PROTEST AGAINST SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN ARUNDHATI ROY’S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS*: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH

RESEARCH PAPER
Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of Education in English Departement

by
SITI AISYAH
A 320 030 167

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
2008
A. Background of the Study

Most of the time an author pours his/her experiences, thought of feeling in his/her literary work. Thus some people studying literary work should know the author’s biography in order to understand his/her work easily.

Most of Indian authors develop their talent in abroad, but it is not for Arundhati Roy. She is a local product from India. Susanna Arundhati Roy was born on 24 November 1961 in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. She is an Indian novelist, writer, and activist. She grew up in very similar circumstances to the children in the book. Her mother was divorced; she lived on the edge of the community in a very vulnerable fashion. Her mother Marry Roy was a well-known social activist who ran an informal school named Corpus Christi. Arundhati Roy developed her literary intellectual abilities unconstrained by the set rules of formal education.

Firstly, she never studied at elementary school until she reached the tenth. Her mother decided to teach herself at home. Roy’s mother was sure that she was able to teach her daughter alone. Roy recognized herself as her
mother’s genuine pig. Roy’s mother was a courage woman. She had a big
courage to criticize or claim unfair laws or regulations made by the court.

Lather, Roy continued her study in school of architecture in Delhi; she
realized that she got many things from the architecture. Roy paid big attention
to social problems in her society. She also rejected nuclear project. Mostly
activists and mass media copied her essay, which told about the rejection of
terrorism and united attack to Afghanistan.

Roy began writing her first novel, *The God of Small Things* in 1992
and completing it in 1996. She also had another work, which were *The Cost of
also wrote essays, speeches, and articles, *Insult an injuring in Afghanistan
(2001), War is peace* (2001), *Stop bombing Afghanistan and instant
democracy* (2003)

Arundhati Roy’s work was much profoundly depicting the critical
issues of on going phenomena. Among her great and well-known novel, which
picture a smart critical issues, is *The God of small Thing*. It is one of her best
novel, which reached the excellent respond from the world of literature.
Arundhati Roy’s writes *The God of Small Thing* in 1992 but she completed it
in 1996 within 340 pages and 21 chapters. The book is semi autobiographical
and a major part captures her childhood experiences in Ayemenem. The book
received the 1997 Man Booker Prize for fiction; it also became one of the New York Times notable books of the year for 1997. The book reached fourth position in the New York Times bestseller list for independent fiction. She received half a million pounds as an advance, and rights to the book were sold in 21 countries.

*The God of Small Thing* itself presents the nature and socio culture of Kerala authentically. Nevertheless, the same time, it raises a great awareness of people’s humanity. *The God of Small Things* shows that, whether it is communism or religions that teach people how to cope with human equality, in a social way or through the perspective of God, it does not change the system of looking at human being, discriminatively or patriarchy, which has been exist for many centuries among society.

This novel uses the eye of the minority. God loses one of his arms; he cannot kiss and hug at the same time, he cannot hug and touch at the same time, he cannot win the war. The perspective is through a little Girl named Rachel and her sensitive twin, Estha, children of Ammu, a grand daughter of insectologist and the owner of factory from the noble class of Syrian Christians. As a grand daughter, Ammu does not have any right of possessing whatever the family got. More over, she was divorced from a marriage with Hindus. It means thousand folds of humiliation. The children know well how if felt to be the left ones, the meaningless, who could loose anything at any second. Ironically, the fragility, would in the future, have the involved brutally by destiny and the power of history, in the tragedy of the murders of people
they love. The guilty feeling caused Estha to lose his voice, and Rachel to get lost in her own life. The twins, being likely one soul, are the shadow of two loves in despair.

For the writer, this novel is necessary to study. Firstly, it is because it is the best seller’s book around the world. Secondly, it depicts problem that happened in India. One of the problems is social stratification in the society. The depiction of the events in society described complexity and its relation with others, so it forms a series of inoculations between one event to others.

Thirdly, it is because of the countries people’s respond after the publication. Not many people welcome the novel. Some Indian communists told about Roy’s anti communists. At last, issues about social stratification and the mixture of exotics, mysticism, and India local history, which is nationally discussed, are not very often found in a book, which effectively takes off all the clothes of nationally, castes, and religion to eventually show what humanity is all about. On the other word, this novel represents Roy’s protest against the system that put the value of humanity away.

Stratification can be defined various ways, but most commonly refers to institutionalized inequalities in power, wealth, and status between categories of persons within a single social system (e.g., classes, castes, ethnic groups) (http://courses.washington.edu/anth457/stratif.htm). The word “protest” itself, according to Oxford (2007: 332), is a statement or action that shows strong disapproval or disagreement. Protest (against) shows one’s
strong disapproval/ disagreement of somebody/ something. Protest also declares firmly against opposition.

Through this novel, Roy presents the theme of minority that questions about the system of caste itself and its hypocrisy around the system. Roy admits that the unique mixture between progressivism and slinkiness, which are extreme in Kerala, inspires her to reflect the most basic human natures. It also protests the socio cultural reality that is sensitive in India. The approach the writer uses to study the novel is sociological approach with the title: **PROTEST AGAINST SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN ARUNDHATI ROYS THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

B. Literary Review

*The God of Small Thing* is one of the most popular works of Arundhati Roy’s. Although the writer is popular, as far as the researcher knows, there are no researchers that conduct a study on Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. The writer will try to analyze protest against social stratification in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* Sociological Approach.

C. Problem Statement
In this research, the writer proposes a single problem statement. The problem of the research is “What is the social stratification which appears in *The God of Small Things*?”

D. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses her discussion on the protest against social stratification as reflected in *The God of Small Things* by using Sociological Approach.

E. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of analyzing *The God of Small Things* can be elaborated as follows:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the novel entitled *The God of Small Things*.
2. To analyze the play based on the sociological perspective.

F. Benefit of the Study

In studying the research paper, the benefits expected from study are follows:

1. Theoretical Benefit
Theoretically, the result of the study contributes to the development of the knowledge, particularly literary study on Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*.

2. Practical Benefit

To give deeper understanding in literary field as the reference to the other researches in analyzing the novel that is analyzed in this research into different perspective.

G. Research Method

Dealing with research method, there will be at least four points that need to be involved as follows:

1. Object of the Study

The object of the study is Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*.

2. Data Sources

Dealing with research method, there will be at least two points that need to be involved as follows:

a. Primary Data Sources

The primary data source is the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, published in 1997. The primary data are taken from words, phrases, sentences, narration, and dialogues in the novel.

b. Secondary Data Sources

Secondary data sources are some materials related to the data required such as the book that consist of theory of sociological approach.

3. Method of Data Collection
The method used for collecting data is library research by collecting and celebrating both the primary data and the secondary data. The researcher will involve some required steps.

a. Reading the novel repeatedly to get deep understanding

b. Reading some related books to find out the theory, data, and information required

c. Making notes of important parts in both primary and secondary data sources

d. Classifying the data into some categories

4. Technique of Data Analysis

In analyzing data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis of content the analysis begun from the structural analysis of the work and finally the sociological analysis of the literary work.

H. Research Paper Organization

This research paper is divided into six chapters. Chapter I is introduction, which contains the background of the study, literature review, problem statement, objectives of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, research method and research paper organization. Chapter II presents underlying theory. It deals with the notion of sociology, the principle of sociology, and theoretical application. Chapter III includes the historical background with all aspect of social reality of India at the second half of the twentieth century. Chapter IV covers the structural analysis of the novel.