voices medium which later become the object in postcolonial studies of literature (Nugraha, 2015).

In 1980s then, theorists like Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Mohanty, Trinh Minh-Ha, and others featured the issue of dual oppression towards women in patriarchal colonized society (Ashroft, et al, 1995). Postcolonial feminism critics focus on the unbalance binary opposition between men and women which in this context, male norms frequently dominate, marginalize and subordinate women. While postcolonial studies focus on marginalization and oppression towards women in colonial discourse. It aims to help identify the gap of western feminism which does not take racial discrimination towards colonized third world women into account. Double oppression faced by third world women are based on colonialization and patriarchy. According to Mohanty (2003) western feminist assumption cannot cover those women's context complexity and dynamism. Spivak (1988) introduced the concept of subaltern as the group of marginalized silenced people and those who are dominated by patriarchal system. Minha (2009) narrates the word "double colonialism" in her work as patriarchal dominated group of women coming from colonized society where they are oppressed due to their gender and race. Not only for the issue of colonialism, postcolonial feminists also attack the absence of women recognition for their role in national independence. Tyagi (2014) in her journal elaborates the male-centrist of postcolonial studies circle. For instance, Edward Said in his "Orientalism" recorded only few mention about the agency of women. Davies in Tyagi (2014) even questions the existence of women in the theorization of postcolonialism. Thus, postcolonial feminism exists to fill this gap.

### *Patriarchy*

Patriarchy refers to a social system marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line (Merriam-Webster). It is the term used for sociological condition where male dominates power of society. According to Mies (1986) patriarchy refers to system of value which places male into higher position than female in influencing any dimension of society. Here, male hold the domination while female are subordinated that their roles are limited and are not considered significant. Walby (1998) divides patriarchy into domestic patriarchy and private patriarchy. Domestic patriarchy centers women on domestic works as absolute duty while private patriarchy can be seen through social system related to its relation to households, works, state life, violence by men, relation in sexuality and patriarchy in cultural institution. These perpetuate male domination in patriarchal culture. More broadly, men have domination to control ideology, political system, law, customs, norms and even interpretation to religious text that may lead women into false consciousness.

In further impact, woman often traps in mystification without intention to change the status quo in how phallogocentric world dominates and how women see themselves.

"Mystification" is the term of Beauvoir related to the situation of women are convinced that they are marginal in society and it occurs naturally as it should be from time to time. There are many myths constructed by patriarchal culture and legitimated by its instruments that women are naturally belong to family and domestic areas. Beauvoir further explained that women do not complain this condition as it firmly planted in their consciousness as submissive beings and remain in that oppression (Scholz, 2010). In a more concerning situation, women internalize patriarchal values in themselves and make them standardized morals and customs in perceiving the world and themselves. Tyson (2016) explained that the internalization of patriarchy establishes in the self of women and men due to men domination's privilege in promoting traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles consider men rational, protective, strong and easily considering decision and women as reverse; emotional, irrational and submissive. It also spreads into many aspects of life such as gender representation on media and arts, the lack of women roles in politics and any other aspects that assert into women's life and consequently those external consumptions also perpetuate women's perspective to the world and how they are mentally and physically shaped. At last, this phenomenon occurs circularly as it influencing each other.

### *Spivakian Subalternity*

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is well-known with her critical theories on postcolonialism studies on culture and literature. She stepped from Marxism, feminism, deconstruction and postcolonialism to enhance her view on marginalized group, women and working classes as the result of west domination and hegemony (Riach,2017). These fields also assist her in making arguments about the oppression caused by the imbalance of power, access, knowledge and gender. In her phenomenal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak means subaltern as the oppressed subjects or those in the inferior position. She adds that under colonialism discourse, subaltern has no history and cannot speak though still, men are privileged enough whilst women are deeply in shadow. In advance, Spivak through deconstruction offers women's lives and histories into account (Morton, 2003). Women in colonial discourse do not have political and conceptual languages to speak since there are no ears from both male colonizers and male indigeneous to listen to them. Not because they literally cannot speak, but the absence of subject position does not enable them to articulate themselves and they keep remain unheard (Gandhi in Saputra, 2011). Here, Spivak fills the gap that was not included by white feminists that is way more complex than women who come from marginal group in the west. If white women face gender discrimination, women from common wealth countries face double colonialization which oppressed them for their race also, for their gender.

According to Aschroft et al(1995: 250) double colonialism refers to the oppression that women faces under two layers of power. Firstly they are suppressed by patriarchy and second by colonialization both mentally and physically. Women who were faced with imperialism become the "other" under structural discrimination that the culture created. Furthermore, the suppression continues to establish even after the national independence so that the oppression also continues to happen. This can be seen on the women's name blurring on national history that only happen to attach several names.

During the colonial era, women faced complex experiences such as submissive through sexual violence and objectification whether through forced marriage that also frequently happened in traditional patriarchal society by the colonizers (invaders) or as concubine. These dragged women in confusion and blindness of their own identities. Martono in Rahman and Nurgiyantoro (2019) offered the question of how women are seen from the point of view of the colonized. He led to the fact that in colonial discourse, patriarchy domination of the colonized transferred its submission towards women to the whites.

In "Can The Subaltern Speak?" Spivak focuses on the problem of Third World women that never been talked about in international narrations (Liu,2012). Concept of feminism finally could not aspire all women's scenes since there are different contexts and the history in which they are in needs more intense analysis. Spivak challenges the conception of universal feminism that fails to accentuate women's diversity regardless the race, social class or ethnicity. If western women struggle with patriarchal liberation, Third World women especially postcolonial nations struggle with postcolonialism matters and patriarchy (Liu,2012). That is why, it is challenging to create the concept of universal women aspiration. Here, Spivak is not anti feminism nonetheless, she tries to echo women's diversity that needs to be wrapped in strong fundamental principle in order to reach the goal of each background (Morton, 2003). Studying about subalternity in a literary works means reading and interpreting the authors perception towards the identity and condition of subaltern. Injustice and inequality faced by women in Third world countries are not far away from the colonial practice effects in perceiving male superiority towards female and modernity towards traditionality.

This research uses qualitative method as its approach in exploring and interpreting particular phenomena represented in characters on the data including description in the novel. Qualitative research tends to show diverse perspective starts from social issues, ideological perspective, philosophical stances, to systematic procedural guidelines (Cresswell, 2009). Its process includes certain questions and procedures, the data usually collected through any population and the analysis is built specifically to broader topics which later will be interpreted (Saputra,2011). Its primary text itself is *The God of Small Things* a novel by Arundhati Roy published by Noura Publishing in 2018 with 475

pages long from its quotations, description and dialogues supported by related research topic, articles, books and videos online that can support the data. Cresswell (2009:175) states that researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research. Therefore, the main instrument of this research is the researcher herself and notes taken of acquired data from the novel *The God of Small Things* in order to identify and classify subalternity of the female characters represented by Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Ammu as the subaltern group. Comprehensive reading and note-taking was conducted to understand and collecting the primary text in *The God of Small Things* and the used supporting literature of the theory. Lastly, all collected data were categorized based on the grand theory used.

## **2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Women Characters As Subalterns**

#### **1. Mammachi**

##### **a. Patriarchy Domination Towards Mammachi**

Pappachi as the husband of Mammachi plays a big role as a patriarchal instrument. Since he has a high rank in the British official as an Entomologist, he never helps his wife with the pickle-making as shown below:

“Though Mammachi had conical corneas and was already practically blind, Pappachi would not help her with the pickle-making because he did not consider pickle-making a suitable job for a high-ranking ex-Government official.”(2018:67)

Besides that, he also shows his jealousy due to Mammachi’s success as described below:

“He had always been a jealous man, so he greatly resented the attention his wife was suddenly getting.”(2018:67)

Since he feels superior towards his wife, he is frequently jealous. On another occasion he even tries to kill his wife potential:

“It was during those few months they spent in Vienna that Mammachi took her first lessons on the violin. The lessons were abruptly discontinued when Mammachi’s teacher Launsky-Tieffenthal made the mistake of telling Pappachi that his wife was exceptionally talented in his opinion, potentially concert class.” (2018:71)

In that event, it clearly shows his way of killing Mammachi’s potential which in this case, is a way to silence her under his domination as a male. Pappachi’s notion of

silencing his wife even continued by breaking Mammachi's violin bow and throwing it into the river. To legitimate his domination, he beats his wife with a brass flower vase every night as seen in the below's quotation:

"Every night he beat her with a brass flower vase. The beatings weren't new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place. One night Pappachi broke the bow of Mammachi's violin and threw it in the river". (2018:67)

Chacko, her son, is the second male character who takes the role as the instrument of patriarchy domination towards Mammachi within the novel. After defending his mother from his father's beating as seen down below:

"A week after he arrived he found Pappachi beating Mammachi in the study. Chacko strode into the room, caught Pappachi's vase-hand, and twisted it around his back. "I never want this to happen again," he told his father. "Ever." (2018:68)

After that event, Mammachi gave all her feelings and burden to Chacko and because of that too, Chacko could easily take over the pickle factory and named it "Paradise Pickles" and made her only a passive partner to further show that only male members of the family having right and ability in controlling capital production instead of just letting Mammachi to control it herself. Even though he is a Marxist, he follows phallogocentric tradition in dominating old mother, which sounds paradoxical.

#### *b. Internalized Patriarchy in The Self of Mammachi*

As a mother, she loves her son more than Ammu as a daughter. At the funeral of Sophie Mol, English daughter of Chacko, she is fully in grief.

"her tears tricked down from behind them and trembled along her jaw like raindrops on the edge of a roof. She looked small in her crisp off-white sari. Chacko was Mammachi's only son. Her grief grieved her. He devastated her" (2018:7).

Instead of giving the same love to both of her children, she is way harsher towards her only daughter, Ammu. When Ammu came back to her parents' house in Ayemenem after her divorce, she was not welcomed both by her father and mother. It is different when the whole family went to the airport to welcome Margaret Kochamma, the ex-wife of Chacko, and Sophie Mol (the daughter of Chacko) very excitedly with a couple of preparations as if there is no problematic perception towards their divorcement as what is perceived to Ammu as a female.

## 2. Ammu

### a. Double Colonialism Towards Ammu

To begin with, Ammu is the most subjugated female character in the novel. Growing up in a strict family, Ammu faces domestic violence from her father while her mother, Mammachi, remains silent. Ammu's family directly reflects how society confines girls to access better education as seen below:

"Pappachi insisted that a college education was an unnecessary expense for a girl. So Ammu had no choice but to leave Delhi to move with them. There was very little for a young girl to do in Ayemenem other than to wait for marriage proposals while she helped her mother with the housework." (2018:54)

While Ammu is not supported with higher education, Chacko even makes it to Oxford University. Even though Pappachi is an intellectual also a philanthropist, he still holds the old tradition that girls do not need education. Since she is living desperately and her dreams as a daughter are silenced, Ammu dreams to leave Ayemenem as a way of escapism. As an effort, Ammu marries her own chosen Hinduism man so that she will never go back to her parent's house as seen below:

"Ammu didn't pretend to be in love with him. She just weighed the odds and accepted. She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem."(2018:55)

To Ammu, with her inability to determine her own life, marrying any man will liberate her from her parental overcontrol. For women in a phallogocentric society, marrying any man can gradually free them even though, in general, they do not have the right to choose their option and that is why, Ammu is disliked as she is considered to be against family and social custom. Moreover, it is because Baba, her husband, is not a Syrian Christian but embraces Hinduism. However, marriage in fact can not fully liberate her from marginalization but drag her into another oppressor since her husband turns out to be alcoholic and abusive (2018:56). Not only abusive, her husband even once takes the chance to trade her to his boss, Mr. Hollick, to gain his work back as portrayed below:

"Over coffee Mr. Hollick proposed that Baba go away for a while. For a holiday. To a clinic perhaps, for treatment. For as long as it took him to get better. And for the period of time that he was away, Mr. Hollick suggested that Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be 'looked after.'"(2018:59)

Mr. Hollick as Baba's boss also takes a role as a colonialist in the colonized Kerala society makes him having bigger power. After the birth of her two twin children and



finds out that her husband often abuses them, Ammu leaves him and comes back unwelcomed to Ayemenem without any dreams as what is seen below:

“When his bouts of violence began to include the children, and the war with Pakistan began, Ammu left her husband and returned, unwelcomed, to her parents in Ayemenem. To everything that she had fled from only a few years ago. Except that now she had two young children. And no more dreams.”(2018:60)

Ammu as a woman does not have many choices after cutting off from marriage institution since her existence is only counted from the man who marries her. Baby Kochamma for instance considers Rahel and Estha as wretched fatherless children (2018:64) and thinks that Ammu has no right to stay in Ayemenem since she is a divorcee of her own chosen man. to Baby Kochamma, such a woman does not belong anywhere. When arrived in Ayemenem, Pappachi himself does not show sympathy, instead as what is shown in the following part:

“Pappachi would not believe her story-not because he thought well of her husband, but simply because he didn’t believe that an Englishman, any Englishman, would covet another man’s wife.” (2018:60)

Ammu on the very base layer does not have any political and conceptual language to speak up about this situation to her father moreover to colonialist that controls her husband. The other male character that oppresses Ammu is Chacko. as explained before, Chacko is Mammachi’s pride and he also has power to oppress Ammu as described as follow:

“Though Ammu did as much work in the factory as Chacko, whenever he was dealing with food inspectors or sanitary engineers, he always referred to it as my Factory, my pineapples, my pickles. Legally this was the case, because Ammu as a daughter had no claim to the property.” (2018:82)

Ammu does the works as much as Chacko does but does not equal right as Chacko has to claim the factory. Chacko even controls every production instruments including naming the factory as “Paradise Pickles and Preserves” as his form of strong domination. This is because Ammu as a daughter has no right in claiming ownership of property. Chacko also tells Rahel and Estha that Ammu has no Locust Stand I-social status (2018: 82).

With her status as a mother and divorced widower who owns less, Ammu and her sincere feeling towards Velutha becomes a glimpse of hope that she still owns but is reproached by the world she gives wry look into and making her even marginalized. The

day when Ammu wants to defend Velutha towards murder and rape accusation accused to him at the police station, her witness is unheard like below:

“He stared at Ammu’s breasts as he spoke. He said the police knew all they needed to know and that the Kottayam Police didn’t take statements from veshyas or their illegitimate children. Ammu she said she’d see about that. Inspector Thomas Mathew came around his desk and approached Ammu with his baton. ‘If I were you’ he said, ‘I’d go home quietly.’ Then he tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently tap tap. As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing out the ones that he wanted to pack and deliver.” (2018:10)

At the police station, she is seen as veshya which means prostitute regarding her relationship with Velutha. Ammu as subaltern is unheard and even silenced by the police as an agent of the social aspect. Police act like they rule the Law of Love. Moreover, Velutha is also a subalternized Paravan due to his caste. That is why their relationship has even no place at all.

As a form of inequity, Chacko who was divorced from Margaret Kochamma takes over the factory and often “sleeps” with the labor women which is described below from the perspective of Mammachi and Baby Kochamma:

“When Baby Kochamma brought up the subject, Mammachi became tense and tight-lipped. ‘He can’t help having a Man’s Needs,’ she said primly. Surprisingly, Baby Kochamma accepted this explanation, and the enigmatic, secretly thrilling notion of Men’s Needs gained implicit sanction in the Ayemenem House. Neither Mammachi nor Baby Kochamma saw any contradiction between Chacko’s Marxist mind and feudal libido. They only worried about the Naxalites, who had been known to force men from God Families to marry servants girls whom they had made pregnant.” (2018: 235)

Both Mammachi and Baby Kochamma do not problematize his deed except a channeling of his “Mans Need” rather than a contradictive act regarding Chacko’s claim as Marxist. Mammachi even facilitates his activity by making different doors and giving those women incentives as if they are whores that she can tolerate as an act of giving charity due to her status as a generous Syrian Christian. After being locked in a room when her love affair with Velutha is found, she is also casted away and lives alone in a lodge to finally die alone in 31. At her funeral, the church refuses to bury her corpse. Ammu symbolizes her life tragic end as subaltern woman in the world where she successfully claims her voice though fails to be heard.

### *b. Ammu's Resistance*

As the most subjugated character and repressed in many layers, Ammu is not fully represented as a subaltern without resistance at all. Ammu's agency is shown mainly through the narrator's voices and the character herself in several chances. Unlike Mammachi, Ammu still claims her criticism to articulate even though not heard and approved.

Since she is used to her father's torment since younger, Ammu grows stubborn in herself like shown below:

"...as she grew older, Ammu learned to live with his cold, calculating cruelty. She developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in Someone Small who has been bullied all their lives by Someone Big." (2018:255)

She places herself as Someone Small frequently subjugated by casteism in the hegemonic society they belong. Ammu, even though is placed as Someone Small, still has consciousness to show her displeasure to Someone Big domination. In the scene when they were trapped between Marxist march, Chacko thanked the man who hit their Plymouth and sarcastically responded by Ammu as seen below:

"Another balled first slammed down on it, and the bonnet closed. Chacko rolled down his window and called out to the man who had done it.

'Thank, Keto!' he said. 'Valarey thanks!'

'Don't be so ingratiating, Comrade,' Ammu said. 'It was an accident. He didn't really mean to help. How much could he possibly know that in this old car there beats a truly Marxist heart?'" (2018: 100)

In the above scene, Ammu enjoyed her sarcasm on Chacko which she labeled "Oxford avatar of the old Zamindar-landlord forcing his attention on women who depended on him for their livelihood" (2018: 93). Ammu realized Chacko's actions only benefited female factory workers by claiming himself as Marxist and educating them about class and workers' rights but never missed flirting with them a lot. Ammu became the only family member who blatantly disliked Chacko's relationship with the workers-which Mammachi and Baby Kochamma normalized.

When Mammachi often claimed Chacko's probability as smartest man in India in a sense that an Oxford lecturer once praised him as brilliant and deserved to be prime minister, Ammu responded in sarcastic laughter as what is seen below:

"Mammachi loved to tell the story (Chacko's story) of how one of the dons at Oxford had said that in his opinion, Chacko was brilliant, and made of prime ministerial material. To this Ammu always said 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' like people in the comics. She said:...And, most important of all:

(d) All Indian mothers are obsessed with their sons and therefore judge their abilities poorly."(2018:80)

In the above quotation, it is clearly shown that Ammu acts openly to the system that oppresses women around her. When she mentioned, "All Indian mothers are obsessed with their sons and are poor judges of their abilities" she directly satirized Mammachi's overpride to Chacko.

The other resisting notion of Ammu is also shown by her option to marry her own chosen man instead of accepting arranged marriage that Indian families normally do. It also can be considered as a transgression to social order. It is no other than a way to escape Ayemenem as described below:

"Ammu grew desperate. All-day she dreamed of escaping from Ayemenem and the clutches of her ill-tempered father and bitter, long-suffering mother. She hatched several wretched plans. Eventually, one worked. Pappachi agreed to let her spend summer with a distant aunt who lived in Calcutta." (2018:54)

Different from Mammachi who did not have any resolution to escape from Pappachi's violence, Ammu planned to liberate herself. Marrying any man for her was her last option to set free from her parents' domination. However, marriage could not fully save her since her husband was an abusive and alcoholic man. Marrying and dreaming of escape from Ayemenem was her way to resonate her voice.

In several parts, Ammu is also described by the narrator to have the consciousness that as a woman, she has no plenty choices as shown under quotation:

"...Ammu was considering reverting to her maiden name, though she said that choosing between her husband's name and her father's name didn't give a woman much of a choice." (2018:51)

So far, Ammu can be considered to be the only subaltern women character who realizes the oppressive system, does something to avoid it even though mostly fails.

### 3. Baby Kochamma

#### a. Double Colonialism Towards Baby Kochamma

Baby Kochamma fell in love with an Irish Roman Catholic priest named Father Mulligan who was delegated to stay in Kerala for a year. He was an orientalist that his purpose was to learn Hindu scriptures so he could give a smart rebuttal to them. As a woman in the colonized era, Baby Kochamma did not have many choices including to confess her feeling as seen below:

“Displaying a stubborn single-mindedness (which in a young girl those days was considered as bad as a physical deformity-harelip perhaps, or a clubfoot), Baby Kochamma defied her father’s wishes and became Roman Catholic.”(2018:35)

As the victim of patriarchy, her love for Father Mulligan was not seriously considered due to her inferior position of a colonized race. Other than that, she was a daughter with limited options. Despite subtle refusal from Father Mulligan, baby Kochamma did not give up to take more ways to gain Father Mulligan’s heart. However, Baby Kochamma still did not succeed to win his heart as he left her with her “aching heart on a leash, bumping behind him, lurching over leaves and small stones. Bruised and almost broken” (2018:34).

#### *b. Internalized Patriarchy and Oppression in The Self of Baby Kochamma*

Father Mulligan and remains unmarried till the end of her life. Although it is a way to show her loyalty to her desired love, she also embraces society’s attitude to other-ing divorced women and grows self-piety to her own self. It is coming from her perception that man-less women have no place in Indian society as described in the following quotation:

“Baby Kochamma herself felt she had graciously accepted. The fate of the wretched Man-less woman. The sad, Father Muliigan-less Baby Kochamma.” (2018:64)

To project her self-pity and anger that she cannot freely express, she drops it to Ammu and her children that she does not like seeing them happy because Ammu, for her, does not belong anywhere as reflected below:

“As for a divorced daughter-according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma’s outrage.” (2018: 65)

The next finding is internalizing oppression in Baby Kochamma, represented by her submission to colonialism, which is shown by her excessive admiration for English-related things and refusal to social changes threats derived from the lower caste movement. Firstly, Baby Kochamma indeed has a duty to discipline Rahel and Estha as shown in the below quotation:

“That whole week Baby Kochamma eavesdropped relentlessly on the twins’ private conversations, and whenever she caught them speaking in Malayalam, she lived a small fine which was deducted at source. From their pocket money, she made them write lines- ‘impositions’ she called them- I will always speak in English, I will always speak in English. A hundred times each.” (2018:50)

As a victim of colonialism, Baby Kochamma brings an inferiority complex even until the postcolonial condition.

The God of Small Things takes place in the state of Kerala, India with its dynamic socio-cultural and various political streams. Its history is enriched by religious diversity from Hindu, Christian to Islam also with the colonialization of Portuguese and England. Syrian Christian embraced by the Ayemenem family is practiced by 20% amongst people in Kerala. Besides that, the state also becomes the place where Communism fertilized its ideology and gained the electoral win. (Budianta, 2018:477). In the novel itself, the Ayemenem family practices Syrian Christian which in its first arrival offered egalitarianism to the Paravan caste but in practicality, their offer did not fully liberate them from casteism. They had to pray in their own church. In the story itself, the lower caste or The Small Things or The Untouchable are represented by Vellya Paapen who, in the past, still faced the back-walking days to erase their footprints so the Brahmins would not step on theirs. Arundhati Roy described them as “the God of Loss. The God of Small Things. He left no footprints in the sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors.” (2018: 373) to tell that the Untouchable has no history and their names are erased. Vellya Paapen’s son, Velutha, represents progressive Paravan who desires to change their class and the class system that otherized them for centuries by joining with the Naxals. He is then silenced and even killed for the mistakes he did not even do.

The marginality theme of the novel is strengthened with the postcolonial issue represented by Sophie Mol, daughter of Chacko and his English ex-wife, Margaret Kochamma. Sophie Mol becomes the family pride which is basically anglophiles. Sophie Mol’s existence marginalizes Rahel and Estha who were born as Hindu-Hybrid (symbol of Colonized). Postcolonial practice is also shown by Baby Kochamma with no reluctant punishing Rahel and Estha anytime she finds out them speaking Malayalam and not in English. Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma’s arrival in the novel is symbolized as Play refers to the family's exaggerated admiration for the English who colonized them. As the

central issue of this paper, three main female characters' representation is traced amidst patriarchal and postcolonial culture.

### *1. Women Characters as Subaltern*

The main female characters are represented in Mammachi, Ammu, and Baby Kochamma. The first one is Mammachi. As a wife, she is oppressed by her husband by beating her with a brass vase but stoically does not complain. Mammachi started her own pickles and jam business from the kitchen and worked every process alone. Watching Mammachi reach significant success and attention, Pappachi grew jealous and beats her instead. By other time, when Mammachi is recognized for having talent as a concert violinist, he broke her bow and threw it into the river.

The author portrays how patriarchy subjugates women domestically and privately. In the domestic area, Pappachi considered himself as high-rank official worker that it was improper for him to do what Mammachi usually did with her jams and pickles. When Mammachi's business gained more praise, he hated her even more. Private patriarchy was shown when Pappachi tried to kill her potential in playing the violin. Pappachi would like to show his domination as a male in controlling what women can and cannot do, what women can have and cannot have.

As repressed a woman, Mammachi is represented as silent subaltern with no opposition to gender-based violence she faced. It is due to internalized patriarchy within herself that silenced her. She is no other than the instrument of patriarchy and self oppressor. She does not only submit herself to patriarchy but considers it as ideal standard descended from generation to generation. Bartky in Scholz (2010) argues that mystification makes women accept stereotyped contributions that they give in community and somehow believe they have no par than men. the aftermath of mystification also creates male superiority so that women just accept it.

Even though both of her children are divorcees, Mammachi only tyrannizes Ammu and accepts the manipulative self of Chacko. When Chacko was divorced from Margaret Kochamma, she welcomed him and moved her submission to Chacko after saving her from Pappachi's beats even though it was only form of Chacko's self claim to be dominant at their house. After knowing Chacko's liaison with women workers, Mammachi allows it as Chacko's "Man's Need" and makes a separate door for Chacko and the workers. She even gives them "incentive" as an excuse that she is helping them. Chacko also contributes as an instrument of patriarchy. Her oppression to Mammachi can be seen through her decision to take over the factory and make Mammachi only a passive partner. Mammachi is an inferior woman in colonized patriarchal society and, though the nation has gained its independence, colonialism traces still stay longer. As

subaltern, Mammachi is mentally oppressed through internalized patriarchy that she accepts.

Ammu is the most subjugated subaltern in the novel. She is repressed for her gender and race which confront her with double colonialism. As subaltern, she is oppressed by dominant group, neglected from social aspects due to her status as divorced woman and her inter-caste relationship with Velutha. Not only that, she does not acquire justice from her witness, to be called as veshyas (prostitute) and is outcasted from her house. Layered oppressions that she faces make her *Small Things* and suffer. Ammu as the Other, dies in young age, alone and rejected by the church. Ammu had been oppressed by her father since she was little together with Mammachi who was stoically silent without any resistance. Although Pappachi is a highly educated intellectual, he did not want to spend his money for useless expenses for Ammu's education meanwhile Chacko as son even made it to Oxford University. When becoming wife of Baba, she is also suffered with his alcoholic and abusive behaviors and at a time, tried to trade Ammu with his boss, Mr. Hollick. It is evident of Ammu as an indigenous woman subjugated by English man due to her inferior race and being objectified merely as bargaining object. If in the first place marriage is her only way to escape Ayemenem, fate offers her differently and only drags her from one dominant to another dominant.

After her homecoming to Ayemenem, she is unwelcomed by her family. Her father, Pappachi, does not believe that an English man will ever want an Indian woman like her. It subalternizes her since as an indigenous woman, Ammu has no ears that listen to her moreover from the colonialist. Despite she works as hard as Chacko, she will never have right to claim property ownership. Her love affair with Velutha is also considered to be contempt for her caste and the Love Law-that controls who to love, how to and how much. Meanwhile Chacko as man is privileged and his liaison with many female workers at the factory does not receive any opposition moreover, rejection from the family members he dominates. Ammu dies in the age of 31-not old, not young, but a viable, die-able age.

The next subalternized woman character is Baby Kochamma. She falls in love with Irish Roman Catholic priest, Father Mulligan. In order to win his heart, she does many efforts to grab his attention. She finally converts to Roman Catholicism and placed in the monastery in Madras. However, till the end of her life, Father Mulligan is still out of her reach and decides to be unmarried. As colonized woman from inferior race, her feeling is not accounted since she has no status as subject to confess or even to be worthy of loved by superior raced man like Father Mulligan. Spivak contemplation on native women as subaltern as explained in *Nimmi* (2016:25) argues that women lie within the structures of patriarchy and colonialism that they cannot articulate and instead, are spoken for. As colonized woman, Baby Kochamma cannot love the colonialist and



silence herself by not getting married her whole life. Despite her tragic end, Baby Kochamma already accepted her fate as wretched manless woman. The sad Father Mulligan-less Baby Kochamma. Different from Ammu who tends to marry her chosen man to be married with, Baby Kochamma chooses to be given up under the discourse. During colonial era, transgressing the old tradition and religion that she embraces moreover defying parents will by converting faith for the sake of love is not a small deal. Her failure has brought long grief to her. She even projects her hatred and jealousy to Ammu for being rebellious towards the fate that she has sadly embraced.

Her inferiority becomes more complex as the issue of postcolonial appear in novel. not because she suffers under this condition but because she, as subaltern also submits herself in the form of mentally internalizing it both by her thoughts and acts. First, Baby Kochamma will punish anytime she eavesdrops them speaking in Malayalam instead of English and orders them to write I will speak English a hundred times. Her admiration to Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma comes from her inferior mentality about the race she belongs which the novel is symbolized "the Sweeper Class. Second, she also internalizes patriarchy as old tradition to hold shown by her subjection to Chacko. she also has role as instrument of patriarchy to subjugate Ammu and the other Untouchable characters whom she considers small.

## *2. Subaltern Women Voice*

Despite subalternity within the three characters, Roy represents her characters with agency and choices. Roy represents Mammachi as a woman with complex personal stances. She is represented to resist traditional gender roles by working which indicates her agency but on the other side, she is also becoming a self-oppressor and somehow internalizing the patriarchal values and casteism in her mentality. For example, her pickles and jam factory can be an instance of her emancipation despite the patriarchal perspective of Keralite society towards the working wives. Roy also represents her as a generous Syrian Christian to Untouchables like Velutha and Vellya Paapen by realizing Velutha's skill. Unfortunately, it only occurs on the surface because the very base of her is oppressive to inferior people. Instead of goes against hierarchal system, she chooses to maintain it. Her real appeal was revealed after knowing the news of inter-caste affair of Ammu and Velutha from Vellya Paapen. She hysterically screams and curses the words never spoken by her before and swears him "drunken Paravan liar". It clearly shows how firm she holds the caste system despite her Christianity that offered equality to lower caste people at the beginning. It indicates Mammachi's options and choices that she can still actually has choice despite her subalternity.

The second subjugated character, Ammu, is also represented as subaltern with loud resistance that the other women characters do not choose to do. As *Small Things*

in the novel, Ammu grows anger on herself for every kind of injustice that she faces. Roy, through the character of Ammu tells her critics to patriarchy and hegemonical social strata of Keralite society whether through the character's voices or dialogues with other characters. The voice of rejection in Ammu is derived as a form of resistance which under double colonialism discourse is "unthinkable". Her notion of consciousness and resistance can be seen from when she grows to understand her father's temper and "long-suffering" mother thus, she consciously realizes what truly happens. Her bravery to marry her own chosen man (Baba) to escape Ayemenem is also uneasy to be done by women in arranged-marriage customed tradition. Additionally, Ammu is the only family member who acts openly and becomes critical to Pappachi's tyranny and excessive admiration to white people by clinching her father's title as "shit-wiper". Not only to Pappachi, she also becomes critical to Chacko's liaison with women workers at factory, insinuating him for his Marxism claim and often becomes straightforward to respond Chako's words when they happen to be contradictive with Chacko's actual behaviors.

Another thing that differentiates Ammu from her mother and aunt is her way of seeing Velutha as a man despite his social background. That she loves him unconditionally is courageousness to violate Love Law and exertion to reclaim her body authority. The day in Marxist march when Rahel says she sees Velutha among the crowds, Ammu really hopes that inside himself, Velutha really nourishes rage towards the world that seems against Small People like them. Their inter-caste affair is resistance to inequity and social greed. Although they are silenced, they resonate the voices of the unheard in loudly rebellious way. The muted voices that already speaks for years but remain insignificant without "footprints in sand, no ripples in water, no image in mirrors."

The last character, Baby Kochamma with her own way of transgressing traditional boundaries of Love Laws by loving Father Mulligan cannot be underestimated. In spite of her antagonistic character, Roy represents her with her own agency and choice for this matter. She chooses to love Father Mulligan even after his death, converts her faith for her desired love, and is responsible for the tragic aftermath of her manipulation during the Ammu and Velutha's conflict. It is quite complicated to determine her subalternity yet the fact that her life is tragic with one starting point mutes her to achieve position as a subject in the matter of winning her life's love.

Linear to Spivak's deliberation in putting Third World women into account as she filled the gap that is rarely included by universal feminism discourse, Arundhati Roy as a feminist from a postcolonial nation presents women in her characters with various depictions of oppression and decisions they made. She blatantly lifts up marginal women issue from ex-colonial India, who rarely discussed in history by giving them voices in the notion of agency and choices also spirit to resist. Although she does not

bring them to subject position, it is her way to convey her critics and resistance to patriarchal and oppressive society which not only subalternised people by race and class but also by gender.

In comparison with previous findings explained in chapter two, the research by Suciati in 2014 finds out the dualism condition of postcolonial India which did not completely explain social and individual phenomenons in postcolonial nation of India more specifically to individuals freedom of choices and determinations. If the previous research concluded East and West dichotomy (in the context of orientalism) inside the novel is coming together and creates dualism community, this research findings find out that despite its dualism condition, its dichotomy affects individuals' mentality and liberation especially on subaltern women. The next is by Hariati (2000) whose findings show that the anglophiles on the novel which consists of the Ayemenem family is offered with hybridization however the ex-colonial generations who fall in dilemmatic grey area still striving to find their root identity while being active and dynamic in living their life. Suciati (2014) and Harinati (2000) findings give clue that the characters in the novel are subaltern in general as their identity is erased and forced to see themselves through eurocentric looking glass. This conclusion is in line with Makalesi (2019) findings that all of the inhabitants of Ayemenem are subaltern as they are racially oppressed. Beside of that, he also pictures the face of the Untouchable (Paravan caste) as subalternized ones not only because they are Indians but also because they are trapped under caste system which is powered by their own people. Lastly, his findings also mention the notion of subordinated women as a group of subaltern. However, this research findings in detail, discusses subaltern women not only as a group but to examine each individual's oppression and their own way of facing it. Arundhati Roy as the female author depicts them as complex characters that each individual can be different in terms of perception and way of resist the oppression. As Makalesi (2019) does not talk about Roy's role in representing women characters, this research invents her role as non-elite from ex-colonized Kerala who, though unheard, sneaks her own voices through the female characters' agency.