Tribhuvan University

Estrangement from the Centre: A Postcolonial Gothic Reading of *The God of Small Things*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

for the Degree of M. Phil. of Arts in English

By

Kapil Baral

Central Department of English (TU)

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

November 2011

Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled "Estrangement from the Centre: A Postcolonial Gothic Reading of *The God of Small Things"* by Kapil Baral has been completed under my supervision. I recommend it for acceptance and examination.

Supervisor:

Dr. Arun Gupta

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Estrangement from the Centre: A Postcolonial Gothic Reading of *The God of Small Things"* submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Kapil Baral has been approved by the under designed members of the research committee.

Research Committee Members:

……..……

Internal Examiner

……

External Examiner

……..

Head

Central Department of English T. U.

Kathmandu, Kirtipur

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Arun Gupta for providing scholarly suggestions and invaluable guidance, without whose companionship and supervision this present research work would never come to this form. I have no words to express my gratitude for him.

I express my sincere gratitude to former M. Phil. Coordinators Dr. Birendra Pandey, and Dr. Sanjeev Uprety. They have always remained a great source of guidance by sharing ideas and materials in relation to this research work.

Similarly, I remain owed to Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, Dr. Ammaraj Joshi, Head of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Dr. Ananda Sharma, Dr. Anirudra Thapa and Dr. Shiva Rijal for sharing their profound ideas and books related to the present dissertation.

Similarly, I thank Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota and Rajan Gautam for their kind support in the preparation of this dissertation. I am very much grateful to Laxmi, my wife and lovely daughter Liza, without whose support this research would have been impossible.

Last but not the least, I am very much grateful and indebted to my maternal grandmother, my parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and other relatives who helped me directly or indirectly in achieving this academic success.

Kapil Baral

ABSTRACT

The present dissertation seeks to read the novel *The God of Small Things* from the critical perspective of gothicism. The narrative that is woven with gothic elements, such as haunted house, obsession for something uncanny and fearful delineation of the events has the subversive potentiality. The gothic is located in the familial house, gender and caste relationship, political situation and the everyday interactions amongst family members. Seen from the lens of gothicism, the present research argues that gothic turns out to be strategic trope in order to foreground the signs of colonialism and the alienation and estrangement of the people from the establishment. Overwhelmed by colonial legacy, the Kerala government founded on communism fails to secure freedom and pursuit of happiness for which native people have fought so far. The communism practiced in Kerala cannot resolve the problem of caste system. Rather communist leader like Comrade Pillai stretches the discourse of caste in order to exploit the untouchables like Velutha and tightens bond with Baby Kochamma, the traditional elitist woman, to win the consent of the upper class and caste. Pappachi's inability to gain the public honour of the British administration is metaphorically extended to the moth, which is then cast into the intimate sphere to bring about destruction to Rahel and Estha. Pappachi's moth becomes a family curse that visits itself upon each subsequent generation of the family. His failure to obtain recognition shadows the entire novel and shows how the postcolonial rulers attempt to imitate the colonial policy. Therefore, gothicism has deliberately been employed to highlight the malfunction of communism to address the vexed issues related to caste and gender. Besides, gothic narrative subverts the teleology of the grand narrative of colonialism/nationalism and native people's traditional values and belief-system regarding self and family.

Table of Contents

Chapter-I: Introduction: Gothicism as Subversive Trope

The present research seeks to study Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* to show the continuing countervailing impacts of colonialism and how Roy highlights them through the devise of gothic elements. Setting against the backdrop of the general values of Kerala life, Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* focuses primarily on the problems faced by the twins Rahel and Estha, their mother Ammu and her family including Velutha. Almost all the major characters of the novel feel the pain of loneliness in their own home/land leading to the state of estrangement and unhomeliness. Colonial legacy becomes the unavoidable element for the alienation and estrangement. Because of their own alienated and estranged self, the characters in the novel are forced to implicate in violent activities. Such estrangement and violence in the lives of the characters is deeply rooted in the continuing impacts of colonialism; an impact that is manifested in social and familial disorder and gets reflected through gothic incidents in the novel.

The term 'gothic' initially received derogative prerogative as post-Roman barbarism in order to highlight the term classical. The underlying motif of devising the prose of otherness to interpret the gothicism is to upstage classical Christian English tradition founded on the concepts like orderly, simple, pure, modern, civilized, elegant, and composition of the cosmopolitan gentry of Europe. But, the gothic has been defined as the manifestation of uncanny, chaotic, convoluted, uncivilized, and barbaric. The English critics witness gothic as a powerful trope to underrate the prevailing status quo. In this regard writes Ronald Paulson, "The Gothic . . . serve[d] as a metaphor with which some contemporaries in England tried to come to terms with what was happening across

the Channel in the 1790s"(534). In other words, they see French Revolution as the return of the uncanny as their predecessors have seen such terror in Roman Empire.

As I have noted above the seed of subversion underlay in gothicism can be stretched to the study of postcolonial texts. The postcolonial writers employ gothic structure in order to subvert the colonial definition about history and geography in order to reengage in the native history from nativist perspective. In fact, gothicism disrupts historical concerns of colonialism in a geographic locality elsewhere, dwells in the historical past, and identifies the presence of the past in the present. For example, Markman Ellis argues that "the aura of dark irrationality and pleasurable terror enveloping gothic fiction offers a critique of the enlightenment construction of history as a linear account"(11) of the progress of Western civilization.

Subversion lies in the process of unmasking the myth of linearity and barbarism fabricated throughout colonial era in order to subjugate colonized people. The postcolonial writers use gothic narrative mode in order to trace critical dents in the relationship between the colonial era and the present moment of complicated postcoloniality as one that is haunted by the specter of the colonial past. Depicting the gothic, postcolonial fiction attempts to problematize the lingering historical and political conditionality of colonialism in terms of a European narrative mode. Postcolonial gothic inquires into the uncanny relationships between colonial narratives of conquest and unspeakable violence, public history and intimate narratives, and the persistence of nostalgia for nation or homeland in the face of the failure of such projects. Postcolonial writers devise gothic as a subversive trope to foreground the colonial legacy stretched to

the postcolonial nations. Ironically postcolonial people have revolted against colonialism in order to remain free from colonial domination and its discourses.

Roy uses gothic as a trope so that she can resist the colonial version of progress, development, and other epithets. Although she is an Indian writer, she raises the problems prevalent in one of the regions of India. As a regionalist writer, she entails the problematic situation of Kerala strongly imbibed the colonial legacy. By using gothic elements to weave the plots of the novel is not to arouse mere suspense and horror. But by gothic elements she makes critique of sociopolitical situation of Kerala degenerated everyday because of the ruling elitist class of people. The elitist class that rules the State under the theoretical apron of communism seems to be more degraded than that of the colonial rulers. The present paper basically discusses, by using gothicism, the author not only foregrounds the return of colonial uncanny but also uses as a subversive trope against the establishment which remains core mechanism to further debase and degrade the socio-politico-economical condition of Kerala. Separate chapters have been made to study the novel *The God of Small Things* from gothic perspective. Gothicism helps cogitate on the novel replete with estrangement and alienation within and without among people ensued by debased socio-political situation caused by the rulers who have stretched colonial discourses to the postcolonial Kerala.

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* documents debased post independent Indian society in which social justice becomes chimera for the ordinary citizen like Velutha. Once fully colonized, the legacy of colonial period does not die away with the country's independent movement in 1947. The continuing impacts of colonialism is manifested in social and familial disorder as shown in the novel under

analysis and the characters suffer the pain of violence and feel the sense of alienation. Colonial impact keeps on breathing, walking among Indian people, and it breaches their social relations with each other as reflected by the novel. The experience of British colonization, like a phantom, haunts India and its people in many aspects. It is being internalized as a part of Indian's social-political reality, to be tolerated, endured and lived with. Roy achieved a grand success as a writer from the debut postcolonial novel *The God of Small Things*. The creation of the novel was an unusual experience and a revolutionary experiment in postcolonial literature. Trained as an architect, "She structured her book more like a building than a narrative" (Fields-Meyer and Fernandez 108). The brief synopsis of the novel is as follows.

As a postcolonial novel, it is based on the Indian society with its caste, culture and politics. Set in a small village called Ayemenem in the southwestern Indian state of Kerala, where Roy was raised, *The God of Small Things* tells a story about the turmoil within a local family, the Ipe family that resulted in its decline and eventual disintegration. The decline of the family lies in the continuing impacts of colonialism in the once colonized Indian society. Elder generations in the Ipe family used to take great pride in its family history in which there was the glory of the patriarch's blessing given to Reverend E. John Ipe as a little boy. Since that, John Ipe, who became a Syrian Christian priest, had been well known as "Punnyan Kunju- Little Blessed One" (23), and the family established its reputation and significance in Ayemenem.

Conversion to Christianity is an example of the colonial impact in India. John Ipe's daughter Baby Kochamma, having a crush on her father's good friend, father Mulligan, in her teenage, entered a convent in hopes of being close to him. The one-sided

infatuation received no approval and even response. Baby Kochamma comes back to the family and lives on the perpetual memory of the unrequited love throughout her life. Baby Kochamma's infatuation for Father Mulligan is similar to the fascination of the Indian people for the western land and its achievement. Colonized people consider the Westerners as civilized, educated, modern etc. British people are superior to the Indians so they imitate the British way of life, and even government imitates the projects to be launched in the country. Pappachi, Baby Kochamma's brother, moving to Ayemenem after his retirement from the respected job as "an Imperial Entomologist" (48) after India's independence, infuriates at the fact that the new specie of moth he has discovered twelve years ago is named after someone else. The British authority does not accept that an Indian could have such invention. This exemplifies arrogance and vain attempt of colonizers to degrade the native people like Pappachi.

Being frustrated by the colonial authority, Pappachi channelizes his frustration and anger by inflicting domestic violence upon his wife Mammachi and daughter Ammu. Meanwhile, his patriarchal authority and sense of superiority is challenged by Mammachi's mounting success of pickle business, where as another patriarchal agent, his son Chacko, gets admitted to Oxford, where he becomes a self-conceited "Rhodes Scholar" (232) and then is married to a Café waitress called Margaret. Soon after the birth of their daughter Sophie Mol they divorce. Margaret has her second marriage with Joe, the man she has met when she becomes pregnant. Chacko, a single man without job, a home and money in England, returns to Ayemenem to take over his mother's profitable pickle factory. However, his management of the business turned out to be a failure that he refuses to admit. His sister Ammu, a witness and also a victim suffering Pappachi's

domestic violence and persistent neglect, gets married with a Calcutta man working in a tea estate in haste in order to flee from "her ill-tempered father and bitter long-suffering mother" (39).

Unfortunately, she finds that her husband "a full-blown alcoholic" (40) plans to offer his wife to the English manager Mr. Hollick, in exchange for his job. Ammu deserts him and returns to Ayemenem with her seven-year-old twins, Estha and Rahel. There in Ayemenem she falls in love with an untouchable worker named Velutha, the son of Vellya Pappen. Estha and Rahel love Velutha, too. They visit him during the day, whereas their mother visits him at night in secret. Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol visit Ayemenem as a healing tour after Joe's death in a car accident. The Ipe family present an extravagant welcome home reception. In this occasion, the twins feel that Sophie Mol draws the family attention away from them, and they begin to have the doubt about Ammu's love for them. Sophie Mol's family attention reflects the Indian or colonized psyche that consecrates the colonial image to the level of divine image.

In short, it exemplifies the issue of colonial impact in the life of the people of colonized nation. Chacko is fond of Margaret simply because she is white woman and he could prove his superiority in the Indian society by marrying her. He wants to reunite with her for the same reason. The twins quit the house to test Ammu's love. Sophie Mol, who insists on going with them as an expression of her friendship with them, drowns as they try to cross the Meenachal River. In the meantime, Vellya Pappen comes to the Ayemenem house to report his son's illicit love-affair with Ammu. Baby Kochamma takes advantage of Mammachi's fury at Ammu's violation of the traditional social norm-the Love Laws. Her mistake, for them, becomes her relationship with the untouchable,

which becomes deeply rooted even after communist government in Kerala. Chacko's grief for Sophie Mol's death points out fault in Ammu as the person to blame and is responsible for what has happened.

After Baby Kochamma and Inspector Thomas Mathew work together and charge Velutha with the crime of abduction. Then after, harsh punishment is meted upon him up to his death. Ammu, who dies her death in the hotel, is cast out from family and society. The family sends Estha in Calcutta to live with his father. He waits quietly to be re-returned to Ayemenem after twenty-three years. Rahel, exhibiting discipline problems in her teenage school years, gets admitted to a mediocre college of architecture in Delhi, where she meets Larry McCaslin. They marry and move to Boston. The marriage soon after is broken apart. She returns home to Ayemenem. Finally, the twins become reunited after their long separation. These events of the novel exhibit how the characters with Indian origin suffer due to the role of the characters with British origin. Thus the novel reflects the continuing impact of colonialism that becomes responsible for the degeneration and disintegration of family and society in the post independent Indian society.

The novel enhances the postcolonial issues by means of gothic elements. The story of the novel shows that the major characters of the novel are forced to live the life of violence and they get alienated in their own native land. *The God of Small Things* deals with the significant issues in the historical development of post colonial nation in general and Kerala state ruled by Marxist and Communist logic. But simply they are not recognized as containing gothic elements. For example, the failure of Marxism to solve fully the questions of caste and gender in *The God of Small Things* are the incidents that

trigger the onset of gothic thematics such as vampiric desire, the haunted house etc. In other words, gothic elements as mentioned in above lines undercut the communist logic to resolve the problems related to caste, gender and social structure.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* frames its gothic narrative within ancestral family home. The gothic is located in the familial house, gender and caste relationship, political situation and the everyday interactions amongst family members. The novel launches big political questions specifically through the erotic and transgressive dimensions of intimate life, not through the public sphere of politics, the communist party, or national historical narratives. The given domestic setting unleashes the socio-political intricacies which far from improving the condition of life abducts the common choice to make for the betterment and satisfaction of individuals. In this regard, Ammu and Velutha's incident trenchantly undercuts the communist logic of the end of exploitation of an individual in the name of caste, gender, widowhood, etc.

The novel that deals with the private sphere of intimate relations and the family saga contextualizes the voices of the unheard little gods. The domestic setting constitutes the only site where many social, political and moral issues are buried and discovered, examined and accounted for, and preserved as a lingering impact of historical memory, i.e. colonial signs working together to make the postcolonial society. Indeed, the historical memory of *The God of Small Things* is based on a portrayal of Kerala in all of its "quotidian actuality" (236). The novel illustrates that the violence of the intimate sphere is a product of large political problems, such as the vestiges of the colonial era in the postcolonial, and the failure of Communism to resolve fully the question of caste and gender.

Gothic elements in the novel become effective when the public sphere fails to answer adequately vexed questions in relation with caste, gender, and class. Hence, Pappachi's inability to gain the public honour of the British administration is metaphorically extended to the moth, which is then cast into the intimate sphere to bring about destruction to Rahel and Estha. Pappachi's moth becomes a family curse that visits itself upon each subsequent generation of the family. Likewise, it is argued that in *The God of Small Things,* the Communist party's focus on class excludes other forms of oppression, such as caste and gender. Moreover, it shows that the party even fails to execute plans to neutralize the class-gap. Excluded from any serious debate in the novel, caste and gender uncannily return in the form of Ammu's and Velutha's romantic love affair, which undermines the logic of caste superiority as well as sensibilities of propriety for the bourgeois Christian Indian woman. The romantic affair between an untouchable servant and a bourgeois single mother with no social standing combines the two biggest threats to national and political stability, in part because it reveals that the supposed cohesion of the family structure is just male authority over women, the touchable over untouchable and the wealthy over the poor.

Transgression of erotic desire and romantic love received gothic treatment in *The God of Small Things* have dual roles; erotic desire and romantic love have the potential to reconcile social, political, and historical conflicts on the private level but also reflect the political reality by which a resolution to a conflict is unsolvable and impossible. Pappachi cannot rebuke the colonial administration for failing to recognize his moth, so instead he beats his wife. Baby Kochamma never admits that she is afraid that the Naxalites will steal her land, but she plays an instrumental role in persecuting Velutha. Likewise,

Ammu and Velutha are unable to speak of the big political things that separate them, so instead they focus on their erotic desire and only discuss the small things. Estha and Rahel cannot admit their role in Velutha's death. Similarly they cannot also mourn him publicly, but their incest can attempt to allay the unspoken, and emotional pain.

Thus, the novel abounds with the remnants of colonial era that continue even after the independence of the country leading to the state of estrangement and violence in the life of the inhabitants. Such estrangement and violence of the inhabitants is reflected in the novel by means of gothic elements. This research attempts to justify the same issue. To do so, along with this introductory chapter, this research paper follows the following structure. In the next chapter entitled "Reading the Signs of Colonialism in *The God of Small Things*", I endeavor to analyze the novel from postcolonial perspective along with the issues of postcolonial theory. Then, I attempt to analyze the novel from gothic perspective with the title "Politics of Gothicism in *The God of Small Things*" mainly to see how estrangement and violence in the lives of the major characters is deeply rooted in the continuing impacts of colonialism and how Roy takes the support of gothic elements for its depiction. Finally, in the concluding chapter "Revealing Estrangement through Gothicism", the outcome of the research will be stated briefly.

Chapter-II: Reading the Signs of Colonialism in *The God of Small Things*

Set in postcolonial Kerala, *The God of Small Things* abounds the signs referring to colonial legacy of making economy, society and state inseparable from colonial entrepreneurship. The novel captures how national elitist government absorbs the gist of "mercantile and plantation colonialism…authoritarian rule" in its polity (Benita Parry 108). Overwhelmed by the colonial model of governance ranging from industrialization to policy formation, workers and ordinary postcolonial people could not achieve their aspirations for better and comfortable living. The disintegration of the family and society becomes the epitome of malfunction of postcolonial governance hinged on colonial model. The present research contends that the failure of colonial mimicry pertaining to economy, society and state has been represented through the devise of gothicism.

In the novel, postcolonial state-government of Kerala reinforces the colonial version of hierarchization. The discourse of governance turns to be a mere niche rather than getting rid of untouchability, and widowhood from the society. By deploying the colonial strategy, the cunning leaders like Comrade Pillai earns the support of elite and middle class orthodox people whose majority determines the state-government. In order to critique the exploitative socio-political system, the writer deploys gothic elements that will be discussed after the study of signs of colonial legacy operative in postcolonial society.

Due to the continuing impacts, the ordinary citizens are unable to enjoy the freedom, justice and equality in the time of independence. Jose´ David Saldıvar writes

> Central to the novel is a vision of the continuity between knowing the world through experience and struggle and changing the central relations of the coloniality of power which sustain and make the world what it is. …

> subalternized characters in the novel,…defy bloodlines of kinship and caste to condemn the bloodsheds of their everyday world in Kerala. (358)

The major characters of the novel like Ammu, her twins Rahel and Estha, Velutha, Mammachi etc. are forced to live the life of violence and are estranged from their own home/land. This leads to their alienation and unhomliness in their own home. Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* depicts these issues with several instances throughout the novel that can be analyzed by unveiling the signs of colonialism.

Postcolonial study has been developed to deal with the problems generated by the European colonialism and its aftermath in the academia and in society. As India is the bearer of the traumatic experiences of colonialism, the novel captures the legacy of colonial system stretched via elitist national polity that exploits common people. Therefore, it deals with the cultural contradictions, ambiguities and ambivalence associated with the history of colonialism. Colonialism involves temporary and permanent dispersion of millions of people over the entire world. It is evident in the novel that Estha and Rahel's father who sent them a letter, informing that he

> had retired from his carbon black job and was emigrating to Australia where he had got a job as Chief of Security at a ceramics factory, and that he couldn't take Estha with him. He wished everybody in Ayemenem the very best and said that he would look in on Estha if he ever came back to India. (9)

The above quote becomes the testimony of the dispersion of once colonized people in many parts of the world. It, however, does not mean that people except colonized country do not travel abroad. Obviously, they do but in different condition.

In the beginning, the act of colonialism centres on capturing the economic wealth in different communities. In this connection, N. Jayaram remarks, "In terms of the magnitude of emigration and its spread, the European colonization, marked by the penetration of mercantile capitalism in Asia" introduced nauseating modern machine, factories, and pesticides (20). These modern colonial objects and instruments not only exploited workers, but also damaged the environment. It echoes in the novel as Estha "walked along the banks of the river that smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils" (13). It becomes the evident of the big lie spun by the west to exploit the third world countries. It also unveils the paradox that the west hoots for improving the climatic condition but it maneuvers third world people to use pesticides.

In the process of colonization, the colonizers harassed and abused the native people by using brutal force and took advantage of the new community. The colonizing countries established power through conquest. As a result the colonized society was compelled to go through a social and cultural change and their identity was changed as well. The colonizers forced the native people to follow their norms, beliefs and cultural values. The colonizer's belief was that the natives were savage, uneducated, and passive even when they were the civilized, educated, and active. Even after independence, the natives could not quite come out of the representation in which they were trapped. In the novel *The God of Small Things* the subject of coversion into Christianity becomes visible. Then, the conversion bears historical importance as

> Baby Kochamma's father was seven years old [in 1876], his father had taken him to see the Patriarch who was visiting the Syrian Christians of

> Kerala. They found themselves right in front of people whom the Patriarch was addressing in the westernmost verandah of the Kalleny house, in Cochin. Seizing this opportunity, his father whispered in his young son's ear and propelled the little fellow forward. The future Reverend, skidding on his heels, rigid with fear, applied his terrified lips to the ring on the Patriarch's middle finger, leaving it wet with spit. The patriarch wiped his ring on his sleeve, and blessed the little boy. Long after he grew up and became a priest, Reverend Ipe continued to be known as Punnyan Kunju—little Blessed One—and people came down the river in boats all the way from Alleppey and Ernakulam, with children to be blessed by him (22-23).

The above quote epitomizes the horrific history of the conversion often accompanied force. The narrative implicitly foregrounds the forceful conversion in the above narrative in which Baby Kochamma's father resists forced conversion; for an instance he skids, moves, and bites the finger of the Patriarch at the moment of the conversion.

In the theoretical tune of Abrams, the novel *The God of Small Things* exhibits the aftermath of colonial exploitation meted upon the native subjects. In the section Pappachi's Moth, the narrative implicitly exhibits the signs of colonial exploitative system in which Chacko as colonial sycophant enjoys every privilege and Ammu, as a daughter, is bereft of any right:

> Up to the time Chacko arrived, the factory had been a small but profitable enterprise. Mammachi just ran it like a large kitchen. Chacko had it registered as a partnership and informed Mammachi that she was the

> sleeping partner. He invested in equipment (canning, machines, cauldrons, cookers) and expanded the labour force. Almost immediately, the financial slide began, but was artificially buoyed by extravagant bank loans that Chacko raised by mortgaging the family's rice-fields around the Ayemenem House. 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 (57).

The above quote demonstrates that the tone of voice of Chacko echoes the colonial mindset; the white owner has never considered the native people as having their share in the factories. The natives were workers only during colonial regime. Chacko, therefore, bears the sign of callous colonial agent preying upon innocent natives.

Postcolonial studies focuses upon the analysis of the signs of imperialism and its aftermath: slavery, colonialism, nationalism, independence and migration. It deals with the narrative structures, representation of cultural differences and strategies of subject formations in the colonial and post colonial texts. It particularly emphasizes the cultural problems of the countries such as India and Africa. Abrams argues that postcolonial studies is the outcome of colonial exploitation "Postcolonial studies sometimes encompasses also the aspects of British Literature in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century, viewed through a perspective that reveals the text to which the social and economic life represented in literature was tacitly underwritten by colonial exploitation" (236).

Abrams thinks that postcolonial studies is not a unified movement with a distinctive methodology. It is a development after the Second World War era that emerged from the rejection of the master narrative of western imperialism. Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) initiated the entry of post colonial studies into the metropolitan academies of Europe. Postcolonial theorists and critics attack the claim made of Eurocentric art and literature as having universal validity and relegating nonwestern cultural forms to margins. They try to dismantle the binaries constructed by the colonizers who regarded the 'orient' as 'inferior', 'other', 'female' and the west as 'superior', 'male', 'universal', 'civilized' and so on. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* very elaborately analyses this tendency. The same book is said to be the inaugurator of the postcolonial theory.

Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* are widely acknowledged as key texts in shaping the post colonial aesthetics and cultural theory. He argues that the struggle against the colonizer should be taken as its aims not only its complete autonomy but also transformation of social and political consciousness. Fanon inflects his medical and psychological practice with the understanding that racism generates harmful psychological constructs that both blind the black man to his subjection to a universalized white norm and alienate his consciousness. It becomes pertinent in the novel *The God of Small Things* in which Chacko gets married with Margaret simply because she possesses white skin. For him, the values she has imbibed become universally valid and winning her he could be superior to other Indians. Similarly, comrade Pillai epitomizes the remnant of colonial agency. He is a very shrewd leader who has maintained caste order exactly like the British government's policy of

ruling the natives putting them into hierarchical orders. The narrative provides the historicity of the continuation of caste system even after conversion:

> When the British came to Malabar, a number of paravans, Pelayas and pulayas (among them Velutha's grandfather, Kelan) converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of Untouchability. As added incentive they were given a little food and money. They were known as the Rice-Christians. It didn't take them long to realize that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. They were made to have separate churches, with separate services, and separate priests. As a special favour they were even given their own separate Pariah Bishop. After Independence they found they were not entitled to any Government benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates, because officially, on paper, they were Christians, and therefore casteless. It was a little like having to sweep away your footprints without a broom. Or worse, not being allowed to leave footprints at all. (74).

The above quote that uses the analogy of jumping into the fire condenses the degraded condition after being converted into Christianity. Since then Untouchability becomes much more rooted in Kerala. The untouchables even received the Pariah a priest, hence are alienated in their own community.

A racist culture prohibits psychological health in the colonized subjects. As Fanon argues being colonized by a language has larger implications for one's consciousness: "To speak . . . means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (17-18). Speaking English means that one accepts, or is coerced into

accepting, the collective consciousness of the English, which identifies nativeness and blackness with evil and sin. In an attempt to escape the association of blackness with evil, the black man or colonized person wears a white mask, or thinks of himself as a universal subject equally participating in a society that advocates equality supposedly abstracted from personal appearance. It becomes evident in the novel as Chacko becomes elated when Margaret comes back to Ayemenem after the death of her husband. He is ready to accept her even after she is divorced from him and is married to another man.

After the independence is gained, in many nation states there emerges various divisive tendencies- some new, some historically entrenched- which became the major source of ongoing violence in the form of inter-clan and intra-clan conflict calling for special rights or secession. This form of conflict has been observed in the history of decolonization in the countries like Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, India etc. It shows that decolonization did not bring equality, redemption and salvation to the people of the once colonized lands. Newly freed countries did not acquire lasting peace. Instead suffering and misery continued nearly everywhere in altered form, at the hand of the different agencies. Common people saw little improvement in their lives.

The condition of the common people in the 'de-colonized states' has worsened as a result of cultural and political fragmentation. Masao Miyoshi in his essay "A Borderless World" relates this issue of decolonization with the contemporary global scenario. He writes: "The problem we face now is how to understand today's global configuration of power and culture that is both similar and different vis-à-vis the historical metropolitan-colonial paradigm"(79). He argues that even though direct political colonization is a matter of past, forms of colonialism are even more active now in the form of transitional

corporatism. It seems colonialism is even more active now in the form of neo-colonialism. Miyoshi further writes, "western culture was to be normative civilization and the indigenous cultures were banished as pre-modern and marginal"(80). Therefore, post colonial nation has often in practice operated as an aberrant, politically independent yet economically dependent new colony known as neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism signifies the continuing economic control by the west especially Europe and America over the once colonized world and also the eastern and African nations.

Neo-colonialism emerged after the decline of colonialism in 1950s. It is a form of ongoing nature of imperialism. Elleke Boemer in her book *Colonial and Post Colonial Literature* defines neo-colonialism as "the continuing economic control by the west of the once colonized world under the guise of political independence"(9). In other words, the continuing western influence located in the flexible combination of the economic, the political and ideological is called neo-colonialism. What makes it different from colonialism is the nature of domination. While neo-colonialism suggests an indirect form of control through economic and cultural dependence, the formal methods of colonial governance are administrative structures, military forces and incorporation of natives in the metropolitan government.

Thus, it is naïve to argue that colonialism can end abruptly. Colonialism is not merely an act of occupying the land of a colonized country. It brings new values, new beliefs, new language and alien traditions with itself and these cannot be shed like the skin of a snake even after the end of colonialism. It will always leave something behind, some forms of colonial residue. Post colonial theorists describe the colonial subject as having double consciousness or double vision. In other words it is a subject that is

divided between two antagonistic cultures: “that of the colonizer and that of the indigenous community”(421), as viewed by Lois Tyson, and the case continues even after the end of colonization too.

In Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*, one of the most significant colonial legacy is the consolidation of the caste system. Although caste system was not the colonial product in India, it was there before colonization. But it survived the British colonization and also received the support from the empire to intensify itself. The import of colonial constitution did nothing to reshuffle the social classes in India or reform its social inequality, but joined the local forces to organize a complicit mechanism that practiced and manipulated the Love Lows even more powerfully than in the pre-colonial days. With the support of the caste ideology and the disciplinary mechanism enforced by the police, the Love Laws finally can operate as coercively, effectively and productively as the state law.

According to Axel Michaels the caste system in actuality is very different from the traditional way in which it is understood by the West. In the eyes of the West caste system is typically Indian, as Michaels writes that the caste system “…became the defining factor of Hinduism, its soul, its psychology."(163) It is in this limited sense, Michaels claims that "the caste system is essentially a Western construct."(171) This claim is further supported by Gloria Goodwin Raheja and writes: "The colonial imagination had seized upon caste identities as a means of understanding and controlling the Indian population."(495)

This construct, according to Raheja, has become a remarkable means for colonial control. British colonizers worked from this simplistic understanding of the system,

ultimately changing the system and using it to serve their colonial purposes. They created handbooks detailing the "characteristics" of the different castes, a process that naturalized and explained away rebellion by classifying any caste that had risen against the British as inherently "turbulent."(500) "The discursive reifications of caste, intimately tied to at their genesis to the politics of colonial rule," writes Raheja, "later became the foundation of much anthropological and historical writing on Indian society."(508)

Another example took place during the early stages of British rule when the colonial government approached the Zamindar class, which traditionally simply was a class of landowners, and gave them the power and duty to collect taxes. This caused the Zamindars' wealth and power to increase immensely, their influence far surpassing that of their previous role. What is more, this strategy also created, as the British had intended it to do, a sort of buffer class between the colonizers and the colonized, one which was dependent on the Raj for its wealth and influence. This example points at another aspect that Raheja underlines of colonial use of the caste system to maintain control: the participation of the Indian elite. This is sufficiently reflected in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things.*

The introduction of communist party also did not stand in their favor at the moment of necessity as it claimed to work for the privileged group of people. The communist leaders too behaved as elites. "When the British came to Melabar, a number of Paravans, Pelays and Pulays (among them Velutha's grandfather, Kelan) converted to Christianity and joined the Anglican Church to escape the scourge of Untouchability" (71). These untouchables did so hoping that they would no longer suffer the racial oppression. Soon after the conversion, the Paravans found what they expect was nothing

but a daydream in the end. “The colonizers, reproducing the British class system, reserved special churches and priests for them”(Durix11).

The narrator ironically remarks that the Paravans realized that “they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire”(74). The party politics also takes the advantage of the same caste system. In this regard Roy talks about the real practices of communism in Kerala. Although communism is supposed to be the helper of the downtrodden, the leaders work the other way. Communism ends up playing into and reinforcing the caste system. Roy writes:

> The real secret was that communism crept into Kerala insidiously. As a reformist movement that never overtly questioned the traditional values of a caste-ridden, extremely traditional community. The Marxists worked from *within* the communal divides, never challenging them, never appearing not to. They offered a cocktail revolution. A heady mix of Eastern Marxism and orthodox Hinduism, spiked with a shot of democracy.(64)

As stated above, communism in Kerala demonstrates the exploitation of the caste system by the Indian elite. Velutha is a card-carrying communist. He is Untouchable but has gained special privileges in the pickle factory by merit of his great skill as a carpenter. So the other "Touchable" factory workers resent him. The local communist leader, Comrade Pillai, in trying to foment a rebellion in the pickle factory, sees Velutha as a hindrance to his winning the rest of the factory workers over. In this sense, Velutha's death "could be more profitable than his life had ever been."(267) He is therefore abandoned by the Party for causing trouble by overstepping the bounds imposed upon him by his untouchability.

In fact the imported structure of communism reinforces class stratification by making use of it, to the detriment of all involved. Comrade Pillai succeeds in causing a rebellion in Chacko's pickle factory once Velutha is out of the way, but this victory ends his career. Pillai, who, in the "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs" scheme of politics is Ayemenem's "professional omeleteer," ultimately breaks the eggs but burns the omelette.(266)

The British conqueror found that the caste system in India not only did any harm to his monopoly but also provided a ready-made source of income. Maddison thinks that the motivation of British colonization in India was “economic, not evangelical”(35). The aim was to obtain efficient control over the agricultural production and industries in order to gain itself the maximum economic benefits. The lower castes were the working labor, and the upper castes were the supervisors. The lower castes were subordinated to the upper castes, and the upper castes were subordinated to whoever held the state power. To the colonizers there was no “incentive to destroy the system. Instead they simply established themselves as a new and separate caste” (Maddison 29) above all the other castes. Maddison further argues that “The British established themselves as a separate ruling caste, like other castes, they did not intermarry or eat with the lower (native) castes”(43).

The British colonizers adopted the strategy of not spoiling the social structure already there, not “[merging] into a homogenous culture”(29). They simply replaced the native “warlord aristocracy by an efficient bureaucracy and army”(37) carefully designed for utilitarian purposes and for efficient maintenance of law and social order. Neither disturbing the way India nor introducing British democratic experience into this primitive

country the colonizers enlarged the Hindu caste system by settling themselves as the supreme ruling caste. The untouchables once highly expected that the British could make some changes to their lives. The upper castes still kept their position at the top of the society, yet their ascendancy had decreased as compared with that before the colonization.

Thus, the upper-caste intellectual elites had a hard time struggling to draw themselves closer to the nucleus of power through the act of mimicry. Unusual friendship allied the colonizer with the colonized. The former supported the latter to have him manage the lower castes for the interests of colonization. The latter colluded with the former to retain high social status. The interdependent relation between the upper castes and the British colonial power based on their same concern for the maintenance of the caste system had made the Love Laws and the punishment for violation possible.

As far as the regime in India is concerned, the Love Laws characteristically is a compound mechanism of discipline and punishment. One central notion of such mechanism is "docility," a request that "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved"(Foucault, 136). The police apparatus in the modern India, like that in the colonial time, takes the role of carrying out the functions of social discipline. The governmental institution of police is represented by the Inspector Thomas Mathew in the novel. The cruel punishment of the police resulted into the death of the central untouchable character Velutha.

The name of the Inspector itself indicates his western/British identity. His exotic name can be easily associated with British colonization of India from 1849 to 1947. Arundhati Roy bestows a mixed metaphor upon this Indian policeman with a British

name to invoke attention not to a specific Indian character but to India's colonial past whose influence is still felt in India even today. As Michel Foucault explicates in his thought-provoking masterpiece *Discipline and Punish*:

> Although the police as an institution …is certainly linked directly to the centre of political sovereignty. ... It is an apparatus that must be coextensive with the entire social body and not only by the extreme limits that it embraces, but by the minuteness of the details it is concerned with. Police power must bear 'over everything'"(213).

For this purpose, the police is given "the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance" to supervise "the most elementary particle, the most passing phenomenon of the social body" (214). In every society, when the body "in the grip of every strict power, which imposed on it constrains, prohibitions or obligations"(136) is tamed down to be docile, the society can produce its order and harmony.

Thomas Mathew, who was the physical embodiment of the political power "looked out at the world and never wondered how it worked" because he, comparing himself to a mechanic who serviced the machine-like nation, was the very person that "worked it"(248). All the policemen, including himself, shared the unshrikable responsibility to exterminate any visible obstacle causing social disorders. No doubt Ammu's love affair with Velutha, who belonged to an abject class with the most unenlightened and uneducated minds, and was believed to be a group of barbarian, crude and immoral people, was identified as a prelude to more serious trouble or even large-scale social disorder which was likely to threaten the well-being of the other social classes that must be corrected as soon as possible.

The policemen “crept towards the house. Like Film-policemen. Softly, softly through the grass. Batons in their minds. Machine guns in their minds. Responsibility for the Touchable Future on their thin but able shoulders”(291). The policemen “were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak”(293), an outbreak that may imperil the caste system in the prosperous land. In Foucault’s sense, “society as a whole does not judge one of its members, but that a social category with an interest in order judges another that is dedicated to disorder”(276). Literally, Velutha’s delinquency is an intolerable defiance of the caste system. Owing to the fact that his transgressive behavior which was alien to the society’s tradition, as it upset the caste system which has traditionally kept the society in its proper order, he was put under the social judgment and then punished.

Along with the death of Velutha, the whole novel revolves around the Ipe family which is not, in fact, Hindu. The twins are the exception, whose position as "Half-Hindu Hybrids"(44) plays a part in their exclusion from the family. The Ipe family belongs to the group called Syrian Christians, constituting twenty percent of Kerala's population. The Syrian Christians believe themselves to be "descendants of the one hundred Brahmins whom St. Thomas the Apostle converted to Christianity when he traveled East after the Resurrection." Despite their convergence to Christianity, the society judges them according to a strict social hierarchy.

Due to this Baby Kochamma is extremely concerned about what will be thought of the family if news of the scandal (Ammu-Velutha affair) gets out. They are aware of their place in the society (even no longer Hindu, they are aware of their Brahmin ancestry), and they, too, judge others by the laws of its hierarchy. No Untouchables are

allowed in their house. The matriarch, Mammachi's outrage upon the revelation of Ammu and Velutha's affair is extremely violent; she attacks and spits in the face of Velutha's father, an "Old-World Paravan".(73) His guilt and feelings of beholdeness exceed even his love for his son (he offers to kill Velutha with his own hands for his crime). Roy's novel really depicts how the caste system dominates all members of society, even the non-Hindu ones. By exposing it the novel also illustrates the ways in which the elite perpetuate the system's violence and the oppressed internalize them.

There are two waves of postcolonial literature within any colonized country. First, there is a wave which celebrates the nation through a nationalism which attempts to return to an unadulterated, precolonial identity. The second wave, however, rejects this new nationalism as well: "the novels of the second, postcolonial, stage are novels of delegitimation: they reject not only the Western imperialism but also the nationalist project of the postcolonial national bourgeoisie."(353) This is what Kwame Anthony Appiah, in his article "Is the Post- in Postmodern the Post- in Postcolonial," identifies as the second wave of postcolonial literature and Roy's novel falls under this category.

Roy's critique of the caste system is thus twofold. On the one hand, it shows the caste structure to be a disruptive and harmful aspect of Indian society, in the perpetuation of which the Indian elite are implicated. On the other hand it also demonstrates the ways in which this system was exploited and enforced by colonial and later political powers as a means of control. The tragic results of the infractions of the Love Laws that take place in *The God of Small Things* belie an interpretation of the caste system as rupturing Indian identity.

The rupturing of identity results from the colonizers' exploitation of the caste system as a means of control. Such means of control take the form of houses in the novel. This effect is manifest on the largest scale by what the twins come to think of as the History House; an abandoned rubber plantation once owned by an Englishman "gone native;" "Ayemenem's own Kurtz."(51) The twins' Oxford-educated uncle, Chacko, tells Estha and Rahel that the Ipes are

> 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 explain[s] that history [is] like an old house at night. With all the lamps lit. And ancestors whispering inside.
>
> . . . "But we can't go in," Chacko explain[s], "because we've been locked out. And when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try to listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we can't 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 re-dreams them. A war that makes us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves."(51-52)

This exclusion from one's own history epitomizes the broader structure of exclusion that Roy establishes with the model of exclusion from the Ayemenem house. The house's inside represents a unified identity which is denied the Ipes. This same structure of representation finds a mirror across the river in the ancestral seat of the Ipe family, the Ayemenem house. The binary opposition of inside and outside represents the radical

rupture in identity caused by British colonialism. This is powerfully demonstrated by *The God of Small Things*.

Postcolonial studies claims that the colonizers were anxious to reinforce their authority. They established their authority over the natives by making them follow their culture and language. In order to overcome their marginality the colonized people tried to adopt the colonizer's culture. They attempted to remake themselves with the image of Europeans. However, they could not still be the same as Europeans. In this regard Boehmer further remarks:

> […] the colonial system required that the colonized aspire to remake themselves in the image of the European, to become at once secondary to the colonizer, and also (necessarily) other to what they were before. Yet, as they were not in fact European, or indeed white, there was always a slippage or *hybridization*, however subtle, in the meanings that they thus worked to reiterate. (356)

Even now the once colonized people are conscious of not being the same as Europeans and they try to achieve to their pure image, which becomes impossible and they encounter distortion and disturbance with colonized culture.

Therefore, the colonized countries are hegemonized by the ideology of western countries and they try to imitate their culture, language etc. Not only the non-western people try to imitate the western culture but the westerners are also equally influenced by the non-western culture. There is cultural clash because of the adaptation of cultures from both sides. As non western countries are independent, as colonial period no longer exists, third world countries run on the hang-over of colonial period. By

celebrating hybridity they rupture the colonized culture: “Despite postcolonial attempts to foreground the mutual transculturation of colonizer and colonized, celebration of hybridity generally refers to the disestablishing of colonized culture” (Gandhi 136).

Hybridity is one of the responses to the colonial oppression. Postcolonial theory is related with the theme of nationalism, hybridity and alienation, solidarity and dispersal. The postcolonial writers revisit and remember the colonial past, by unfolding the troubled and troubling relationship of the colonizer and the colonized. In their writing they show the ambivalent cultural moods of characters and the period of transition. Though post colonialism is a period of the colonial aftermath, postcolonial writers reinforce colonial psyche in their writing by persisting with the colonial hierarchies of knowledge. In this regard Leela Gandhi writes, “In their response to the ambiguities of national independence, writers like Memmi and Said insist that the colonial aftermath does not yield the end of colonialism” (7). Their writings deal with the issues of separateness, fear, and the loss of home.

Since decolonization, the colonized people have tried to reconstitute their identity and tried to repudiate the binary identities. During the colonial period they were treated as imperfect replicas of colonizers. As a result they assimilated with colonizer’s culture but later they were disturbed by the blurring identities and have been trying to create their own. Boehmer writes:

> In his tripartite schema or ‘panorama on three levels’ of anti-colonial struggle, the keynote postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon outlines how the first level of colonial assimilation will almost inevitably lead the politicized native on to a second phase of ‘disturbance’. This second phase

> importantly involves, amongst other features, the reconstitution of identity through the reclamation of local cultural traditions. And from this stage, Fanon also suggested, might eventually emerge a third or 'fighting phase'. (345 qtd. in Waugh)

Since decolonization they have been trying to remake themselves from scratches. There was the necessity to give birth to new identities, and to speak languages of their own. They have attempted to Indianize, Africanize, and Caribbeanize themselves, but this complete return is not possible. In this regard Ashcroft, Gareth, and Tiffin write "It is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible to create national or regional formation entirely independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise" (195-196).

So, postcolonial literary texts are based on mimicry, hybridity, in-betweenness, self-alienation, rootlessness and homelessness. And the postcolonial writers take the very issue of cultural diversity in their texts. "All postcolonial literatures are cross-cultural" (Ashcroft et al. 30). They no longer talk about one particular culture and location. In this regard Leela Gandhi remarks: "[…] postcolonial literary theory receives an ambivalent inheritance on the one hand, it learns to glean and defend the radical energies of writing and, on the other, it acquires the habit of investing texts with values that can't be located or fulfilled in reality".(160) They cope with the terrors of colonial aftermath. Hybridity, in-betweenness, rootlessness, homelessness and self-alienation are the major characteristics of the postcolonial writing because it is difficult to trace the pre-colonial purity. Such writings are mostly found in Indian literature. Hybridity is commonly used in postcolonial discourse to signify cross-cultural exchange. "It is the 'in-between' space

that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 119). In a hybrid condition people try to adopt both cultures of the home and the hostland.

Hybridity is also one of the remarkable postcolonial issues in *The God of Small Things*. A usual consequence of migrating is the formation of hybrid identities when the migrants interact with the local population. Biologically speaking a hybrid is an offspring with parents who belong to different races. This makes Sophie Mol the only real hybrid in *The God of Small Things*, since her father Chacko is an Indian and her mother Margaret is an Englishwoman. Another, extended form of hybridity is mentioned by Baby Kochamma herself. "Baby Kochamma disliked the twins, for she considered them doomed, fatherless waifs. Worse still, they were Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry." (45). She calls the twins hybrids in reference to their religion, because their father Baba is a Hindu and their mother Ammu is a Syrian Christian like the rest of the Ipe family, a circumstance that had already caused disapproval of the marriage itself: "She wrote to her parents informing them of her decision [to get married to a Hindu]. They didn't reply." (39). After Ammu's divorce, the whole affair leaves especially Baby Kochamma completely speechless:

> She subscribed wholeheartedly to the commonly held view that a married daughter had no position in her parents' home. 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. As for a divorced daughter from a

> intercommunity love marriage – Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject. (45-46)

In her essay *Language, Hybridity and Dialogism in The God of Small Things*, Anna Clarke explains why discussing hybridity is relevant to postcolonialism in particular. Hybridity as a critical concept has had a privileged place in postcolonial studies. This is because contact and intermixture between different cultural groups have often taken place in the historical context of colonization. Since colonial relationships were often relationships of power between what the colonizers saw as the privileged 'enlightened', 'civilized', 'rational' and 'advanced' colonizer and the subaltern 'barbaric', 'superstitious', 'backward' colonized, hybridity in such contexts has often taken on a politicized dimension. (138) Salman Rushdie had a similar idea in *Imaginary Homelands*: "Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools."(15)

In *The God of Small Things*, this description applies to Chacko the most as he describes his situation "We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore." (53). On the one hand he is very English, because he has lived in England for a long time as a father of a family. Due to this, he has become accustomed to English habits and English culture and on the basis of these values he, for example, stops his father from beating his mother. But on the other hand, he falls back into a pattern that follows the strict Indian moral concepts when he batters down Ammu's bedroom door and expels her from the Ayemenem House: "'Get out of my house before I break every bone in your body!'" (225).

An exploration of the complicity between Indian people and the colonizers must

also cover the effect of mimicry taken place in the colonized's side. Homi Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* has reminded us that "mimicry represents an ironic comprise"(86). Mimicry, Bhabha points out, indicates the colonized's appropriating the colonial Other. The colonized parrots the lines of the colonizer with the hope of becoming a perfect reflection of his colonial master. The replication can never be perfectly achieved because there are always racial and cultural boundaries, a slippage, a gap between the colonized's background and the foreign arrivals. Colonial mimicry produces "a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite"(86). Ania Loomba contends in *Colonialism-Postcolonialism* that "the process of replication is never complete or perfect, and what it produces is not simply a perfect image of the original but something changed because of the context in which it is being reproduced"(89).

Inevitably, the danger of cultural alienation plagues the mimicking people. They lose their root in the soil of their race or country, at the same time, they cannot identify with the colonizer completely. They become culturally hybrid. Roy in the novel offers concern for this kind of confusion in national identity when Chacko in his "Reading Aloud voice"(54) explained to Estha and Rahel the meaning of "Anglophile"(50): "Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore. Our sorrows will never be sad enough. Our joys never happy enough. Our dreams never big enough. Our lives never important enough. To matter"(52). The Ipe family, as Chacko confessed, "were a family Anglophiles"(51). They were "pointed in the wrong direction, trapped outside their own history and unable to retrace their steps because their footprints had been swept away"(51).

What is curious is that Chacko unconsciously refused to admit that he was such a

mimic man. His general attitude towards British culture is that of a mimic man. He is very proud of staying at Oxford. He has tried to 'whiten' himself by marrying an English woman. His sister, Ammu, dismissed him with a single blow. '"Marry our conquerors, is more like it,' Ammu said dryly, referring to Margaret Kochamma"(52). Chacko married Margaret Kochamma and had the illusion that the mixed marriage had transformed him into a real British like her. His admiration for the colonial culture did not come to an end after the divorce as he "had never stopped loving Margaret Kochamma"(36). Having his reunion with Margaret Kochmma at the airport, Chacko appeared to be "a proud and happy man"(136) having a white wife. Margaret Kochamma meant more than a wife to Chacko. What is more important is that she was white. She was a white he often spoke of "with a particular pride"(236) as he had not been separate from her and he had never lost her.

The God of Small Things centers on the effects of the rupture of identity caused by colonization. It cuts the colonial subject off from its past, the source of identity. At the same time it also enforces a model of control which perpetually denies colonized people their subjecthood. In "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" Homi Bhabha locates the cause of this rupture in the system of mimicry enforced by colonial powers. He argues that colonization enforces a system of control that requires the colonial subject to mimic the colonizer. According to this system, the only valid identity is that of the colonizers, so the subject must mimic this identity in the hope of gaining personhood.

However, this mimicry can never be perfect; in order for the colonizer to retain control, he must preserve the trace of otherness, which enables his domination. This

structure mirrors the structure of supplementation; the necessity of the imperfect resemblance, the difference that is always already contained in identity in order for the sign to function, the trace of otherness, which allowed him to function as a double. What's more, it is the impossibility of the perfect resemblance, which would allow the colonial subject full subjecthood, that creates the rupture in colonial identity with which Roy's novel deals.

Like Chacko, Baby Kochamma showed a great desire for colonial mimicry when she met Margaret Kochamma and her daughter, Sophie Mol, at the airport. Sophie Mol in her eyes "was so beautiful that she reminded her of a wood-spire. Of Ariel"(138). Her communication with Sophie Mol implies that there is truly a common phenomenon that a mimic person can feel a strong affinity to the colonizer. As another mimic person in the novel, Baby Kochamma was so eager to express her greeting and compliments in a language with "a strange new British accent"(137). For Estha and Rahel, the adulation was nothing more than an act of "trying to boast"(138), yet Baby Kochamma herself knew that the showing-off carried the intention to enhance her cultural standing. As the narrator has commented, "all this was of course primarily to announce her credentials to Margaret Kochamma. To set herself apart from the Sweeper Class"(138).

Through the mimicking act, on the one hand, Baby Kochamma shortened the distance between her and the English. She intentionally uprooted her Indianness to identify with the British conquerors. On the other hand, she extended the distance from the upper castes to the debased castes as she thought that she had made another step closer to the British. It is apparent that her grandnephews at the airport had not yet comprehended the complex meaning of their Anglophile family's cordial welcome paid

to their British relatives. They giggled, mocking at Baby Kochamma's artificial courtesy. In the later chapters, they gradually made sense of the welcome ceremony and critically treated it as the adult's welcome-home-our-Sophie-Mol play. The spotlight followed Sophie Mol all the way. "The Play went with her. Walked when she walked. Stopped when she stopped"(177). Whoever else was a peripheral character, some were even excluded-from the play. Rahel, standing "on the periphery of the play"(174), found that people in the play were deceitful and hypocritical. When she was outside the play with Velutha, who had been excluded from the play entirely, she experienced the most genuine affection of exchanging love between one another. The twins shared with Velutha "a sub-world" of physical ease, "a tactile world of smiles and laughter"(167) that one in the welcome play had no part in.

The God of Small Things presents the caste system as a structure of deep-rooted discrimination. The colonial use of the same further employed the divisions creating a structure of self-alienation and, ultimately, self-hatred. The British manipulated and enforced a rigid caste structure, transforming the slightly more flexible and far more complicated system that was in effect before their colonization and using it as a tool to create divisions in society. The same process is copied by Comerade Pillai to pit castes against each other in the name of Communism. The scene of exclusion is manifest in the Ayemenem house.

The Ayemenem house serves to exclude people rather than providing shelter. The house finally belongs to Baby Kochamma. She inherits it simply by "outliving everybody else;"(28) she has no real claim to it. As noted above, untouchables are excluded from the house; Kochu Maria, the low-paid but "Touchable" Syrian Christian maid, acts as

doorkeeper. Even Ammu, despite having been born and raised in the Ayemenem house, is still a barely tolerated guest. As a daughter, she has no "Locust Stand I," (later, when Rahel returns to the Ayemenem house after her long absence, she is also without *locus standi)*(56). She has no stake in the family pickle factory despite doing as much work there as her brother Chacko ("What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine," he says).(56)

Both Ammu and, later, Rahel also have the added scandal of having been married and then divorced their husbands. The results of Ammu's failed marriage, Estha and Rahel, share her mother's unwelcomeness, with the added disgrace of being "Half-Hindu Hybrids." Baby Kochamma, feeling, as an unmarried daughter, the effects of scorn and exclusion herself, does her best to make Ammu and the twins feel as unwelcome as possible; "She was keen for them to realize that they (like herself) lived on sufferance in the Ayemenem house, their maternal grandmother's house, where they really had no right to be."(44) The treatment to the different members also differs in the Ayemenem house.

The twins are always negatively treated like their mother. They grow up in a world in which love for them is always conditional and have the knowledge that if they misbehave, their mother, as well as the rest of their family, they will love them "a little less."(107) The case is not similar to their cousin, Sophie Mol, the daughter of Chacko and his British ex-wife, Margaret Kochamma, who arrives with her mother to spend Christmas in Ayemenem. Such difference is due to their different relationship. Sophie Mol is the daughter of British woman whereas the twins belong to the divorced Indian woman. This dichotomy of treatment shows how Indians look at the British people with respect due to colonial impact. The dichotomy in the way they are treated is demonstrated

by the twins' thoughts in response to the film *The Sound of Music*, which the narrator expresses:

> Oh Baron von Trapp, Baron von Trapp, could you love the
> little fellow with the orange in the smelly auditorium?
> . . . And his twin sister? Tilting upwards with her fountain
> in a Love-in-Tokyo? Could you love her too?
> Baron von Trapp had some questions of his own.
> (a) Are they clean white children?
> No. (But Sophie Mol is.)
> (b) Do they blow spit bubbles?
> Yes. (But Sophie Mol doesn't.)
> (c) Do they shiver their legs? Like clerks?
> Yes. (But Sophie Mol doesn't.)
> (d) Have they, either or both, ever held strangers' soo-soos?
> N . . . Nyes. (But Sophie Mol hasn't.)
> "Then I'm sorry, Baron von Clapp-Trapp said. "It's out of
> the question. I cannot love them. I cannot be their Baba. Oh
> no." (101-2)

The twins, in their own minds and in those of their relatives, simply cannot live up to the standards for love.

But Sophie Mol is welcomed into the Ayemenem house with much pomp and circumstance; a whole "Welcome Home, Our Sophie Mol" ceremony that is performed. Her coming is the culmination of *"What will Sophie Mol think?* week,"(36) and she

arrives "hatted, bell-bottomed and Loved from the Beginning."(129) This dichotomy shows us that the Love Laws "which lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much," are not simply a function of the caste system; they have been deeply affected by British colonization. The Ayemenem house is completely open to Sophie Mol although her British mother is a divorced one. But Estha and Rahel, along with their divorced and "Locusts Stand I"-less mother as well as their unmarried baby grandaunt do not get similar treatment in the house.

Mammachi, the widow of a knighted Imperial Entomologist, and Chacko, her Oxford-educated son are the only two with a legitimated claim to the house, and even they are never completely at home there. The lasting effects of colonization have made the Ipe family unwelcome in their own house; a fact which represents the way in which colonization robs its subjects of their own cohesive identity and any possibility of being 'at home' with themselves, i.e. the possibility for self-love. The Ipes still bear the trace of Otherness; this trace takes the form of Pappachi's moth.

Pappachi was the head of Ayemenem house. Pappachi was the twins' grandfather. He was an Imperial Entomologist. He worked within the British system, hoping to achieve success by its standards. He discovered a new type of moth, only to be told that the moth was already classified. This is how he failed to achieve the success. Years later, a taxonomic shuffle resulted in the moth being acknowledged as a separate species, but by then it was too late for Pappachi to assert his claim to the discovery.

With the help of the moth, Pappachi endeavours to be recognized by the colonial system, and it would be the marker of his success. But, his hope becomes shattered and suffers within with the pang of his ultimate failure: "Its pernicious ghost—gray, furry,

and with unusually dense dorsal tufts—haunted every house he lived in. It tormented him and his children and his children's children."(48) The moth's reappearing from time and again throughout the novel substantiates the idea of ordinary people's estrangement from the establishment.

The narrative mentions that the moth keeps on tormenting each subsequent generation. That the people keep on suffering suggests the perpetuation of the indifference of the system to accommodating the people's aspiration. Under such indifferent system, even intra-relation among the family members becomes affected. It is reflected in the treatment that Rahel and Estha receive from the members of Ayemenem house including their mother. Rahel is denied the unconditional love even from her mother. So Ammu tells her when Rahel misbehaves it makes her love a little less. Reflecting this point, Roy writes: "a cold moth with unusually dense dorsal tufts landed on Rahel's heart. Where its icy legs touched her, she got goosebumps. Six goosebumps on her careless heart. A little less her Ammu loved her."(107)

The scene in which Roy describes Velutha's suffering body versus the policemen's collective cruelty provokes the reader's sympathy for the weak lying with fractured body parts. It compels the reader to question the righteousness of the Love Laws and the caste-colonialism complicity behind the laws. Roy seems to treat the dying Velutha as a martyrdom for which she conveys both empathy and compassion. Dying Velutha's "skull was fractured in three place. His nose and both his cheekbones were, leaving his face pulpy, undefined. … His lower intestine was ruptured and hemorrhaged, the blood collected in his abdominal cavity"(294). The policemen still "brought out the handcuffs"(294) to declare their official power as if they had not seen the disabled body

in front of them that was no longer able to fight back.

Or more specifically, that Velutha, as a Paravan despised by the others, had been deprived of his right and ability to fight back at the very beginning. Velutha had his hands cuffed, feet fettered, and opinions suppressed by the caste system. He is not allowed to touch whatever he wanted to, not to remove himself from the place he is allotted in the society, and not expected to speak freely about what he should not long for. The culture forces many other Indians like Velutha to give up their free will, and they have to identify themselves as untouchables, which do not describe what they think they really are, but are imposed on them from without.

People gain their social existence, and is recognized at the cost of their freedom in many occasions. Estha, a merely seven year-old child lacks her capacity to know the hardship in the society. Estha, unaware of the social reality that was going to murder his childhood, once believed that "India's a Free Country" (188). Was India a really Free Country and "No one could argue with that" (188)? The quote above in the novel *The God of Small Things* exhibits the author's critical stance in regard with the society in which Estha, Velutha, and others live.

The novel also critically unveils the evils of conservatism and of the caste system in particular. Roy's devotion to criticize the social injustice is evident in the novel. Towards the end of the novel, Ammu and Velutha are tormented for their transgression of the caste system. Roy battles against those who support the system of transgression. What she critically access is whether there are "proper punishments" (309) besides severe and overdone discipline. "They didn't ask to be let off lightly. They only asked for punishments that fitted their crimes" (309). For the couple, the children witness the

infliction of the punishments on the couple, and Roy as the narrator, one should be punished according to the seriousness of his or her crime rather than the preference of the law executor. In regard with the issue of Velutha and Ammu, there is no crime as such. It, therefore, undermines the suffocating postcolonial system that is found no better than the colonial one—both keep on exploiting common people. At first, the novel deals with the issue of Law drafted in favour of the upper-caste members becomes reflective of the colonizers' time manipulated the laws to dominate the powerless. The deep-rooted caste system has developed into a callous social mechanism that disciplines and even traumatizes the Indians by excessive punishments in the name of the Love Laws.

Amidst the gloomy social system, Roy, however, is optimistic while tackling with the issues of caste in her novel. She seems to point towards a hope which goes beyond the text as the novel ends with the exchange of love between Velutha and Ammu. For example, the novel closes up with a paragraph, "Tomorrow," the women's promise to meet their lover again is the suggestive of the dismissal of the present coercive law, and also refers to the inevitable condition of law that allows freedom to all irrespective of caste system. The future with hope, like many other "Big Things, lurks unsaid inside" (136). Velutha and Ammu's meeting represents a possibility of large scale resistance of the forms of coercion and control that may pervert human culture and it also paves the way for trans-caste dialogue and communication.

Considering the above discussion, it can be argued that the impact of colonization is so deeply rooted in the post colonial Indian society in which people remain crushed. The system has abducted their freedom to live life without impinging the right of their fellows. The system will not allow the Ipes to successfully mimic Britishness—the moth

is always with them—so they are forever excluded from unified identity. This has been the real impact of British colonization in India and they keep suffering in the time of independence too. The major characters of the novel feel the pain of estrangement and they are forced to bear the violence in their own home. By showing this the novel really proves the continuing impacts of colonization in the postcolonial world.

Chapter-III: Politics of Gothicism in *The God of Small Things*

Gothic elements that surround the novel serve the subversive role throughout by making critique of the established polity and values that not only duplicate the colonial system but also exploits the ordinary people like Velutha and Ammu in the novel. The narrative of the novel is basically confined within one family and its members maintaining varying relations. The gothic prodigy becomes integrated within the setting and the characters' interpersonal relationships. Through the gothic elements, one can perceive the discrepancy between common people and the mainstream values and the ruling system. The sense of terror in the house has to do with the sins of the father or mother.

S. S. Friedman's research on the given novel shadows the gothic quality but highlights the women's harrowing tale and material history of postcolonial anguish and anxiety. S. S. Friedman writes that the novel tells "…the story of women's competing loyalties during the British Raj in India and its aftermath, although colonial and postcolonial material histories and angst are key constituents of the novel" (117). Friedman acknowledges the novelist capacity to include gender and caste into the story of the nation - particularly as this story involves violence performed, tacitly sanctioned, or ignored by the state but fails to point out the gothic elements enabling to depict the estrangement of the ordinary people from the establishment.

The author chooses domestic territory and uncannily presents the seemingly disordered sequence of action in order to deterritorialize the existing system. Roy feels imperative to deterrotorialize the system in order to expose the vain glory of postcolonial governance, especially of Kerala in narrowed sense. In broad level, the author depicts the hopelessness and dejection experienced by common people like Velutha and powerless Ammu in the high family. The questions are not addressed through the public sphere of politics, the Communist

party, or national historical narratives despite their references in the novel. As the title suggests, the public sphere of communal or state politics is not the matter of significance in the novel as it is all about the small people and their god. Due to the failure of the grand narratives, the novel mostly focuses on small narratives like that of the private sphere of intimate family relations. This is the only site where the things that the Small God can tell are buried and discovered, examined and accounted for, and preserved as a different sort of historical memory. It is not the matter of grand historical narratives of nations or their powerful rulers. It is only about the ordinary group of people of Kerala. The author defamiliarizes the story telling by deliberately making it complex with the inclusion of Gothicism.

Gothic as a powerful trope exploits the narrative to evoke both horror and romance. It is generally believed to have been invented by the English author Horace Walpole, with his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*. The term "gothic" deals with emotional extremes and expresses dark themes. Due to the exploitation of ruined castles, mansions, and monasteries, it stirs up horror. The ruins of gothic buildings arouse multifarious emotions signaling at the inevitable decay and collapse of human creation. Prominent features of gothic fiction induces terror both psychological and physical, and evokes mystery, and embodies ghosts, haunted houses and gothic architecture, castles, darkness, death, decay, doubles, madness, secrets and hereditary curses.

The gothic novel exhibits fears about possible bleak occurrences along with the socio-political change. In some cases gothic narratives are also used to depict horrors that exist in the old social and political order—the evils of an unequal, intolerant society. Through gothic narratives, Roy expresses the anxiety generated by imitating colonial mode of the conduction of the social values that remain antithetical to the poor people

like Velutha's aspiration for change and progress. The gothic creates feelings of gloom, mystery, and suspense and tends to the dramatic and the sensational, like incest, diabolism, and similar other events that trigger terror. Writers weave gothic narratives in response to anxiety over either worst change or continuation of the evil practice in the nation or region.

The term 'gothic' has initially been defined as a medieval period of post-Roman barbarism and is used to contrast with the term 'classical'. The contrast implies that classical period was orderly, simple, pure, modern, civilized, elegant, whereas the gothic was chaotic, convoluted, excessive, uncivilized, barbaric, crude, and archaic. In other words, gothic came as a revolt against so-called normal social norms. Thus the gothic plot includes trappings, which include crumbling ruins, convents, abbeys, and monastic institutions. Later, it has also begun to deal with madhouses, houses haunted by the sins of the father, guilt, and mystery, unspeakable violence and murder, sexual excess and incest. Moreover it also depicts unintelligible manuscripts; uncanny familial resemblances that repeat generations later; and tyrannical relationships such as that between a master and servant or father and daughter. The novel *The God of Small Things* encompasses such attributes.

To get detail information about the preoccupation of gothic in postcolonial literature, it is necessary to see how postcolonial fiction renders the gothic. Traditionally, gothicism displaces its distinctly historical concerns in a distinct geographic location, dwells in the historical past, and depicts the presence of the past in the present. In other words, gothic scene has the historical connections between the past and contemporary life and politics.

The issue of the presence of past in the present time makes the relevance of gothicism in the postcolonial context that cannot do away without the inclusion of colonial past in the postcolonial time. This very sense of past-ness and its uncanny return in the present constitutes gothic historical sensibility. Thus it can be concluded that most gothic fiction is shaped by a historic sensibility and the very historical sensibility should be one of the defining factors of the postcolonial gothic. Family is the foundational structure in gothic fiction by which that historical sensibility manifests itself. Gothic plots present the family and familial relationships as the places in which political, historical, and social conflicts are staged to perform either resolving or problematizing the historical facts.

As argued in the present dissertation that Roy's gothic strategy in *The God of Small Things* foregrounds the indifferent elitist government to ease the hardships undertaken by common people. Postcolonial gothic analyses the uncanny relationship between colonialism and the unspeakable violence afflicted in the colonized nation. The use of gothic in postcolonial texts is, thus, a narrative form of writing back to empire, and appears as a palimpsestic echo. As a palimpsestic echo, gothic literature exposes the unspeakable, lost, or silenced historical narratives of colonial conquest. Bernd-Peter Lange argues that: "Gothic brings to the fore what is unadmitted in a culture by painting it across, or palimpsestically underneath, time and space" (42) and the untold stories of the colonial experience receives special treatment under the postcolonial writers like Arundhati Roy.

On the basis of what is stated earlier, it is noticed that postcolonial gothic fiction arises in response to certain social, historical, or political conditions. The appearance of

the gothic in postcolonial fiction comes as a response to the failure of national or colonial politics that are ripen by sectarian, gender, class, and caste divisions. Thus postcolonial gothic is a tool by means of which postcolonial literature can respond to the increasing problematic questions of the postcolonial domestic terrain. The questions concerning legitimate origins; rightful inhabitants; usurpation and occupation; and nostalgia for an impossible nationalist politics are all understood in the postcolonial gothic as national questions. Such questions are asked of the everyday, domestic realm and postcolonial gothic is a form of commentary on the politics of home that asks foundational questions about the relations of family life and the private sphere. In the gothic, the sins of the fathers always visit themselves upon their children and curses keep on repeating throughout the generations.

Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* is woven with the gothic narrative. Such gothic narrative vehicle enables to mull over the past ruins evoking a different sort of historical memory as shown in the novel. As stated earlier, gothic is the matter of a distinct historical sensibility. It has the ability to depict the uncanny nature of seemingly natural phenomena. Gothic also becomes an appropriate narrative mode in the novel to illustrate the violence that the characters are forced to implicate, tolerate, and also become intimidated. The violence seems to be the matter of their private sphere of life but in turn the intimate sphere of the characters' lives is the product of large political problems, such as the legacy of the colonial era in the postcolonial period. Furthermore it is also the product of the failure of communism to resolve fully the question of caste and gender.

So gothic elements in the novel seem to appear when the public sphere fails to answer adequately the above mentioned questions. The problem in Pappachi's family begins when he is unable to get the recognition of identifying the moth by the British administration. Pappachi's frustration results into the violence as he continues torturing Mamachi and, as a result, other members too get tortured. Hence, Pappachi's inability to gain the public accolades of the British administration is metaphorized in his moth, which is then cast into the intimate sphere to bring about destruction to Rahel and Estha. Pappachi's moth becomes a family curse that visits itself upon each subsequent generation of the family. This is all the matter of colonial domination and the novel demonstrates how colonial vestiges remain even in the postcolonial era by means of gothic elements.

Through gothicism we can trace that the novel *The God of Small Things* depicts how Communism is unable to solve the problems of ordinary people. Communism has been hailed high as the proper governance for the advancement of the lower class people. The communist party's focus on class excludes other forms of oppression, such as caste and gender. Excluded from any serious debate in the novel, caste and gender uncannily return in the form of Ammu and Velutha's romantic love affair. This affair undermines the logic of caste superiority as well as sensibilities of propriety for the bourgeois Christian Indian woman. The romantic affair between an untouchable servant Velutha and a bourgeois single mother Ammu has been considered as the combination of the two biggest threats to national and political stability. It reveals that the supposed order and system of the family structure turns out to be just male authority over women and the wealthy over the poor.

The major characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* evoke violent and extraordinary passions of the gothic nature. Such violent and extraordinary passions reflect the social problems and become comment on the social and historical contradictions of their time and place. It can be illustrated from several examples like: Pappachi's anger resulting from colonial alienation; Baby Kochamma's indignance stemming from her fears that the communists will seize her status of the owner of the land. Similarly, Estha's and Rahel's guilt has much to do with the fact that there exists no space in which to memorize the brutal death of untouchable Velutha. Ammu's and Velutha's romantic passion is the product of the very love laws that prohibit inter-caste love affairs in the superstitious communist Kerala society.

The novel uses gothic elements to deal with complex and intricate emotional stage. For instance, Pappachi cannot rebuke the colonial administration for preventing his recognition as the discoverer of his moth. However, his frustration and anger of colonial administration becomes reflective in the beating of his wife. Similarly Baby Kochamma never admits that she is afraid of the Naxalites who will steal her land. Instead she directs her anger against Velutha and persecutes him. Likewise, Ammu and Velutha are unable to fight against the social norms and values of the love laws that separate them, so they focus on their erotic desire and only discuss the small things. Estha and Rahel can neither admit their role in Velutha's brutal killing, nor can they mourn his death publicly. Instead they get engaged in incestuous relation that can allay the unspoken emotional pain.

The gothic is concerned with strangeness and alienation, the appearance of the familiar in the midst of the unfamiliar, or the unfamiliar in the midst of something familiar. An eerie feeling is the result of violent action. It reflects the condition of

homelessness triggered by the revelation of the foreignness prevailed within domestic sphere. Straight writing shows something homely, familiar, and easy way of life. This mode of writing cannot effectively depict the unruly, lunatic and disorderly system where as the gothic signifies the opposite—the unhomely, foreign, hidden, and concealed within the fabric of the society.

In the postcolonial gothic, homes and dwellings are the geographic sites in which larger political, historical, and national allegories become foregrounded. The postcolonial gothic gives prominence to the geography in which action is unfolded. In this regard, Rosemary George reminds that: "Homes and nations are defined in the stances of confrontation with what is considered 'not-home,' with the foreign, with distance. … it is in the heyday of British imperialism that England gets defined as 'Home' in opposition to 'The Empire' which belongs to the English but is not England"(4). Gothic textual elements in postcolonial fiction seem to appear upon the realization of the failure of the national or political project.

Gothicism is inextricably linked up with the enlightenment in opposite manner. It becomes subversive to what the proponents of enlightenment give focus. Taken as a metaphor for mystery, the concealed, and unknowable, the gothic is considered to be the flip side of the enlightenment. Early gothic fiction displaces its plots of tyranny, usurpation, and illegitimacy onto exotic locations in the past. More sophisticated examples of the gothic, however, achieved gothic thrills without such geographical and temporal travel but with the depiction of the homeless environment. The presence of unhomeliness within homely location underlines that evil not only return home, but originate there as well.

Similarly, gothicism reverses pastoral setting in order to depict the cruel and violent action and event. In this regard, John Paul Riquelme observes that:

> … the Gothic is structurally and implicitly a negative version of pastoral because of its turn to foreign locales that are threatening and bizarre. It later relocates the antipastoral setting and its implications much closer to home: on native soil, on board ship, in the sanitarium, in the library, in the house, in the bedroom, in the schoolroom, in the mind, and in language (587).

Postcolonial gothic fiction is, in many respects, a negative version of pastoral. *The God of Small Things* locates the gothic in the familial house, the customs and rituals of village life (Kerala), and idealist notions of regional hybridity.

The novel *The God of Small Things* galvanizes horror and terror within familial structure evoked through the depiction of the ancestral house in Ayemenem. Thus, houses become useful metaphors for the gothic quest for family, parentage, origins and identity. The depiction of gothic in postcolonial texts, likewise, invests human actions and social institutions with gothic potential. "[S]hould we be surprised," asks Bonnie Honig "to find that anxieties about the identities and agendas of one's compatriots . . . might find expression by way of novels that are set in the uncanny domestic terrain of the . . . household?"(112)

The novel *The God of Small Things* embodies political, social, or historical conditions. The gothic in the novel digs out the failure of national or colonial politics driven by sectarian, gender, class, and caste divisions. Postcolonial gothic encourages a rich sense of the presence of the past, the historical depth that underlies and helps to

determine the shape and significance of the present through gothic elements. In this regard, the novel entails colonial past when Pappachi witnesses his status compared to the moth. The novel does not end up with the representation of the colonial past. It also embodies postcolonial present time when the ancestral house witnesses its disintegration.

As stated above, postcolonial gothic fiction creates the sense of past-ness in the present. It does so by investing intimate relations and private structures of human relation and kinship like marriage and family life with a deep historical and political sensibility. H. L. Malchow sees in the gothic representation of the racial other a

> vocabulary . . . by which racial and cultural difference could be represented as unnatural—a "racial gothic" discourse that employed certain striking metaphoric images to filter and give meaning to a flood of experience and information from abroad, but that also thereby recharged itself for an assault on domestic social and physical "pathology."(3)

The use of gothic as uncivilized, barbaric, and excessive connotations grant the narrative mode with ample metaphors. This helps to elicit the reader's horror through its representations of race and racial difference, and the threat of racial contamination.

Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* uses the house as the gothic figure in order to engage with a haunting and unhomely concept of history. The novel points out that there is no escape from the past due to colonial legacy and compels to bear a high price upon the present. There are five different houses in the novel with different nature. The houses are the Ayemenem house, Chacko's metaphoric house of history, Velutha's small house, Comrade Pillai's house, and Kari Saipu's house. Kari Saipuu's house later becomes the Heritage Hotel which the twins also named as the History House.

Roy strokes gothic finish at the representation of these houses in the novel. The houses bear the trait of haunted history. While talking about the haunted history house, Chacko furthers the notion that the colonial era produced a generation of Indians who are estranged and alienated from their authentic, pre-colonial histories and identities. For Chacko, postcoloniality is a state of estrangement and alienation. The Ayemenem house portrays such state on a much smaller, intimate scale.

The root cause of violence in the Ayemenem house lies in Pappachi's lack of recognition of the moth from the British administration. His moth is the signifier for uncanny repetition throughout the generations. The moth represents Pappachi's jealousy, disappointment, and insecurity that get displaced onto other members of the family and manifest themselves as intimate forms of domestic violence. This violence is inherited transgenerationally and is passed down through the generations from Pappachi to Ammu and her children. Kari Saipu's house is presented with multiple functions: it is the twins' escape hideout, Ammu's and Velutha's romantic retreat, the site of Velutha's beating, and later, the renovated and sanitized Heritage Hotel. In its position as the mysterious and foreign house across the river from the Ayemenem house, the History House that suggests the homeless environs within a house that triggers horror.

The major characters of the novel feel the pain of being estranged in their own homes. In other words they are in unhomely situation within their homes. This is due to the presence of colonial impacts even in the postcolonial era. The novel presents such situation of the characters as the matter of estrangement from the centre of family and society. Chacko's metaphoric history house best represents this. David Punter argues in *Postcolonial Imaginings* that the

> very structure of the term 'postcolonial' itself, its apparent insistence on a time 'after,' on an 'aftermath,' exposes itself precisely to the threat of a return, falls under the sign of repetition, . . .[which makes a gothic] history written according to . . . [the] logic of the phantom, the revenant, . . .[and] haunting. (193)

Punter reads the trope of the haunted house in the novel as an example of this form of postcolonial gothic haunting.

As the novel progresses and the plot takes a sentimental and erotic turn towards Ammu's and Velutha's love story and the twins' tragedy, the estrangement is further enhanced. Chacko's metaphorical history house and Pappachi's moth frame the unhomely through the family structure. This seems to align itself with the novel's larger discourse on the small god and small things, when in reality this discourse of the private sphere locks out the private narratives of children, unmarried women, longtime family servants, and those of lower caste and class. These smaller private narratives are, like the very shifting history of the History House itself, buried and papered over by larger, more authoritative narratives.

Roy uses petty narrative in order to deal with private sphere. She mostly focuses on the smaller, more insidious dialectics of power of men over women, masters over servants, and upper caste over lower caste within the domestic terrain. The novel finally reveals the secrets regarding Ammu's and Velutha's love affair, the twins' role in Velutha's death and its subsequent traumatic role upon their adult lives. This shows that the erotic and intimate elements of the novel display their estrangement through which

the grand narrative of colonial alienation manifests evoking inevitable terror in the postcolonial psyche.

The novel *The God of Small Things* is constructed on the logic that the sins of the father are inherited and haunt subsequent generations of the family until a resolution brings about a revelation of truth. The sins of the father are inherited, but they are not always easily visible or acknowledged by the affected family members because the father's deeds are usually kept secret. Pappachi definitely leaves an unhomely mark upon the Ayemenem house. His moth is symbolic not just of the deceased grandfather's Anglophilism, but of his failure to get the British to return his love by bestowing upon him acknowledgement of his discovery.

In the issue of Pappachi's moth, Julie Mullaney argues that Pappachi's "job of collecting, preserving, and indexing India's fauna for the colonial archive, puts him at the heart of the colonial enterprise" (33). It can also be justified from Freud's logic of repression. Pappachi's sorrowful loss of respect and admiration are driven beneath the surface and resurface in distorted form as aggression, violence, and hatred toward women. It becomes evident in the novell as: "Pappachi's moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. Its pernicious ghost—gray, furry and with unusually dense dorsal tufts—haunted every house that he ever lived in. It torments him and his children and his children's children" (33). This even becomes symbolic to the history of postcolonial nations fated to be haunted with the colonial past.

Similarly, Pappachi's moth haunting the Ayemenem house which indicates the power of the repressed has more to do with colonialism, gender, and male privilege than class. While many characters are able to acknowledge the haunting presence of

Pappachi's moth, most are unable to locate the moth's presence in their daily lives. For example Chacko's philandering, Ammu's righteous sense of injustice, and Baby Kochamma's resentment and betrayal of Ammu and the twins are instances of its uncanny repetition.

The God of Small Things illustrates how India's colonial period continues to haunt its present. Pappachi's unrecognized moth is, within the novel, a loss of love, esteem, and respect. As such, it becomes the root cause of the unhomely situation with the social and political context of colonization. It also reflects that loving the conqueror as a professional goal and not a romantic love story of the likes of Ammu's affair with Velutha. In other words, the novel revolves around the colonial idiom as a legitimate historical form of postcolonial estrangement. It also represents the intimate and private form of uncanniness in the novel.

The estrangement of the characters is also seen in other instances. Papppachi's continuous torture to Mammachi is an example of this case. The concept is made strikingly apparent in Pappachi's nightly brass vase beatings of Mammachi and Chacko's intervention on his mother's behalf. Pappachi displaces his anger or sadness about the loss of love and respect onto his wife. The brass vase beatings are the most obvious form of violence as Roy writes:

> Late at night he went into his study and brought out his favorite mahogany rocking chair. He put it down in the middle of the driveway and smashed it into little bits with a plumber's monkey wrench. . . . He never touched Mammachi again. But he never spoke to her either as long as he lived. . . . In the evenings, when he knew visitors were expected, he would sit on the

> verandah and sew buttons that weren't missing onto his shirts, to create the impression that Mammachi neglected him. To some small degree he did succeed in further corroding Ayemenem's view of working wives. (47)

After the intervention of Chacko, Pappachi never touched and spoke to Mammachi. He behaved as if he is neglected. Then this physical violence of the nightly beatings shifts to another form intimate violence of keeping wives unemployed. This helped to keep the wife economically and emotionally dependent on the husbands.

The relationship between Pappachi and Mammachi can be stretched up to the male female relationship in postcolonial Indian society. It exemplifies how male continued their superiority over the females. Behind this gendered subjugation of Pappachi's passive aggressive revenge lies a highly gendered and classed definition of women's rightful place in India. Pappachi's conduct with Mammachi shows that the male does not want female to occupy higher status in the society than that of her husband in every respects. Pappachi is unemployed and his career ended without proper acknowledgement of his achievements, he is jealous of his wife whose business of the pickle factory is thriving. Hence, Mammachi's greater success creates much more hatred and fear of women in Pappachi. The relationship between Mammachi and Pappachi is, thus, seen as a complicated exchange between east and west as well as class, gender, and caste.

Pappachi imitates the nature of the colonizers. He represents the new ruling class of people after decolonization in India. Such new ruling class continued similar domination against the lower class people. This shows that the life of the ordinary class

of people did not improve even after decolonization. The Anglophile Pappachi only adopted so-called modern or western ways outwardly. Pappachi's reforms were mostly limited to outer forms. The fundamental structures of his home life, particularly his rule over his wife and children, did not change. These intimate structures were found threatening to Pappachi on the grounds that they violated proper modes of gender, class, or caste behavior. So the problem was solved through the practice of traditional gender roles. This can be justified with Pappachi's practice of traditional gender roles that allows him to refuse Mammachi to explore her potentiality in music by taking violin class in Europe.

Double standard touches upon the core of patriarchal psyche. In this regard, Pappachi also maintains double standard i.e. to show himself a modern man, he allows Mammachi to be an entrepreneur in Kerala. She owns and manages a pickle factory there. It is also remarkable that Pappachi allows her to do the business related to the traditional female skill of preparing food in the kitchen. Preparation of pickle is a matter of female in the family and Mammachi is allowed to do the similar business as it is the field of women.

Traditionally, in Indian society, business is handled by men. It has to do with the economic status. Women are economically dependent in the traditional society. Entrepreneurship and independent business ventures seem a more typically masculine activity. Pappachi allows Mammachi's entrepreneurship because her business is of domestic type, i.e. preparation of traditional Indian foods and pickle. Mammachi's business venture allows her access to the public sphere of economic exchange, which eventually converts her home into a factory. Pappachi could not tolerate Mammachi's

economic success and his violence increases. This makes the homely domestic sphere an unhomely one and proves the estrangement of Mammachi from the centre of family.

For Pappachi, Mammachi's business venture becomes threat for his masculinity. He becomes militant against her as she expands her relations out of home. It is not because it results in the increase of maternal or wifely attention towards children and a dejected, lonely husband. Pappachi may weave "sullen circles around the mounds of red chilies and freshly powdered yellow turmeric" (145), but he never engages in an act of violence against the business as he does against her musical talent when he snaps Mammachi's violin in two. This complicated balance between Pappachi's rage and a tolerance is very important. On the one hand it has to do with Pappachi's alienation with Anglophilism and the failure to gain recognition by the British. On the other hand it stands for his failure to execute his complete control over his domestic sphere.

The novel focuses on the domestic violence occurred after marriage. It becomes symptomatic of the oppression and subjugation of women within domestic arena. The characters like Chacko and Ammu in the novel undergo a severe exploitation. They speak of its existence openly and the twins Rahel and Estha are fully aware of their grandfather's brutal oppression. These are the more secretive events that the novel wishes to divulge; telling readers about Pappachi's abuse first. The novel also puts the big and small within private life into context, and illustrates how some secrets haunt the borders of family life and threaten to return to extract their due price. This is all possible with the help of gothic tools.

The characters in the novel experience unfriendliness among each other in their dwellings. In one of his "Oxford Moods," Chacko tells the twins metaphorically about

the problems of history and the significance of recovering lost historical narratives. He uses the metaphor of the house to evoke history. Chacko tells the twins that: "history was like an old house at night. With all the lamps lit. And ancestors whispering inside"(51). Chacko's delineation of the history house bears gothic trait:

> The old house on the hill wore its steep, gabled roof pulled over its ears like a low hat. The walls, streaked with moss, had grown soft, and bulged a little with dampness that seeped up from the ground. The wild, overgrown garden was full of the whisper and scurry of small lives. . . . The house looked empty. The doors and windows were locked. The front verandah bare. Unfurnished. . . . [A]nd inside, Baby Kochamma was still alive. (4)

Through the above explication of the Ayemenem house, the novel weaves the gothic structure with in the Ayemenem house.

The discourse of Chacko opens up a new avenue to reading repressed history. The metaphor "history was like an old house at night" reflects the complexity and uncertainty caused by the British colonial rule of India. Chacko's metaphoric history house finds familial ancestors and their artifacts uncanny because the colonial process has alienated knowledge of them from past to present generation. When one tries to reveal the authenticity of the precolonial past, one may penetrate in the ancestral house like the Ayemenem house or Chacko's history house. Trying to dig out the authenticity of the past is something like the process of finding out the authenticity of the Ayemenem house. However, one becomes frustrated to know the authenticity like the history house whose authenticity is differed each time one tries to know. In the novel, we can see that the

house unfolds layer after layer. No layer is final. It goes on peeling out many layers. It is the symptomatic of tracing out the authenticity of the history. History of Kerala does not have the final finding. It is like the chimera box of the Ayemenem house.

Chacko as the member of the history house finds Anglophilism ever shifting notion and fails to be its part. It is evident from his personal experience of his own family. The peculiar way in which Chacko expresses these theses on history is significant:

> "But we can't go in," Chacko explained, because we've been locked out. 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 captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves." . . . "We're prisoners of War," Chacko said. Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. (52)

The metaphor of the house allows Chacko to explore a form of cultural alienation that is caused by the colonial era. He is bound up in the politically hegemonic role of love in coercive national or colonial agendas. He uses the image of war. That the war 'made us adore our conquerors' suggests that loving one's conquerors is not natural or willing, but as coercive as the forced labor of a camp for prisoners of war. It is all because of colonial domination.

The novel also gives space to the female character, Ammu devoid her voice in the family. She makes critique of Indian psyche that mimics the conqueror. Her words

unravel the excluded desire. After listening to Chacko's lecture to the twins, Ammu follows Chacko's comment that the war made them adore their conquerors with the retort and subtle corrective: " 'Marry our conquerors, is more like it,' Ammu said dryly, referring to Margaret Kochamma" (52). Ammu's retort is an acknowledgement to the prohibitory desire in the novel. Virtually all characters in *The God of Small Things* harbor or have harbored a desire for the prohibited other. This is gothic in nature. The desire in each instance differs greatly from the next. Pappachi for British recognition of his moth, Mammachi for Chacko, Chacko for both Margaret Kochamma and his factory girls, Ammu for both a Bengali Hindu man and Velutha, Baby Kochamma for Father Mulligan, Kari Saipu for the young boy, Rahel for Larry McCaslin, and Rahel for Estha are the different examples of the attraction of the different characters.

The History House constitutes the principal image to the depiction of the gothic haunted house. In the novel, the notion of history as a haunted house came from Chacko. It is Chacko who associates history with a house and illustrates what history is like. While Chacko uses various metaphors to explain what history is, the twins associate this abstract house with a specific domain that is not their own house:

> Estha and Rahel had no doubt that the house Chacko meant was the house on the other side of the river, in the middle of the abandoned rubber estate where they had never been. Kari Saipu's house. The Black Sahib. The Englishman who had "gone native." Who spoke Malayalam and wore mundus. Ayemenem's own Kurtz. Ayemenem his private Heart of Darkness. . . . The house had lain empty for years. Very few people had seen it. But the twins could picture it. . . . With cool stone floors and dim

> walls and billowing ship-shaped shadows. Plump, translucent lizards lived behind old pictures, and waxy, crumbling ancestors with tough toe-nails and breath that smelled of yellow maps gossiped in sibilant, papery whispers. (51-52)

The above quote underscores the representation of the house as the replica of the hunted house often depicted in the gothic writing of Walpole. In the twins' History House, whispering ancestors have transformed themselves into a comical subversion of Chacko's discourse with their 'waxy crumbling features', 'tough toe-nails', and 'bad breath'. Yet the History House becomes veritable mine in order to engage into the novel as the architectural site for cultural estrangement and a political commentary on civilization. The History House stages a thoroughly erotic and sexualized notion of colonial history.

Eroticism undercuts the linearity of the colonial history by invoking personal passions with political colour. In the novel *The God of Small Things,* the image of Ammu and Velutha's making love, for example, hauntingly looms over the History House, and provides alternative historical narratives of colonialism and communism. In doing so, it poses the problem of caste and its resolution in the society through the union between the two lovers which displaces traditional concept of caste, class and colonialism.

In the novel *God of Small Things*, the house sustains importance from various perspectives. The History House transforms itself from the site of an Englishman's sexual perversion to the twin's site of comfort from loss, to Ammu and Velutha's romantic sanctuary, to the site of Velutha's beating, and finally, to a luxury hotel. Yet no amount of renovation and air conditioning can drive away the haunting remnants of the past,

which remain buried but determine the hotel's odd character of forbidden sexuality, loss, and history.

We can perceive dramatic yet significant transformation of the ancestral house from Saipu estate to History House to Heritage Hotel which demonstrates the shift from the colonial era to multinational capitalist one. Erotic element has been used to show the transformation that underlines the perversion of so-called high civilizational ethos. The above idea becomes evident in the truncated kathakali performances staged by the Heritage Hotel's swimming pool: "While Kunti revealed her secret to Karna on the riverbank, courting couples rubbed suntan oil on each other. While fathers played sublimated sexual games with their nubile teenaged daughters, Poothana suckled young Krishna at her poisoned breast" (121). The performance playfully undermines the authenticity and loftiness of the classical epics like Mahabharata. The comic version of the performance, however, has the potentiality to subvert the linearity of the history. It reverses traditional linear history with teleological point. The classical dances of the kathakali that tell stories of epic familial estrangement, betrayal, and violence are juxtaposed with frolicking families on vacation, but also echo the savage not so distant past of the History House.

Kathakali performance also exhibits the familial and cultural estrangement as faced by postcolonial people like Estha and Rahel. They had seen its work before. Another morning. Another stage. Another kind of frenzy" (224). This layering of kathakali tales of family bonds forged and estranged, alienated and betrayed with the 'sublimated sexual games' of ordinary families emphasizes that while some family relationships may express their sexual desire openly, many of them disguise their sexual

content through displacement or other forms of masking that may return uncannily as distorted forms of desire, betrayal, estrangement, and alienation. Such representation in the novel becomes gothic because it arouses a kind of fear at the reading of such cultural practice. The establishment becomes scared at the existence of such other hidden familial and historical facts.

Through the history house, Estha and Rahel learn to grasp the uncertainty prevailed in either familial or social relationships. For example, While Velutha is known and familiar to the family and develops a loving and even father-like relationship with the youngsters, though he is untouchable servant, he is assigned to 'outsider' status to the house and the family designation. The twins take Chacko's intellectual uncertainty and notion that history derives from one's own family and house; and gothicize it by displacing it away from the familiar Ayemenem house to the unknown haunted house across the river, which they christen the History House. In doing so, they find history packed with secrets, mysteries, and the unknown. On the one hand, this move replicates the typical gothic mode of displacing oneself to geography elsewhere from the home, region, or nation. However, such displacement into the alien territory ironically backlashes the territory from where it starts.

The novel, however, does not spare the Ayemenem house. It represents Ayemenem house as a haunted, gothic house full of secrets like that of History House. The novel represents the haunting remnants of a colonial period in the Kari Saipu house and in the mimicry of Chacko. For Estha and Rahel, history is a gothic fright, but it is one that entails the authoritative familial structure denying acknowledging as its own, such as servants, transgressive desire, or sexual abuse.

In the novel, Ammu's and Velutha's affair represented as the gothic provides alternative criticism on Marxism and Communism that sidelines domestic and gender concerns. Because of their affair which becomes transgressive act, it makes "cost of living to climb . . . to unaffordable heights" (318). In this line, Deepika Bahri views the central erotic encounter in the novel as contrasting with the larger sphere of commodity exchange:

> The human rate of exchange contrasts sharply with that which prevails in the world of commodities. In re-presenting the events, the narrator chooses to leave us in an uncomfortable zone of libidinal desire, a rejected arena [by Marxist critics and]. . . a realm of sensuousness that has historically invited the venom of critics.(231-32)

As argued above, Ammu's and Velutha's affair becomes a part of administered world of exchange. The affair, however, uncannily defies the social division of everyday life—who you can love, who you can associate with in public, and where and how you live. The defiance of the everyday parameter unearths the estranged self of everyday life. For example, Baby Kochamma and Comrade Pillai betray Velutha to the authorities who are only too happy to violently avenge the honor of a bourgeois Hindu woman. Their romantic affair constitutes the biggest political thing they can possibly do and, consequently, asks them to pay the ultimate price.

The novel *The God of Small Things* has the political undercurrents shown in small things like affair, incest, etc. Brinda Bose argues that "to read her novel politically one may need to accept that there are certain kinds of politics that have more to do with interpersonal relations than with grand revolutions, that the most personal dilemmas can

also become public causes, that erotics can also be a politics" (68). For Roy, erotics become political because the private realm is itself a dimension of history and a powerful arena to enact political leadership and to reflect concerns for the nation-states. In the language of big and small that the novel employs, the small things like erotic desire, acknowledgement, and friendship are political acts that challenge the social status quo of caste, gender, and class.

Recognition and the politics of recognition form the basis not only of the love affair, but also the twins' love and spectatorship of Velutha. Ammu's and Velutha's recognition of each other is presaged by Ammu's recognition that her children share a special bond with Velutha that rivals her own maternal bond of blood kinship. She recognizes that this man already plays a loving, paternal role for her children even though he is not of their blood. Rahel's boisterous recognition of Velutha during the Naxalite rally gives Baby Kochamma a convenient target for all of her class and caste resentment as well as her sexual frustrations, which eventually precipitate Velutha's downfall and murder.

Ammu's silent recognition of Velutha at the rally summons a swerve of familiar and comforting childhood memories of Velutha while remaking the adult man uncannily as a once-familiar man with unknown secrets harbored deep within him: "She hoped that under his careful cloak of cheerfulness he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world that she so raged against" (167). Her recognition, in other words, frames their romantic affair through the dialectic between what things appear to be externally (Velutha as a devoted and loving servant) and the secretive truth about what they are internally (Velutha as disobedient servant, political radical, and desiring subject),

which is mirrored in the twins' own formulation of the History House as a place in which all of the secretive internal things of a house may be uncannily relocated and reenacted. This all has to do with Gothicism.

In *The God of Small Things*, the twins' incest provides another gothic element. Incest undercuts and subverts the linearity by means of emphasizing and reworking the interpenetration of the public into the private sphere. In other words, incest becomes a way in the novel to illustrate how the big political things of life are inseparable from the small things of family life. It talks about the incestuous relation between the twins Rahel and Estha. The way Roy describes them in the beginning of the novel shows that the twins are constructed as a single, unified being: "Esthappen and Rahel thought of themselves together as Me, and separately, individually, as We or Us. As though they were a rare breed of Siamese twins, physically separate, but with joint identities" (4-5). The twins are only physically separate but they have joint identities. Their joint identities manifest themselves through the uncanny commingling of one twin's memories and experiences with another.

The novel provides the flip side of the familial bond which sometimes harbours otherwise repressed sides. Roy writes: "Rahel has a memory of waking up one night giggling at Estha's funny dream. She has other memories too that she has no right to have. She remembers, for instance (though she hadn't been there) what the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man did to Estha in Abhilash Talkies" (5). That unity is broken by the unspeakable tragedy involving Velutha's murder and Estha's betrayal of Velutha, which results in the physical and emotional separation of the twins from one another:

> [S]he thinks of Estha and Rahel as Them, because, separately, the two of them are no longer what They were or ever thought They'd be. Ever. Their lives have a size and a shape now. Estha has his and Rahel hers. Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks andLimits have appeared like a team of trolls on their separate horizons. (5)

The above quote demonstrates the inevitable separation between the two of them. The separation, however, enables them to realize their self. Their physical separation begins after Rahel's migration away from home to the United States. There in America she ostensibly moves on with her life and marries an American (an outsider). Due to the misery of separation, Estha remains traumatized, frozen due to the different perception. It has got gothic nature.

The gothic treatment of the familiar within family members digs out what has hitherto remained buried. For example, Rahel's return home from abroad signals the return of repressed memories of tragedy and betrayal, or the flooding of the political and public back into the private sphere, which Estha had tried to seal off with his emotional and psychic detachment and silence. The incestuous act between the twins goes to show just how permeable the borders and other boundaries are that separate big from small, and public from private. The twins' incest manifests in distorted form that the secrets, mysteries, and losses of the past live on into the future. The twins' incest attempts to resolve the traumas and ghosts of the past i.e. sexual abuse and their involvement in Velutha's death.

Gothic elements help us realize the simmering problems in the backdrop of the society. The private issues and political problems turn into public that stands at odds with

the traditional values. Although it is not represented as horrific and dreadful, incest in *The God of Small Things* is an attempt to heal. It is an act of desperation, last resort, and survival to heal the festering wounds of the past. It is assumed that incest attempts to repair the transgression of the Love Laws by Ammu and Velutha as well as Estha's traumatic encounter with the Orangedrink Lemondrink man: "what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief" (311).

In the context of the novel's dialectic between external and internal, gothic representation of the erotic desire among the characters results in subverting the elitist cultural assumption related to the family and social structure. It is invoked to counterbalance the damage caused by Ammu's act of caste miscegenation, the direction of erotic desire externally, towards endogamy outside of the family. The twins' incest is the repressed thing that comes back to haunt the Ayemenem house after many years of displacement. The novel has shown a failure of all desire that is externally directed. When the twins lack the healthy family environment, they get engaged in incestuous relation for the consolation. Incest is the violation of norms and values of the society. Incest is no liberatory or idealist solution of the political and personal problems of the novel, but the natural result of the betrayal of Baby Kochamma on the grounds of caste and gender propriety and the hypocrisy of the Marxist party on the grounds of caste.

In short, gothic reading of the novel critically evokes political content of the novel's geography—its history of conquest by foreign powers and ideologies, its peculiar caste hierarchies, the historical dominance of communism, the tension between men and women—intervenes to make romantic love an impossible solution. The gothic with its haunted houses of history, its desire present only in uncanny reversals, doubles, and

absences, its insistence that history and tragedy redound throughout the generations of a single family, and its fascination with transgressive desire all prove the novel to be a gothic novel. By means of the gothic, the novel displays the problems faced by the people of the once colonized nation like India due to the impacts of colonialism even after independence.

Chapter-IV: Conclusion: Revealing Estrangement through Gothicism

The politics of rendering gothic elements that abound in the novel is to demonstrate the hopeless and pathetic postcolonial society of Kerala. Even after decolonization, people of Kerala find no more change in their life. The standard of life peculiarly becomes reduced. Colonial corrupted culture becomes translated into and stretched up to postcolonial Kerala. Legacy of the colonial polity induces suffocation because the existing government exploits the downtrodden and untouchable people. Gradually, hope and aspiration of the postcolonial people of Kerala becomes strangled, they become alienated within and estranged from the establishment. Old ideology of the caste system becomes deeply rooted and ingrained in the mind of people. The narrative makes ironic portrayal of the state government that prolongs the caste system in order to appease elite people of the upper class. Communist Party holds sway Kerala but it extends old system that reverses the ethos and principle of communism. In the novel, the leaders like Comrade Pillai act conservatively reversing the spirit of communism. It inherits the colonial legacy. It exploits the discourse of widow, untouchability and caste system to uphold its polity. Common people like Velutha and Ammu are forced to suffer a lot because they love each other. Velutha is a Paravan who is considered to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not spoil themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint. It makes common people estranged from the mainstream system. Thus, the lives of the poor and untouchables become more and more degraded.

Even conversion to Christianity fails to improve the situation of the untouchables. It rather impinges on their usual life to feel more degraded than the previous one and get separated from the colonizers too. With the postcolonial gothic elements, the novel suggests

the harrowing experiences of the conversion because of the colonial occupation. Many native cultures witnessed their deaths because colonialism forced people to abandon native or tribal cultures and traditions and values. Baby Kochamma's father changed his religion when he was seven years old and later he became local priest. Even after the conversion, the condition of people did not change because untouchability persists as it is. The untouchables go to separate churches as they have separate priest. More tragic thing is that after independence they have not been entitled to any benefits like job reservations or bank loans at low interest rates because, officially, on paper, they are Christians i.e. casteless people.

Even after independence, the aspiration of the people is not accomplished. The communist regime of Kerala extends the same system. In the novel, Ammu's and castless Paravan Velutha's love affair brings cataclysm. What is striking in the representation of the dead body of Velutha is the gothic portrayal. As Deepika Bahri views, the central erotic encounter in the novel is extended to the level of commodity exchange as Roy writes "The human rate of exchange contrasts sharply with that which prevails in the world of commodities"(231). In representing the events, the novel unearths an uncomfortable zone of libidinal desire, a rejected arena by Marxist critics and a realm of sensuousness that has historically been degraded.

Gothic representation of Ammu's and Velutha's affair constitutes a part of the world of exchange. The affair resists the existing social order of everyday life. Their romantic affair constitutes political issue by challenging the Love Laws which seriously impinges on Ammu's and Velutha's usual life. The rebelliousness of these everyday strictures unmasks the unhomely nature of everyday life as Baby Kochamma and Comrade Pillai betray Velutha to the authorities who are only too happy to violently

avenge the honor of a bourgeois Hindu woman. Velutha's hope of gaining support from his party and leader Comrade Pillai shatters and thus he gets estranged. It echoes Brinda Bose's contention that interpersonal relations entail much more political undercurrents than the grand political revolutions. In the novel, erotics turn to be political because the private realm is itself a part of history rather than political leadership and nation-states. In the use of the gothic tropes that the novel employs, the small things like incest, erotic desire, acknowledgement, and friendship are the things which are actually political acts that challenge contemporary convention of caste, gender, and class.

Rahel and Estha's incest also indicates the estrangement of the people from the family and society. The family itself becomes an epitome of torture. In the novel, the torture begins right from Pappachi and later other subsequent senior members extend it. Therefore incest stands as the resistance of the imposition of defunct moral codes with which Velutha and Ammu witness their death. The writer uses much effort in representing the twins as a single, integrated being. As the novel opens, Esthappen and Rahel anticipate themselves as displaying sense of unification and integrated unlike other members who fight against each other.

Obviously, the representation of the incest suggests the deviation from the centre of the family and society. It has subversive strategy like the gothic literature that uses uncanny elements to resist the so-called order and classical linear world view. The incestuous act between the twins goes to show just how permeable the borders and other boundaries are that separate the big from the small and the public from the private. The twins' incest manifests in distorted form that the secrets, mysteries, and losses of the past

live on into the future. The twins' incest attempts to resolve the traumas and ghosts of the past, from sexual abuse to guilt about Velutha's death.

Summing up, the novel *The God of Small Things* gives gothic treatment to the representation of Ayemenem House which is similar to the haunted house to the people living there. It is a very strange house which seizes everyone to their degeneration and decay. Similarly, Ammu and Velutha's affair also receives gothic colour. Usually they meet at night in the secluded house. The writer's representation of the scene is very gloomy and fearsome. It is very uncanny. Likewise, Estha and Rahel's incest also shares gothic trait. The twins' incest is something that comes back to haunt the Ayemenem house after many years of displacement.

As already discussed elsewhere in present dissertation, gothicism has been developed as a literary criticism to subvert the monotonous linearity and formal convention of classic writing. The present novel uses the gothic mode in order to foreground estrangement seen on many occasions. The estrangement is seen from the colonial period. Pappachi experiences inevitable estrangement from the British government as the colonial agents decline to recognize him as the discoverer of the moth. Being frustrated, Pappachi vents his anger over Mammachi, Ammu, Estha, and Rahel and they become estranged from the core of the family. They are deviated from the convention of the family. Ammu not only transcends the usual laws of love of traditional family but also subverts by falling in love with Velutha. After having divorce with Margaret, Chacko is estranged from Britain and is forced to return to India. Baby Kochamma also fails to gain love from the British priest and gets frustrated.

Thus the novel has shown a failure of all desire that is externally directed. When the twins lack the healthy family environment, they get engaged in incestuous relation for the consolation. Incest is the violation of norms and values of the society. Incest is no emancipatory or idealist solution of the political and personal problems of the novel. It turns out to be the natural result of the betrayal of Baby Kochamma grounding on caste and gender aptness. It also hints at the hypocrisy of the Marxist party dealing with the practical problems related to gender and caste.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 8th ed. India: Wordsworth, 2005.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: Verso, 1991.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter, 1991), 336-357.

Ashcroft, Bill, Geneth Griffiths, and Hellen Tiffin, eds. *Postcolonial Studies Reader*. London and Newyork: Routledge, 1994.

… *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Bahri, Deepika. *Native Intelligence: Aesthetics, Politics, and Postcolonial Literature*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* London: Routledge, 1994.

Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphor.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

"Postcolonialism". *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New York: Oxford UP, 2006: 340-360.

Bose, Brinda. "In Desire and Death: Eroticism as Politics in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things.'" *ARIEL* 29 (1998): 59-72.

Clarke, Anna. "Language, Hybridity and Dialogism in The God of Small Things". *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things*. Ed. Alex Tickell. London: Routledge, 2007: 132-141.

Durix, Jean-Pierre. "The Postcoloniality of *the God of Small Things*." Reading Arundhati

Roy's The God of Small Things. Ed. Carole and Jean-Pierre Durix. Dijon: Edition Universitaries de Jion 2002. 7-22.

Ellis, Markman. *The History of Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Fanon, Franz. *Black Skin White Masks.* Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

- - - . *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1968.

Fields-Meyer, Thomas and Elizabeth Fernandez. "No Small Things." People Weekly 3 Nov 1997: 107-09.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Feminism, State Fictions and Violence: Gender Geopolitics and Transnationalism." *Communal/Plural,* vol. 9, No. 1. 2001.

Gandhi, Leela. *Postcolonial Theory*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998.

George, Rosemary Marangoly. *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth- Century Fiction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Gibert, Bart Moore. *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London: Verso, 2000.

Honig, Bonnie. *Democracy and the Foreigner*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Jayaram, N. Ed. *The Indian Diaspora*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004.

Lange, Bernd-Peter. "Postcolonial Gothic: Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*." In

"The Decolonizing Pen": Cultural Diversity and the Transnational Imaginary in Rushdie's Fiction, edited by Liselotte Glage and Ruediger Kunow, 39-50. Trier, Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2001.

Loomba, Ania. Colonialism – Postcolonialism. London: Routledge, 1998.

Maddison, Angus. *Class Structure and Economic Growth: INDIA AND Pakistan since the Moghals*. New York: Norton, 1972.

Malchow, H. L. *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Michaels, Axel. *Hinduism, Past and Present.* trans. Barbara Harshay. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Miyoshi, Masao. "A Borderless World" *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary,* eds. Rob Nixon and Wimal Disanayake. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 78-106.

Mongia, Padmini, ed. "Introduction". *Contemporary Post colonial Theory.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Mullaney, Julie. *Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things: A Reader's Guide*. New York: Continuum, 2002.

---. "'Globalizing Dissent'? Arundhati Roy, Local and Postcolonial Feminisms in the Transnational Economy." *World Literature Written in English* 40 (2002-3): 56-70.

Nkrumah, Kwame. *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Capitalism*. New York: International, 1984.

Parry, Benita. Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Paulson, Ronald. “Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution.” *ELH* 48 (1981): 532-54.

Punter, David. “Arundhati Roy and the House of History.” In *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre*. Edited by Andrew Smith and William Hughes, 192-207. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

---. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. New York: Longman, 1980.

---. *Postcolonial Imaginings: Fictions of a New World Order*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Raheja, Gloria Goodwin. "Caste, Colonialism, and the Speech of the Colonized: Entextualization and Disciplinary Control in India." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23, No. 3. (Aug., 1996), pp. 494-513.

Riquelme, John Paul. “Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 46 (2000): 585-605.

Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2002.

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands*. Essays and Criticism. London: Granta Books, 1991.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage, 1979.

- - - . *Culture and Imperialism,* New York: Knopf, 1993.

Saldivar, Jose David. “Unsettling Race, Coloniality, and Caste.” *Cultural Studies,* Vol. 21, No. 2-3. (March/May, 2007), pp. 339-367.