

**FEMALE CHARACTERS
STRUGGLE TO FIGHT AGAINST
THE PATRIARCHAL CULTURE IN
THE NOVEL *THE GOD OF SMALL
THINGS* BY ARUNDHATI ROY**

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the forms and impacts of patriarchal culture experienced by female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. This study uses a qualitative method with a feminist approach by using Simone De Beauvoir's Existential Feminism theory. The researcher collected data from the novel *The God of Small Things* using a note-taking instrument. The results of the analysis show that there are three forms of resistance to patriarchal culture in the novel *The God of Small Things*, namely women able to work, women are able to become intellectuals, and women can refuse service to their bodies. This study also found the impact of patriarchal culture on female characters in the novel, namely: subordination, discrimination, violence against women, sexual harassment, and trafficking of women. Therefore, the researcher found that Arundhati Roy's novel presented female characters who live under a patriarchal

discourse that subjugates them to multiple oppressions of both race and gender-based discrimination.

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchal Culture, *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy

A. INTRODUCTION

Women have already fighting for their rights for a very long time from the Greek era until modern times. In Greek history, women were treated as slaves and servants. In the Romans themselves there is a slogan that reads '*Tie them up and don't let go*'. The slogan strongly emphasizes that oppression in the Romans was so strong against women (Adji et al., 2009). Nowadays, in modern society, Feminism is not just the formation of a women's movement that only aims to gain superiority over men. However, feminism believes in equality for all people regardless of gender. women are still fighting for gender equality, and the issue has not ended and still needs to be voiced in this modern era.

The issue of gender equality is fought for today, including focusing on gender norms, eradicating injustice in the social sphere (health, education, work,

etc.), and empowering oppressed women. Examples of feminist movements that have been voiced are the Women's March, which voices women's rights by taking action to the streets (Long March), the #MeToo movement, and Time's Up, which voices resistance to sexual harassment through online media to gain considerable attention online in 2017.

With the existence of patriarchy that prioritizes men, feminism emerged. Patriarchal culture is a social system that places men in a dominant position who hold power and lead women (Marwinda, 2020). The dominance of men from all fields is the root of the problems faced by women, which has led to the emergence of gender inequality. The patriarchal culture that emphasizes men as rulers who have rights that place women always in a subordinate position to men makes women always marginalized. Feminism itself is a women's movement that seeks to demand full equality of rights between women and men (Pratiwi Wiwik, 2016).

Women are often labelled as instruments of sexuality, helpless, and also victims of violence. Women are often

considered as "*kitchen, well, and bed*", especially in societies that still adhere to the patriarchal system like most Asian countries such as India (Purtanti, 2022). Despite the success achieved by India in many fields, India is still not aware of women's rights. The gender gap that occurs in India causes several phenomena, including; discrimination, prostitution, human rights violations, arranged marriages, forced uterine removal, and Dowry murder. Tom Reuters Foundation ranked India as the 4th most dangerous country for women (Kristalia Tedjo et al., n.d.).

Arundhati Roy criticized the social phenomenon of women in India towards her work entitled "*The God of Small Things*" in 1997. Roy also criticized the patriarchal culture that is widely happened in India through the female characters, Mammachi, Ammu, and Baby Kochamma. It shows the depiction of their struggles and resistance to a system that has never favored them as women in a postcolonial and patriarchal situation. With the above issues describing the content of the novel, the researcher is

interested in examining *The God of Small Things*. This novel is also important to study because issues related to gender equality are still rampant today, and needs to pay attention.

This research aims to add to the existing knowledge gaps and make a significant contribution to our understanding of patriarchal practices and the impact they have on women, particularly in *The God of Small Things*. Given the importance of this research, this study aims to how the female characters fight against patriarchy and the impact of patriarchal culture in the novel *The God of Small Things*. The researcher will then elaborate on these issues by using Simone De Beauvoir's theory of Existentialism Feminism.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies on the impact of a patriarchal culture that has been compiled previously which are likely to have similarities with further research. With the existence of the previous below, researcher can make references and comparisons with this

research. So, from previous research, the researcher can present the results of the research as follows.

Firstly, Widananto, (2021) conducted research entitled "*The Impact of Patriarchal Cultures Against Female Characters in Madeline Miller's Circe: A Feminism Perspective.*" In this study, researcher used a study of feminist literary criticism, namely gender theory by Mansour Fakhri with a sociological approach. In this study, researcher found that there are two forms of patriarchal culture, namely forms of public and private patriarchal culture. and the impact of patriarchal culture in Madeline Miller's *Circe* novel, a namely patriarchal culture that is still considered normal, creates many negative impacts on the goddesses in the novel.

Secondly, A research from Khasanah Uswatun (2021) entitled "*Analisis Budaya Patriarki yang Digambarkan Dalam Novel Kim Ji Young, Born 1982. Teori Feminisme.*" The researcher aims to analyze what issues are contained in Kim Ji Young's novel, *Born 1982*. The type of research

used in this study is qualitative research with two sources, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. After the researcher collects data, the researcher uses analytical techniques. descriptive qualitative to analyze. The writer uses feminist theory in this study because in the novel there are several problems which include the patriarchal cultural system, gender stereotypes, and gender inequality experienced by female characters, as well as the impact of patriarchal culture experienced by female characters.

Third, research was conducted by Purnamasari Heti (2019) entitled "Kajian Feminisme Dalam Novel *Cantik Itu Luka* by Eka Kurniawan". This research aims to describe the forms of women's existence in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka* based on the data collection method by identifying, classifying, and interpreting the results of data analysis. The researcher found that there are forms of women's existence in Eka Kurniawan's novel *Cantik Itu Luka* and how women can show their existence. This research shows three forms of women's existence,

the first is personal existence, the second is the existence of women's role in the family, the third is the existence of women's role in society.

The results of the studies above, are differences with this study. The difference is that in previous studies researcher used different theories and different objects. The first researcher by Widananto (2021) used the gender theory by Mansour Fakih with a sociological approach. Then, the second by Uswatun Khasanah (2021) used feminist theory, and the third by Ramadhan, (2019) describes the patriarchal practices that appear in the novel using Walby's six patriarchal structures. Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher analyzed how the female characters fight against patriarchy and the impact of patriarchal culture in the novel "*The God of Small Things*" based on Simone De Beauvoir's theory: Existential Feminism.

1. Feminism

Feminism comes from the word feminist (the struggle for women's rights), which later expanded into

feminism (an understanding that fights for women's rights) Sugihastuti 2010: 63 (in Zuraida & Dan U'um Qomariyah, 2013). According to Moeliono, et al. (1993: 241) states that feminism is a women's movement that demands full equality of rights between women and men. This equality of rights covers all aspects of life, whether in the political, economic, or socio-cultural fields. Many people often misunderstand and think that feminism is an ideology that hates men. In fact, both men and women benefit equally when there is no unequal relationship between the two.

Feminism emerged as a result of gender prejudice that tends to subordinate women. Women are subordinated because of the assumption that men are universally different from women. This difference is not only limited to biological criteria but also to social and cultural criteria. With such biological conditions, the universal view considers that women should realize their nature. But feminism rejects this assumption, feminism assumes that the biological attributes possessed by

women are a source of excellence rather than inferiority, (Heryadi Dedi, 2007).

Feminism is synonymous with the term gender, Humm 2007: 147-148 (Nuraeni, 2017) According to Humm feminism is a thought that discusses women with the belief that women experience injustice because of their gender, with a social transformation thought that aims to create a world for women feminism combines the doctrine of equal rights for women into an organized movement to achieve the goal of women's human rights.

Humans are created with different biological organs between men and women. Women have organs that function for reproduction, namely ovulation, menstruation, and childbirth. While men do not have organs that function for reproduction. With the advantages that women have, women can give birth to a child. These organs with their respective consequences construct the nature requirements that need to be possessed by each of them. Women with their organs are culturally constructed to be delicate, patient,

compassionate, motherly, softer, and the like. These traits are known as femininity. In culture, men are portrayed as strong, muscular, virile, mighty, and even ruthless because a representation of their body is not plagued by reproductive cycles like women. This trait is called masculine, muthali'in 2001: 29 (in Rokhmansyah, 2016:7).

Biologically women and men are different creatures. This opinion gets cultural articulation which results in the assumption that women are weak creatures and need protection. It is this (biological) weakness that makes women clearly utilized by men in unhealthy sexual practices and this is an affirmation of male dominance, Abdullah 2001:50 (in Rokhmansyah, 2016:8).

From some of the explanations above, it can be concluded that feminism is an ideology, understanding, and assumption that state that women experience injustice, exploitation, discrimination, and differences in treatment with men and demand equal rights between men and women. From this ideology and understanding,

differences between women and men in terms of rights, responsibilities, and roles can be shaped and changed by culture, tradition, religious understanding, and the social status of the local community.

Within feminism itself, there are various streams with different perspectives, ranging from issues in the political, social, economic, and personal spheres. As a result, there are various differences of opinion within feminism itself regarding various issues. These schools of feminism include Liberal feminism, Radical feminism, Marxist feminism, Socialist feminism, Postmodern feminism, Multicultural feminism, and Existential feminism. This research will focus on one school of feminism, namely existential feminism by Simone de Beauvoir.

2. Existential Feminism of Simone De Beauvoir

Between the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement in the West was heavily influenced by 20th-century French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre believed that humans have no nature, nature, or essence (innate nature).

Human existence depends on how he creates his own essence. Therefore, what is called human essence is basically socially created, which depends on the environment in which a person is.

Simone de Beauvoir applied this understanding to reject the existence of the nature of women and men. In her book "*The Second Sex*" (1994), Beauvoir says that women are culturally treated as secondary creatures. (secondary creation) whose job is to take care of the family and children, and maintain the environment. She believes that this role is not due to women's nature. The feminine norms attached to women such as nurturing, nurturing, passive, and recipient, are traits cultivated by the patriarchal system. According to this understanding, the cultivation of feminine norms is perpetuated by this system so that women can continue to be "oppressed". Beauvoir emphasizes that women must break away from these norms so that they can determine their own existence.

The theory of existentialist feminism emerged in the 20th century and was

inspired by the theory of women in Simone De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. In working on her theory, Beauvoir refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory in his book *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre's concept that is very close to feminism "*is to exist for others*", which is a philosophy that sees the relationship between humans. However, in the vision of these relations, men objectify women and make women into other figures (other), (Kurniawan, 2019). This theory argues that women are always placed second, and are positioned as unimportant compared to male figures. In the book created by Simone De Beauvoir entitled "*The Second Sex*", through her work, The Existentialism Feminism Beauvoir has developed in her book states that men are called "men" as the self, while women are "others" who are a threat to men. Therefore, a man must subordinate a woman to himself if he wants to be free. Beauvoir says that women in their existence in the world are only an object and men are subjects. So existentialism according to Beauvoir is when women are no longer objects but

have become subjects for themselves. The reason why women are oppressed continuously is that their existence is ignored and not a subject like men's. Feminism itself emerged as a movement to fight against all forms of objectification of women. Women and men are believed to have differences in social awareness and social control (Munaris & Nugroho Setyo Joko, 2021).

A human being who exists is a human being who can prove that he can be a being for himself, especially after being faced with a precarious situation. Sartre believes that existence precedes essence. Humans are initially aimless, It is based on this that humans try to prove themselves in the world and determine the meaning of their existence. In determining this meaning, humans have the freedom that other creatures do not have. The freedom referred to here is responsible freedom, humans are responsible for freely determining their life options and are responsible for the result of all these choices, Sartre, 2002: 158 (in Kurniawan, 2019)

As mentioned above, humans are born free and humans have the right to determine the direction of their lives, and so do women. According to Beauvoir, women should be given the same freedom as men to determine their own lives.

Simone de Beauvoir revealed that women who are aware of their freedom will be able to freely choose their path in life, so according to Beauvoir, women are able to become intellectual figures and do not need to worry about their abilities when viewed from their biological limitations. And most importantly women must be able to refuse to be objectified, and women can also objectify men, (Beauvoir, 1949:575).

Thus, it can be understood in existentialist feminism proposed by Simone de Beauvoir, Beauvoir said that women in their existence in this world only become the figure of the Other for men. Women are the object and men are subject. So, existentialism according to Beauvoir is when women no longer consider themselves as objects but have

become subjects for themselves. Beauvoir in existential feminism invites women to be able to live freely to determine their future autonomously without any encouragement or direction from others. In other words, Beauvoir invites women to be their own selves. Women must be able to freely express themselves in all aspects because women have the same rights as men. This is what expresses the existence of women as human beings.

With the novel *The God of Small Things*, we can study and analyze female characters using a form of feminist approach, using this approach we will analyze the forms of resistance of female characters as a form of their existence.

3. Forms of Female Resistance

According to Beauvoir, there are several strategies that women can employ when they reject their femininity.

- a) First, women are able to work. Beauvoir realizes that working in patriarchal capitalism is repressive, especially if the job requires women to work double shifts: one shift in

the office or factory, and another shift at home. Nonetheless, Beauvoir insists that no matter how hard and exhausting women's work is, the work still provides various possibilities for women to claim their rights. For example: when women take on outside work roles. Such as being part of a government that occupies a high position, becoming a career woman, becoming a businesswoman, or becoming a teacher. So that this can break the assessment of women that the choices given are only marriage and being a housewife. By choosing to work outside with men, women can reclaim their transcendence. Women visibly emphasize their status as a subject for themselves, as someone who is active in determining the direction of their fate.

- b) Secondly, Intellectual activity is the activity of thinking, seeing, and defining, and not the activity of being the object of thinking, seeing, and defining. This activity

embodies the formation of a member who will build change for women. Beauvoir invites women to value themselves truly by studying writers such as Emily Bronte as a writer who investigates issues of death, life, and suffering (Tong, 2004: 274).

- c) Thirdly, women can defy their otherness by identifying themselves with the perspective of the dominant group of society. Therefore, the only way for women to be themselves in society is to free themselves from their bodies. For example, they should refuse to spend their time in beauty salons if they can spend their time with more useful and creative things (Tong, 2004: 276).

From some of the things described above, we can conclude that women can also fight against the previous marginalization that has happened to them, namely through work, then become an intellectual, and finally can

work to achieve the socialist transformation of society.

4. Patriarchal Culture

God has created his creatures side by side, both animals and humans. Men and women are created in the world side by side. However, in many situations around the world, women continue to feel disadvantaged between men and women, especially in terms of gender differences. The issue of gender differences has always been a major factor in women's sense of injustice. Women are still below men or always second to men. Women are often seen as mere appendages who must submit to male power. Men always feel that they must intervene in women's decisions and assist them in making judgments, (Taufik, 2024-556). Often women also have to feel themselves to be victims of male oppression and discrimination in all fields. This happens because of the influence of patriarchal culture that is still inherent in society, even in a modern society like this.

According to Hartman Marwinda (2020), patriarchy is a set of social

relationships that have a material basis. What marks the existence of patriarchy is the hierarchical relationship and solidarity among men that allows them to control women. This explains that patriarchal culture supports the assumption in society that men have the power to control women.

Walby (in Marwinda, 2020) also argues that patriarchy is a system of social structures and patriarchy is a practice that places men in a dominant position over women. This dominant position of men triggers the oppression and exploitation of women.

According to Mies (in Azzahrah, 2021), patriarchy refers to a value system that places men in a higher position than women in influencing every dimension of society.

Based on several opinions from the experts above, it can be concluded that patriarchal culture is a social system that places men in a dominant position that holds power and leads women, (Marwinda, 2020). From the differences between the positions of men and women adopted in the patriarchal system, men

are more likely to dominate women by emphasizing their strength and always showing that women are weak beings. The position of a leader who is always held by men makes women obliged to obey the rules and orders of men. In this case, women will always feel disadvantaged and get a bad impact on male leadership and power. For example, in the smallest scope, namely the scope of the family or the relationship between husband and wife, in this small scope, a wife must take on the role of a subordinate who must always obey all the rules of the husband, because men are superiors and women are subordinates. If the wife does not obey the husband, then the wife will experience oppression, violence, and even harassment.

Walby 1998: 20 (in Azzahrah, 2021) divides patriarchy into two, namely patriarchy in the domestic sphere and patriarchy in the private sphere. Domestic patriarchy focuses women on household chores as an absolute obligation, in this case, private patriarchy leads to more oppression of women in the family. Men are labeled as the head

of the family who plays the role of breadwinner and gives authority to their wives as a woman. This division of roles makes women dependent on men who have a position of power and control over economic resources. Meanwhile, domestic patriarchy can be seen through the oppression experienced by women at the economic level and the workplace. In this realm, women are allowed to take part in every job but are oppressed by gender inequality in education, working conditions, or salary. Male violence, sexual relations, and patriarchy in cultural institutions represent male dominance in a patriarchal culture. Broadly speaking, men have dominance in controlling ideologies, political systems, laws, customs, norms, and even views that lead women to false consciousness.

Weitz (in Marwinda, 2020) explains that in Western countries and even other developed countries, the fact that there is less subordination of women has not changed at all. Weitz gives an example that when a woman chooses to marry a man, she is giving herself to that man.

The woman will automatically lose everything she has, a woman who has chosen to be owned by a man will automatically have to show her obedience to her husband. These things are characteristic of the patriarchal culture that occurs in society, describing a good wife who is obedient to her husband. because in the past women were considered the same as property or goods belonging to their master, namely the husband.

One of the countries with a strongly patriarchal culture is India. India is one of the countries that have many problems regarding women and gender inequality. In this country, patriarchal culture cannot be separated from the hierarchical system plus the class division in the caste becomes a gap in the values of human honor. The social norms that prevail in the social life of Indian society contribute a lot to the gender gap in India. These gender gaps have resulted in a lot of discrimination against women in India. This discrimination covers various aspects of life in terms of education,

health, social life, and economic independence.

5. Froms of Patriarchy

Some of the forms of patriarchal culture that have developed in society that are detrimental to women include subordination, discrimination, violence against women, sexual harassment, and trafficking in women.

a. Subordination

Subordination of women is defined as the 'subordination' of women, that women are weaker/lower than men so that the position, functions and roles of women seem to be lower than men. Examples of differences in functions and roles include: women must be gentle, emotional, beautiful, patient, loving, educate children, cook, wash, go to the market, clean the house, and do other domestic activities. While husbands/males must be strong, rational, authoritative, mighty, breadwinners, responsible, priests in the family, and so on. These gender differences often result in gender injustice. Differences in the functions, roles or behaviors of men and women are actually female socio-

cultural formations in certain societies. Feminism views that "women's subordination is rooted in a set of cultural constraints and habits that inhibit women's access to opportunities to compete fairly with men" Saptari, 1997 (in (Syafe'i Imam, 2015)). The formation process is taught from generation to generation by each parent, customs, and society that intentionally or not provide roles that make humans think that this is the role we must carry out.

b. Discrimination

Discrimination can be defined as treating individuals differently based on gender, race, religion, age, or other characteristics. Discrimination also occurs in gender roles. The essence of discrimination is different treatment. As a result of the attachment of gender traits, the problem of gender injustice (discrimination) arises. Gender discrimination is an unfair condition resulting from social systems and structures in which both women and men are victims of the system. Various distinctions in roles and positions between women and men, both directly

in the form of language and attitudes and indirectly in the form of the impact of laws and policies, have led to various injustices rooted in history, customs, norms, or in various structures that exist in society (Setyorini, 2017).

c. Violence against Women

Violence is a matter of nature, characterized by violence, the actions of a person or group of people that cause injury or death to others or cause physical damage or other people's property and coercion. The forms of violence against women are diverse. Ranging from physical, psychological, economic to sexual violence. Since humans understand the concept of ownership and recognize the pattern of social life, the desire to own is increasingly complex. The subordinate position of women is the beginning of opportunities for violence against women (wives). Male dominance is always maintained because of personal interests, limiting women's access to other fields, which have been wetlands for men such as politics, economics, society, and so on.

d. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment refers to behavior related to unwanted sex such as requests for intercourse as well as other behaviors either verbally or physically that lead to sexual acts. Sexual harassment is generally experienced by women regardless of age, place and under any circumstances. The result of a patriarchal culture that positions men. As a result of a patriarchal culture that positions men as parties who tend to have the discretion to do anything to women, women often get verbal or physical sexual harassment (Irma Sakina & Dessy Hasanah Siti, 2021).

e. Trafficking of Women

The next picture of patriarchal cultural practices is the trafficking of women. The trafficking of women itself can be interpreted as an act carried out with the intention of handing over women to a group or individual for prostitution. This action is experienced by many women, especially in countries that are still closely related to patriarchal culture such as India, because the social system in India still adheres to the caste

system, the lack of education they receive makes women easy to seduce with the lure of false happiness (Agustina Shinta, 2006).

6. Character and characterization

Literary works are the result of an author's expression that of that displays complex human life, including soul and personality. From the results of these expressions, the author can produce a literary work that is poured through a piece of writing. In this literary work, there are characters that were built by the author in such a way as to make the literary work come alive. One of the results created from a literary work is a novel.

The characters in each novel have different characters or personalities. According to the Phoenix library team 2008: 418 (in Alawiyah, 2018) character is a characteristic that is possessed by other individuals: character; characteristic; character; talent; while it has a characteristic according to a certain disposition; has its own peculiarities. Character is also a mental or psychological state of each individual

that can be seen from his behavior and environment. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, a character is also defined as a psychological trait, morals, or character that distinguishes a person from other people. The formation of a character is the most important thing in producing a literary work. Characters are created to convey messages or ideas and feelings about an event that occurs in each plot in a literary work. It can be concluded that character is a trait possessed by each individual. Where these characteristics are described by the author through literary works in the form of prose.

Characterization means portrayal and characterization. Characterization is the process of describing the characters in a fictional work, Minderop, 2010 (in Setiawan et al., 2017). Based on Minderop's opinion above, it can be concluded that characterization is a person's effort to display the character or character of the character being played.

In a literary work, both the main character and supporting characters all have the character or character described

by the author. The depiction of the main or supporting characters is done by the author to give more value to the characters he makes. In addition, the characters given by each character are used to provide an explanation of the characters in the novel. Through characterization that is still arranged by the author, the character will be described as the figure the author wants to convey, (Rakomole N Dewinta, 2019).

7. Synopsis Novel *The God of Small Things*

Arundhati Roy is a writer from India, she has written many novels, one of which is a novel entitled *The God of Small Things*. This novel tells a story about the life of a pair of twins, twins who are known to be non-identical, or “dizygotic” twins, a pair of twins who experience things that make their lives destroyed because of the “law of low” prevalent in Kerala, India in the 1960s. The novel also represents how small things that are seen as insignificant can change the shape of a person’s behavior and life.

In the city of ayemenem, Kerala, India. there is a large family of entrepreneurs who make packaged fruit sweets (Paradise Pickles & Preserves). The agribusiness was very successful. It is from this extended family that the story of the novel begins. Rahel and Esthappen, are a pair of twins who were sexually abused in a movie theater. Rahel and Esthappen had too many scars in their lives, they realized that they had become part of the Lesser, challenging the Greater. Ammu has a life filled with suffering due to her marriage to a temperamental drunkard, a mother of twins who later divorced, fell in love with Velutha from a lower caste (dalit caste), a grandmother, Mamachi faced domestic violence from her husband, Papachi. Their uncle, Chacko, is an Oxford-educated labor activist who perpetrates violence and harassment against women workers while preaching equality. Finally, Baby Kochamma, is Rahel's grandmother. at the age of eighteen, Baby Khocamma fell in love with the handsome Irish monk, Father Mulligan. at that age, Baby Khocamma

experienced a failed love story with a missionary and later converted.

The story begins at the funeral of Sophie Mol, a mystery that happened when Estha and Rahel were 9 years old. After Sophie Mol's funeral is over, Ammu takes the twins to the police station and makes a confession that she killed Sophie Mol. After Chacko invites his ex-wife Margaret Kochamma to visit India and celebrate Christmas after Margaret's second husband died. After Sophie Mol's death, Velutha is accused of being her murderer. Also accused of raping Ammu in the river. Because he was accused and belonged to the lowest caste, Velutha was brutally beaten by the police although it was not deliberate.

In a further turn of events for Rachel and Estha, Ammu was told to return Estha to their father, who by then had resigned from his lonely job in the tea estates of Assam and moved to Calcutta. Estha and Rahel were separated for 23 years. During that time, Ammu died while Rahel married an American man, Larry McCaslin. But her marriage to the American fell through and they divorced.

then after Rahel learned of Estha's return to Ayemenem, Rahel decided to return to Ayemenem. The two twin sisters then engaged in a sexual relationship.

8. Arundhati Roy biography

Arundhati Roy, full name Suzanna Arundhati Roy, was born on November 24, 1961, in Shillong, Meghalaya, India), Indian writer, actress, and political activist best known for her award-winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) and for involvement in environmental causes and human rights.

Roy's father was a tea plantation farmer and his mother was a Christian of Syrian descent who defied India's inheritance law by successfully asserting the right of Christian women to receive an equal share of their father's estate. In the career world, Roy was trained to become an architect but instead of becoming an architect, Roy dreamed of becoming a writer. After a series of odd jobs, Roy began writing and acting in the film *In Where Annie Gives It to They Ones* (1989) and then wrote the script for the film *Electric Moon* (1992) and several television dramas. The films

earned Roy a loyal following, but his literary career was plagued by controversy. As a result of the controversy that was experienced by Roy, Roy decided to withdraw from the public and return to the novel she had started writing.

In 1997 Roy published a novel she calls *The God of Small Things*. Autobiographical works of art depart from conventional plots and typical light prose. This non-expatriate novel, written in lyrical language about South Asian themes and characters in a time-travel narrative, became the best-selling book ever written by an Indian author. In 1998, it won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. Over time, Roy's literary work has largely consisted of politically-oriented nonfiction, mostly focused on addressing the problems of capitalism in the country. Among his publications are *Power Politics* (2001), *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2002), *War Talk* (2003), *Public Power in The Age of Empire* (2004), *Field Notes on Democracy: Listening to Locusts* (2009), *The Broken Republic: Three Essays* (2011),

Capitalism: A Ghost Story (2014), and his last novel for the last 20 years *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, his work blends personal stories with topical issues as it uses many characters, including a transgender woman and a resistance fighter in Kashmir, to explore contemporary India.

C. METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The descriptive qualitative method is when the data and research results are presented in the form of an explanation in the form of words or sentences, not in the form of numbers. The primary data be used as the object of research is the novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy. This research is based on a literature study, therefore the secondary data are from other sources in the form of books, journals, articles, and the internet as references related to research analysis.

D. RESULTS

In this section, the researcher presents data that are considered a form of women's struggle against patriarchal culture based on three strategies that women can use to

reject their femininity and the impact of patriarchy experienced by female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things*. In order to facilitate the understanding of the data, the researcher provide information in the data presentation. P stands for Page, and D stands for Data. The following is a form of women's struggle against patriarchal culture and the impact caused by patriarchal culture in the novel *The God of Small Things*.

1. The form of women's struggle against patriarchal culture, is based on Simone De Beauvoir's three strategies.

a. Women are able to work

Working is one of the things that supports women to be said to be someone who exists, because by working women can prove themselves that they are able to become independent person, namely by not expecting help from others to finance their lives, and indirectly they will be able to determine their future.

In the novel *The God of Small Things*, there are several characters who prove that they can work and are able to

become independent figures and show their existence to others by working. As Simone De Beauvoir said by working outside the home together with men, women can concretely assert their status as someone who actively determines the direction of their destiny. The following will present data that shows a character who is able to show her existence as a woman.

“She spent eight years in college without finishing the five-year undergraduate course and taking her degree. The fees were low and it wasn’t hard to scratch out a living, staying in the hostel, eating in the subsidized student mess, rarely going to class, working instead as a draftsman in gloomy architectural firms that exploited cheap student labor to render their presentation drawings and to blame when things went wrong. The other students, particularly the boys, were intimidated by Rahel’s waywardness and almost fierce lack of ambition. They left her alone. She was never invited to their nice homes or noisy parties. Even her professors were a little wary of her—her bizarre, impractical building plans, presented on cheap brown paper, her indifference to their passionate critiques.” (P.17/D.1)

From data (01), we know that Rahel uses her time as a student to work as a draftsman in an architectural firm, even though the job exploits students as cheap labor. Rahel still chooses to work to prove that she can be an independent woman, even though the views of other students, especially men, towards Rahel are not good. Rahel did not care about their passionate criticism.

“After they were divorced, Rahel worked for a few months as a waitress in an Indian restaurant in New York. And then for several years as a night clerk in a bullet-proof cabin at a gas station outside Washington,” (P.19/D2)

Then from data (2), it can also be seen that Rahel is a woman who is very existent. Seen where Rahel after divorcing her husband Larry McCaslin, worked in the service of an Indian restaurant in New York. Then, for a few years, she worked as a night clerk in a bulletproof cabin, and then worked at a gas station, this proves that Rachel is an independent woman who can determine her own life, without any help or even direction from others and does not depend on her husband Larry McCaslin.

a. Striving to realize oneself as an intellectual

Intellectuals are people who use intelligence to learn, work, initiate, imagine, and answer problems about various ideas (Andriani, Ana (2016)). making everyone's desire to actualize individual ideas. Intellectuality cannot be measured in value but can be measured through daily life, both in careers and in problem-solving. Women who become intellectuals are women who can show their existence because intellectual activities are the activities of a person who thinks, sees, and defines. Women who have the intelligence and ability to express opinions are women who are able to determine the direction of their future well and will certainly be respected by others. In this case, there are several characters who are able to describe the figure of a woman who is intellectual and able to carry out thinking, and defining activities.

“So as long as she wasn't noisy about it, she remained free to make her own enquiries: into breasts and how much they hurt. Into false-hair buns and how well they burned.

Into life and how it ought to be lived.”(P.16)

The data above shows about the character is attitude and action who always tries to understand something deeply and broadly from what she learns, sees, and hears. people with high intellectual intelligence tend to have a high sense of curiosity, because their thoughts about something are always deep and broad, one of them is Rahel. When she attended school at Nazareth Convent Rachel had a very high curiosity about many things, at the age of eleven she began to be curious about how painful breasts were when hit with a door, how easily fake rounds burned, and about life and how to live life.

b. Women are able to defy their otherness with their bodies.

In society, women's Otherness is internalized in various forms. Women are fed with images of "perfect beauty". So when women want to achieve transcendence, they must free themselves from their bodies, refuse to waste time by beautifying themselves, and rather utilize it by doing more creative activities. In this

case, it is depicted that Baby Kochamma is a character who rejects her femininity because she is able to do more useful and creative activities.

“Baby Kochamma spent her afternoons in her garden. In sari and gum boots. She wielded an enormous pair of hedge shears in her bright-orange gardening gloves. Like a lion tamer she tamed twisting vines and nurtured bristling cacti. She limited bonsai plants and pampered rare orchids. She waged war on the weather. She tried to grow edelweiss and Chinese guava.” (P.26)

In data shows about how Baby Kochamma decides to leave the convent in Madras. Baby Kochamma realizes how impossible it is for her to be Father Mulligan's love interest, and she becomes restless and unhappy in the convent. Baby Kochamma rejects her existence as a woman thirsting for love, as Simone (1989:560) says in her book, although love has been reserved for woman as her primary vocation, and when she directs it to a man, she seeks God in him; but, if human love rejects her because of circumstances, if she is disappointed or overly concerned, she may choose to

worship the sacredness in God himself. Baby Kochamma would rather do something useful and creative, rather than spend her time being a woman chasing love because her fate was not what she expected in the Madras convent. Baby Kochamma denied that solitude made her life more difficult. On the contrary, Baby Kochamma feels the bitterness of her life gradually dissipating as she traces her path further and further.

b. The impact experienced by female characters on patriarchal culture

The description of patriarchal culture in the novel *The God of Small Things* can be seen through the activities carried out by the characters chosen by the author to show something that refers to patriarchal cultural acts. The depiction in question can be in the form of things that align women under the power of men in all aspects. This brings up several forms of the impact of a patriarchal culture that has developed in the community and can harm women, including subordination, discrimination, violence against women, sexual harassment, and even trafficking in

women depicted through the scenes told in the novel *The God of Small Things*.

a. Patriarchy towards

Patriarchy is a social system which practices the positions of women under the control of men. In the practice of this control, men dominate, oppress and exploit (Afifah Nurlaili Khoirunnisa, 2023). As a result of the placement of men as the main role in the social system, fathers or men have control over the lives of women, mothers, children, and property.

a) Mammachi

“Though Mammachi had conical corneas and was already practically blind. Pappachi would not help her with the pickle-making because he did not consider pickle-making a suitable job for a high-ranking ex-Government official.” (P.44/D.10)

The subordination of women is seen in data (10), which is an assessment or assumption that one gender is inferior to the other. In the quote above shows the arrogance of Pappachi who considers the work that Mammachi does as a job that does not deserve her because she is a former high-ranking government official

while Mammachi is only a pickle maker. It is also because of Pappachi's jealousy towards Mammachi who is more successful than her.

“He had always been a jealous man, so he greatly resented the attention his wife was suddenly getting. He slouched about the compound in his immaculately tailored suits, weaving sullen circles around mounds of red chilies and freshly powdered yellow turmeric, watching Mammachi supervise the buying, the weighing, the salting, and drying. Of limes and tender mangoes.” (P.45/D.11)

Similar to data (10), the subordination of women is also seen in data (11) as seen in the quote above after Pappachi retired, Mammachi had a more important role in the household than Pappachi as the head of the family. This made Pappachi unacceptable, because she felt she had a high rank in the British government as an Entomologist which made her feel superior to Mammachi. Because of Mammachi's hard-working actions amidst the negative stereotypes of women in society, Mammachi is often physically abused by Pappachi.

Ammu

“It’s a little too late for all this, don’t you think?” he said. He spoke the coarse Kottayam dialect of Malayalam. He stared at Ammu’s breasts as he spoke. He said the Police didn’t take statements from Veshyas or their illegitimate children. Ammu said she’d see about that. Inspector Thomas Mathew came around his desk and approached Ammu with his baton.” (P.71)

The treatment of violence against women is also experienced by Ammu's character, as can be seen in Data (15), Ammu experiences sexual violence. In the quote, Ammu is harassed by Inspector Thomas Mathew. Inspector Thomas Mathew freely harassed Ammu, he tapped Ammu's breasts with his truncheon. Inspector Thomas felt that what he was doing was not wrong, because he did not care what Ammu felt. Inspector Thomas Mathew realized that he had a higher position than Ammu.

“He proposed to Ammu five days after they first met. Ammu did not pretend to be in love with him. She just weighed the odds and accepted. She thought that anything, anyone at all, would be better than returning to Ayemenem. She wrote to her parents informing them of her

decision. They didn't reply."
(P.37/D.16).

Discrimination against women is also depicted in the novel *The God of Small Things*, in the quote in Data (16), it appears that Ammu has no choice in determining the direction of her better fate as a woman, so in the quote, Ammu merely accepts the proposal, while weighing the advantages and disadvantages of returning to Ayemenem, because if in Ayemenem she will spend her time with her temperamental father and see her mother suffer from living under patriarchal pressure. But the only choice to live a better life instead trapped her in the patriarchal sphere.

Discussion

The God of Small Things is a fiction novel written by Indian woman Arundhati Roy, full name Auzanna Arundhati Roy. The novel is set in the Indian state of Kerala, a diverse political scene and dynamic socio-culture. The novel is enriched by religious diversity from Christianity, Hinduism to Islam as well as Portuguese and British colonialisation.

The Ayamenem family adheres to Syrian Christianity which is practised by 20% of the people in Kerala. In addition, the state of Kerala was also a place where communist ideology was channelled and an election victory was achieved.

In *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati presents aspects of Kerala's nature and social culture in a beautiful and compelling manner. Despite the backward-facing storyline and child's storytelling, Arundhati Roy in this novel, harshly criticises the caste discrimination and patriarchal society. Although the novel has various religions that teach about human equality, the patriarchal system in India is very different. In *The God of Small Things*, Syrian Christianity has been practised by the Ayamenem family, the initial arrival of the religion offers egalitarianism to the pravan caste (the lowest caste) but in practice, the offer does not fully make them free from casteism. They were required to worship in their own churches. The novel depicts the life of the lowest caste or *The Small Things* or *The Untouchable* represented by the character Vellya Paapen who, in the

past, still faced days of walking backwards to erase their footprints so that the Brahmins would not step on the footprints of the lower castes.

"God of loss", the God of small things. The term is Arundhati Roy's description of the lower castes. They leave no footprints in the sand, no ripples in the water, not even an image in the mirror." (2018:373) This is so that people from these castes have no history and their names are erased. The character from the caste is represented by Vellya Paapen, whose son is Velutha. Velutha had represented the progressive Paravan caste who had a desire to change the class of their caste and the caste system that had alienated their people for centuries joined the naxal party but the movement was silenced and even Velutha was killed for a mistake he never made.

The characters that represent the patriarchal system in the novel are Pappachi, Chacko, Mr Hollick, along with other characters that support patriarchy and oppression. Pappachi is the son of Reverend John Ipe and is an intellectual and generous personality, in public

Pappachi is known as a very kind and thoughtful person but because of the patriarchal system, he becomes very abusive towards Ammu and Mammachi. Furthermore, Chacho is the son of Pappachi, he is an Oxford graduate who takes over Mammachi's pickle and pickling factory and claims himself as a Marxist. He is indebted to the class, promising the women to abolish their class and lecture the women in the factory on labour rights, but in reality Chacko takes advantage of sleeping with them and becomes a tyrant to the women's family members. Through the characters of Big Things (Touchable) and Small Things, Roy unravels these two ironic social relationships.

Furthermore, the characters that represent the feminist movement in *The God of Small Things* are Rachel, Ammu, Mammachi, and Baby Khocamma. The novel *The God of Small Things* alludes to how parents always differentiate the treatment of boys and girls. This is experienced by the main character "Ammu" who always gets different treatment from her brother "Chacko".

Rahel, Ammu, Mammachi and Baby Khocamma have attitudes that show that they have a desire to be treated fairly.

The theme of marginality in the novel is reinforced by postcolonial issues represented by Sophie Mol, Chacko's daughter and his British ex-wife Margaret Kochamma. Sophie Mol is the pride of the family who are basically anglophiles. Sophie Mol's existence marginalises Rachel and Estha who were born as Hindu-Hybrids (a symbol of colonisation). Sophie Mol's self-description also becomes their standard of beauty because of their admiration for everything that comes from the west (England). Postcolonial practices are also demonstrated by Baby Kochamma who does not hesitate to chastise Rahel and Estha whenever they are found speaking with Malayam accent instead of English.

E. CONCLUSION

After conducting the entire series of research procedures in the previous chapter and completing the analysis of the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy using Simone de Beauvoir's Existential Feminism theory

using a feminist approach, the researcher concludes that there are forms of women's struggle against patriarchal culture using the three strategies proposed by Simone de Beauvoir and the impact of patriarchal culture on female characters in the novel. Based on the data from the discussion in the description of chapter IV, the author draws several conclusions, namely:

1. The form of women's resistance to patriarchal culture as a form of existence of female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* using the three strategies proposed by Simone are events experienced by female characters in their relationships with other people and their environment that show and strengthen their existence as a woman. In the novel *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy, there are sentences and paragraphs that show the experiences of female characters in the novel *The God of Small Things* such as women are able to work, strive to become intellectuals, and fight against the Otherness of their bodies as a woman who exists.

2. The impact produced by the patriarchal culture depicted in the novel *The God of Small Things* is detrimental to women in all aspects of life. The results show that the forms of patriarchal culture caused include subordination, discrimination, violence against women, sexual harassment, and even trafficking in women caused by two factors, namely internal and external factors which include the role of the family and the role of society in supporting patriarchal stigma.

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