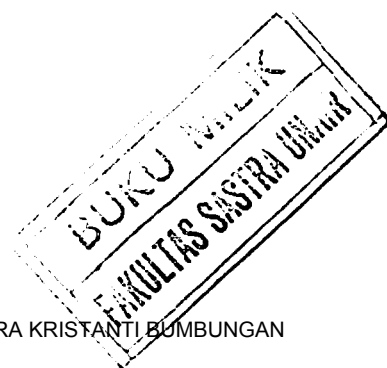


ABSTRACT

A literary work, especially novel, is likely to perform certain social and cultural values of its age or era. Arundhati Roy's novel, The God of Small Things, has the similar spirit which tells a lot about the social condition of Indian society where the writer lives. Taking Ayemenem, South India, in 1969, as its setting, this novel shows the tension arises in a respected Syrian-Christian family. They represent the supremacy of Touchable caste which is challenged by the taboo cross-caste love affair between Ammu, the daughter, and Velutha, one of their factory workers who belongs to the damned Untouchable caste. The intensity of caste border between Touchable and Untouchable in this novel is intriguing and it encourages the writer to develop this subject into a thesis.

Caste in this novel becomes interesting since it is situated among the influence of Christianity and Marxism. Many characters of this novel represent the apparatuses of caste who maintain caste as the dominant ideology through various form of institutions. Thus, it will be appropriate to apply theory of ideology by Althusser in analyzing this novel which recognizes both subtle and repressive way of imposing the dominant ideology. The support of socio-cultural approach on caste and unique case of Kerala is also used to gain more understanding of the society and situation portrayed in the novel.



The God of Small Things shares the universal complexity of every society, at such critical point where the value of a human being must be sacrifice for the common good. It shows the incomparable cost to pay for breaking the rules of caste. It leaves a bitter yet true reflection of the vulnerability of personal lives under the power of the dominant structure.

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION