

British Gods in an Indian World?

*The portrayal of the legacy of British colonialism in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things**

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Synopsis

This thesis investigates Arundhati Roy's attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India. This will be examined in a close-reading of her novel *The God of Small Things*. Most of the novel's plot occurs in the 1960s in the village of Ayemenem, which is located in the state of Kerala, South India. First, the thesis considers the effects of British assimilationist policies in colonial India in the nineteenth century. In connection to this, some characters will be analysed in the light of the postcolonial term 'mimicry' as it is viewed by Homi Bhabha. Second, there will be paid attention to the integration of Syrian Christianity in the society of Ayemenem, in which Hindu societal norms dictate social behaviour. This will be viewed in the context of British colonial interference with religious and societal traditions in Ayemenem. Third, some focus will be devoted to dam projects in India. Although India has a long history with dam building, such projects escalated during British rule. Following Independence, India faces unforeseen consequences of dam projects initiated by the British. Finally, the thesis investigates the treatment of the novel's Indian-English 'hybrid' characters by the majority population. This will take the form of a character analysis, in which a selected number of characters will be analysed in the light of Homi Bhabha's view on the postcolonial term 'hybridity'.

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1 Introduction

The overall purpose of this thesis is to provide an analysis of Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* in which my primary focus will be to investigate Roy's attitude towards the British legacy in India in retrospect of the British colonisation of India. It is my opinion that several characters in Roy's novel are mistreated because they are Anglophile. Although most of the novel's plot takes place in India the 1960s, it is my impression that Roy suggests that the British are accountable for the general ill-treatment of these Anglophile Indian characters. I argue that Roy critiques the British for intervening with local Indian customs and traditions during the colonial period. In my analysis of the novel, I will explore five topics that are relevant to my problem statement: British assimilationist policies in colonial India, British intervention of religious practices of the local Syrian Christian Church, local caste-regulations, and dam building initiated by the British before Independence. The fifth topic of exploration is an investigation of how selected Anglophile characters in the novel are perceived and treated by other Indians after Independence. With an emphasis on these topics, I aim to uncover the author's attitude towards the imperial British influence in the context of the complex post-colonial society in India. Thus, my problem statement is: How is Arundhati Roy's attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India revealed in her novel *The God of Small Things*?

1.1 The author of the novel under discussion

Arundhati Roy was born in Ayemenem in the state of Kerala in India in 1961. She is the daughter of a Syrian Christian mother and a Hindi father, who got divorced when Arundhati and her brother were young. Roy grew up in a multi-faith society, in which Hinduism, Islam and Christianity was established religions. Roy took up an apprenticeship in architecture at the New Delhi School of Architecture, and later, she studied the restoration of monuments in Italy. Prior to *The God of Small Things*, Roy wrote a couple of screenplays as well as publishing a pair of controversial articles about the oppression of Indian women in India (Mullaney 2002: 8). Roy published *The God of Small Things* in 1996, and it immediately received critical acclaim. It has been published in over forty different languages and has sold over six million copies worldwide. The novel earned Roy the prestigious Booker Prize in 1997. This is quite an accomplishment, considering that it is her debut novel. Roy donated the

Booker Prize money to an Indian grassroots activist group in order to support the group's opposition to further big dam development in India. Roy has taken advantage of the attention she has received for her novel by writing several essays in which she brings critical attention to "the local effects of government policies together with the wider issues of international development, globalization, and the mobilization and meaning of local resistances to the capricious operations of the transnational economy" (Mullaney 13).

Roy has only published one novel, but she continues to write essays on environmental and political topics. She is critical to the effects of globalisation, and she suggests that globalisation is "a mutant variety of colonialism, remote controlled and digitally operated" (Mullaney 14). In her writings, she often draws on and problematizes India's colonial history with a particular emphasis on the British occupation of India. Mullaney observes that in *The Art of Spinning*, Roy exemplifies how a new generation of Indians are being groomed by the British during colonial India, in which they are whitewashed into "man the backroom operations of giant transnational companies while being effectively hidden under the homogenizing and decontextualising influences of the global economy" (Mullaney 15). Roy's main critique of colonisation and globalisation revolves around the imbalance of power, in which one nation exploits the other. Roy argues that "[t]he only way to keep power on a tight leash is to oppose it, never to seek to own it or have it. Opposition is permanent" (Mullaney 17). Roy's argument suggests that she has considered the pros and cons of globalisation and colonisation, with the conclusion that she will persistently pay attention to their negative effects.

Having written her novel and several essays in English, Roy has established herself within the field of Indian writers who write in English. Indo-Anglican fiction is a transnational phenomenon, and the literature produced within this field often problematizes the collisions between East and West. Many consider it ironic that in order for these Indian authors to be heard in the West, they need to write their fiction in English. Salman Rushdie argues that "English-language Indian writing will never be more than a post-colonial anomaly, the bastard child of Empire, sired on India by the departing English; its continuing use of the old colonial tongue [is] seen as a fatal flaw that renders it forever inauthentic" (Mullaney 19). An important part of all writing is to convey one's spirit, one's personal message. Rushdie suggests that the meaning of one's spirit and the meaning of one's personal message is rendered inauthentic when your fiction needs to be written in a language that has

been imposed on your culture; a language which is not your mother tongue. The case is different with Roy, because despite her speaking Malayalam and Hindi, English is her primary language (Mullaney 22). Furthermore, it has been claimed that in her writing, Roy twists the English language through her use of stylistic devices, such as regional aphorisms and culturally eclipsed meanings, which portrays her written language as original and authentic. This has also been noticed by Aijaz Ahmad, who states that “Roy is the first Indian author in English where a marvellous stylistic resource becomes available for provincial, vernacular culture without any effect of exoticism or estrangement, and without the book reading of translation” (Mullaney 22). These observations suggest that Roy’s fiction consists of a combination of elements not found elsewhere within the field of Indian writers who write in English. The combination of her command of the English language and her stylistic devices may offer new ways of viewing and interpreting postcolonial literature.

1.2 The novel under discussion

In the novel, readers follow the lives of the Ipe family in Ayemenem in the state of Kerala, India. *The God of Small Things* has a non-sequential narrative, in which events of the plot are not presented in a chronological order. The main plot occurs in Ayemenem in the 1960s, and minor parts happen in Ayemenem in the 1990s. Readers often follow the perspectives of the twins Estha and Rahel, who experience the stigmatising effect of being Syrian Christian-Hindu hybrids of divorcee parents in a strongly caste-regulated society. The main historical context is the aftermath of India’s Independence. The Ipe family descends from an Indian character that used to work under the British, and this seems to affect future members of the Ipe family in several ways after Independence. The novel pays critical attention to the consequences of violating the established caste-laws in Ayemenem. Furthermore, the novel focuses on the integration of Syrian Christianity in a society where Hinduism is the majority religion, as well as portraying social inequality in the form of deeply implemented caste regulations.

The God of Small Things contains several autobiographical elements. The character of Ammu is based on Roy’s mother, Mary Roy. Her husband was Hindi, but they got divorced as the cultural differences between them aroused in a life full of conflict (Dodiya 2001: 3). Roy’s mother, just like the character of Ammu, had to raise two children by herself. In the

novel, the character of Ammu experiences local disapproval for being a divorcee as well as for marrying outside her religious community. The way Roy problematizes this is probably based on first-hand knowledge, considering that her mother experienced the same. Furthermore, the character of Rahel is based on Arundhati Roy herself. Just like Roy, the character of Rahel goes to study architecture in New Delhi, where she meets her future husband. Considering that *The God of Small Things* contains autobiographical elements, it could be argued that the novel's portrayal of Ayemenem reflects the real Ayemenem. However, Alex Tickell warns readers that “[w]e should be aware [...] of making simplistic connections between author and novel, [...] or using Roy's personal experiences as a model for what is essentially an imaginative work of fiction” (Tickell 2007: 12). Indeed, Roy has herself stated that “[t]he texture is autobiographical, the incidents are not” (Dodiya 4). Therefore, I consider my theoretical analysis of the novel as an interpretation of a piece of literary fiction, and it should be noted that my findings do not make claims about the real world.

1.3 Theory

My approach to my problem statement will draw on postcolonial theory. Generally speaking, the term ‘postcolonial’ is an umbrella term that covers a wide array of theoretical approaches which can be applied to investigate how the impact of European colonialism is portrayed in the writings of formerly colonised countries. The colonisation of a country bears either an economic, cultural or an ideological impact on the colonised country, or a combination of the three. Postcolonial theorists and critics investigate how non-Europeans are misrepresented in colonial writings. In addition, they explore how authors from countries like India use English literary traditions and the English language “to articulate their own identities *after*, and often *in opposition to* colonial rule” (Tickell 72).

From the field of postcolonial theory, I will apply the theories ‘mimicry’ and ‘hybridity’ in my analysis of *The God of Small Things*. The term ‘mimicry’ describes the ambivalent relationship between a colonised people and their colonisers. Many scholars agree that the mimicry of a colonised people is never a simple reproduction of the colonisers’ traits. Rather, the colonised people act as a ‘blurred copy’ of the colonisers, which can be threatening because the result often resembles mockery rather than mimicry (Ashcroft &

Griffiths & Tiffin 1998: 139). In chapter two of this thesis, I will provide a discussion in which I demonstrate how certain characters in Roy's novel have an ambivalent relationship towards their former British rulers, as well as giving examples and explanations of how and why their mimicry of the British is faulty. I will primarily apply the term as it is used by Homi K. Bhabha. Throughout the second chapter of this thesis, I interpret and explain Bhabha's view on mimicry and I apply it on certain characters in the novel as a means of investigating Roy's attitude towards the British legacy in India after Independence.

Hybridity generally refers to new transcultural forms created in the contact zone produced by colonisation. Hybridity can appear in many forms, be it linguistic hybridity, religious hybridity, racial hybridity and so on (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 118). Several characters in *The God of Small Things* appear to have an Indian-British cultural hybridity. I will attempt to analyse these hybrid characters in the light of Homi Bhabha's positive view on hybridity. For Bhabha, hybridity can potentially be recognised as a genuine, international culture rather than a mix of two diverse cultures (Bhabha 2004: 56). Thus, Bhabha considers hybridity as having the potential to be an empowering cultural identity which subverts and challenges the power structures of hierarchies: "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha 5). In chapter three of this thesis, I will attempt to analyse the hybrid characters in Roy's novel with an emphasis on whether their hybridity is empowering and subverts the hierarchy of the homogenous Indian culture in Roy's Ayemenem. This will be done by investigating how they are treated by the local population.

In my research on Bhabha's view on mimicry and hybridity, I noticed that as a theorist, I found him to be occasionally abstract in his explanations. It should be noted that the way I apply his theories on the literary text of *The God of Small Things* is based on my interpretation of his theories. I attempt to concretise aspects of his view on mimicry and hybridity that are relevant to my discussion throughout this thesis.

1.4 Methodology

As this thesis revolves around my analysis of one work of literary fiction, I will use the method close-reading. This implies that throughout my discussion, I will refer to relevant quotations from Roy's novel and look closely at their contents in order to interpret what they imply. As my discussion of different characters takes the form of character analysis, it should be noted that I distinguish between a character's comments and the narrator's comments. I view each character as a personage in the novel, and I view the narrator as the one who is assumed to be telling the story, albeit not participating as a character in it. In other words, I distinguish between comments made on the character level and on the narrator level throughout my discussion of the novel.

A characteristic feature of Roy's novel is that the narration is occasionally internally focalised. This implies that the narration's point of view is sometimes seen from a character's point of view (Baldick 2008: 131). In *The God of Small Things*, the focalisation is sometimes placed among the seven year old twins Estha and Rahel. Thus, readers are presented with certain events from the perspectives of the twins. In these cases, the narrative voice resembles that of a young child, and the author of the novel draws on several stylistic devices in order to achieve this. Clarke observes that some of these stylistic devices are unusual capitalisation of words, and fragmentation of semantic unity and syntax (Clarke 2007: 135). Here is an example from the novel:

Ambassador Rahel wouldn't come out of the curtain because she couldn't. She couldn't because she couldn't. Because Everything was wrong. And soon there would be a Lay Ter for both her and Estha. Full of furred moths and icy butterflies. And deep-sounding bells. And moss. And a Nowl. (Roy 2009: 146)

This narrative style will not be under analysis in this thesis. However, considering that my close-reading of the novel involves referring to many quotes, a reader of this thesis will encounter such a narration quite often. Therefore, I explain this narrative style in advance as a means of preparing the reader for encountering several unusual sentence constructions.

In addition to my close-reading of the literary text, I will also provide a close-reading of the literary text in the context of historical events mentioned in the novel. Most of the novel's plot takes place in Kerala in the 1960s. I will primarily focus on the novel's main family in the aftermath of India's Independence, which was granted in 1947. My aim is to explore Roy's attitude towards the British legacy in India after colonisation. For instance, the British influenced many Indians with British culture, values and opinions during colonial India. Some of these traits are found among members of the Indian main family in the novel,

which I suggest affects how these characters behave and are treated by other Indians in the community. I will also consider the history of the integration of Syrian Christianity in Kerala, with a particular focus on how the British attempted to influence certain practices of the Syrian Christian Church in the nineteenth century, which leads to unforeseen consequences for some characters in the novel. Furthermore, I will briefly refer to dam building initiated by the British in India in the twentieth century.

Considering the novel's popularity among people who read it for amusement as well as among people who read it for academic attention, it is natural to assume that several interpretations of the novel have already been made. During my research on the novel, I experienced several cases in which I discovered that my own observations and interpretations had already been made by other people. Throughout this thesis, I state whenever an observation made by me has also been made by another person, in which I include a reference to where this can be found. If my interpretation is identical to a work done by somebody else, and I do not mention this, then it is not my intention to steal that person's work and claim it as my own. Pragmatically, it is nearly impossible for me to check whether my observations have been made by others already.

1.5 Summing up the introduction

To sum up, this thesis aims to investigate Roy's attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India. I will apply the postcolonial theories 'mimicry' and 'hybridity' in a close-reading *The God of Small Things*. In other words, in my attempt to uncover Roy's attitude, I consider the novel as a stage in a play, and I interpret this 'play' through the light settings of Bhabha's 'mimicry' and 'hybridity'.

2 Mimicry, mockery and menace; some ways in which Roy's attitude towards the British's colonial legacy in India is revealed in *The God of Small Things*

In this chapter, I will apply the term 'mimicry' as used by Thomas Macaulay and Homi K. Bhabha to some of the Kerala residents and parts of the community in *The God of Small Things* as a means of exploring Roy's attitude towards the British's colonial legacy in India. The term mimicry is relevant to my problem statement because it helps explain the behaviour and the complex transcultural identities of the novel's main family. In addition, the term can be helpful to partly explain the negative outcome of the dam projects and the compromised integration of Syrian Christianity in Kerala, which Roy's narration seems to criticise.

Generally speaking, within the field of postcolonialism the term 'mimicry' describes the ambivalent relationship between a colonised people and their colonisers. Many scholars agree that the mimicry of a colonised people is never a simple reproduction of the colonisers' traits. Rather, the colonised people act as a 'blurred copy' of the colonisers, which can be threatening because the result often resembles mockery rather than mimicry (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 139). In other words, mimicry can reveal the colonisers' limitations in controlling the behaviour of the colonised. In order to discuss the mimicry of the relevant characters in *The God of Small Things*, I find it a viable starting-point to begin with Pappachi Ipe as he lived during colonial India. Although his father and grandfather are mentioned in the novel, very little information is given on them. More information is provided about Pappachi, and his background is relevant in my discussion of mimicry.

2.1.1 Pappachi Ipe as a mimic man

Pappachi is grandfather to the main characters Estha and Rahel. Readers do not get to know too much about his past. The information which is relevant to my discussion is that he used to work as an Imperial Entomologist. This means that he was hired by the British and instructed to study and potentially revise the taxonomic order of insects native to India, which naturally implies that he needed to communicate his findings and report back to the British. Arguably, it was convenient for the British to have Pappachi hired in colonial India because he could speak English, Hindi and Malayalam, thus functioning as a translator in addition to being an Entomologist. This makes Pappachi resemble the 'mimic man' which early nineteenth-century British colonialism sought after in India. In 1835, British historian and politician

Thomas Macaulay argued that the British imperialism of India could succeed if the British created “a class of interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Bhabha 124-125). Macaulay also recognised that English morals and values could be inculcated in this translator class of Indians through the teaching of English literature, and argued that “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India” (Tickell 51). Arrogant as this statement is, the British seem to have succeeded in creating this kind of ‘mimic man’ in Pappachi, at least in some respects. First of all, the Ipe family quotes and references English literature on numerous occasions throughout the novel. Although there are no examples of Pappachi referencing English literature himself, his sister Baby Kochamma and his son Chacko quote Shakespeare quite often. If Pappachi had disliked English literature, I doubt that he would allow his son and sister to be as verbal about the English literary canon as they are. Therefore, I find it more likely that Pappachi has influenced his family into liking English literature. Secondly, Pappachi prefers dressing in nice-looking suits. This may be motivated from wanting to distinguish himself from the lower-caste Indians and the average-looking citizen in Ayemenem. The wearing of suits may also signify that Pappachi prefers the English way of dressing over wearing a mundu, which would be more in accordance to societal norms. In either case, he fits the description of Macaulay’s translator class. In addition, he likes to drive around in his car that he bought from an Englishman, showing it off to native Indians:

He bought the skyblue Plymouth from an old Englishman in Munnar. He became a familiar sight in Ayemenem, coasting importantly down the narrow road in his wide car, looking outwardly elegant but sweating freely inside his woollen suits. (Roy 48)

Furthermore, Pappachi thinks more highly of English people than Indian people. This is another trait that makes him resemble Macaulay’s translator class, who were Indian in blood and colour but shared the opinions of the English. Chacko points this out to Estha and Rahel:

Chacko said that the correct word for people like Pappachi was *Anglophile*. He made Rahel and Estha look up *Anglophile* in the *Reader’s Digest Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary*. It said *Person well disposed to the English*. Then Estha and Rahel had to look up *disposed*. It said:

- (1) *Place suitably in particular order.*
- (2) *Bring mind into certain state.*
- (3) *Do what one will with, get off one’s hands, stow away, demolish, finish, settle, consume (food), kill, sell.*

Chacko said that in Pappachi’s case it meant (2) *Bring mind into certain state*. Which, Chacko said, meant that Pappachi’s mind had been *brought into a state* which made him like the English. (Roy 52)

That Pappachi's mind has been brought into a state that makes him like the English is clearly exemplified in his reactions to Ammu's excuses for divorcing her ex-husband, Baba. Baba violently abused Ammu, and he almost lost his job due to alcoholism. His boss, an Englishman by the name Mr Hollick, said that he would not fire Baba as long as Baba went along with 'lending' Ammu to Mr Hollick for his sexual needs:

Over coffee, Mr Hollick proposed that Baba go away for a while. For a holiday. To a clinic perhaps, for treatment. For as long as it took him to get better. And for the period of time that he was away, Mr Hollick suggested that Ammu be sent to his bungalow to be 'looked after'. (Roy 42)

Arguably, any Indian father disposed to liking the English would hate Mr Hollick for taking advantage of his married daughter in this way. However, Pappachi does not seem to have much love and respect for his family. Instead, it seems like his morals and opinions have been masked and whitewashed by the colonisers:

Pappachi would not believe her [Ammu's] story – not because he thought well of her husband, but simply because he didn't believe that an Englishman, *any* Englishman, would covet another man's wife. (Roy 42)

The cases above illustrate that Pappachi resembles Macaulay's translator class of Indians which imperial England sought after in the nineteenth century. In many ways, Pappachi's opinions and values seem to have been brought into a state that makes him mimic imperial British opinions and values. Macaulay's perspective on mimicry is useful and relevant to my discussion because it helps explain how and why Pappachi started to mimic the imperial culture in the first place, which I argue that he in turn inculcated on to other members of the Ipe family. Here, it is useful and relevant to include Homi K. Bhabha's view on mimicry because it can be applied to help explain the consequences of the Ipe family's mimicry. Bhabha argues that Macaulay's suggestion on colonial mimicry results in a "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha 122). This means that on the one hand, the imperial British wanted to make Pappachi as English as possible, but on the other hand, they wanted him to be identified as a recognisable other, as something that were not completely synonymous with the English. This discourse of mimicry is for Bhabha constructed around an ambivalence, in which he explains that "in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha 122). Put in other words, Macaulay's translator class of Indians needs to make occasional mistakes in their mimicry in order to be distinguished as a subject of difference that is almost the same as the English, but not quite. The case above when Pappachi refuses to believe that Mr Hollick has sexually abused Ammu can serve as an

example. Although colonial mimicry succeeded in making Pappachi disposed into liking the English, Pappachi fails to mimic them correctly. He goes too far in his liking of the English, with the result of neglecting his own daughter in favour of thinking well of an Englishman whom he is not even acquainted with. Arguably, no Englishman would make this mistake. This shows that Pappachi's judgement is clouded, which hinders him in mimicking the English correctly.

The above discussion suggests that the colonisers impose an identity on the colonised people which is almost English, but not quite. When the colonised people are not identical to the colonisers, there is always a chance that their mimicry resembles mockery instead. For Bhabha, this kind of mimicry is

the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. [But] Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers. (Bhabha 123)

Bhabha's point here is, then, that whenever a colonised people's mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence, the result is both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. That a colonised people behave inappropriately implies a limitation in the colonisers' control of this behaviour. In order to investigate whether Roy implies this kind of limitation in her novel, it is necessary to further examine her narration of Pappachi and other members of the Ipe family.

2.1.2 Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour among some members of the Ipe family

Pappachi behaves appropriately on several social occasions:

He was charming and urbane with visitors, and stopped just short of fawning if they happened to be white. He donated money to orphanages and leprosy clinics. He worked hard on his public profile as a sophisticated, generous, moral man. (Roy 180)

On the surface, it seems as though Pappachi is a moral man who contributes to the local community. Although Pappachi resembles a moral and generous man in the example above, there are several examples of him behaving inappropriately as well. He is jealous of his wife Mammachi for running a successful pickle factory. He refuses to help her out with her business, even though she is almost blind. Instead of being helpful, Pappachi beats her:

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. He had always been a jealous man, so he greatly resented the attention his wife was suddenly getting. [...] Every night he beat her with a brass flower vase. The beatings weren't new. What was new was only the frequency with which they took place. (Roy 47-48)

Furthermore, Pappachi gets jealous when Mammachi is recognised as having potential when practicing the violin: "The [violin] lessons were abruptly discontinued when Mammachi's teacher, Launsky-Tieffenthal, made the mistake of telling Pappachi that his wife was exceptionally talented and, in his opinion, potentially concert class" (Roy 50). Later, one night when Pappachi was jealous of and angry with Mammachi, he "broke the bow of Mammachi's violin and threw it in the river" (Roy 48). From these examples, it can be deduced that Pappachi's behaviour is two-fold: while he is concerned with appearing charming and generous towards strangers, particularly if they are white, he behaves like a monster towards his Indian family:

[...] alone with his wife and children he turned into a monstrous, suspicious bully, with a streak of vicious cunning. They were beaten, humiliated and then made to suffer the envy of friends and relations for having such a wonderful husband and father. (Roy 180)

This goes to show that Pappachi behaves both appropriately and inappropriately because his mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence, as Bhabha would have it. For Bhabha, the result of Pappachi's mimicry, which excesses inappropriate behaviour, is a mimicry that is "at once resemblance and menace" (Bhabha 123). On the one hand, Pappachi's mimicry resembles English behaviour and manners; on the other hand, his jealous and violent behaviour towards his own family resembles a curiously unidentifiable menace. Pappachi's menacing behaviour was probably not intended by the British, but now they are powerless to control it. This can be interpreted as Roy mocking the British for the limitation in their colonial authority. What the British set into motion ended in mockery and menace, which Roy implies in Chacko's comment about the situation of the Ipe family: "They were 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" (Roy 52). Chacko's opinion here is a literal and clear critique of a colonial authority imposing an identity on to a colonised people, and shows what the consequences might be for the future of the colonised people. As a side note, it is worth observing a relevant parallel between the British and the Ipe family on the subject of control. While the British fail to control the inappropriate behaviour of some members of the Ipe family, so does the Ipe family fail to control some of its own members' inappropriate behaviour. As a teenager, Baby Kochamma fell in love with an Irish monk by

the name Father Mulligan. He enjoyed the company of Reverend John Ipe, who was Baby Kochamma and Pappachi's father. Father Mulligan and Reverend John Ipe belonged to different denominations of Christianity, but this was no problem. John Ipe had Father Mulligan stay for lunch frequently. However, John Ipe soon observed that his daughter had inappropriate feelings for their guest:

Of the two men, only one [Reverend John Ipe] recognized the sexual excitement that rose like a tide in the slender girl [Baby Kochamma] who hovered around the table long after lunch had been cleared away. (Roy 23)

The notion of being in love with a monk is ironic because a monk pledges to live in celibacy. However, Baby Kochamma fails to recognise this, and she goes to great lengths in her pursuit of Father Mulligan's love, despite her father's wishes:

Displaying a stubborn single-mindedness (which in a young girl in those days was considered as bad as a physical deformity – a harelip perhaps, or a club foot), Baby Kochamma defied her father's wishes and became a Roman Catholic. [...] She hoped somehow that this would provide her with legitimate occasion to be with Father Mulligan. (Roy 24)

This example displays a weakness in John Ipe's authority, and this weakness suggests an interesting parallel to the British and their limitation in colonial authority. After Independence, there is a similar example with Pappachi and his daughter, Ammu. Growing desperate to find a husband and be able to move away from her parents, Ammu easily accepted a wedding proposal from a Hindu at someone else's wedding reception in Calcutta:

He [Baba] proposed to Ammu five days after they first met. Ammu didn't 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. (Roy 39)

The narrator suggests that Ammu's parents are not happy with her decision. The main reason for this is that Ammu's family consists of Syrian Christians, whereas Baba's family consists of Hindus. Inter-faith marriages are generally disapproved in Ayemenem. Arguably, Ammu was aware of this when the proposal came her way, and thus she knew that by accepting the proposal she neglected her father's wishes. The significance of this is that Roy seems to suggest the consequence of colonialism: by ruling and imposing an identity on the Indians, the result may be that they lose their ability to govern themselves. Much like the flawed colonial authority of the British, the Ipe family also reveals a flaw in authority after Independence.

The discussion of inappropriate behaviour among the Ipes so far suggests that in Roy's opinion, the British are to blame. However, colonial mimicry is not solely responsible for

Pappachi's inappropriate behaviour. In Roy's paragraph above where Pappachi is described as charming and urbane with visitors, I find it relevant to pay some attention to the narrator's choice in words when describing him, specifically the word *fawning*. This word is generally associated with dogs. A dog fawning is trying to please somebody, usually its owner. By attributing Pappachi with this trait, Roy suggests that Pappachi views white people as someone more worth pleasing than others. It is as though Pappachi announces his submissiveness towards his colonisers with a desire to please them. This resembles the relationship between a dog and its owner, and suggests that India is England's fawning dog. This is ironic because India had gained Independence by this point in time. In addition to the British creating a mimic man in Indians like Pappachi, the incident of Pappachi's moth can be interpreted as another reason why Pappachi holds a higher opinion of the English than the Indians after Independence. When the British left after India's Independence, Pappachi's designation was changed from Imperial Entomologist to Joint Director, Entomology. Before he retired he had risen to a rank equivalent to Director. One day, while working hard in the field, Pappachi discovered a unique moth which he thought to be a separate species. He took it to Delhi for taxonomic attention, and he hoped he would become famous for having discovered a new moth species and get it named after him. Disappointingly to Pappachi, the moth was identified as an unusual race of an already well-known species. However, after Pappachi's retirement, there was a taxonomic reshuffle which resulted in Pappachi's moth being identified as a separate species after all, but the moth was named after the current Acting Director. This is obviously a huge disappointment to Pappachi, who was the one who found the moth in the first place. What this all comes down to, is that Pappachi holds the Indians responsible for his great disappointment. His Anglophilia leads him to believe that if he had discovered the moth while working under the British, he would receive credit and recognition for his finding. After the British left, however, Pappachi worked under the Indians, who later took credit for his work. A relevant question to ask here is whether the British can be held responsible for the Indians' treatment of Pappachi after Independence. The incident with Pappachi's moth and the following disappointment are important in understanding why he despises his Indian family while he fawns the English. Ultimately, the disappointment connected to Pappachi's moth is held responsible for some of his inappropriate behaviour:

In the years to come, even though he had been ill-humoured long before he discovered the moth, Pappachi's Moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. (Roy 49)

This narration suggests that Pappachi is punished for remaining Anglophile after Independence.

It should be noted that Pappachi's Anglophilia is not shared by all members of the Ipe family. His daughter, Ammu, has the opinion that "Pappachi was an incurable British CCP, which was short for *chhi-chhi poach* and in Hindi meant shit-wiper" (Roy 51). Ammu is also sceptical of her brother's education at Oxford, and questions its practical value in the local village of Ayemenem:

Mammachi often said that Chacko was easily one of the cleverest men in India. 'According to whom?' Ammu would say. 'On *what* basis?' Mammachi loved to tell the story (Chacko's story) of how one of the dons at Oxford had said that in his opinion, Chacko was brilliant, and made of prime ministerial material. To this, Ammu always said, 'Ha! Ha! Ha!' like people in the comics. She said:

- (a) Going to Oxford didn't necessarily make a person clever.
- (b) Cleverness didn't necessarily make a good prime minister.
- (c) If a person couldn't even run a pickle factory profitable, how was that person going to run a whole country? (Roy 55-56)

What is significant about Ammu's opinions is that she mocks her Indian family for being Anglophile. She does not seem to criticise the British as a former colonial power. Rather, she criticises the unconstructiveness of her father and brother to remain Anglophile in a local place like Ayemenem after Independence.

2.2 Bhabha's consequence of mimicry – 'menacing' postcolonial writing

For Bhabha, what emerges through the flaws in colonial authority discussed above is post-colonial writing which is 'menacing' to colonial authority (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 140). What I interpret to be menacing in post-colonial writing is the criticism of the planned and unplanned consequences produced by colonisation. By 'colonisation' I refer to colonisation in general, and do not necessarily refer to the British colonisation of India in particular. Throughout *The God of Small Things*, Roy refers to several colonial projects that have taken place in India. Roy critiques the negative outcomes of several projects in Ayemenem which colonialism and globalisation brought about. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss the integration of Syrian Christianity in the novel, as well as discussing the building of dam projects. In my discussion, I will argue how these topics can be interpreted as relevant to the legacy of the British in colonial India.

2.2.1 Syrian Christianity in Kerala

The family readers follow in *The God of Small Things* consists mainly of Syrian Christians. India has long been a multi-faith society, which implies that different religions coexist in the same areas. Hinduism is the majority religion in India, while Syrian Christians make up but a small minority group. According to an Indian census of 2001, 80, 5% of the population identify as Hindus, whereas 2, 3% identify as Christians. The situation is somewhat different in Kerala, the area that encompasses the main plot of the novel. Though Syrian Christians are still a minority group in Kerala, the percentage of people identifying as Syrian Christians are higher in Kerala than in other parts of India:

Twenty per cent of Kerala's population were Syrian Christians, who believed that they were descendants of the one hundred Brahmins whom Saint Thomas the Apostle converted to Christianity when he travelled east after the Resurrection. (Roy 66)

Throughout the novel, there are references to the history of Syrian Christianity in Kerala and how this religious community needed to assimilate certain local Hindu social structures. Although Syrian Christianity was not implemented in India through colonisation, it was implemented as a foreign religion in a Hindu-established community. Later in my discussion, I will consider a small part of British interference with religious practices and caste regulations in India. This part is relevant both to the content of the novel as well as Bhabha's interpretation of 'menacing' postcolonial writing. I find it necessary to provide some background information on Syrian Christianity in South India as well as information on relevant Hindu social structures in order to investigate what Roy seems to criticise about the integration of Syrian Christianity in Kerala.

The Syrian Christian community in the south-western state of Kerala dates back to 52 AD. This is when the apostle St. Thomas arrived and converted several Hindu and Jewish families to Syrian Christianity, as well as founding seven churches. Legend has it that St. Thomas' first Hindu converts were thirty-two *Brahmin* families. Belonging to a Brahmin family is the highest rank in the Hindu caste-system, and even though the thirty-two Hindu Brahmin families converted from Hinduism to Syrian Christianity, they retained certain social privileges from their former high status. These families preserved their high social standing through strict endogamy, which means that they only married within their religious community (Tickell 19). This tradition remains important in the novel, and helps explain why interfaith marriages are considered taboo in Kerala. Roy gives the character Chacko a voice in which he criticises this old tradition of endogamy:

Ammu worried about madness. Mammachi said it ran in their family. That it came on people suddenly and caught them unawares. [...] Chacko said that the high incidence of insanity among Syrian Christians was the price they paid for Inbreeding. Mammachi said it wasn't. (Roy 223)

Chacko's comment can be interpreted as a critique of the Syrian Christian community's motivation for retaining a high social standing. In order to keep its high social status as descendants from Brahmin families, the Syrian Christian community cannot reproduce with people of a lower social standing, which is ironic from a Christian perspective where all men and women are equal. As Chacko sees it, after generations of sexual reproduction within its own community, the Syrian Christians experience instances of inbreeding. For Chacko, the word 'inbreeding' probably serves as a symbol for the moral disfigurement that occurs among these Syrian Christians, and does not refer to actual physical deformities among members of the community. By giving Chacko this voice, the author communicates her opinion that the strictness of this tradition is outdated and immoral in today's society.

Moreover, the first Syrian Christians needed to assimilate certain Hindu practices because Hinduism was the majority religion, and therefore it dictated certain aspects of social behaviour. As a consequence, the converted Brahmin families continued to practise many ritual aspects of Hinduism outside their Syrian Christian churches (Tickell 19). This demonstrates that the Syrian Christian religion was compromised in South India. Although this happened centuries ago, Syrian Christianity is still presented as a compromised religion in Roy's novel. The compromised state of Syrian Christianity in Kerala will be discussed throughout this section.

In order to understand why the Syrian Christians made it a priority to retain their social status, it is necessary to consider the social structures of Hinduism. Since Hinduism has long been the majority religion across India, its view on social structures has influenced all members of society regardless of the peoples' religious identities. In my brief discussion of Hindu social structures I refer mainly to the Hindu caste system. The Hindu caste-system is an ancient structure of Hindu society that divides and arranges people into four different castes. These four castes are entailed different duties and obligations, which Alex Tickell summarises:

[...] *brahmins*, as the revered priest caste, officiated at temples and religious ceremonies and were authorized to learn and recite holy scriptures. The *ksatriya* caste group traditionally associated itself with warfare and military service and the *vaisya* group involved itself in trade, business and agriculture. The low-caste *sudra* group was designated as a 'service' caste and performed agricultural labour and menial tasks. These broad caste groupings do not represent the whole of Hindu society, however, and 'outcaste' or 'untouchable' communities exist at the bottom of the *sudra* group, on the margins of the

caste system. Always economically and socially dependent on higher castes, these untouchable communities traditionally perform dirty, spiritually polluting activities such as leatherwork, street-sweeping, rubbish collection and disposing of the dead. (Tickell 23)

Though this is a very simplistic summary of the four castes and the untouchables in a Hindu society, it is sufficient due to the limited scope of this thesis. As mentioned already, the novel's Syrian Christians in Kerala believe they are descendants of the Hindu Brahmin families whom St. Thomas converted almost two thousand years ago. These people kept some of their social privileges after they converted. In a Hindu society, there is a codified set of social rules which explains how members of all castes should behave in interaction with each other. These rules are attributed to the sage Manu, and in an increasingly complicated Hindu caste society, Tickell explains that the law code of Manu "reinforces the superior status of the *brahmin* or priest caste, and delineates, in meticulous detail, the rules of caste conduct and punishments for their infraction" (Tickell 24). Tickell suggests that these rules can be clearly associated with the 'Love Laws' in Roy's novel. On several occasions throughout the novel, readers are reminded that the 'Love Laws' are "The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (Roy 33). This demonstrates that all members of the Hindu society in India must adhere to the caste system and the 'Love Laws', regardless of religious identity. As mentioned above, the main family in the novel is Syrian Christian, but most of its members have integrated caste-identities, which Baby Kochamma's thoughts reveal when she is among lower-caste people at the airport: "'Mostly sweeper class,' Baby Kochamma said grimly, and looked away [...]" (Roy 138).

The novel's clearest example of the importance of adhering to the Hindu caste-laws is revealed through Ammu and Velutha's relationship. Although both are Syrian Christians, they belong to different castes. Ammu is a touchable, even though she has lost some status for being a divorcee. Velutha, on the other hand, is an untouchable, and thus a majority of the people consider him polluted. Being touched by a polluted untouchable is considered a serious violation of the caste-laws, and in the novel, Ammu's family loses their status as a consequence of Ammu's relationship with Velutha:

She [Ammu] had defiled generations of breeding (The Little Blessed One, blessed personally by the Patriarch of Antioch, an Imperial Entomologist, a Rhodes Scholar from Oxford) and brought the family to its knees. For generations to come, *for ever* now, people would point at them at weddings and funerals. At baptisms and birthday parties. They'd nudge and whisper. It was all finished now. (Roy 258)

This passage demonstrates how the Syrian Christians in the novel are compromised in a Hindu society. By violating the 'Love Laws', Ammu and her family receive punishment in

the form of social degradation. If Ammu had behaved in accordance to Hindu caste-norms, she and her family would have kept their social status. Thus, a Hindu society enforces and expects Syrian Christians (and people from other religions) to mimic certain aspects of Hindu social performance. Syrian Christianity has assimilated these norms and has organised a Syrian-Christian church council, which has the power to excommunicate members of its Church if the members behave inappropriately (Tickell 20). Ammu suffers this consequence, which is revealed after her death: “The church refused to bury Ammu. On several counts” (Roy 162). This can be interpreted as a flaw in the authority of the Syrian Christian Church, because a common denominator of Christianity is that all men and women are equal, and thus it is ironic to punish a Syrian Christian couple for belonging to different Hindu castes. However, the Syrian Christian Church was compromised by the Hindu caste-system, which dictates otherwise. By constructing a plot in which a love affair between a touchable and an untouchable receives considerable attention, Roy sheds light on India’s challenges with an increasingly complicated caste-society.

Now that sufficient background information on the compromised integration of Syrian Christianity in Kerala has been given, the discussion can turn to how Roy reveals her attitude towards the British’s colonial legacy in India. Early in the nineteenth century, the British sent missionaries from the Church of England’s Church Missionary School to India. These missionaries had been ordered to assist the Syrian church, but not to interfere with its religious practices. Yet, these missionaries did in fact attempt to influence some rites and practices of the Syrian church, as well as attempting to attract lower-caste Hindus to convert to Christianity. The missionaries persuaded the lower-caste Hindus by promising that as Christians, they could escape ‘untouchability’ (Tickell 21). However, as Tickell also observes, the untouchable Hindus in Roy’s novel who convert in response to this colonial interference are still stigmatised, as exemplified by Velutha’s grandfather:

When the British came to Malabar, a number of Paravans, Pelayas and Pulayas [=caste names for untouchables] (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. (Roy 74)

This excerpt demonstrates the narrator's criticising attitude towards the British for their colonial interference. Although the situation for untouchables was bad before the British interfered, the unforeseen consequence of converting untouchable Hindus to Christianity is their loss of Government privileges after India's Independence. However, it should be noted that the British probably intended for the converted people to be more humanely treated in India. Therefore, it can prove useful to investigate how Vellya, Velutha's father who is a Syrian Christian but comes from a Hindu untouchable blood line, is treated before and after Independence. The narrator presents Vellya as "an Old World Paravan. He had seen the Crawling Backwards Days [...]" (Roy 76). Mammachi is a higher-caste Christian than Vellya, and belonging more or less to the same generation as Vellya, she also remembers the 'Crawling Backwards Days' and explains what they mean:

Mammachi told Estha and Rahel that she could remember a time, in her girlhood, when Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmins or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravan's footprint. (Roy 73-74)

Mammachi's memory reveals that Paravans like Vellya were inhumanely treated by higher-caste Hindus and Syrian Christians due to the seriousness of caste-norms before India's Independence. The fact that Mammachi's recollection of this is constructed as a distant memory suggests that Vellya's situation is different in the 1960s, after India's Independence. Indeed, the 'Crawling Backwards Days' are not present after Independence, but the economic situation for Paravans seems to be the same as before, which leaves them economically dependent on higher castes:

When he [Vellya] had his accident with the stone chip, Mammachi organized and paid for his glass-eye. He hadn't worked off his debt yet, and though he knew he wasn't expected to, that he wouldn't ever be able to – he felt that his eye was not his own. His gratitude widened his smile and bent his back. (Roy 76)

Vellya is portrayed as a man who will always be economically dependent on Mammachi, even long after Independence. He is also portrayed as infinitely grateful and submissive towards Mammachi, not just because of the glass eye, but also because he recognises her superior caste-status. By 'bending his back' in gratitude towards Mammachi, Vellya reveals that he still accepts his low-caste restrictions after Independence, despite the former attempt of the British to rid people like Vellya of their untouchable status. Vellya's peak example of adhering to societal norms is when he discovers that his untouchable son has an affair with Mammachi's touchable daughter, and consults Mammachi about this violation of the 'Love

Laws’: “He [Vellya] offered to kill his son with his bare hands. To destroy what he had created” (Roy 78). Mammachi upholds these societal norms just as much as Vellya:

Mammachi’s rage at the old one-eyed Paravan standing in the rain, drunk, dribbling and covered in mud was redirected into a cold contempt for her daughter and what she [Ammu] had done. She thought of her naked, coupling in the mud with a man who was nothing but a filthy *coolie* [=an offensive name for an unskilled Asian labourer, my translation]. [...] His particular Paravan smell. *Like animals*, Mammachi thought and nearly vomited. (Roy 257)

These examples with Mammachi and Vellya suggest that the British failed to remove the untouchable status of Hindus who were encouraged by the British to convert to Syrian Christianity. It is not a coincidence that Roy has rendered these characters sightless – we remember that Mammachi is practically blind and Vellya has one glass eye. This loss of sight can be interpreted as moral blindness, which suggests that Roy criticises people who hold old, traditional caste-norms more important than the life of their children. It is interesting that in the novel, the figure of Christ appears in the untouchables’ home: “On the wall [...] there was a benign, mouse-haired calendar-Jesus with lipstick and rouge, and a lurid, jewelled heart glowing through his clothes” (Roy 208). Although this is not the most traditional presentation of Jesus, it is nevertheless the only form in which he appears among Syrian Christians in the novel. The fact that Jesus appears in the untouchables’ home has the effect of portraying them as the sinned against, as the ones who embraces and suffers the sins committed by everyone else.

Another dimension of the Hindu caste-society is that belonging to a certain caste dictates what occupation you are suited for. Caste identity remains an important part in a Hindu society, in which caste and profession still limits occupational mobility (Tickell 24). These societal norms are implemented in Kerala to such a degree that all citizens adhere to them, regardless of religious identity. By promising low-caste Hindus an escape from the status of ‘untouchability’ if they converted to Syrian Christianity, the British gave these people hopes of increased occupational mobility. In Roy’s novel, these promises are not fulfilled. Velutha, an untouchable in Roy’s novel, can serve as an example. He works at the main family’s pickle factory, and although he is skilled, his untouchable status limits his career:

Apart from his carpentry skills, Velutha had a way with machines. Mammachi (with impenetrable Touchable logic) often said that if only he hadn’t been a Paravan, he might have become an Engineer. [...] Velutha knew more about the machines in the factory than anyone else. (Roy 75)

All the workers at the factory have a touchable status except Velutha. The narrator's comment that Velutha knew the machines at the factory better than other workers suggests that people of higher castes refuse to acknowledge their dependency on skilled people of lower castes. In this example, Roy demonstrates the irony of simply accepting illogical caste regulations. Roy's point is made clearer in the context of Velutha's death, after which the factory runs unsuccessfully and finally closes. In these examples, Roy criticises a society that simply accepts caste regulations based on illogic. Furthermore, she critiques the British for having made promises that they had no authority over.

It is relevant to consider the British's interference with religious practices and caste regulations in the light of Bhabha's 'menace'. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a potential outcome of colonial mimicry and mockery is for Bhabha postcolonial writing which is 'menacing' to colonial authority. What is mocked in this case is the authority of the British because even though they exerted their political and colonial power in order to weaken certain aspects of the Hindu caste-system (in this case by strengthening Christianity in South India), the British proved powerless in penetrating the powerful, deeply implemented social structures of Hinduism. This is evidenced in the excerpt above in which the newly converted Syrian Christians are still stigmatised for their former low status as untouchable Hindus. These examples illustrate how Roy's fiction can be interpreted as menacing towards the British for their limited colonial authority.

It should be noted that the history of Syrian Christianity in South India and the Hindu caste-system is vastly more complicated than I have portrayed in this section. For instance, there are many different Syrian Christian Communities in South India, and caste regulations in India differ greatly from one area to the other. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I have only included the parts that are relevant to my discussion of Roy's novel. As a concluding remark to this section, it is my impression that Roy criticises the Hindu caste system above all else which I have discussed. This is suggested in Roy's following quote:

It could be argued that it began long before Christianity arrived in a boat and seeped into Kerala like tea from a teabag. That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much. (Roy 33)

2.2.2 Dam projects

Surendran observes in the novel that Roy's Ayemenem longs for its past: "There was a time when Ayemenem was known for its freshness, an unpolluted river and matchless greenery which made life pleasant for the people there" (Surendran: 50). This serves as a stark contrast to the way Ayemenem is presented in the 1990s, in which some parts of the plot take place: "Some days he [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" (Roy 13). What the narrator critiques in these descriptions of Ayemenem is the potentially negative outcome of dam projects. Access to water has been crucial to the people of India for centuries. They soon learned the importance of storing excess water during monsoons, which are periods of heavy rainfall in southern Asia during summer. By storing excess water, the people could endure periods of drought more easily, as well as increasing agricultural growth. According to Diane Ward, Indian dams were being built as early as the eleventh century, but it was first during colonial India that dam building escalated:

Under the British Raj, dam building escalated. British engineers constructed some of the most advanced dams and canals in the world on Indian ground and by the time the Union Jack was lowered in New Delhi in 1947, they had put down 75,000 miles of irrigation canals to water the subcontinent's most valuable farmland. (Ward 2003, Web)

In the context of India's long dam building history, I am obviously not implying that the phenomenon of dam building was introduced in India by the British. However, considering that dam building escalated in India under the British, I argue that it is these projects that Roy refers to in her novel. In her essay *The Greater Common Good*, she states that "Big Dams started well, but have ended badly" (Roy 1999: 15). She elaborates on her statement by referring to the unfortunate consequences of several dam projects in India:

There was a time when everybody loved them, everybody had them – the Communists, Capitalists, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists. [...] Not any longer. All over the world there is a movement growing against Big Dams.

In the First World they're being de-commissioned, blown up. The fact that they do more harm than good is no longer conjecture. [...] They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich. Their reservoirs displace huge populations of people, leaving them homeless and destitute. Ecologically too, they're in the doghouse. They lay the earth to waste. They cause floods, waterlogging, salinity, they spread disease. (Roy 1999: 15-16)

Roy's use of the notion 'the First World' is necessary to explain as it is relevant to my further discussion in this section. The First World generally refers to developed, industrialised and capitalised countries, for instance England. By contrast, the Third World refers to developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia, an example being India. Roy argues how the

negative outcome of dam projects in the First World resulted in an exportation of dam building from the First World to the Third World:

For all these reasons, the dam-building industry in the First World is in trouble and out of work. So it's exported to the Third World in the name of Development Aid, along with their other waste like old weapons, superannuated aircraft carriers and banned pesticides.

On the one hand the Indian Government, *every* Indian Government, rails self-righteously against the First World, and on the other, actually *pays* to receive their gift-wrapped garbage. Aid is just another praetorian business enterprise. Like Colonialism was. (Roy 1999: 17)

In this paragraph, Roy clearly demonstrates her opinion that Big Dam projects have more negative outcomes than positive aspects. More relevant to this thesis is that she portrays the building of dams in India as a way for the West to financially exploit India. Roy specifically draws a parallel between this economic exploitation and the colonisation of India. In the context of the fact that dam building in India escalated during British rule, Roy reveals her negative attitude towards this dimension of the British's legacy in colonial India.

The discussion of Roy's negative attitude towards dam building has so far mainly dealt with her essay. As the method of this thesis is a close reading of the novel, it is necessary and relevant to investigate the revelation of similar opinions in the novel. When Rahel returns to Ayemenem in the 1990s, the narrator gives a critical description of a dam-like construction:

Downriver, a saltwater barrage had been built, in exchange for votes from the influential paddy-farmer lobby. The barrage regulated the inflow of saltwater from the backwaters that opened into the Arabian Sea. So now they had two harvests a year instead of one. More rice, for the price of a river. (Roy 124)

A common rationale would be to consider two harvests a year a benefit. However, Ward explains that "Water weighs so heavily on the Indian mind that the Hindu faithful see the country's rivers as sacred" (Ward 2003: Web). Thus, the narration in the novel suggests that this dam-like construction was built from a selfish motivation to gain votes while neglecting the culture's sacred status of the river. In addition, this tide-regulated, dam-like construction makes Roy's Ayemenem resemble a rather uninviting place:

On the other side of the river, the steep mud banks changed abruptly into low mud walls of shanty hutments. Children hung their bottoms over the edge and defecated directly onto the squelchy, sucking mud of the exposed river bed. [...] Eventually, by evening, the river would rouse itself to accept the day's offerings and sludge off to the sea, leaving wavy lines of thick white scum in its wake. Upstream, clean mothers washed clothes and pots in unadulterated factory effluents. [...] On warm days the smell of shit lifted off the river and hovered over Ayemenem like a hat. Further inland, and still across, a five-star hotel chain had bought the Heart of Darkness. [...] The view from the hotel was beautiful, but here too the water was thick and toxic. *No Swimming* signs had been put up in stylish calligraphy. (Roy 125)

The portrayal of Ayemenem in Roy's novel suggests similar negative attitudes towards dam projects as she reveals in her essay. There is also a subtle menace towards the British in her novel on the topic of dam building. In the 1960s, much of the plot revolves around the consequences of Sophie drowning in the river. Sophie is the daughter of Chacko and Margaret, who are divorced. Margaret is ethnically English, and Sophie is raised by Margaret in England. All the Anglophile members of the Ipe family love Sophie simply because she is English, even though most have never met her. Estha and Rahel, on the other hand, need to constantly deserve the love of their family. Ironically, the river in which Sophie drowns has dried up by the 1990s as a result of a dam project. By constructing a plot in which an innocent child from England drowns in India, Roy's fiction exerts a menace towards India's former rulers.

As we have seen in this chapter, Roy's attitude towards the British's colonial legacy in India seems to be negative. It has proved helpful to apply Homi Bhabha's view on mimicry on the character of Pappachi Ipe in order to raise our understanding of the impact of British assimilationist policies during colonial India. We have also seen limitations in the colonial authority of the British in their unsuccessful attempt of removing the status of 'untouchability' among lower-caste Hindus by having them convert to Syrian Christianity. Although the British probably meant well, the unforeseen consequences of this colonial interference are loss of Government rights after Independence among the converted, as well as a persistent stigmatising status of 'untouchability' that limits occupational mobility. Furthermore, Roy portrays the escalation of dam building under the British as having severe environmental consequences in Ayemenem. Bhabha suggests that the consequence of colonial mimicry is 'menacing' postcolonial writing, which rings a loud bell in Roy's fiction.

3 Empowering hybridity? The treatment of ‘hybrid’ characters and new transcultural forms in *The God of Small Things*.

In the previous chapter, I apply the term ‘mimicry’ as used by Thomas Macaulay and Homi Bhabha to some of the Kerala residents in *The God of Small Things* as means of exploring what Roy suggests to be the consequences of the British’s attempt to create Indian ‘mimic men’ in colonial India. I also suggest that Roy criticises the British’s interference with religious, social and environmental practices in Ayemenem by paying attention to the negative outcomes from this interference. This chapter aims to investigate how the Ipe family’s ‘hybrid’ characters are treated in Roy’s novel after India’s Independence. Within the field of postcolonialism, hybridity generally refers to new transcultural forms created in the contact zone produced by colonisation (Ashcroft & Griffiths & Tiffin 118). The character of Pappachi is a mixture of Indian culture and British culture, which makes him a cultural hybrid. Hybridity can appear in other forms as well, be it linguistic hybridity, religious hybridity, racial hybridity and so on, or a combination of these forms. Based on my discussion in the previous chapter, I interpret Pappachi’s cultural hybridity as a result of the British colonisation of India. In the novel, Pappachi’s son and other members of the Ipe family seem to inherit Pappachi’s cultural hybridity, even after Independence. I argue that this cultural hybridity is a product of the British colonial legacy in India. In order to investigate Roy’s attitude towards this dimension of the British colonial legacy in India, it is relevant and necessary to investigate the treatment of her cultural hybrid characters by other people after Independence. I will attempt to analyse the hybrid characters in the light of Homi Bhabha’s positive view on hybridity. Bhabha recognises the productive capacities of what he calls ‘The Third Space of Enunciation’, which he explains as the contact zone between different cultures in which cultural hybridity is created:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or post-colonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory – where I have led you – may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an *international* culture, based not on the exoticism or multi-culturalism of the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*. (Bhabha 56)

As Bhabha would have it, Pappachi’s hybridity could potentially be recognised as a genuine, international culture rather than a mix of two diverse cultures. For Bhabha, cultural hybridity has the potential to be an empowering cultural identity which subverts and challenges the power structures of hierarchies: “This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens

up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha 5). Thus, Bhabha’s ‘Third Space of Enunciation’ is a place in which hybridity can breach established, homogenous hierarchies. In my analysis of the cultural hybrid characters in Roy’s novel, I will consider whether their hybridity is empowering and subverts the hierarchy of the homogenous Indian culture in Roy’s *Ayemenem*. For each character I discuss, I will first provide illustrative examples in order to establish that character’s cultural hybridity, and then I will provide a discussion in which I argue whether that character’s cultural hybridity breaches established hierarchies based on the treatment of that character in the local community.

3.1.1 Estha

Estha is grandson to Pappachi Ipe. He is seven years old when most of the novel’s plot takes place. Estha and his twin sister, Rahel, are born from an interfaith marriage, in which their mother, Ammu, is Syrian Christian and their father, Baba, is Hindu. The twins’ religious hybridity is not seen as an empowering identity, which is revealed in Baby Kochamma’s consideration that “they were Half-Hindu Hybrids whom no self-respecting Syrian Christian would ever marry” (Roy 45). As I discuss in the previous chapter, interfaith marriages are generally considered taboo in Kerala. However, this chapter will primarily focus on the British-Indian cultural hybridity of the selected members of the Ipe family. The twins’ cultural hybridity is nourished in their upbringing in the form of British literature: “At night Ammu read to them from Kipling’s *Jungle Book*” (Roy 59). This does not necessarily reveal the twins’ family’s cultural hybridity, considering that Kipling’s *Jungle Book* is a children’s book. However, their family presents the twins with British literature as means of education as well: “Baby Kochamma, who had been put in charge of their formal education, had read them a version of *The Tempest* abridged by Charles and Mary Lamb” (Roy 59). To educate the twins with British literature resembles Macaulay’s proposal of teaching English morals, manners and values to Indians through British literature. Furthermore, there are no examples in Roy’s novel in which the twins read Indian literature. In addition, Estha regularly quotes other works from the British literary canon for amusement, like Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*: “At night, Estha would stand on his bed with his sheet wrapped around him and say, “*Et tu, Brute?* – Then fall Caesar!”” and crash into bed without bending his knees, like a stabbed corpse” (Roy 83). Arguably, these intertextualities resonate a deeper meaning in Roy’s novel, but to analyse them would fall outside the scope of this thesis. They are used here primarily to

establish Estha's cultural hybridity. Apart from reading British literature, Estha is also encouraged to speak English in Ayemenem. This is mostly advocated by Baby Kochamma as preparation for the arrival of Sophie, who is the twins' cousin from England:

That whole week Baby Kochamma eavesdropped relentlessly on the twins' private conversations, and whenever she caught them speaking in Malayalam, she levied a small fine which was deducted at source. From their pocket money. She made them write lines – 'impositions' she called them – *I will always speak in English, I will always speak in English.* (Roy 36)

Furthermore, Estha idolises Elvis Presley. Estha mimics Elvis' hairstyle, clothing style and lyrics:

Estha was wearing his beige and pointy shoes and his Elvis puff. His Special Outing Puff. His favourite Elvis song was 'Party'. '*Some people like to rock, some people like to roll,*' he would croon, when nobody was watching, strumming a badminton racquet, curling his lip like Elvis. '*But moonin' an' a-groonin' gonna satisfy mah soul, less have a pardy . . .*' (Roy 37)

These examples demonstrate Estha's cultural hybridity. Although he is only seven years old, he speaks English, he is familiar with the British literary canon, and he mimics his idol from the west. In order to investigate how Estha's cultural hybridity is viewed by the homogenous Indian culture in Roy's Ayemenem, it is necessary to examine a contact zone in which such a person meets Estha. When Estha and his family go to watch *The Sound of Music*, Estha cannot stop singing along to a song in the musical. As a consequence, he has to leave and wait in the lobby until the song is finished. In the lobby, Estha encounters a man selling drinks to the audience. This man's name is not revealed in the narration, and for convenience, I will simply refer to him as 'the man' throughout my discussion of Estha. The man is currently sleeping in his break, but Estha's singing wakes him up:

'Ay!' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said. 'Look, this is my Resting Time. Soon I'll have to wake up and work. So I can't have you singing English songs here. Stop it.' (Roy 102)

The man obviously wants Estha to be quiet, but the detail of relevance here is that the man specifies his wish for Estha to stop singing English songs. Estha stops singing in response to the man's request:

Estha stopped singing and got up to go back in. 'Now that I'm up,' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said. 'now that you've woken me up from my Resting Time, now that you've *disturbed* me, at least come and have a drink. It's the least you can do.' He had an unshaven, jowly face. His teeth, like yellow piano keys, watched little Elvis the Pelvis. 'No thank you,' Estha said politely. 'My family will be expecting me. And I've finished my pocket money.' '*Porketmunny?*' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said with his teeth still watching. 'First English songs, and now *Porketmunny!* Where d'you live? On the moon?' (ibid)

Here, the man emphasises his surprise towards the fact that Estha receives pocket money. One reason may be financial. We remember that belonging to a certain caste reflects what

occupation you are suited for. It is reasonable to conclude that the man who works behind the refreshment counter at the movies belongs to a low caste as his occupation does not require specific education or skills. This implies that his economic resources are limited, which could be a reason why he is surprised by the notion of pocket money. However, I argue that the man is culturally unfamiliar with the notion of pocket money. This is evident in that he misarticulates 'pocket money' twice, which is revealed in the narration as 'Porketmunny'. This suggests that it is not customary for Indian children to receive pocket money, which in turn explains why the man asks if Estha lives on the moon. It is significant that the man's perception of Estha is emphasised as disturbing in the quotation under discussion, which is narratively revealed in the italicised '*disturbed*'. I argue that the man is disturbed by Estha due to the cultural hybridity Estha represents. Estha goes to see *The Sound of Music*, he sings English songs, he mimics Elvis in hairstyle and clothing, and he receives pocket money. Although not much information is given on the man, he seems to be a local Indian who has a common service job, he dresses in accordance to local customs, and he thinks it is unsettling to hear Indian children singing songs in English. In response, the man molests Estha:

'Now if you'll kindly hold this for me,' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man said, handing Estha his penis through his white muslin dhoti [=a traditional men's garment worn in India, my translation], 'I'll get you your drink. Orange? Lemon?' Estha held it because he had to. (Roy 103)

I argue that the molestation can be interpreted as the man's response to Estha's cultural hybridity. In light of Homi Bhabha's view on the potential of hybridity, Estha's cultural hybridity does not subvert the power of the man's culture. The man's culture resembles a homogenised Indian culture, and in the meeting between the two cultures, Estha's cultural hybridity is not empowering, but overpowered. Although molesting a child is a perverse action, the man selling drinks might perceive Estha as perverse for dressing like Elvis, singing English songs and receiving pocket money. It should be noted that it is not my intention to present an Indian homogenous culture as a potential molester of an English-Indian cultural hybridity. My intention is to analyse an episode in Roy's novel in the light of Bhabha's optimistic view on hybridity, in order to investigate what Roy suggests about the English colonial legacy in India. By letting a young boy get molested in her novel, Roy seems to suggest her opinion that British behaviour, manners and customs are not welcome in India after Independence.

After the molestation, Estha goes back to his family to continue watching *The Sound of Music*. He and his family have to leave the musical because Estha is not feeling well. Ammu

takes Estha and the rest of the family to the man who, unbeknownst to them, has just molested Estha. Ammu hopes that the man has refreshments that might make Estha feel better. The detail of relevance is the man's offerings. He only offers mixtures of things, or blends. In my opinion, the man recognises the family's cultural hybridity, and offers them only 'hybrid' drinks as a statement:

'He's not feeling well,' Ammu said. 'I thought a cold drink would make him feel better.' 'Of course,' the Man said. 'Ofcourseofcourse. Orangelemon? Lemonorange?' Dreadful, dreaded question. 'No thank you.' Estha looked at Ammu. [...] 'What about you?' the Orangedrink Lemondrink Man asked Ammu. 'Coca-ColaFanta? IcecreamRosemilk?' (Roy 109)

However, once the man gets to know that the family has real London connections, he develops a new respect for them:

'We must go,' she [Ammu] said. 'Mustn't risk a fever. Their cousin is coming tomorrow,' she explained to Uncle [the molester]. And then, added causally, 'From London.' 'From London?' A new respect gleamed in Uncle's eyes. For a family with London connections. (Roy 109-110)

This goes to show that the local, homogenous Indian culture admires English culture. But even though Estha expresses certain English traits, he is not respected by the molester. I argue that this is because the molester recognises Estha's behaviour as a flawed mimicry of English behaviour. It seems as though Estha has inherited Pappachi's flawed mimicry of the British. Therefore, the man selling drinks perceives Estha as almost the same as the English, but not quite (Bhabha 122).

These examples suggest that Estha's cultural hybridity is not recognised as an empowering identity by local Indian people who have a more homogenous cultural identity. An interesting comparison to this is an observation made by Hilde Gjernes. In a part of her MA thesis that is relevant to the critical concerns of this one, she investigates certain areas of cultural consumption in *The God of Small Things*. Gjernes observes that when the Ipe family welcomes their English relatives Sophie and Margaret in India, Baby Kochamma gives them an excuse as to why Estha appears like Elvis: "'I'm afraid we're a little behind the times here.' Everyone looked at Estha and laughed" (Roy 145). Gjernes explains that Elvis Presley caught on later in India than in the western world, and she argues that everyone laughing at Estha "symbolises an arrogant attitude from the western world towards India", and that "[t]his attitude disturbs the power balance between east and west, making India the weaker part" (Gjernes 2011: 17). This observation is significant to my discussion of Estha because it demonstrates that a western point of view also mocks Estha's cultural hybridity, which is another case in which his cultural identity is not empowering.

3.1.2 Rahel

Estha's twin sister, Rahel, is also a cultural hybrid. She is brought up like Estha, which implies that she can speak English and that she is familiar with the British literary canon. She does not experience the horrible mistreatment that Estha does. One explanation may be her 'Love-in-Tokyo':

Most of Rahel's hair sat on top of her head like a fountain. It was held together by a Love-in-Tokyo – two beads on a rubber band, nothing to do with Love or Tokyo. In Kerala Love-in-Tokyos have withstood the test of time, and even today if you were to ask for one at any respectable A-1 Ladies' Store, that's what you'd get. Two beads on a rubber band. (Roy 37)

In this example, the narrator describes Rahel as an ordinary Indian girl who possesses an accessory which is widely popular among Indian girls in Roy's Ayemenem. This point is also made by Gjernes, who explains that this particular hair band refers to the Hindi Bollywood production film *Love-in-Tokyo* from 1966. Gjernes argues that Rahel's Love-in-Tokyo is a stereotypically Indian trait, which serves as a contrast to Estha's imitation of Elvis Presley, which Gjernes considers a stereotypically American trait (Gjernes 2011: 18-19). From this example, it can be argued that Rahel's cultural hybridity is better received by the homogenous Indian culture because she behaves more stereotypically Indian than Estha does. Despite the fact that Rahel is more stereotypically Indian than Estha, she seems incapable of making friends:

In each of the schools she [Rahel] went to, the teachers noted that she:

(a) Was an extremely polite child.

(b) Had no friends. (Roy 17)

The reason may be that even though Rahel has a popular hair band, the Indian children still detect her cultural hybridity, and therefore they refuse to become friends with her. Rahel is reminded of her lonely childhood when she returns to Ayemenem as an adult:

A band of children followed Rahel on her walk. 'Hello, hippie,' they said, twenty-five years too late. 'Whatisyourname?' Then someone threw a small stone at her, and her childhood fled, flailing its thin arms. (Roy 127)

During her visit as an adult in Ayemenem, Rahel sees the deteriorated state of her family's closed pickle factory. The narrator presents some information of the family's pickle-making past, which Rahel reflects on:

They used to make pickles, squashes, jams, curry powders and canned pineapples. And banana jam (illegally) after the FDO (Food Products Organization) banned it because according to their specifications it was neither jam nor jelly. Too thin for jelly and too thick for jam. An ambiguous, unclassifiable consistency, they said. [...] Looking back now, to Rahel it seemed as though this

difficulty that their family had with classification ran much deeper than the jam-jelly question. (Roy 30-31).

Rahel's thoughts reveal that, as an adult, she is quite conscious of the difficulties she and her family have experienced due to their cultural hybridity. Roy orchestrates a narration in which an Indian-English cultural hybridity in India is perceived as 'ambiguous' and 'unclassifiable'. Rahel has a hard time making friends because other Indian children view her as ambiguous and unclassifiable. Rahel and Estha's unhappy childhood as cultural hybrids suggests that Roy's attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India is negative. Her negative attitude is magnified by letting innocent children suffer the consequences the British sat in motion during colonial India.

3.1.3 Chacko

Chacko is the twins' uncle and Pappachi's son, and it seems like he has inherited his father's Anglophilia. He is proud for having been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. He keeps many books from his student days in his home in Ayemenem, and he randomly quotes them from time to time as means of excessing his cultural capital:

Chacko's room was stacked from floor to ceiling with books. He had read them all and quoted long passages from them for no apparent reason. Or at least none that anyone else could fathom. For instance, that morning, as they drove out through the gate, shouting their goodbyes to Mammachi in the verandah, Chacko suddenly said: '*Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.*' Everyone was so used to it that they didn't bother to nudge each other or exchange glances. Chacko had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford and was permitted excesses and eccentricities nobody else was. (Roy 38)

The narrator reveals that what Chacko considers cultural capital is not shared by his family. Although the family considers knowledge of the English literary canon as cultural capital, the family does not recognise Chacko's way of quoting the classics as something that communicates meaning. One explanation may be Chacko's mimicry. Chacko has arguably inherited his father's flawed mimicry of the British, which explains why he makes random quotations that no one understands the reference to. However, Chacko's quoting of Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* suggests a deeper resonance in Roy's novel. Among other things, Fitzgerald's novel is about becoming economically successful in America. In *The God of Small Things*, it is revealed that in the 1990s, Chacko attempts to live out this American dream, but he is unsuccessful: "Chacko lived in Canada now, and ran an unsuccessful

antiques business” (Roy 15). In Chacko’s quote above, there is a relevant parallel between Chacko and Gatsby. A floating, foul dust is presented as something that preys on Gatsby. Arguably, there is something foul preying on Chacko as well, which I suggest is his cultural hybridity. This is evident in Chacko’s utterance to the twins:

Chacko told the twins that though he hated to admit it, they were all Anglophiles. They were 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. (Roy 52)

That Chacko considers his cultural hybridity as something negative is also observed by Anna Clarke, who argues that from Chacko’s perspective, “cultural hybridity is seen as emphatically negative as it alienates the subject from both cultures” (Clarke 138). In this context, it is plausible to consider that Chacko moves away from India because he feels culturally alienated by the homogenous Indian culture. At the same time, he feels alienated from English culture, which may serve as an explanation as to why he does not succeed in Canada. One reason why Chacko has a negative attitude towards his cultural hybridity is arguably related to his disappointment of having to divorce his former wife, an English woman named Margaret. He meets Margaret while studying at Oxford. Margaret falls in love with him, but the romance is short-lived as Margaret discovers that their relationship is not based on mutual love and respect:

Margaret told Chacko that she couldn’t live with him any more. She told him that she needed her own space. As though Chacko had been using *her* shelves for *his* clothes. Which, knowing him, he probably had. (Roy 117)

Furthermore, Margaret’s parents do not approve of Chacko. This is revealed during Chacko and Margaret’s wedding:

Margaret Kochamma’s mother was looking away, out of the photograph, as though she would rather not have been there. Margaret Kochamma’s father had refused to attend the wedding. He disliked Indians, he thought of them as sly, dishonest people. He couldn’t believe that his daughter was marrying one. (Roy 240)

This observation is relevant and significant to my discussion of the British colonial legacy in India because it reveals that after Independence, the British disapprove of the English-Indian hybridity which they themselves created during the colonisation of India. Furthermore, three weeks after Chacko and Margaret’s daughter, Sophie, is born, Margaret confesses that she has been cheating on Chacko with an Englishman named Joe, while simultaneously asking Chacko for a divorce:

Into the night he [Chacko] lit a Charminar and wondered what his daughter looked like now. Nine years old. Last seen when she was red and wrinkled. Barely human. Three weeks later, Margaret his wife, his only love, had cried and told him about Joe. [...] She asked him for a divorce. (Roy 117)

These examples illustrate that Chacko was refused by Margaret as well as her parents, and it serves as a hard lesson for Chacko in which he learns the disappointing value, or a lack thereof, of his cultural hybridity. Despite him being Anglophile, proficient in English and successful at Oxford, Chacko is distinguished as inferior to the English. Chacko's disappointment manifests itself in him developing a negative attitude towards his own cultural hybridity. His sister, Ammu, recognises that Chacko views everything which carries English connotations as something negative:

Chacko said that going to see *The Sound of Music* was an extended exercise in Anglophilia. Ammu said, 'Oh come on, the whole world goes to see *The Sound of Music*. It's a World Hit.' 'Nevertheless, my dear,' Chacko said in his Reading Aloud voice. 'Never. The Less.' (Roy 55)

Ironically, despite Chacko's negative attitude, he persistently remains Anglophile. This is evident when his ex-wife Margaret and their nine-year old daughter Sophie come to visit the Ipes in Ayemenem: "Chacko, who usually wore a mundu [=a garment worn around the waist in this area of India, my translation], was wearing a funny tight suit and a shining smile" (Roy 137). It is significant that on the one hand, Chacko despises himself for having a cultural hybridity, but on the other hand, he keeps announcing his credentials to his former rulers, who disapprove of him. By attributing Chacko with 'a shining smile', the narrator suggests that Chacko holds no grudges against his English ex-wife who cheated on him. On the contrary, Chacko resembles a dog that fawns the culture that refused him. Furthermore, the narrator describes Chacko's suit as 'funny' and 'tight', which reveals that the narrator views Chacko's suit as an unfamiliar clothing garment in India. According to local customs, it would be more appropriate for Chacko to wear a mundu. By wearing a suit instead of a mundu, Chacko signals that he prefers to be associated with English culture rather than Indian culture. This is further revealed in his desperate attempt to win respect and admiration from strangers in India by showing off his connections to Margaret. At the airport, he introduces Margaret to his family not for their sake, but "more for the benefit of onlookers and eavesdroppers" (Roy 142). It may appear as though Chacko is unconscious of his ambivalent attitude towards English culture and Indian culture, but Chacko does provide an explanation for his negative attitude in which he blames colonisation. He argues that the British colonisation of India was "[a] war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves" (Roy 53). Thus, Chacko seems to be conscious of his ambivalent attitude, but he remains powerless to alter his

cultural hybridity. His utterance serves as a critique of the British colonisation of India, and Chacko claims that they are responsible for having created an English-Indian cultural hybridity in himself and in the rest of his family, which further suggests that he makes the British responsible for his and his family's appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

The discussion of Chacko has so far revolved around establishing his cultural hybridity. Although I have argued that his cultural hybridity is seen as negative both from his own perspective as well as from the perspective of the English, I have yet to investigate how Chacko's hybridity is viewed by the homogenous Indian culture. Chacko regularly goes to see a character named Pillai. Pillai owns a local printing press in Ayemenem, where Chacko gets labels from for the products at Chacko's pickle factory. Both Chacko and Pillai are Marxists, and considering that this part of the plot takes place in the 1960s, there is a historical reference to the Marxist Revolution that occurred in this part of India during the same time. I will not, however, include background information on this historical reference, as this knowledge is not necessary in order to understand my further discussion. It is sufficient to understand that as Marxists, both Chacko and Pillai want more social and economic equality, particularly among people of lower castes. Pillai is a local politician, whose goal is to become the local member of the Legislative Assembly. He is convinced that organising a trade union among low-paid workers would win him local recognition. When Chacko's pickle factory starts running unsuccessfully, Pillai notices that the workers there are being paid less than usual. Despite the fact Pillai has been printing labels for Chacko's family for years and is still financially dependent on this agreement, Pillai plots to go behind Chacko's back in order to advance himself in the field of politics:

Since things were not going well financially, the labour was paid less than the minimum rates specified by the trade union. Of course it was Chacko himself who pointed this out to them and promised that as soon as things picked up, their wages would be revised. He believed that they trusted him and knew that he had their best interests at heart. But there was someone who thought otherwise. In the evenings, after the factory shift was over, Comrade K. N. M. Pillai waylaid the workers of Paradise Pickles and shepherded them into his printing press. In his reedy, piping voice he urged them on to revolution. In his speeches he managed a clever mix of pertinent local issues and grand Maoist rhetoric which sounded even grander in Malayalam. (Roy 120)

This reveals that Pillai has little respect for Chacko, considering that Chacko genuinely seems to have the workers' best interests at heart. When Chacko reveals that he is planning to organise his workers into a union and wants Pillai's views on this, Pillai's ambiguous response shows that he does not want Chacko to organise them into a union. Pillai wants to organise the workers himself in order to promote his political career:

When Comrade Pillai spoke next, he spoke in Malayalam and made sure it was loud enough for his audience outside. ‘Of course the proper forum to air workers’ grievances is through the Union. And in this case, when Modalali [=landlord, in this case, Chacko, my translation] himself is a Comrade, it is a shameful matter for them not to be unionized and join the Party Struggle.’ ‘I’ve thought of that,’ Chacko said. ‘I am going to formally organize them into a union. They will elect their own representatives.’ ‘But Comrade, you cannot stage their revolution for them. You can only create awareness. Educate them. They must launch their *own* struggle. *They* must overcome their fears.’ ‘Of whom?’ Chacko smiled. ‘Me?’ ‘No, not you, my dear Comrade. Of centuries of oppression.’ [...] ‘Revolution is not a dinner party. Revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence in which one class overthrows another.’ And so, having bagged the contract for the Synthetic Cooking Vinegar labels, he deftly banished Chacko from the fighting ranks of the Overthrowers to the treacherous ranks of the To Be Overthrown. (Roy 280)

Pillai is thus presented as a person who exploits Chacko for personal gain. He does not hesitate in prioritising his own interests instead of giving useful advice to Chacko in a time of need. Pillai displays a double standard by acknowledging to Chacko that it is a shame that he has not organised his workers into a union yet, while simultaneously stating that there is only so little Chacko can do for his workers. Arguably, Pillai would not have given such an advice to a person he respected, which suggests that he disrespects Chacko. A detail of relevance in the narration that echoes a deeper meaning is Pillai’s mentioning of classes of people that are either ‘overthrowers’ or ‘overthrown’. The ‘overthrowers’ refer to established hierarchies, which consist of people who have the authority to overpower groups of people who do not conform to the norms of the established hierarchy. The narration suggests that Pillai has the authority to overthrow Chacko in that he banishes Chacko ‘to the treacherous ranks of the To Be Overthrown’. This suggests that Pillai has more authority in Ayemenem than Chacko does, which is interesting because there are certain cultural similarities between them. For instance, they both consider knowledge of the British literary canon to be a marker of cultural capital. When Chacko visits Pillai’s home, he requests a poem from Pillai’s six year old son, Lenin. Pillai holds a high opinion of his son’s knowledge, and states that “‘He is genius. In front of visitors only he’s quiet.’” (Roy 274). Pillai starts quoting a scene from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* in order to kick-start his son, who eventually starts shouting:

*‘I cometoberry Caesar, not to praise him.
Theevil that mendoo lives after them,
The goodisoft interred with their bones;’* (Roy 275)

Although Lenin has memorised this piece of literature, his flawed articulation reveals that he has a rather low proficiency in English. In turn, this questions whether Lenin understands what he is saying. This is prominent to this discussion because by comparing Lenin’s proficiency in English with that of the Ipe twins, it demonstrates that Estha and Rahel have a substantially higher command of the English language. This is evident in that they have no

problems conversing with their English cousin Sophie during her stay in Ayemenem. Since Lenin and the Ipe twins are roughly the same age, it is a fair comparison. Aside from viewing knowledge of British literature as a status symbol, Pillai's family is rather Indian compared to the Ipe family. John observes that Pillai's family is not free from class prejudices, which is ironic in the context of Pillai's public profile as a man who advocates a caste-less society (John 2001: 122). Pillai's family adheres strongly to local caste-regulations, and Pillai's wife refuses to speak English in her own home:

'See her, for example. Mistress of this house. Even she will never allow Paravans and all that into her house. Never. Even *I* cannot persuade her. My own wife. Of course inside the house she is Boss.' He turned to her with an affectionate, naughty smile. '*Allay edi*, Kalyani?' Kalyani looked down and smiled, coyly acknowledging her bigotry. 'You see?' Comrade Pillai said triumphantly. 'She understands English very well. Only doesn't speak.' (Roy 278)

The narrator demonstrates that Pillai exclaims the quotation above in a triumphant way. This is significant because it suggests that Pillai is proud of his family for adhering more to the local Indian culture than Chacko's family does. Furthermore, Pillai's proficiency in English is revealed as faulty due to his grammatical mistakes. Although he teaches his son British literature, he retains a high amount of respect for Indian culture. For instance, Pillai is concerned with teaching Estha and Rahel some aspects of Indian culture, which does not seem to be a priority among the Ipe family:

Oddly enough, it was he [Pillai] who had introduced the twins to kathakali. Against Baby Kochamma's better judgement, it was he who took them, along with Lenin, for all-night performances at the temple, and sat up with them till dawn, explaining the language and gesture of kathakali. (Roy 236)

Kathakali is a South-Asian classical dance form which is characteristic for being dramatic and for lasting for entire nights (Tickell 40). All of these examples demonstrate that Pillai's family respects and adheres to the local Indian culture. Considering that Pillai does not hesitate to betray Chacko for personal gain implies that Pillai disrespects Chacko due his cultural hybridity. Bhabha's positive perspective on hybridity, in which he proposes that it can be recognised as an empowering cultural identity that breaches established hierarchies, is obviously not shared by Pillai. Pillai represents in many ways the local, homogenous culture in Ayemenem, and he betrays Chacko because he considers Chacko as lacking in cultural integrity. This demonstrates that in Roy's Ayemenem, the local Indian culture has the power to be an 'overthrower' while the Ipe family's cultural hybridity is 'to be overthrown.'

3.1.4 Baby Kochamma

Baby Kochamma is Pappachi's sister and the twins' great-aunt. As already mentioned, she educates the twins with British literature, which suggests that she shares her brother's Anglophilia. She has never met Margaret or Sophie before, but she looks forward to their visit in Ayemenem. Even though Margaret cheated on Chacko and divorced him, Baby Kochamma announces her credentials to Margaret in order to be distinguished from the average Indian:

She [Baby Kochamma] said Sophie Mol was so beautiful that she reminded her of a wood-sprite. Of Ariel. 'D'you know who Ariel was?' Baby Kochamma asked Sophie Mol. 'Ariel in *The Tempest*?' Sophie Mol said she didn't. [...] 'Shakespeare's *The Tempest*?' Baby Kochamma persisted. All this was of course primarily to announce her credentials to Margaret Kochamma. To set herself apart from the Sweeper Class. (Roy 144)

Tickell observes that the recitation of British literature in *The God of Small Things* is mostly done by Indian children in order to impress adults. In effect, Baby Kochamma appears childish for taking on this role herself (Tickell 52). As opposed to Chacko, Baby Kochamma seems to be proud of her cultural hybridity. She considers having British connections as positive, despite Margaret and her parents' disapproving attitude towards Chacko's cultural hybridity. Furthermore, Baby Kochamma is excessively class-conscious, which is revealed in her condescending attitude towards people of lower castes and of different religions. During a public Hindi prayer in Kerala, Baby Kochamma exclaims to her Syrian Christian family: "I tell you, these Hindus, [...] 'They have no sense of *privacy*.'" (Roy 86). Chacko does not share her prejudice, which he communicates in his humorous reply: "'They [the Hindus] have horns and scaly skins, [...] 'And I've heard that their babies hatch from eggs.'" (Roy 86). This reveals that despite sarcastic comments from her family, Baby Kochamma remains prejudice and refuses to become open-minded.

Baby Kochamma's class-consciousness and Anglophilia are noticed by others in the community. One day, when the family drives Chacko's car to visit the movies, they run into a large group of low-caste Marxists who are marching to demand economic and social equality in India:

A man with a red flag and a face like a knot opened Rahel's door because it wasn't locked. The doorway was full of men who'd stopped to stare. 'Feeling hot, baby?' the man like a knot asked Rahel kindly in Malayalam. Then unkindly, 'Ask your daddy to buy you an Air Condition!' and he hooted with delight at his own wit and timing. (Roy 79)

The man with the red flag, whose name is not revealed in the narration, recognises that the Ipe family belongs to a higher caste than himself and his fellow marchers. Since this character is not given a name, I will simply refer to him as 'the man' throughout my discussion of Baby

Kochamma. By suggesting that Rahel could ask Chacko for an air conditioner reveals that the man mocks the Ipe family for their economic capital. The man creates an image of the Ipe family in which they are perceived by others as people who believe they can solve all their problems with money. Immediately after his joke, he shifts his attention to Baby Kochamma:

‘Hello sister,’ the man said carefully in English. ‘What is your name please?’ When Baby Kochamma didn’t answer, he looked back at his co-hecklers. ‘She has no name.’ ‘What about Modalali Mariakutty?’ someone suggested with a giggle. Modalali in Malayalam means landlord. (Roy 80)

The man takes advantage of the class difference between himself and Baby Kochamma by implying that she is a landlord. By mocking Baby Kochamma in front of his fellow marchers, who outnumber her, the man subverts the established hierarchy by making Baby Kochamma, who belongs to a higher caste, the laughing stock. A relevant point is that the man does not speak to her in Malayalam, but in English. This observation is significant because it implies that he recognises Baby Kochamma’s Anglophilia. I argue that the man’s mocking of Baby Kochamma serves as a protest against her high caste as well as her Anglophilia. Thus, the ridiculing of Baby Kochamma reveals that her cultural hybridity is not perceived as empowering by the marching Marxists. Before the man lets the Ipe family drive on, he humiliates Baby Kochamma once more by forcing her to wave his Marxist flag and utter a cheer for the Marxist Revolution:

The man like a knot gave Baby Kochamma his red flag as a present. ‘Here,’ he said. ‘Hold it.’ Baby Kochamma held it, still not looking at him. ‘Wave it,’ he ordered. She had to wave it. She had no choice. [...] She tried to wave it as though she wasn’t waving it. ‘Now say *Inquilab Zindabad!*’ [= Long Live Revolution, my translation] ‘*Inquilab Zindabad!*’ Baby Kochamma whispered. ‘Good girl.’ The crowd roared with laughter. A shrill whistle blew. ‘Okay then,’ the man said to Baby Kochamma in English, as though they had successfully concluded a business deal. ‘Bye-bye!’ (Roy 80)

By presenting her flag-waving and her Marxist cheering as involuntary, the narrator reveals that Baby Kochamma does not support the marching Marxists’ political agenda. For her, the continuation of inequality in India is important because it makes her feel superior to lower-caste Indians. During her encounter with these marching Marxists, however, Baby Kochamma starts to perceive these people as a threat. She realises that if the requirements of these marchers are heard and met, then Baby Kochamma will no longer be perceived as the distinguished, high caste woman she has been all her life:

Baby Kochamma’s fear lay rolled up on the car floor like a damp, clammy cheroot. This was just the beginning of it. The fear that over the years would grow to consume her. That would make her lock her doors and windows. [...] The fear of being dispossessed. (Roy 70)

The narrator explains that later in the novel, Baby Kochamma isolates herself because she is afraid of being dispossessed. Arguably, what she is afraid of being dispossessed of is her

social capital, and this fear is born during her encounter with the marching Marxists. In the 1990s, in which some parts of the plot take place, it is revealed that Baby Kochamma locks herself away in her house, and the only bridge between herself and the outside world is her satellite TV: “Baby Kochamma had installed a dish antenna on the roof of the Ayemenem house. She presided over the World in her drawing room on satellite TV” (Roy 27). In her isolation, she happily consumes western soap operas like *The Bold and The Beautiful*. This observation is significant to my discussion of cultural hybridity because it suggests that Baby Kochamma prefers western popular culture over Indian popular culture. Hilde Gjernes examines this area of cultural consumption in her MA thesis. Gjernes found that although satellite television opened up for global TV-channels in Kerala in the early 1990s, the Indian soap operas remained the most popular TV-shows in this part of India. For this reason, Gjernes finds it interesting that Baby Kochamma watches American soap operas instead of the popular Hindi and Malayalee serials (Gjernes 2011: 14). Based on Gjernes’ information on this topic, I consider Baby Kochamma’s choice in TV-shows a signal of her cultural preference, in which she reveals her persistent Anglophilia. I argue that Baby Kochamma’s persistent Anglophilia communicates that she refuses to conform to the homogenous Indian culture. In her belief that her cultural hybridity is empowering, she has a hard time accepting the threatening ridicule done to her by the lower-caste Marxists in the 1960s. Furthermore, many of the Anglophile members of the Ipe family are gone in the 1990s. Pappachi and Mammachi are dead, and Chacko has emigrated to Canada. That Baby Kochamma remains Anglophile in isolation can be interpreted as her disapproving of the local Indian culture. She has experienced that her cultural hybridity is not approved by the local Indian culture, and in turn, she refuses to conform to local customs. It is relevant that Baby Kochamma’s only option is to be excluded from the established hierarchy. This implies that she recognises that her cultural hybridity cannot breach the established hierarchy in Ayemenem, and by refusing to conform, Baby Kochamma is not permitted a space in the social world of Ayemenem, which renders her powerless.

3.1.5 Sophie Mol

Sophie Mol will be the last hybrid character under discussion in this chapter. She serves mainly as a relevant comparison to the cultural hybridity of Estha and Rahel. As mentioned

earlier, Sophie is Chacko and Margaret's daughter. However, due to her parents' early divorce, she grows up with her mother in England. She and her mother rarely travel to meet the Ipes in Ayemenem, which is revealed in Chacko's reminiscing of his daughter: "He took his wallet out of the pocket, and looked at the photograph of Sophie Mol that Margaret Kochamma had sent him two years ago" (Roy 117). This suggests that Chacko and the rest of the Ipe family have little to do with Sophie's upbringing. She is reunited with her father in Ayemenem at the age of nine, which is the first time she meets the rest of the Ipe family. Upon Sophie's arrival in Ayemenem, she is described as "Hatted, bell-bottomed and Loved from the Beginning" (Roy 135). The narrative technique of highlighting that she is loved from the beginning suggests that somebody else in the novel is not loved from the beginning. Estha and Rahel are unsure of whether they are loved or not, and they feel that they constantly need to deserve the love of their family. Before the arrival of Sophie, the twins see *The Sound of Music* with their family. In the musical, the character of Captain von Trapp experiences that he is incapable of hiding his affections for his children. This makes the twins wish that Captain von Trapp would be their father. However, in the twins' imaginative scenario, Captain von Trapp cannot love the twins because they are different from Sophie:

Oh Captain von Trapp, Captain von Trapp, could you love the little fellow [Estha] with the orange in the smelly auditorium? [...] And his twin sister? [...] Captain 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.*)

[...] 'Then I'm sorry,' Captain von Clapp-Trapp said. 'It's out of the question. I cannot love them.'
(Roy 106-107)

In the narration, Captain von Trapp's questions and comments appear in italics, although these are just imagined by the twins. Arguably, Estha and Rahel feel that they are loved less than Sophie is. This probably stems from the twins' observation of their Anglophile family members, who talk highly of Sophie even though they have never met her. It is ironic that Sophie is presented as different from the twins, because on the subject of hybridity, they have several things in common. The twins are cultural hybrids, while Sophie has an English mother and an Indian father. The twins are religious hybrids, while Sophie's parents belong to different denominations of Christianity. Having divorced parents is stigmatising in India, but Sophie's parents are also divorced. Considering that the twins recognise that their cultural hybridity is not empowering, they cannot understand the logic as to why Sophie is so easily

loved by their family. I argue that Sophie is loved because she is recognised as English. It is significant to consider this in the context of Bhabha, who argues that to be anglicised in a flawed colonial mimesis “is *emphatically* not to be English” (Bhabha 2004: 125, his emphasis). Bhabha’s argument suggests that the cultural hybrid characters of the Ipe family can never aspire to be recognised as English due to their flawed mimesis of the colonial British. Sophie’s hybridity, on the other hand, is recognised by the Anglophile members of the Ipe family as a status symbol.

In this chapter, we have seen that the selected characters in Roy’s novel are cultural hybrids, and I have argued how I view this to be a result of the British colonisation of India. I have attempted to investigate how they are treated by the homogenous Indian culture. In order to do this, I have applied Bhabha’s optimistic view on cultural hybridity, and I have investigated whether the characters’ hybridity is empowering enough to breach the established hierarchies in Roy’s *Ayemenem*.

4 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to uncover Roy's attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India. In an attempt to achieve this, I have performed a close-reading of *The God of Small Things* in the light of Bhabha's view on 'mimicry' and 'hybridity'. As we have seen in the second chapter, the character of Pappachi Ipe resembles Thomas Macaulay's translator class of Indians which imperial Britain sought to create during colonial India. Bhabha's view on mimicry has helped explain the ambivalent mimicry that often results due to colonial mimesis. One dimension of Bhabha's mimicry is that the mimicry of the colonised people might resemble the behaviour of the colonising power to such a degree that the colonised people ultimately threaten the authority of the colonisers. Bhabha recognises that in order for the British colonialists to avoid this with Indians like Pappachi, they needed to orchestrate a way in which these Indians excused flaws in their mimicry of the British. I have demonstrated examples in which Pappachi behaves both appropriately and inappropriately because his mimicry is constructed around such an ambivalence and thus excuses flaws. In my analysis of these events, I have concluded that Roy portrays Pappachi as unable to govern himself and his family because his Indian culture has been whitewashed by the British. Furthermore, I have shown limitations in the colonial authority of the British in India. I have demonstrated this in the context of how the British attempted to convert low-caste Hindus to Syrian Christianity while promising them that by converting, they would escape the fates of being stigmatised as 'untouchables'. However, those who converted from Hinduism to Syrian Christianity discovered that they were still stigmatised as 'untouchables', which prohibited their occupational mobility. Furthermore, the converted people also experienced that they lost Government rights and privileges following India's Independence. As we have seen, these incidents happen to the characters of Vellya and Velutha. Roy displays her negative attitude towards the British for attempting to influence local religious and social practices, and reveals that the authority of the British has little impact in a society where Hindu social structures have been deeply implemented for centuries. In the final part of the second chapter, I have given illustrative examples of how Roy critiques the negative consequences of dam projects. This has been relevant to my discussion because I have argued and showed how dam building escalated in India under the British, which implies that Roy's negative attitude towards and critique of dam projects are partly directed against the British.

In the third chapter of this thesis, I have paid attention to the cultural hybridity of several characters in the novel, and I have given examples of how they have been treated by characters of the majority culture. My interpretations have been made in the light of Bhabha's optimistic view on cultural hybridity. For Bhabha, a culture's hybridity can ideally be recognised as a genuine, international culture in its own right, rather than being viewed as a mix of two cultures of difference. Bhabha argues that cultural hybridity can be empowering in that it subverts the power structures of established hierarchies, as opposed to being compromised by a powerful majority culture. As we have seen, the cultural hybrids in Roy's novel do not have the authority to challenge established power structures in Ayemenem. I argue that they are poorly treated because they are Anglophile, which is not received well by the more homogenous Indian culture after Independence. In my analysis, I have proposed that the cultural hybridity of Roy's characters stems from British assimilationist policies during colonial India. Therefore, I have concluded that Roy holds the colonial British accountable for the general ill-treatment of these characters after Independence.

It should be noted that the cultural hybridity of the characters cannot alone explain the reason for the general ill-treatment of these characters. There are several variables that need to be considered if one is to uncover why the majority people hold a negative attitude towards the Ipe family. For instance, Ammu is disapproved by the local people because she has violated the deeply implemented caste norms. Roy reveals that this has disastrous consequences for Ammu and her twins. However, there was little room for me to focus on this aspect due to the limited scope of this thesis. The novel is rich in interpretation, and one can have a critical approach to it from many different angles. In answer to my problem statement, Roy's negative attitude towards the British colonial legacy in India seeps through in her novel. Pappachi's initial contact with the British seems to mark the beginning of the downfall of the entire Ipe family. As we have seen, all characters discussed who show English traits are sooner or later greatly mistreated. The only partial exception is Sophie, who is adored because she is born and raised in England. Ironically, she drowns in Ayemenem. I argue that this adds to the 'menacing' aspect of Roy's novel, considering that postcolonial fiction is often characterised as writing back to one's former colonial ruler in opposition to colonial rule.

As a concluding remark, I would like to draw some attention to the negative attitudes of Roy. My opinion is that throughout the novel, she is overly negative and critical. It seems as though everything that can go wrong, goes wrong. In an interview with Roy in which she is

asked whether she sees any benefits of colonialism and dam building, she replies “[o]f course there are benefits. There are, you know. But at the end, you balance things up and you decide whether to say yes or no and you decide which side you’re on” (Husain). From this, we can deduce that Roy is persistently negative in her novel. This explains why she deliberately undermines cultural hybridity.

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