

NASKAH PUBLIKASI

**AMMU'S REVOLT AGAINST THE CASTE SYSTEM IN ARUNDHATI
ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* (1997): A FEMINIST APPROACH**



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ABSTRACT

*The object of the research is a novel entitled *The God of Small Things* written by Arundhati Roy. The study focuses on the feminist perspective of the novel. The major problem of this study is to depict how is Ammu's revolt against the caste system reflected in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Thing* novel. The objectives of the study are to analyze the structural elements of the novel and to analyze the novel based on the feminist perspective.*

This research is the qualitative approach. The data sources are divided into two, namely primary data source and secondary data source. The primary data source is the novel itself. The method of the data collection is documentation research. The technique of data analyzes is descriptive analyzes.

*The results of the research show the following conclusions. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, Arundhati Roy wants to deliver a message to the reader that revolt against the caste system in *The God of Small Things* occurs because of social contexts. Secondly, based on the feminist analysis it shows that Arundhati Roy reflects the people in that time were still living under colonial rule and the caste system.*

Keywords: *Revolt Against, Caste System, Feminist Perspective.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the study :The caste system in India is an important part of ancient Hindu tradition and dates back to 1200 BCE. The term caste was first used by Portuguese travelers who came to India in the 16th century. Caste comes from the Spanish and Portuguese word "casta" which means "race", "breed", or "lineage". Many Indians use the term "jati". There are 3,000 castes and 25,000 sub castes in India, each related to a specific occupation. These different castes fall under four basic varnas Brahmins for priests, Kshatriyas for warriors, Vaishyas for traders, and Shudra for laborers.

Caste not only dictates one's occupation, but dietary habits and interaction with members of other castes as well. Members of a high caste enjoy more wealth and opportunities while members of a low caste perform menial jobs. Outside of the caste system are the Untouchables. Untouchable jobs, such as toilet cleaning and garbage removal, require them to be in contact with bodily fluids. They are therefore considered polluted and not to be touched. The importance of purity in the body and food is found in early Sanskrit literature. Untouchables have separate entrances to homes and must drink from separate wells. They are considered to be in a permanent state of impurity. Untouchables were named "Harijans" (Children of God) by Gandhi. He tried to raise their status with symbolic gestures such as befriending and eating with Untouchables. Upward mobility is very rare in the caste system. Most people remain in one caste their entire life and marry within their caste.

In Arundhati Roy's novel, *The God of Small Things*, the laws of India's caste system are broken by the characters of Ammu and Velutha, an Untouchable or Paravan. Velutha works at the Paradise Pickles and Preserves Factory owned by Ammu's family. Yet, because he is an Untouchable, the other workers resent him and he is paid less money for his work. Velutha's presence is unsettling to many who believe he acts above his station. His own father notes this *problem*: "Perhaps it was just a

lack of hesitation. An unwarranted assurance. In the way he walked. The way he held his head. The quiet way he offered suggestions without being asked. Or the quiet way in which he disregarded suggestions without appearing to rebel.

Suzanna Arundhati Roy grew up in Ayemenem, a village in the state of Kerala, in southern India. She was born on 24 November 1961. Her father, a Hindu tea planter from Begal, was divorced from her Syrian Christian mother when Roy was very young, and Roy was raised by her mother, who ran an informal school. Roy left home when she was sixteen and lived in a squatter's colony in New Delhi, selling empty beer bottles for a living. She eventually went to architectural school and married a fellow student, Gerard Da Cunha. In recent years, Roy has published several non fiction books, such as *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2001), *Power politics* (2001), and *The Ordinary person's Guide to Empire* (2004), just to name a few.

In this study of *The God of Small Things* novel, Indian multiculturalism is the central concern. There are some issues in the novel, one of them is transgression of the twins violates all biological norms. Throughout history, societies have circumscribed certain forms of intimacy in the family setting. Disturbing a family relationship with generate an individual responsibilities to do incest. Ammu's revolt against the caste system is reflected in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* is one of appealing aspect that is interesting to be studied. Roy describes how Ammu's revolt against the caste system. It is one of the issues that make this novel's story be interesting.

Based on the previous reasons the writer will observe Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* by using feminism theory. So the writer constructs the title **AMMU'S REVOLT AGAINST THE CASTE SYSTEM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS* (1997): A FEMINIST APPROACH.**

Problem Statement : Knowing that the problem is important of the *research*, the writer proposes “How is Ammu’s revolt against the caste system reflected in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Thing* novel?”

Limitation of the Study : The writer focuses this research in analyzing Ammu’s Revolt against the Caste System in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) novel based on a feminist approach.

Objectives of the Study: The objectives of the study are mentioned as follows to analyze *The God of Small Thing* novel based on the structural elements of the novel and to describe Ammu’s Revolt against the Caste System in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* (1997) novel based on a feminist approach.

Literature Review: *The God of Small Thing* (1997) novel by Arundhati Roy is an interesting novel. As far as the writer concern, the research on *The God of Small Thing* (1997) novel has been conducted by Nufikha Hidayah, a State University of Semarang (2006), entitled “Gender Inequalities in Male-and-Female Relationships Found in Arundhati Roy’s Novel *The God of Small Things*”. The final project is aimed at analyzing gender inequality issues existing in Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things*; which kinds of gender inequalities found in the novel and how gender inequalities are reflected in the novel. The second study is conducted by Dwi Utami, State University of Semarang (2006), entitled “Psychoanalysis of The Dream Works to Show Roy’s Despair toward Indian Society in Arundhati Roy’s “*The God of Small Things*”. The aim of the study is to find the problems of how the applications of the dream are and what are the realistic values behind the dreams of the characters. The third research conducted by Siti Aisyah, a Muhammadiyah University student (2008), entitled “Protest against Social Stratification in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*”. The aim of the study is to depict problem that happened in India that is social stratification in the society. The fourth research related to the study entitled “Untouchability and Social Exclusion in Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Thing* (1997) by Veena Sukla, Rae

Bareilly, India. He tries to explain that there are many other instances of social exclusion in *The God of Small Things* (1997). The fifth research is conducted by Karta Losensky, a Humboldt University student (2008), entitled "Globalization and Colonialism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*". The major aim of the study is to show that "India's colonial histories cannot be ignored. The result is globalization and colonialism is phenomena which cannot be looked at separately when speaking about India's history and present. He tries to give examples of how globalization and colonialism are linked and how that is shown in Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* (1997).

Different from five previous writers, the writer has different **perspective**; the writer analyzes Ammu's Revolt against the Caste System in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) using a feminist approach.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

Types of the Study: In the research, the writer uses a qualitative research. It is library research while data source are using literary data. It purposes to analyze the novel using feminist perspective. The steps to conduct this research are: Determining the type of the study, determining the object of the study, determining data and data source, determining technique of data collection and determining technique of data analysis.

Object of the Study: The object of the study is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Thing* (1997) novel. It is analyzed by using a feminist approach.

Data and Data Source: There are two data sources that are needed to do this research: Primary Data Source is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Thing* (1997) novel and the secondary data sources are books and other sources that support the analysis.

Technique of the Data Collection is library research, the steps are: reading the novel, determining the character and summary that will be analyzed, taking notes of important parts in both primary and secondary

data, classifying and determining the relevant data and taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the novel.

The technique used in analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. It concerns with the structural elements of the novel and a feminist approach.

3. UNDERLYING THEORY

a. Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism departs from the phenomena that the men dominate the literary theories and critics. Feminism is a plural field of theory and politics, which has competing perspective and prescriptions for action. In general terms, feminism asserts that sexual difference is a fundamental and irreducible axis of social organization. Feminism is centrally concerned with sex as an organization principle of social life, which is thoroughly saturated with the power relations subordinating women to men, as Kolodny (in Djajanegara, 2000: 19). The interpretation in feminist criticism is necessary to be seen in wider context that is merely literary criticism, since the main priority of feminism is promoting social and political change (Newton, 1994:39). Thus, in feminist literary criticism, social background when the work was made cannot be neglected, because it gives contribution to the understanding of the work, as Rich (in Djajanegara, 2000:28-29).

Feminist literary criticism tries to see women as independent subject. Thus, feminist literary works mostly written by women, often present women as independent characters that try to break men's dominated and to come to self-recognition. In relation to this study, the writer is going to give illustration of liberal feminist to help the analysis of this research.

b. Basic Principle of Liberal Feminist

According to Anderson (in Mandell, 1995:5), "In principles, every person is to be given equal opportunities and civil rights, in which every person should be allowed to exercise freedom of choice, unfettered by either public opinion or law". The process of liberal feminist analysis

includes rebel against Patriarchal system, position, role, participation, and right of women.

1. Rebels against Patriarchal System is a society, country, etc controlled or governed by men (Hornby, 1995:849). This system means that man becomes superior and women become inferior and subordinated. In the patriarchal society, women have been seen as a weaker sex. Recognizing that women are concentrated in the lowest level and treated as the second classes, therefore, feminism begins with the aims at deconstructing the image of woman that is build by the patriarchal society and tries to build gender equality (Mandell, 1995:6). Then, the women's struggle rebels against patriarchal system have increased a deeper aspiration for woman liberty (Murphy, 1995:44).
2. Women's Position. According to Woolf (in Donovan, 1985:184), women are custodians of feminine value system, one that is inherently anti fascist. The content of *Three Guineas* is a response to three letters Woolf has received: first, from man who suggests that she helps to prevent war by contributing to his pacifist society. Then, from women soliciting funds for the rebuilding of women's college. And the last requesting money for a society dedicated to helping women to enter the professions. The three causes above are interrelated; all might help to prevent war and to eradicate fascism- so she will be guinea to each but only in condition.
3. Women's Right. Right are something owned by every human being. Others cannot determine them. Mandell (1995:4) states that women have right to define as autonomous beings. Two other aspects of feminist existential theory must now be discussed. The first concerns the internalization of others that colonized group experience; and the second, the phenomenological reconstruction of other's.
4. Women's Role. Living in men domination, women usually are trapped in taking their roles. According to Mandell

(1995:54), "women are traditionally defined by their roles as daughters, wives, and mother. Women with disabilities are assumed unable to full care taking and partnership roles". It means that women are always associated with domestic roles.

5. Women's Participation. They do not have equal right with man in citizenship with a reason that women are less rational. When women married, they have duties to her family such as taking care children, introducing and educating them about the best of morality, and adjusting herself as wives. Almost everyday they spend times just for cleaning, washing, or cooking, working in the kitchen and other household chores. Women as mothers and wives must do the duties as well as possible. Liberal feminism emphasizes freedom and equality based on rationale and separation of private and public affairs. Patriarchal system can be removed by changing individual women's attitudes in relation to men.

c. Definition of Caste System

Caste is an elaborate and complex social system that combines elements of endogamy, occupation, culture, social class, tribal affiliation and political power. It should not be confused with race or social class, e.g. members of different castes in one society may belong to the same race, as in India.

Caste not only dictates one's occupation, but dietary habits and interaction with members of other castes as well. Members of a high caste enjoy more wealth and opportunities while members of a low caste perform menial jobs. Outside of the caste system are the Untouchables. Untouchable jobs, such as toilet cleaning and garbage removal, require them to be in contact with bodily fluids.

According to the eminent sociologist Andre Béteille, treating caste as a form of racism is "politically pernicious" and worse, "scientifically anomalous" since there is no discernible difference in the racial characteristics between Brahmins and Scheduled Castes.

d. Structural Elements of the Novel

The novel has a structural element that consists of character and characterization, plot, setting, point of view, and theme.

1. Character and Characterization

a. Character

Beside that, Klarer (1999: 19) explain that, In fictional literature, authors use many different types of characters to tell their Mstories. Different types of characters fulfill different roles in the narrative process, and with a little bit of analysis: major character and minor character.

b. Characterization

Klarer (1999: 19) explain that, “Dramatic characterization, or showing, does away with the position of an obvious narrator, thus avoiding any overt influence on the reader by a narrative mediator.” Characterization is divided become two consist of round character and flat character.

2. Plot

A plot is all the events in a story particularly rendered towards the achievement of some particular artistic or emotional effect. Kennedy (1983: 9) states that, “plot means the artistic arrangement of those events.” In other words, it's what mostly happened in the story or novel or what the story's general theme is based on, such as the mood, characters, setting, and conflicts occurring in a story.

3. Setting

Setting includes the time, location, and everything in which a story takes place, and initiates the main backdrop and mood for a story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, geography, and hour. Along with plot, character, theme, and style, setting is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction.

4. Point of view

The narrators greatly differ in kind; however, since stories usually are told by someone, virtually every story has some kind of narrator. To identify the narrator of the story, describing any part the plays in the events any limits placed upon his knowledge. The author can adopt: subjective point of view, objective view and flash-backs to fill in background.

5. Theme

According Kennedy (1983:103), "Theme of the story is whatever general idea or insight the entire story reveals. In literary fiction, a theme is seldom so obvious. That is, a theme need not be a moral or a message; it may be what the happenings add up to, what the story is about."

6. Style

Kennedy (1983: 75), "Style indicates a mode of expression: the language a writer uses." In this sense, the notion of style includes such traits as the length and complexity of sentences, and diction, or choice of word: abstract on concrete, bookish or close to speech. Involved in the idea of style, too, is any habitual use of imagery, patterns of sound, figures of speech, or other devices.

4. RESEARCH FINDING

The analysis of the major character's condition in Rebel against Patriarchal society, position, role, participation, rights above shows that each classification of them gives an important part in building the major character's struggle in the time she lives.

In Arundhati Roy's novel *The God of Small Things* full of taboo breaking because Ammu revolts against patriarchy. In the novel which turns out to be the worst among the three because Ammu breaks several laws. Eventually, it goes so far as she pays with her life for her affair with Velutha. Ammu has been oppressed by all the men in her life: her father, her brother, her husband, and also by the rest of society.

Roy compared Ammu's situation with Chacko's: Ammu is denied education while Chacko is educated at Oxford, Ammu is punished for divorcing her husband while Chacko is treated as usual, and finally, Ammu is punished for fulfilling her sexual desires with Velutha while Chacko is allowed to fulfill all his desires. Roy also compared to Mammachi, Ammu is a fighter who struggles for equality between the sexes; Ammu is rebellious as she does not care about the consequences of her actions. Roy describe that Ammu is a strong person who fights for equality by breaking several laws, but she is also punished for her actions.

Ammu represents people who actually dare to do 'the untouchable caste', to transgress the very line that upholds the system of difference that casteism inherently maintains. She represents all those who have suffered due to transgressions against the 'Love Laws' and gender-specific expectations imposed upon them, sometimes even by paying with their own lives. The novel itself has given the fictional Ammu and Velutha, as representations of thousands of cross-caste relationships in the real India, a voice that resonates all over the world.

Roy expresses this with the character of Pappachi. Pappachi's attitude towards his wife, who often beat him with a vase. When the death of Pappachi, Roy describes how a wife was crying more not because of she loved him but because of Pappachi used to slouch around the pickle factory, and was used to being beaten from time to time. She explains in her novel that human beings were creatures of habit.

Roy describes the violation of human against the law tradition on Ammu and Velutha's characters that derived from a different caste. In addition, Roy explained incest between Estha and Rachel implicitly. She also puts the Sophie Mol's character as a symbol of colonial influence on cultural values. Roy tries to display the human's behavior on the transgression of revolt againts by Ammu. She explains that revolt againts occurs because of social contexts, such as caste, Syrian Christian culture, *Dizygotic* and conflict in family relation.

The major characters in *The God of Small Things* are constantly coming up against the forces of society and class. Indian society was structured for centuries according to very rigid social classes and boundaries, through what is known as the caste system. Even though the novel takes place after the caste system stopped being a legal social policy. The characters still find themselves limited by what is and isn't deemed socially acceptable for them.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the previous chapters, the study comes to following conclusion, as follows: 1. In this novel, Arundhati Roy wants to illustrate how women are subordinated and exploited in patriarchal society. It is based on the reality in *the God of Small Things* novel that woman's rights become number two after men. 2. In this novel, Arundhati Roy wants to say that women's rights are not given but must be struggled for. It can be seen from Ammu's condition in her daily life, she always struggles to get her right of freedom even she has to runaway from her community. 3. In this novel, Arundhati Roy wants to describe that in order to get their rights as human being women should be smart and talented. And women are expected not only to accept the condition and wait for the miracle but they must struggle to get freedom in all aspect of life. 4. This novel contains many facts that are revealed by Ammu which reflect rebels against patriarchal system women's position, women's role, women's right, and women's participation in leading her life as a woman. And there are many forms of subordination, oppression, exploitation, and violence toward woman.

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