CHAPTER – 2

Multiple Voices of Hybridity

2.1. Postcolonial Hybridity

Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony and dialogism enables one to place the various consciousnesses regarding a single concept or multiple concepts on a single plane, for a clearer understanding of the particular idea or voice. A postcolonial reading of the novel is attempted keeping in mind Bakhtin’s tenets of multi-voicedness. ‘Postcolonialism’ is a term used to refer to the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. “Postcolonialism examines and analyses the aftermath of colonization and the effects of colonial oppression” or rather it analyses the literature “that grew in response to colonial domination, right from the time of contact between the coloniser and the colonised down to the contemporary situation” (Nagarajan 185). It includes a range of literary-critical and theoretical approaches that focus on the economic, cultural and ideological experience of European colonialism and its historical legacy, especially in the writings from formerly colonized countries. Mostly it resists and challenges the values and culture of the colonizers.

Colonial discourse also represents the language in which the colonizers expressed their superiority over the natives. The colonizers considered themselves to be the centre and the colonized were taken to be the margins or the ‘other.’ This practice of ‘othering,’ also goes by names such as ‘the demonic other,’ or the ‘exotic other’. This has resulted from the long-held arrogant and condescending belief in the racial
superiority of the Caucasian over the Asiatic (ibid. 186). World history itself is organized in terms of the conquest by Europe, and not by the normal sense of past culture or history. It ignores the cultural supremacy of the earlier worlds such as Greece, Egypt, Africa and India and promotes values of universalism from the eurocentric viewpoint.

Postcolonial critics reject the claims to universalism made on behalf of canonical Western literature and seek to show its limitations of outlook, especially its general inability to empathize across boundaries of cultural and ethnic differences. They are not only interested in the ‘mis’-representation of non-Europeans in colonial writings, they also look at the strategies by which authors from countries such as India, appropriate and revise the English language and English literary traditions to articulate their own identities after, and often in opposition to, the colonial rule.

Recent debates on postcolonial literatures have increasingly come to resort to the term *hybridity*. The term originally had biological connotations. According to Robert Young, the term refers to the ‘the crossing of people of different races’ (Young 6) Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* makes a fine reading in these lines of postcolonial studies. Roy states in one of her interviews that the essence of her novel is woven around a single defining image that she had in her head. She says: “I didn’t start with the first chapter or end with the last… I actually started writing with a single image in my head: the sky blue Plymouth with two twins inside it, a Marxist procession surrounding it” (Salon Interview). This image she talks about appears in the second chapter entitled “Pappachi’s Moth” is also the image that evokes the theme of postcolonial hybridity in the novel:
Suddenly the skyblue Plymouth looked absurdly opulent on the narrow, pitted road ....

Within minutes, the road was swamped by thousands of marching people. Automobile islands in a river of people. The air was red with flags which dipped and lifted as the marchers ducked under the level crossing gate and swept across the railway tracks in a red wave. (65)

The inmates of the car include most of the major characters of the novel and are all the members of the Ipe family who were on a family outing to watch *The Sound of Music* at Cochin in 1969. The Syrian Christian family belongs to Ayemenem village in the southern Kerala district of Kottayam. The very image of the Plymouth enclosing a family subjected to anglophilia is an apt metaphor for the colonized mind. It is only the degree of colonization and the attitudes of the characters that need to be analysed. The inmates of the car are the twins Rahel and Estha who are just eleven at the time, their mother Ammu a divorcee, uncle Chacko an “Oxford Avatar” graduate and their grand aunt Baby Kochamma a spinster gushing with imperial blood. The Plymouth in itself is a symbol of colonial past and the inmates can also be taken as its representatives. The red pool of people surrounding the automobile is the voice of protest. Moreover the Plymouth has a huge billboard painted with pickle bottles and a Kathakali dancer. The very picture of this confluence -the Plymouth with the painting of the Kathakali dancer invokes the theme of hybridity and cultural fusion and ‘cultural confusion’.

“Hybridity” is one of the main concerns of the novel and serves as an important voice in the postcolonial study of the novel. In fact the whole family is the descendents of the Imperial “Entomologist.” The adjective attributed to the entomologist is no
misnomer and rightly suggests that the father (Pappachi) of Ammu and Chacko is a brute force. Pappachi is a member of the colonial era and his interaction with the Britishers had infused in him certain traits of the imperial culture, thus, making him a “hybrid”. The legacy of this hybridity is transmitted to his progeny. But the meaning and relevance of the term “hybrid” changes from character to character in the novel and we get a multi-voiced comment on the term. This post-colonial reading of Roy’s novel shall concentrate on the concept of “hybridism” as it offers scope for a dialogic study.

2.2. Voice of Pappachi – The Imperial Entomologist

The concept of hybridity can be related to the three generations of the Ipe family and thus three voices. Roy states in an interview to David Barsamian “India lives in several centuries” (Louder than Bombs, 77) so does the novel. These three generations can also be roughly placed in the three stages of Indian Renaissance delineated by the Indian philosopher and mystic Sri Aurobindo in his famous work “The Renaissance in India.”

*The God of Small Things* is the story of disintegration of a family set in postcolonial milieu based in Kottayam district where Syrian Christians are dominant in a community that naturally took to the English language and culture. They are a family of anglophiles, crazed by their affinity for western culture. Pappachi and his sister Baby Kochamma are the descendents of Rev. Ipe. They are the victims of the colonizer’s philosophy. They can be said to have taken the first step in receiving the European contact, what Sri Aurobindo describes as “a radical reconsideration of many of the prominent elements and some revolutionary denial of the very principles of the old culture.” These characters can also be classified under Macaulay’s Children, a term used
to refer to people born of Indian ancestry and adopts western culture as a lifestyle, or display attitudes displayed by the coloniser community (Macaulay). The *Macaulayism* exhibited by them is evident in their treatment of the other members of the house.

Shri John Benaan Ipe or Pappachi worked as the Imperial Entomologist before Independence. After the British left, his designation was changed to Joint Director, Entomology. He led a lonely and bitter retired life brooding over the fact that the moth that he had discovered had not been named after him. As his title suggests, he was an imperial patriarch. He treated his wife and daughter as he would callously treat an insect. These two were often victims of his bouts of anger. His polished behaviour to outsiders and his secret atrocities at home are clearly indicated in these lines: “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” (180). According to Ania Loomba, “… Colonialism intensified patriarchal relations in colonized lands, often because native men, increasingly disenfranchised and excluded from the public sphere, became more tyrannical at home. They seized upon the home and the women as emblems of their culture and nationality” (Loomba 168).

Here he stands for the masked face of colonizers who in the name of moralizing the colonized in fact plundered their resources and malign their culture. He is “Kurtz” (Conrad’s) to his family. The pun on the word should not be ignored because he was a curse too. Pappachi belonged to those trained class whom Macaulay referred to as, ‘a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and, in intellect (*Wikipedia*). He was a product of the colonial ideology that treated
colonial subjects who behaved in the way the colonizer had programmed. This category of hybrids willingly accepted the superiority of the British and their own inferiority. They easily became prey to the underlying premise that Indians can mimic but never exactly reproduce English values, and that their recognition of the perpetual gap between themselves and the ‘real’ thing ensured their subjection to the colonial values. This is validated by Ania Loomba’s comment that “One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it both needs to ‘civilize’ its ‘others’, and to fix them into perpetual ‘otherness’” (Loomba 173).

This idea of breeding a translator class was a political strategy to empower a section of the colonized for the selfish needs of the colonizer. This was converted into colonial law in the English Education Act of 1885. The process of civilizing the ‘other’ also masked the hidden agenda of dominating the masses with the help of the select few. In his attempt to show affinity towards the British, Pappachi has to compromise his subconscious ego. But this kind of repression of Pappachi by the colonizer and his failure in having the moth named after him had other psychological repercussions. Pappachi’s angry outbursts are often symbolized by the ‘moth’ that lost him fame and glory. A moth discovered by him was not named after him because it was stated that it had already been identified. But after twelve years the discovery of the same moth was credited to someone else, Pappachi’s junior and a person whom he thoroughly disliked. This moth hunted him and his family for the rest of their lives. It serves as a symbol of oppression. “Its pernicious ghost - grey, furry and with unusually dense dorsal tufts – haunted every house that he ever lived in. It tormented him and his children and his children’s children” (49).
Pappachi, after his retirement found solace in the Skyblue Plymouth which he bought from an old English man in Munnar. It was a common sight for the people of Ayemenem to see Pappachi “coasting importantly down the narrow road in his wide car, looking outwardly elegant but sweating freely inside his woollen suits” (48). The fact that Pappachi is not really able to enter the zone of the colonizer is revealed here. His inability to attain a total transformation from the colonized to the colonizer status is symbolized. This sentence can be said to be double-voiced because there is a consciousness that takes a dig at those mimics who still crave after western outfits, a code of dressing totally out of place in the ‘hot brooding Ayemenem.’ The Blue Plymouth at the same time serves as a symbol of colonial residue. Pappachi never allows any member of the family to touch the car and it is only after his death that Mammachi takes possession of it. This is again symbolic of the transition phase that marks colonialism and post colonialism. The dust-coated Plymouth, neglected or rather discarded is the picture we see on Rahel’s return after 23 years is a clear sign of the rejection of the colonizer.

The elimination of the colonizer is also marked by Pappachi’s death and his sense of Anglophilia by his decaying collection of moths. The situation is aptly described in the lines from the text: “mounted butterflies and moths had disintegrated into small heaps of iridescent dust that powdered the bottom of their glass display cases, leaving the pins that had impaled them naked. Cruel. The room was rank with fungus and disuse…(155). But Pappachi cannot be wholly looked at in a negative light. He was an unparalleled academician and researcher. This can be looked upon as positive contributions of the British to the Indian sub-continent:
The greatest gift of the English, after universal peace and the modernization of society, and indeed the direct result of these two forces, is the Renaissance which marked our nineteenth century. Modern India owes everything to it. The renaissance was at first an intellectual awakening and influenced our literature, education, thought, and art, but in the next generation it became a moral force and reformed our society and religion. (Historical - British Contribution)

Though Pappachi had his merits he is referred to as an ‘Anglophile’ by his son Chacko as he conformed to the colonizer’s ways (52). Pappachi’s authoritarian impulse alienates him from his family. The metaphor of the Imperial entomologist who mounted insects has other implications as well. This act of fixing organisms can also be compared to the act of setting norms and limits for the powerless. The process of confining the meek and curbing their abilities can be studied in the context of imperialism which underpins practices of colonization (Said 8). Like patriarchy this attitude too indicates power relations and involves the practice of curbing the subaltern’s movements. In their attempt to become the translator class, the likes of Pappachi have imbibed dominant codes of collective identity and this reflected in their ways of life. This identification with the British prompts Pappachi to propagate the colonial mentality and their sense of morality.

Pappachi is so much empowered by the colonizer’s culture that he follows British habit and dress, wearing “khaki jodhpurs though he had never ridden a horse in his life” (50). He adores his conquerors so much that he struggles all his life to be recognized by the English. He reveres them to the extent that he refuses to believe his
daughte Ammu when she tells him of the Englishman’s indecent proposal. Pappachi refuses to believe that “an Englishman, any Englishman, would covet another man’s wife” (42). He believes so strongly in the civilizing mission of the so called superior race that he could not imagine that moral lapses would ensue from any English man. Their agenda, he felt was to moralize and uplift the backward and thus, he finds no remorse in the assimilation of the colonial mindset. His love for power and passion for subjugation is nothing but a product of the colonizer’s instincts. Ammu calls him an incurable British CCP, which is short of *chhi-chhi poch* (shit-wiper). But even after the death of Pappachi the colonial residue is seen to stay. The anglophilia is reflected in various degrees in his descendents. This legacy is especially perpetuated by Baby Kochamma and Mammachi after his death.

2.3. Chacko - The Oxford Avatar

Chacko the son of Pappachi has strains of Angolphilia in him. He would explain that “Pappachi’s mind had been *brought into a state* which made him like the English” (52). Chacko, in fact, believed that they were all 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” (52). Chacko’s voice here is a clear evidence of the predicament of the “hybrid” who faces cultural disinheritance from both the worlds. He also refers to the inability of his types to retrace their steps and make a sense of their culturally rich ancestry; he feels he has been “locked out” and states that “when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows” (53) and is unable to understand the ‘whispering inside the history house’, because he says “our minds have been invaded by a war. A war that we have won and lost. The very worst
sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves” (53). Ramraj, a noted critic calls it a metaphor of “conquest and submission” and informs us that “his residual anglophilia is just one of the many constituents of his postmodern psyche stamped… by multiple selves” (156).

At one moment, he is a Marxist, a stance that the incisive and cynical Ammu, his sister dismisses as “hogwash. Just a case of a spoiled princeling playing Comrade, Comrade! An Oxford avatar of the old zamindar mentality - a landlord forcing his attentions on women who depended on him for their livelihood” (63). Here Ammu voices double strands of protest. We can hear the voice of a feminist questioning her brother’s double standards and at the same time she ridicules his pseudo-qualities as a Marxist because the “imperial” blood still reigns in him. While none of these can be negated, it is true that Chacko is more apprehensive and cynical about his hybrid existence. Though he is caught in the stranglehold of the colonizing mind he still cannot escape from the clutches of his ancestral past. He is more in tune with the kind of hybridity delineated by Fanon, who believes that in a postcolonial hybrid “psychic trauma results when the colonized subject realizes that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, or shed the blackness he has learnt to devalue” (Loomba 176).

Yet in another passage Chacko remarks, “‘We’re prisoners of War,’ …’Our dreams have been doctored. We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore. Our sorrows will never be sad enough. Our joys never important enough. Our dreams never big enough. Our lives never important enough. To
This sense of alienation can be understood in the light of Loomba’s words: “The psychic dislocations Fanon discusses are more likely to be felt by native elites or those colonized individuals, who were educated within, and to some extent invited to be mobile within the colonial system than by those who existed on its margins” (147). This aptly explains the Oxford educated Chacko’s sense of alienation which makes him reiterate his existential dilemma. His longing for his old world is punctuated by his unavoidable present. His life experiences a dialogic tension between the past and the present.

It is Chacko’s education and his birth into a socially elite family that makes him contemplate over his in-betweenness and thus lament over his lack of belongingness. Chacko also says “that going to see *The Sound of Music* was an extended exercise of Anglophilia” (55) at the same time quotes verbatim from *The Great Gatsby* during one of those ‘Oxford moods’. This again proves that Chacko is akin to the ‘Fanonian hybrid’ who undergoes similar psychic tensions. He is torn between two worlds. His Oxford education and family background coupled with his love for the motherland places him in a state of perpetual diaspora. In spite of all his anti-anglophilic talks his love for the foreign culture cannot be ruled out. Chacko’s zeal to please the representatives of the English educated elite is obviously exhibited when he chooses to name the pickle factory “Zeus Pickles & Preserves” but the idea is vetoed out by others and the name “Paradise Pickles & Preserves” is selected as it has more local flavour. “Parashuram Pickles,” a name suggested by Comrade Pillai is vetoed out for carrying too much of local relevance (58). Thus the name “Paradise” is an in-between option, rather a hybrid nomenclature. However the pickle motif in the novel is not solely
historical or a symbol of woman power, but “Mammachi’s problems with classification (according to local government regulations, her banana jam is ‘an ambiguous unclassifiable consistency … too thin for jelly and too thick for jam’” (30) serves as an apt metaphor for the condition of hybrid residues of colonial India of which Chacko is the best example. Chacko reasserts the English superiority in his still colonized mind says Aïda Balavannanadhan because he is thankful to “Margaret Kochamma for divorcing him, a slothful ‘aristocratic’ husband for a practical, working Englishman” (135). Moreover, Chacko is attracted by the “self-sufficiency” projected by Margaret Kochamma (Roy 245); something that he denies his own sister Ammu.

Chacko has no option but to live on with his dual identity. Though he truly wishes to retrace his steps, he never can really escape from his “heterogeneity” as Riemenschneider puts it:

He who in spite of the stereotypical role he is cast in, is never really able to strip himself off his colonized mind: the ex-Balliol student with his rowing oar from Oxford, his European suit and his knowledge of English, his idea of modernizing the pickle factory by buying the latest in machinery, and his final, though similarly unsuccessful migration to Canada as an antiques dealer. (131)

Chacko appears to resent his father’s anglophilia but often we find Chacko himself exhibiting its symptoms, for which his younger sibling, Ammu, derides him. Ammu though his contemporary, has a different stance on this ‘confusion’. She feels Chacko is a hypocrite. His act of marrying Margaret is a contradiction to all his anti-anglophile talk. This is evident when she makes a sarcastic retort to his earlier comment,
‘Marry our conquerors, is more like it’ (53). She even has a more tolerant view regarding the watching of an English movie as voiced in her comment, ‘Oh come on, the whole world goes to see The Sound of Music. It’s a World Hit’, which Chacko feels is an extended exercise in anglophilia. Ammu acts as a mirror in giving us a wider picture of Chacko. This kind of revelation of one’s character from a different consciousness enables the reader to have a better comprehension about the nature of truth.

2.4. Ammu’s Penumbral Shadows

Though Ammu and Chacko belong to the same generation, Ammu’s contact zone as a postcolonial hybrid is comparatively a privileged one. The tolerance and acceptance of both worlds free her from experiencing the kind of psychic tension displayed by Chacko. She is more in line with the concept of hybridity highlighted by Homi Bhabha. It is Homi Bhabha’s usage of the concept of hybridity that has been the most influential and controversial within recent post-colonial studies. Bhaba stresses the interdependence of the colonizer and colonized. Postcolonial hybridity is mostly born out of this interdependence or contact. He considers hybridity as the ‘Third Space’ or contact zone between cultures. It is that interstitial space between cultures that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. Bhabha advocates:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For 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 of multiculturism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and
articulation of culture’s *hybridity*. To that end we should remember that it is the ‘inter’ – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space- that carries the burden of meaning in culture. (*Location of Culture* 56)

This entry into the alien territory is only facilitated by the dialogic relationship between cultures and leads to the expansion of the cultural space. His argument also asserts why claims to the inherent purity and originality of cultures are untenable as this kind of monologism will only curb the growth of culture. Ammu’s attitude towards the intermixing of cultures and her acceptance of a foreign culture is an entry into this space. By exploring this ‘Third Space,’ one may avoid the politics of polarity. Embracing the hybridised nature of cultures steers us away from the problematic binarisms that have until now framed our notions of culture. Though Ammu is tolerant in her attitude towards a foreign culture, in no way does she demean her Indian sensibilities. Ammu is seen to enjoy Takazhi Sivasankara Pillai’s *Chemmeen* with the same aesthetic sensibility as she does Robert Wise’s *The Sound of Music*. Ammu is carried away by Mick Jagger’s song ‘Ruby Tuesday’ with same passion as she listens to the Malayalam song “*Panadoru mukkuvan vannu muthinu poyi*.” While accepting the process of acculturation, Ammu is not tolerant of the power structures sown by her imperial father. She displays her protest against the imperial culture of her father by marrying someone outside her religion, by having an affair with someone outside her caste and by offending the white Margaret Kochamma.

Ammu’s allegiance to her tradition and her reluctance to flatter her white relatives is evident in the passage: “Ammu leaned against the bedroom door in the dark,
reluctant to return to the dinner table, where the conversation circled like a moth around the white child and her mother as though they were the only source of light. Ammu felt that she would die, wither and die, if she heard another word” (312). The other members of the Ipe family, conversely, hanker to get closer to a “superior” race exhibiting their assimilation of the colonial propaganda.

Ammu prefers to remain in darkness rather than endure the “brightness” of Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma. She finds happiness in her otherness and considers it privileged. It is not her nationalistic pride that prevents her from accepting these ‘sources of light’, but she despises those natives who are drawn to them as if the “whites” were the “only” sources of enlightenment. The metaphor of the moth again symbolizes the colonial mentality or rather the colonized mentality from which Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and Chacko find it hard to escape. Despising the self-degrading means adopted by Chacko and Baby Kochamma to please Margaret Kochamma, Ammu blurts out “Must we behave like some damn godforsaken tribe that’s just been discovered?” (180). While the others try to push Ammu to the margins by ‘othering’ her, it is she who inverts the whole affair by likening them to a newly discovered tribe.

Ammu despises Margaret Kochamma, not for her being a representative of the Imperial West, but rather, because of the unnecessary adulation accorded to her by Chacko and the others. Margaret Kochamma, on the other hand reveals her colonizer’s persona when her suitcase containing quinine, aspirin and a broad spectrum of antibiotics is exposed. This is her precaution against the land of mosquitoes and snake charmers as stereotyped by the colonizers. Even her colleagues caution her before
leaving for India, a “Heart of Darkness” in their eyes, “‘Take everything,’ …’ You never know.” In another instance when Chacko explains that Kochu Maria’s sniffing of Sophie Mol’s hands is a kind of kissing she remarks in a moment of curiosity “Do the men and women do it to each other too?” (179). Ammu again, considers this, a derogation of Indian sexuality and retorts by saying “‘That’s how we make babies’” (179). She recalls this incident during her passionate night with Velutha: “yes, Margaret, she thought. We do it to each other too” (321), asserting her sexuality. Ammu’s recalling of Margaret’s seemingly anthropological question on Indian sexuality can be considered as “a pointed rebuttal of the postcolonialist’s continued perception of Indians as just socio-political entities on the other side of the imperial-colonial divide, devoid of any further feelings, attitudes, and responses” (Ramraj 158). Ammu considers neither her children nor her culture inferior to any. When she trains her children to get accustomed to the British etiquette, it is only to familiarize her kids with the best of both worlds:

‘How d’you do, Esthappen?’ Margaret Kochamma said.
‘Finethankyou.’ Estha’s voice was sullen.
‘Estha,’ Ammu said affectionately, ‘when someone says How d’you do?
You’re supposed to say How d’you do? back. Not “Fine, thank you.”’…….
‘Go on,’ Ammu said to Estha. ‘How do YOU do?’
Estha’s sleepy eyes were stubborn.’ (145)

The narrator comments on Ammu’s actions “She wanted a smooth performance. A prize for her children in the Indo-British Behaviour Competition” (145). The narrator’s tone is ambivalent but Ammu’s concern is the integrity of her little ones and their exposure to a global culture, keeping intact their native sensibilities. This kind of a
balance of cultural codes is later seen in the adult twins who feel comfortable in their state of hybridity.

It is the readiness in Ammu’s attitude to accept the inter-mingling of cultures that makes it easier for her to draw closer to Velutha of the lower caste. Ammu does not suffer from the superiority complex exhibited by the other members of the Ipe family. She does not fear the consequences of cross-cultural transgression. Conversely Ammu’s hybridity is threatening to the rigid members of her upper caste family. Ammu is said to live in the “penumbral shadows between two worlds, just beyond the grasp of their power’ (44). The reference to ‘penumbral shadows’ alludes to what Bhabha calls the “interstitial space.” Hybridity for Ammu offers more power and adds to her character an ‘Unsafe edge’ that unsettles hegemony of any kind. She had been successful in making the “unmixable” mixable. Hybridity is thus perceived as a threat by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma because of its ability to ‘challenge, subvert and oppose the prevalent structures of power’ (Clarke 139).

2.5. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma – Blinded by Whiteness

The two older female members of the family do not possess the tolerance displayed by Ammu. They exhibit traits of Pappachi’s anglophilia. The colonial psychology is also discernible in their treatment of the two women - the dark skinned Ammu and the white skinned Margaret. Ammu a divorcee, is repeatedly humiliated, Margaret, a divorcee and a widow is placed on the pedestals of admiration just as Sophie Mol is privileged over Rahel and Estha. A step-motherly treatment is accorded to the native. They are constantly discriminated and are reminded of their status quo. While returning from the airport after receiving Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma, it
said “There would be two flasks of water. Boiled water for Margaret Kochamma and Sophie Mol, tap water for everybody else” (46). This is yet another instance of the anglophile adults of the Ipe family accepting the superiority of the whites with exception of Ammu. The twins too, are constantly made to feel their inferiority by the elders. Even the servant Kochu Maria takes the liberty to rebuke the kids: “Tell your mother to take you to your father’s house. There you can break as many beds as you like. These aren’t your beds. This isn’t your house” (83). A kind of double colonization is imposed on the twins due to their fatherless status. “The colonial forces, active through the colonized, create a pattern of master-slave relationship that realigns the entire power structure” (Adhikari 46).

The colonial persona lurks in the family like Pappachi’s moth and this colonial residue is oppressive. The pride with which Baby Kochamma and Mammachi receive the colonizer’s culture and try to propagate it amongst the younger generation is ample evidence of their leanings. The twins are constantly made aware of where ‘brown feet in Bata sandals’ stand in relation to the white Sophie Mol by these women. This is obvious when the children, Estha and Rahel are made to watch and imbibe the power of whiteness in the movie *The Sound of Music* at a local cinema hall. The voice of Captain von Trapp only echoes the consciousness of these women:

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.) (106)

This is not a mere exchange of dialogue adapted from the movie *The Sound of Music*. The dialogue envisaged in the twins psyche is not just the orchestration of their insecurity. It is in fact a dialogization of different consciousnesses. It also voices the English morality that the kids are forced to imbibe. Through the character of Baron von Trapp the children are made to differentiate themselves from their white skinned cousin Sophie Mol. They are forced to think along the morals and sense of purity imposed by the western society. The reference to ‘clerks’ evokes the prejudice inherent in the colonial psyche.

The tragedy or the change in the lives of the twins is brought in by the arrival of Sophie Mol- a metaphorical representation of the British intrusion. The favouritism displayed by Mammachi and the way in which she privileges Sophie Mol over the Rahel and Estha relegates the twins’ position further into the margins. This discrimination is ingrained even in the maid, Kochu Maria’s psyche who watches Sophie Mol and Rahel at play: “One beach-coloured./ One brown./One Loved. /One Loved a Little Less’ (186).

The constant comparisons and taunting from the elderly ladies make the twins’ existence shaky. Though the twins and Sophie Mol are both children of divorced parents, it is the twins who have to face discrimination. They are constantly reminded of ‘their place’. Though the twins are not much affected in their ambivalent attitude towards the western culture, these discriminations do affect their psyche and contribute to their perverted behaviour as they grow up. Moreover, we find Baby Kochamma trying to portray the twins as the ‘demonic other’ when she says “‘They’re sly. They’re uncouth. Deceitful. They’re growing wild’” (149). Here we find Baby Kochamma
echoing the sentiments of the colonizers who always looked down upon the colonized. In degrading the native, it is not only the individual who is disgraced but their indigenous culture and morals as well. The English sophistication as contrasted with the native manners is again evinced in the following passage:

‘Are you allowed to say “damn” in India?’ Sophie Mol asked.

‘Who said “damn”? Chacko asked.

‘She did,’ Sophie Mol said.’ aunty Ammu. She said, ‘some damn forsaken tribe’ ….”

‘Because in England, we’re not,’ Sophie Mol said to Chacko.

‘Not what?’ Chacko said.

‘Allowed to say Dee Ay Em En,’ Sophie Mol said. (182)

$Naasham$ is the Malayalam equivalent of “damn” and the word is used in moods of frustration without much fuss or derogatory implications in Kerala. The same word in English is deemed highly immoral as revealed in the words of Sophie Mol who later is careful not to repeat the word and rather spells it out. The power of the colonizer still influences a section of Indians even in the post-colonial era and this craze for western morality and culture is known to hit contemporary youngsters as well. Gauri Vishwanthan had discussed this hidden agenda of transporting English morality to the Indians by the implementation of English literature in the Indian curriculum. According to her the British considered moral behaviour and English behaviour as synonymous and as a result English literature functioned ‘as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state (Vishwanath 20).
Before Sophie Mol’s arrival the twins are asked to practise their English. The whole family, described as Anglophile is in one way or the other used to English ways. Rahel and Estha have always been forced to take on the English language as a status symbol, especially by their grandmother, Mammachi and their grand aunt Baby Kochamma who have always craved to be closer to western culture. Their adoration for the English culture is evident in the way preparations are made during the “What will Sophie Mol think? Week” (36). Whenever Baby Kochamma catches the twins speaking in Malayalam, she punishes them with ‘impositions’. She makes them write: “I will always speak in English. I will always speak in English. A hundred times each. When they were done, she scored them out with her red pen to make sure that old lines were not recycled for new punishments” (36).

Earlier too we have seen Estha reluctant to greet Margaret Kochamma in ‘correct English as instructed by Ammu. Estha’s non-acceptance of a foreigner’s intrusion and his reluctance to respond is obvious from his sullenness and stubbornness. His getting accustomed to the English language is not out of his choice but is something infused in his blood, just as that of the author. It is also a part of his cosmopolitan culture. Though he loves English as amalgamated with his mother tongue, he does not like the rule bound language imposed by the others. This kind of stubbornness is voiced by the twins when Miss Mittens tries to teach them and also when the dominating Baby Kochamma expects them to always converse in English. The twins’ love-hate relationship with the language is in fact a conflict between two consciousnesses. Theirs is a blend of two consciousnesses, a balanced hybrid existence, unlike Baby Kochamma’s hybridity which is more a fusion of Indian looks and English consciousness.
Baby Kochamma on the other hand, instead of showering on the seven-year twins her grandmotherly instincts, inflicts a kind of regimental punishment on them. She is quick to correct Estha with a “‘Thank God’” when he remarks “‘Thang God’” (154) with a Malayalam accent. Her colonial mentality compels her to train the children in an imperative model. She is careful about the children getting the correct pronunciation of an alien language. This is also evident when she makes them practice an English car song to be sung on their way back from the airport after picking up their English cousin, Sophie Mol:

“They had to form the words properly, and be particularly careful about their pronunciation. Prer NUN sea ayshun”.

Rejoice in the Lo-Ord Or-Orlways

And again I say rej-Oice ,

RejOice, .... (36)

The above extract again involves more than one consciousness. It is not just a Christian song sung by Baby Kochamma to keep up the spirits of the family during the trip but there is also the consciousness of Baby Kochamma who tries to impose the correct pronunciation on the twins. There is also the consciousness of Roy who adeptly gives a more accurate articulation of the word “pronunciation” without any stress marks or signs of intonation by taking liberties with the spelling and her innovative text. More than informing on the right accent of the word, Roy is interested in presenting the absurdity in the disparity between English spellings and their relative pronunciations. The capitalization and the italicization of the second syllable make the word “NUN” stand out, highlighting the dominance and status quo of the unmarried Baby Kochamma. It also reminds one of Kochamma’s foiled attempt to become a nun, and furthermore her
favourite scenes in the *Sound of Music* are the “nun bits” (98), thus, releasing the voice of ridicule. The word acts as a hybrid utterance to use Bakhtin’s terminology. While giving the correct pronunciation of the word by highlighting the primary stress in the word and modifying the spellings, the author is also able to foreground the ‘nun’ in Baby Kochamma. The years of repressed life has lent a vicious trait to her character.

Baby Kochamma has accepted the superiority of the English and the English language. For her, the knowledge and language imparted by the colonizer is a status symbol. When Kochamma is at the airport to receive Margaret and Sophie Mol, she speaks “in a strange new Bristish accent” (144). She announces her credentials to the white ladies by flaunting her knowledge of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*:

> “‘D’you know who Ariel was?’ Baby Kochamma asked Sophie Mol.
> ‘Ariel in *The Tempest* ?’
> Sophie Mol said she didn’t.
> “‘Where the bee sucks there suck I?’” Baby Kochamma said.
> Sophie Mol said she didn’t.
> “‘In a cowslip’s bell I lie’?”
> Sophie Mol said she didn’t.
> ‘Shakespeare’s *The Tempest? Baby Kochamma persisted.” (144)’

The conversation between Sophie Mol and her Indian Grand Aunt is much more than a mere dialogic exchange and Baby Kochamma’s attempt to set herself apart from the ‘Sweeper Class’ (144). Baby Kochamma like Pappachi is more inclined towards the British. She too belongs to those classes of postcolonial hybrids who devote themselves to the negation of the native culture. Moreover, a multiplicity of consciousnesses is seen
to release from the seemingly simple conversation. In addition to the characters mentioned, there are the voices of Ariel, Shakespeare and Roy herself. The reference to Ariel in *The Tempest* is especially relevant in the postcolonial context as it evokes the memory of Caliban, the rebellious voice of the colonized which is explained in detail towards the latter half of the chapter. It is ironical to note that Sophie Mol of English origin is not as much familiar with the English classics as the twins. This superior edge is probably what enables the twins to deconstruct the English language by reading titles and road signs backwards. Sophie is also amused by the expression “Baby aunt” when the elderly lady is introduced to her: “‘My aunt, Baby,’ Chacko said” (144).

Sophie Mol regards Baby Kochamma with a beady-eyed interest. She had heard of cow babies and dog babies, “But *aunt* babies confounded her” (144). Through the consciousness of Sophie Mol, the intruding consciousness ridicules the Keralites’s obsession with “baby” a translation of ‘kunhi’ and ‘kutti’. These terms are tags of endearment that are prefixed or suffixed to ones names. Over time, the tag Baby was acknowledged as the first names of persons. Ironically the great aunt’s status is subverted by the very person whom she holds in high regard for her whiteness. Baby which has been accepted as a name reverts to its original meaning for smallness and thus her attempt to play the ‘really big aunt’ is thwarted.

Baby Kochamma and Mammachi, like Pappachi are very comfortable in their anglophile status. They do not exhibit the kind of dilemma experienced by Chacko, nor any sense of disgust expressed by Ammu in their overstated love for the white relatives. While Chacko feels a sense of loss at his ebbing native culture, Baby Kochamma and Mammachi never display any interest in safeguarding the native culture. Conversely
they express their affinity towards a foreign culture being totally comfortable in their state of hybridity and their sense of seniority. Mammachi is always shown to play western music on her violin. “She played Lentement - a movement from the Suite I in D/G Handel’s Water Music” (166). Baby Kochamma too, fancies the idea of growing exotic flowers in her fierce bitter garden. “The flower she loved most was the anthurium, Anthurium andraeanum. She had a collection of them, the ‘Rubrum,’ the ‘Honeymoon and a host of Japanese varieties’” (26). Her obsession lies in imported flowers. But Chacko is shown to resent the ways of these ladies by deliberately appearing clumsy before their guests, wearing cheap shirts with mundus and exhibiting his pus-filled boils in an attempt to subvert their western ways in a grotesque act. “…Chacko would appear at her tastefully laid dining table - adorned with her exquisite orchid arrangements and best china - and worry an old scab…” (248). While the younger progeny show affection for their native culture in varying degrees, Pappachi’s generation, by no means exhibit any such cultural loyalty.

2.6. Dialogization of Hybridity across Cultures

In addition to the Tempest there are also references to A Tale of Two Cities, The Great Gatsby, Julius Caesar, Mutiny on the Bounty, etc. Roy does not use these texts as mere embellishments to her narrative. These are the consciousnesses that reinforce some of the voices in the narrative web. Bakhtin has spoken of such diverse consciousnesses making their voice heard on the plane of a single novel. This technique according to Bakhtin allows a dialogue between the earlier texts and the present one. Julius Caesar’s ‘Et tu Brute’ resonates with allusions to the theme of betrayal. There is an isolated mention by Roy of the rubber barons and coffee counts quoting from Romeo and Juliet,
“‘A rose by any other name . . .’ they said, and sniggered to hide their rising panic’ (69).
The quote is highly relevant here as much as their panic. The concealed fear on the part of these social elites is nothing but “Power’s fear of Powerlessness.” This fear is an outcome of the Untouchables’ knowledge of their rights and their demands for equality and dignity: “They demanded not to be addressed as Achoo Parayan, Kelan Paravan, or Kuttan Pulayan, but as Achoo, Kelan or Kuttan” (69). The upper class barons fear that if this underprivileged class is granted their demands then their chances of crossing the boundaries are more. It is the fear of hybridity that is evident here. The same fear exhibited by Mammachi and Baby Kochamma regarding Ammu’s ‘Third Space’.

Betrayal, again, in The God of Small Things has multiple connotations. There is the betrayal of Velutha by the Marxist official Pillai, and then there is the betrayal of Baby Kochamma by Father Mulligan; Ammu’s betrayal of her children and her class; Chacko’s betrayal of his ideologies and Estha’s betrayal of Velutha. But as far as the concept of hybridity is concerned, it is Ammu’s inter-caste marriage to Baba and later her cross-cultural affair with the Untouchable Velutha which is significant. For Baby Kochamma and Mammachi the marriage of Ammu to her Hindu husband is an act of transgression and disloyalty and their offsprings - the twins are considered as ‘Half-Hindu hybrids’. The shift here is from inter-cultural hybridization (colonial) to intra-cultural hybridization. The concept of hybridity is therefore, not only colonial but native as well. Especially in a country like India with its plurality of cultures, intermingling of mores and customs is unavoidable. But the fear of cultural osmosis is usually found in the culturally and socially superior races because they fear equality and over powering. But Roy finds hybridity as a privileged and tolerant space because when the present
researcher asked Roy about the significance of hybridity in her novel in a personal interview, she says that there is no such thing as purity and that there is always violence where claims to purity are established (appendix). The psyche behind such destructive power is beautifully put in Roy’s own words: “these were… history’s henchmen sent to square the books and collect the dues from those who broke its laws. Impelled by feelings that were primal yet paradoxically wholly impersonal. Feelings of contempt born of inchoate, unacknowledged fear – civilisation’s fear of nature, men’s fear of women, power’s fear of powerlessness” (308).

This kind of fear on the part of the ‘privileged’ class is voiced by Baby Kochamma when she says ‘That man [Velutha] will be our Nemesis’ (184) and later the narrator’s voice scorning at the police brutality on Velutha: “After all, they were not battling an epidemic. They were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak” (309). In fact cultural hybridity existed in India not only since British colonialism. India had been a plural society since Aryan invasion. Caste system was practised during the period and resulted in the division of functions and responsibilities of these agrarian societies. Initially there were four castes – The Brahmins (priests), The Kshatriya (soldiers and feudal lords), the Vaishyas (farmers and shopkeepers) and the Sudras (bondsman and artisans). According to the code of Manu a marriage between a Brahmin woman and a Shudra man would result in a “Chandala,” who is described as the “lowest of men” and shares many of the attributes of contemporary “untouchable” (Moffit 34). They were the outcaste class and were hybrids. Aryan culture depended upon enforcing racial exclusiveness, physically as well as spiritually. Inter-caste breeding was curtailed to maintain this rigid system of caste exclusiveness. This kind of rigidity differed from
the attitudes of the British Imperialist who in fact encouraged cross-mingling, though out of selfish motives. So the ambiguity associated with hybridity dates back to ancient times. To quote Roy’s own words:

… it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago. Long before the Marxists came. Before the British took Malabar, before the Dutch Ascendancy, before Vasco da Gama arrived, before the Zamorin’s conquest of Calicut. Before three purple-robed Syrian Bishops murdered by the Portuguese were found floating in the sea…It could be argued that it began long before Christianity arrived in a boat and seeped into Kerala like tea from teabag.” (33)

The treatment meted out to the lower caste people were so bad that “Paravans were expected to crawl backwards with a broom, sweeping away their footprints so that Brahmans or Syrian Christians would not defile themselves by accidentally stepping into a Paravans footprint” (73). Syrian Christians, themselves were of hybrid consciousness as they were upper class Hindu converts and had become, as K. J. John says “almost a part of Kerala’s Hindu social order” and “maintained the ecclesiastical connections with the Persian Church to safeguard their trading interests …” (qtd. in Contenti 186). The above line recalls Chacko’s earlier dilemma about their footprints being wiped out, leaving one to wonder if it is an act of retribution. This is the same ‘hybridity’ manifested by Ammu and seen as an unsettling force in the novel. The members threatened by this kind of disturbing force are seen to resort to all means, in order to thwart this kind of cross-breeding.
In fact, the metaphor of the colonizer-colonized analogy can be extended to the perpetual struggle between power and powerlessness. When the procession which includes “Touchables and Untouchables” surrounds the Plymouth and its inmates, “On their shoulders they carried a keg of ancient anger, lit with a recent fuse. There was an edge to this anger that was Naxalite, and new (69). This new anger is directed at modernity and power which for them is in sync with the English language: “‘What about Modalali Mariakutty?’ someone suggested with a giggle. Modalali in Malayalam means landlord. ‘A, B, C, D, X, Y, Z,’” somebody else said, irrelevantly” (80). The deceptively simple statement marked with sarcasm has more relevance to it than what appears. The English language and its intrusion into the native culture are still considered hostile by a section of the Kerala people. This is perhaps the persistence of the second phase that Sri Aurobindo speaks of in chapter two of *The Renaissance in India*: “The second was a reaction of the Indian spirit upon the European influence, sometimes with a total denial of what it offered and a stressing both of the essential and the strict letter of the national past, which yet masked a movement of assimilation.”

The sentiments manifest in the anti-globalization movements and the protests against neo-imperialism in Roy’s works of non-fiction are all extensions of this phase. But it is also true that the very power generated in these voices of dissent is not empowered merely by ancient systems of Indian education and wisdom. It has its sources in western education as well. Power always increases with knowledge as posited by Michel Foucault. The kind of hybridity manifested by Ammu and in particular Roy is a readiness to accept the best of both the worlds and a rejection of the unwholesome. The very fact that the colonizers encouraged cross-mingling, even though for their
personal benefits has resulted in a positive outcome for many. It has lent a broad minded approach of tolerance as exhibited by Ammu. This has also led to the rejection of many unwanted superstitions that were prevalent in the native culture. Some imperial historians even claim that English literature and English education had fostered ideas of liberty and freedom in native populations and it took Western Enlightenment notions of democracy and fraternity to make Indians or Africans demand equality for themselves (Loomba 90). Sri Aurobindo also articulates similar thoughts: “It revived the dormant intellectual and critical impulse; it rehabilitated life and awakened the desire of new creation; it put the reviving Indian spirit face to face with novel conditions and ideals and the urgent necessity of understanding, assimilating and conquering them.”

All the same this kind of agitation and unsettling force surely leaves the upper-class Baby Kochamma in fear, “Hers, too was an age-old fear. The fear of being dispossessed” (70). This fear is contrasted with the children’s playfulness. The rigidity displayed by Baby Kochamma and her kind is an outcome of their intrinsic insecurity. We find the anger and angst exhibited by the protestor in the voice of Chacko as well, but only that Chacko is ambivalent in his attitude and occupies a zone of cultural confusion. While the members of the Marxist procession show a dislike for English, K.N.M.Pillai, a self-claimed son of the soil and a staunch Marxist is obsessed with the same. This is explicit in the way he brandishes his son and niece before Chacko for their knowledge of verses from English literature and the way he switches over to English to highlight his social status. His niece is made to quote from Sir Walter Scott’s “Lochinvar”:

‘O, young Lochin var has scum out of the vest,
Through wall the vide Border his teed was the bes;
Tanad savisgood broadsod heweapon sadnun,
Nhe rod all unarmaed, and he rod all lalone.’ (271)

While voicing Comrade Pillai’s hypocrisy, the above quote also displays the author’s voice of ridicule at the way English is hybridized and subverted by the intrusion of Malayalam accent. The narrator states: “The words ran into each other. The last syllable of one word attached itself to the first syllable of the next. It was rendered at remarkable speed” (271), in a deliberate attempt to make the readers conscious of the mispronunciation. In another instance we find Lenin, Pillai’s six year old son quoting from Julius Caesar:

‘lend me yawYERS;
‘Icometoberry Caeser, not to praise him.
Theevil that medoolives after them,
The goodisoft interred with their bones,’(274-278).

Roy cleverly allows for the simultaneous existence of two languages with a single utterance, a classic example of Bakhtin’s heteroglossia. It is “another’s speech in another’s language” (Bakhtin, DI 324). The author’s refracted voice, which is one that of subversion is again noted here. Allon White explains, “because languages are socially unequal, heteroglossia implies dialogic interaction in which the prestige languages try to extend their control and subordinated languages try to avoid, negotiate, or subvert that control” (White 137).

Another oft-mentioned text is Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness: “The History House, the house on the other side of the river. Looming in the Heart of Darkness.” The bungalow is a symbol of colonial past and the epithet emphasizes its significance. Roy’s
repeated reference to the expression “heart of darkness” definitely echoes the sentiments of Conrad’s novel. *Heart of Darkness* is a colonial novel almost canonized for its universal qualities. More than highlighting the interiors of the dense Congo jungles the title alludes to the ‘darkness of heart’ of the imperial Kurtz, who exploited and plundered the natives. The allusion to Kurtz is nothing but a reinforcement of the theme of colonial consciousness. It is an allegory of the human mind that seeks pleasure in the atrocities of power. It also reflects the exploitative mentality of the superior castes. “The old colonial bungalow with its deep verandah and Doric columns was surrounded by smaller, older, wooden houses- ancestral homes - that the hotel chain had bought from old families and transplanted in the Heart of Darkness. Toy Histories for rich tourists to playing.”(126) Actually the History House placed in the heart of darkness becomes a symbol of torture and exploitation in the novel. It was this house that witnesses the police brutality towards Velutha. It is said to be owned by an English man, a reminiscence of Kurtz. The owner is referred to as Kari Saipu, translated as the ‘Black Sahib’ and ironically the name of the dark-skinned Velutha means “white” in Malayalam. The choice of names is a deliberate attempt on the part of the author to subvert values and also to signify the arbitrariness of language. By the mere use of solitary words Roy is again able to bring about a double-voiced discourse. The Sahib is subverted not only by attaching the attribute of blackness to his name, but we also learn that Velutha’s father, Vellya Paapen pinned the ghost of this Karisaipu to the trunk of a rubber tree. It is said: “Suddenly he smelled cigar smoke (which he recognized at once, because Pappachi used to smoke the same brand). Vellya Paapen whirled around and hurled his sickle at the smell,” (199) thus, pinning the ghost forever. Roy again refers to
“the Englishman ghost, sickled to a tree” and “abrogated by a pair of two-egg twins” (306). This picture again evokes the image of the imprisoned black Sahib which in turn reminds us of Caliban whose “name may also have been inspired by kaliban or cauliban in the Romani language, which mean black or with blackness (Caliban). Both Ariel and Caliban were slaves to the colonizer Prospero, but in the above allusion, we find the inversion of master-slave relationship.

Near the History house, “In the evenings (for that Regional Flavour) the tourists were treated to truncated kathakali performances (‘Small attention spans,’ the Hotel People explained to the dancers)….Six-hour classics were slashed to twenty-minute cameos. (127). The traditional dance form is stripped of its essence and spirituality and is flaunted before the foreigners for a ‘regional flavour’(Analytical Essay # 60420). Moreover, Roy’s intent is in no way to exoticize her country which is evident in Rushdie’s words “‘The trouble with Arundhati is that she insists that India is an ordinary place’” (qtd. in Swagata Sen). The article also says that “Gillian Beer chose a book among the 106 entries that refused to exotify India, basing itself in an inconsequential village in Kerala and not really venturing out of it.”

2.7. Rahel and Estha - Half-Hindu Hybrids

In addition to the books that evoke multiple consciousnesses, mentioned in the novel, the twins, ‘Half-Hindu Hybrids’ (45) live in a world which is “plotted by a whole range of Western references, both literary and popular.” (Conde 171). Rahel’s fondness for her mother is expressed in the quotation from Rudyard Kipling’s Jungle Book, ‘We be of one blood, ye and I.’ The common cord of assurance and comfort in their state of hybridity runs in their blood and this is aptly voiced by Rahel. Moreover, Mowgli the
hero of Kipling’s book emphasises the theme of hybridity with his half human-half animal existence. They also love *The Sound of Music* as much as their mother. Little Estha is as much interested in Elvis Presley as the adult Estha in Kathakali.

Rahel and Estha’s acquaintance with the classics at such a young age has definitely given the children a mastery over the language. The references to English books are numerous. *Rumplestiltskin, Scarlet Pimpernel, Romeo and Juliet*, in addition to the ones already mentioned, make their entry into the text incorporating multiple consciousnesses. The children after being trained to use the English language with all its nuances are bold enough to bend it and break it to serve their own purpose. It is the subversive voice of the author that is also reflected here. The colonizer required the natives to adopt and internalize the culture of the colonial master, that is, to mimic the master and that is what the kids are taught to do so by the representatives Mammachi and Baby Kochamma. This unconscious acculturation process of the twins actually evinces a kind of speaking back rather than mimicry of the same. This kind of mimicry is fraught with resistance and a reversal has been achieved through the mimicry of the colonizer by the colonized. The child focalizers speak back to the centre by the use of their playful language. Here the consciousness of the author enters into a dialogic relationship with that of the twins. The twins’ mischievous text reflects the author’s anarchic intentions as well. Numerous examples from the text illustrate this point.

Arundhati Roy uses the language of the colonizer twisting and splitting it to suit her native spirit. She displays her opposition by way of her linguistic inventiveness. Although the family is described in such terms of Anglophilia, all are not ready to blindly mimic the colonizer’s language. Rahel and Estha follow Ammu’s legacy in not
accepting blindly all the norms of the non-native culture. The author in fact, skillfully utilizes the children to give a different dimension to the operation of power politics in the novel. The story filtered through the eyes of the twins in an innovative language offers the children a special power of speech. Postcolonial theory is sensitive to issues of who has the power of speech in colonial and postcolonial contexts. In *The God of Small Things*, it is, for instance, the indigenous elites which include family elders, members of the upper castes, police, and men who are represented as having the power of speech in the society to the extent that their words can decide the fate of Ammu, the Untouchable Velutha or the children. This power is inverted or “de-crowned” as Bakhtin used the term by the kind of dissident language used in the novel by way of the child focalizers.

Rahel and Estha with their limited understanding constitute the unreliable voices that prove the apt tool for Roy’s experimentation in unleashing multiple strategies to usher in a fresh language of protest. One of the favourite pastimes of the children is their engagement with the nuances of language and reading backwards is one of them. This is a strategic mode of ‘speaking back’ employed by Roy to topple the colonizers language mercilessly and poke fun at its authority. She imbués it with her own meanings and takes liberties with them whenever and wherever possible:

The red sign on the red and white arm said STOP in white.

‘POTS,’ Rahel said.

A yellow hoarding said BE INDIAN, BUY INDIAN in red.

‘NAIDNI YUB, NAIDNI EB,’ Estha said. (58)

The immediate thoughts that these lines evoke is its association with the ‘swadeshi movement’- a movement that had its genesis in the anti-partition movement in
Bengal in 1903 and which was later adopted by Gandhi in his call for self-sufficiency. This was a policy adopted to oppose the British intervention in India. Ironically this is the sign that twins notice on their way to watching *The Sound of Music*. The children’s ambivalent attitude towards a foreign culture is evident here. The yellow hoarding echoes the voice of only those who belong to the second phase of Indian renaissance as outlined by Sri Aurobindo, the ones who totally rejected all those alien to Indian sensibilities and tastes. By opposition, the hoarding in fact also reminds one of the voices of those like Pappachi who with their ‘Be Western Buy Western’ attitude, felt comfortable under British governance. They believed that the living conditions were better under the British rule. But the child focalizers are skillfully utilized to subvert the idea of a total *swadeshi* culture. The child’s play exposes a serious agenda of incorporating west with the east. This is more in tune with Nehru’s policies of modernization as opposed to Gandhi’s and can be said to carry the germs of the third phase of Sri Aurobindo’s Indian Renaissance in which he feels that the “national mind turned a new eye on its past culture, reawoke to its sense and import, but also at the same time saw it in relation to modern knowledge and ideas” (Sri Aurobindo).

An instance of the twins’ anti-establishment stance by way of language is also reflected in their attitude towards Miss Mittens. Rahel and Estha irritate the Australian Miss Mittens by their ability to read English backwards: “ehT serutnevda fo eisuS lerriuqS. enO gnirps gninrom eisuS lerriuzS ekow pu” (60). It is a highly dissident and politicized act and involves social, spiritual political repercussions. The accidental death of Miss Mitten by a van which was “reversing” is considered by the twins as a just end to an authoritarian teacher. The twins are also not ready to tolerate their teacher’s
ignorance of Malayalam. Her belief that the language spoken by the people of Kerala as “Keralalese” is considered by Estha as a “Highly stupid Impresssion”(60). Such a mistake from a person who strictly adheres to the rules of English is perhaps found unpardonable by the twins. The twins reading back habit on the other hand is viewed as “evil” by Ms. Mittens as she sees “Satan in their eyes” (60). This ‘devilish’ quality attributed to the twins can be contrasted with Kochu Maria’s statement about Sophie Mol. She calls her “‘Sundarikutty: She’s a little angel’” (179).

The twins are constantly ‘othered’ by being referred to with demonic attributes: “Littledemons were mudbrown in Airport Fairy frocks with forehead bumps that might turn into horns. With Fountains in Love-in-Tokyos. And backward-reading habits” (179). The reference to little demons is dialogic with The Tempest and highlights the connection to Caliban, who forms a central figure in many postcolonial studies. Caliban is viewed as one who blends borders and identities in a hybrid formation. Caliban’s mother, Sycorax, is a witch while his father is a devil. This lineage invokes the image of Caliban as a creature that is half-human and half-devil. Various interpretations have been associated with Caliban’s physical appearance. Vaughan and Vaughan aptly conclude that “the confusion of epithets that abound in The Tempest encourages artists, actors, and readers to see Caliban however they wish” (15). This link to Caliban leads to the question whether Roy is suffering from a kind of Caliban complex, which impels her to speak back to the colonizer using his own language, but in a distorted way as the famous lines from The Tempest “You taught me language: and my profit on’t is, I know how to / Curse; the red plague rid you, for learning me your language!”
Caliban complex in the initial context was meant to refer to a kind of dependency by the colonized on the colonizer. As the archetypal representation of the Third World subject, Caliban has been transformed into a cultural and political vehicle by writers who adopt the image of Caliban to serve their own goals. This process or re-interpretation and rewriting is referred to ‘surrogation’, or ‘substitution,’ by Joseph Roach where one generation will stand up and stand in for another, and honor the preceding generation by quoting it, but at the same time, also develop their own ideas and put in their own inventions (Roach 2). This is also the kind of dialogism that Bakhtin encourages where one discourse may enter into a dialogic relationship with another, where it may challenge or support the other. In this study it is posited that Caliban is not suffering from the kind of complex usually attributed to him but rather gathers energy from his newly acquired tongue, his occupation of third space, and wields it to question its authority. It is this new definition of Caliban complex which is reflected in Roy’s own subversive consciousness which dares to question the rigid rules of the coloniser and the English language or to use Bakhtin’s term, it is the refracted voice of the author. In Joel Kurorti’s words “Roy’s text seems to advocate a contestation of the status of English. This is a momentous move; a text which is itself written in English criticizes the very same language… It seems that Roy is after some such rewriting” (179-180).

In another instance, the pseudo-qualities attributed to the police men who murder Velutha are reversed with a child’s mischief. These are also the men who misbehave with Ammu and who collude with the hypocrite politician Comrade Pillai and the cunning Baby Kochamma:
The same inversion of authority is seen as in the case of Miss Mittens who meets her nemesis by being hit by the ‘reversing’ van. Therefore the reversal of these phrases and the unsettling play with language can be taken as a kind of vengeance imposed on these exploiters. Writers like e.e. cummings have experimented with such syntactical distortions. But his experiments constitute a form of anarchy against grammar but Roy’s work is as Evelyn Ch’ien suggests is a “combinative anarchy of the linguistic, literary, and political” (176). The double-voiced discourse in the above example points in two directions: the playful world of children and the voice of dissent against authority.

Presenting the world through the eyes of the children enables Roy to highlight the contrast between two different voices – of the authoritative and the naive. As the novel lays bare the relationships of power in society, it also adopts a strategy of deliberately foregrounding and allowing us to hear the voices of some of those marginalized, ‘subaltern’ figures. These child focalizers constantly assert the subversive power of language. This is a highly effective strategy employed by Roy to bring about the decolonization of language and also highlight her creative potency.

The playful and elastic approach of children which encourages motion and dynamics as opposed to the authoritative and unbending stance of Pappachi is a statement on the polyphonic nature of language itself. This kind of experimentation and
reformation in English is a welcome sign as it fosters growth and dynamism. Alex Tickell notes in his book *Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things* that “This kind of change in language makes it the language of negotiation that authentically represents people looking for a way, a psychological, zone or some form of not feeling the weight of history and of colonization” (Tickell 67). In fact, English itself is a heterogeneous hybrid language and that is what accounts for its receptivity and popularity. Ismail Talib the noted linguist substantiates this point when he states that the English is a borrowed language which has been also loaned to others, such that they are no longer its unique owners. Moreover, he says, “something very different from the attempt to make English distinct from the original language can happen. This ‘borrowed tongue’ – if it can continue to be described as such – is so entrenched in the culture of many of the ‘borrowers’ that they can become more proficient in it than the ‘lenders’ (Talib 101). The language of *The God of Small Things* is only an evidence of the proficiency achieved by its author. Given Roy’s consciousness, it is time for us to look at Indian literature in English as Indian literature. It has liberated itself from colonial hangover and language imperialism.

In fact Roy’s gimmicks with English cannot be considered as any kind of antipathy towards the language, but it is more of a confrontation of its designers. But we have instances where Roy accepts English as a part of her hybrid culture. Roy, in one of her interviews admits her affinity for the language. This empathy for this language is also mirrored in the twins who are thrust into the Anglican set up. Their love for the language and curiosity aroused is illustrated in the following passage:
When the twins asked what cuff-links were for – ‘To link cuffs together,’ Ammu told them - they were thrilled by this morsel of logic in what had so far seemed and illogical language. $Cuff + link = Cuff-link$. This, to them, rivaled the precision and logic of mathematics. *Cuff-links* gave them an inordinate (if exaggerated) satisfaction, and a real affection for the English language. (52)

One also finds Rahel’s reflection on the words “boot” and “sturdy” quite interesting. She treats words as concrete textures in her selective process and reflects on the onomatopoeic quality of words that evoke images: “Rahel thought that *boot* was a lovely word. A much better word, at any rate, than *sturdy*. *Sturdy* was a terrible word. Like a dwarf’s name” (46). For the twins when they were growing up, English was just another mode of expression which they inherited from their anglophile family. But they lack the extreme reverence and craze for the language as exhibited by Pappachi and his generation. It is just another part of their culture. They are also able to use the language without the postcolonial dilemma expressed by Chacko. English is a part of their mental makeup and they are free from any sense of colonization experienced by the elders. The same can be said of Roy, for whom English along with other languages like Hindi and Malayalam is just another Indian language. In an interview she says that English is the only language that is spoken throughout India and for somebody like her, it is a choice made before she is old enough to choose. She continues: “It is the only language that you can speak if you want to get a good job or if you want to go to university. All the big newspapers are in English (qtd. in Chien 190).
In the Preface to *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones*, Roy states that “English as she is spoken by students in Delhi University is an alloy” melted down and then refashioned and soldered together with Hindi to suit the specific communication requirements (p.xii.). Many of the urbanites have taken to this kind of hybridity in language very naturally by interspersing English with their mother tongue. This is only but natural in a country like India where multiplicity rules the roost. It is to be noted that the colonizer’s language still evokes protest from a section of the society while others remain its adorers and still a third group just take to it naturally without the consciousness of it as a foreign language. This plurality in the contemporary generation is reflected in the attitudes of the Marxist procession that surrounded the Plymouth, Comrade Pillai and the twins respectively. While some find their hybrid language very normal, there are others who try to protect the ‘purity’ of their tongue from being maligned by foreign influences. Since India is a country with many indigenous languages, there may be many forms of Indian English. So Roy’s free style of writing and her ground breaking text can be taken as a discourse of heterogeneity.

Roy, however, uses English without the self-consciousness reflected by earlier writers like Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan. In this regard she again, echoes the sensibilities of Rahel and Estha who are more products of an undifferentiated hybridity. She chooses what she wants from the West and draws on Western cultural artifacts with equal ease. In doing so, she, who is born in an independent India, has what could also be termed a liberal, cosmopolitan sensibility. She is not a blind mimic. As Victor Ramraj argues “There is none of Chacko’s anglophilic pretensions in his self-conscious quoting or referring to English or American writers. She uses English with her own creative
touches, completely at ease with her own version” (159). The twins, too is at ease with this kind of culture. They enjoy and comprehend Duryodhana Vadham (Duryodhana’s killing) and Karna Shabadam (Karna’s Oath) – Kathakali as much as they enjoy the English classics. Roy’s unconsciousness hybridity can be explained as “half-acquiescent, half-oppositional” - The hybridized native who refuses to return the colonial gaze and who refuses to acknowledge the colonizer’s position and authority. She is placed in a position of in-betweenness: ‘adopted’ Englishness and ‘original ‘Indianness’.

Roy’s interstitial space is akin to the twins’ for whom contact with a foreign tongue is inevitable and at the same time is reluctant to accept the rigid rules of the same. Roy who is probably the same as age as her twin protagonists belong to this undifferentiated culture, having undergone similar cultural experiences by being born into an upper class Syrian Christian family. Roy’s hybridity includes not only the amalgamation of a foreign culture but also the fusion of indigenous cultures. She too is born of a Bengali Hindu father and a Keralite Christian mother. She inherits the traditions of Bengal and Kerala, two states known for their communist backgrounds and intellectual advancements. It is perhaps this background that lends her the will to rebel.

The twins’ consciousness echoes the author’s at times and vice versa. All the three consciousness interact to give a dialogic sense of truth and this manifests unfinalizability as Bakhtin puts it by existing on the threshold of several interacting consciousnesses, a “plurality” of “unmerged voices.” Morson and Emerson state that “These voices cannot be contained within a single consciousness, as in monologism; rather, their separateness is essential to the dialogue. Even when they agree, as they may, they do so from different perspectives and different sense of the world” (Creation of a
Though the twins dismantle English playfully, it unfolds a serious agenda on the part of the author. The various examples illustrated only suggest, how Roy enables multiple consciousnesses to function by way of her inventive techniques. These innovations are Roy’s distinctive voice of protest as well as creativity. In the words of Evelyn Ch’ien, Roy displays her antagonism by way of her linguistic inventiveness and “champions weird English as the antidote to the dominance of bigness” (156). The children’s teasing and taunting is only a device for the author to decolonize the English language.

2.8. Decolonization of English

Roy herself lays bare two consciousnesses- one that is unconscious of her hybridity and another which is conscious of the rigidity of the colonizer’s language. In an interview by Alice Traux, and editor of the New Yorker magazine, Roy was questioned about her use of the unexpected full stops, “rogue” capitalizations and other grammatical deviations. In her reply she had quipped that she hadn’t studied grammar (Hindustan Times 10). But her language in The God of Small Things belies her claim. A.N. Dwivedi argues that it is only “a cryptic reply to unarm the critics” and he also says that the truth cannot be blunted by mere wit or dash as he personally does not believe that she hadn’t studied grammar (7). So her statement is a kind of ‘hidden polemic” with an agenda. This is apparent when she states in an interview: “My style is my politics” (Shape of the Beast 26). Her knowledge of English is reflected through Chacko. In an excerpt from the novel, we find Chacko correcting Ammu:

“(a)You don’t go to Oxford. You read at Oxford.

And
(b) After reading at Oxford you come down” (55).

In another instance we find Chacko finding fault with his mother when she remarks “‘Over-familiar with who?’ ‘With whom,’ Chacko corrected his mother” (184). Such accuracy reflected by Chacko is only the refracted consciousness of Roy. It is proof of her acquaintance with the intricacies of grammar. Moreover her beautiful prose in her fiction and her forceful language in her non-fiction only disprove her claim further. Her rule breaking and her play with the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’ is not out of ignorance. It is only a strategy employed to decolonize English. She makes an art of rule breaking and her novel is grammatical offence to orthodox English. Many examples from the text point to her attempt to twist and turn the foreign tongue to suit her needs.

elicit multiple meanings and images. When she writes about heavy rains “greenmossing the pigless pigsty” (10), it is another remarkable illustration of her brevity of expression.

At a cursory glance the meanings may not be clear because of the deviant collocations but Firth’s famous remark that “You shall know a word by the company it keeps” (11) takes a significant understanding here. As utterances occur in real-life contexts, Firth argued that their meaning derived just as much from the particular situation in which they occurred as from the string of sounds uttered. Thus, it is obvious that linguistic deviations do not occur randomly in literary work but rather enter into a dialogic relationship with other linguistic features to derive meaning. They are understood, therefore, not in isolation with reference only to the linguistic system, or code, but also with reference to the context in which they appear. So when we say “Sad About Joe silence” we take into account the context and gather that the silence results from the memory of Joe’s demise. Again “Rushing, rolling and fish-swimming sense” actually incites a sense of nausea in the readers reminded of the Orangedrink Lemondrink man. Bakhtin also gave great importance to the role of context in weaving meanings, unlike the traditional stylists who suppressed the relevance of the context.

Sometimes her extraordinary collocations serve as double voiced oxymorons – ‘an unmixable mix’ (44) ‘noisy television silence’(28); ‘Beautiful Ugly Toads’ (187). Elsewhere she describes Estha’s childhood guilt in language that’s unsurpassable:” He had a green-wavy, thick-watery, lumpy, seaweedy, floaty, bottomless-bottomful feeling.”(102), The word “bottomful” as opposed to bottomless sounds like a more emphatic word with depth of meaning. By using such concise and dialogic phrases Roy is able to communicate Estha’s plight and allows one to identify with his feelings.
Roy’s language reflects her creativity and cause. A kind of ‘multi-accentuality’, the ability to carry more than one fixed meaning is achieved by such techniques (Baldwick 216). She does not depend fully on the available resources of English to express her creativity, nor is she curbed by its rigid rules. Her acquaintance with the vast linguistic variances of her native land assists her in bringing variety to the foreign tongue. She exhibits both rage and aesthetic carefulness in her use of English. Roy displays not only an inimitable skill in juggling with letters and treats them with poetic tenderness but also exhibits a deep rooted resentment that forces her to defy the rules. Roy wants to revive English by destroying its orthodoxy. She scissors into words with a view to rebuild a new social and linguistic system:

\[
\text{Nictitating} \\
\text{ictitating} \\
\text{titating} \\
\text{itating} \\
\text{tating} \\
\text{ating} \\
\text{ting} \\
\text{ing} \quad (180)
\]

Here the word’s dissipation into fragments indicates the deconstruction of the current linguistic and social structure that inhibit the creative forces of the subaltern, paving the way for a flexible language and a just social order. Such pictographic presentations and verbal excesses have been criticized by the noted critic C.D.Narasimhaiah who states: “To invoke the Sanskrit concept, her ayukti verbal excess offends against auchitya propriety, authenticity. In fact this may be said to be pervasive
through the whole book. The reader can see how the narrative is made to halt frequently for pictorial display. *Chitrakvya* long ago brought upon itself an inferior status in Indian Poetics” (“A Curse to Creativity”).

But Roy’s authenticity lies in her originality. A narrative which is filtered through the eyes of children need to have such innovations implemented to punctuate the tragic events in the novel and the voices of dissent. Voices of innocence are juxtaposed with voices of experience in this sort of graphological foregrounding which is meant to strike at the root of the social evil, but at same time distances itself from sentimentality by diverting into a child’s play with words. In another instance, the graphic representation of a line of yam leaves blown by a moving train effects aestheticism: “The yam leaves on either side of the railway track began to nod in mass consent. *Yesyesyesyesyes*” (86).

Sometimes grammatical categories are forged and shifted for achieving terseness. Roy alters the conventional sense of suffixes by coining words like ‘outdoorsy’ (13), re-Returned (13), EXITed (101) and Stoppited (141). A single word ‘outdoorsy’ describes Estha’s tanned and tired look which is a result of his daily daytime walks and constant exposure to the sun. The suffix ‘-sy’ is an Indian borrowing which is closer to the English suffix ‘-ish’/’like.’ The word exit has an extra morpheme to emphasize the past action. ‘Stop’ and ‘it’ are combined to form a single word and the past tense morphemes in both cases, ‘exited’ and ‘stoppited’- combined with the’ plosive ‘t’ are used with reference to the children Estha and Sophie Mol after getting admonished by their mothers respectively. The resonance of the reluctance to obey on the part of these children is passed on to the readers by the use of such techniques.
She coins new words like. “afternoon-mares”(217) Roy uses ‘younerness’ instead of youthfulness to describe Velutha’s youthfulness and to convey his “unripeness and inexperience” (Choubey 126). Such neologisms are definitely new but at the same time they are modified forms of the already existing words, thus a dialogic relationship ensues between the old and the new. More of such modifications and inflectional changes can be seen in the next example.

Chacko’s eagerness to meet his loved ones at the airport is described in just two words which function as two paragraphs. “Chacko said he couldn’t take Rahel on his shoulders because he was already carrying something. Two roses red./ Fatly./Fondly”(141). The morpheme ‘-ly’ normally does not accompany the adjective ‘fat’ as it describes the physical concreteness of a person as opposed to actions or abstract concepts. By doing so, the word “fatly” projects before the reader the image of a stout Chacko, an affable figure waiting with all his chubbiness to greet his daughter Sophie Mol and his ex-wife Margaret Kochamma. Such newly minted words enhance the novels evocative quality.

seemingly insignificant things on the twins is reflected. ‘Barn owl’ for them becomes “Bar Nowl” (328) with a distinct children’s logic. This form of writing is only more of evidence of how Roy upsets the rhythm of the movement of the established order in the society and is thus subversive.

Similarly she reflects Indians’ obsession with the excessive use of present participles as in the sentence: “Scurrying hurrying buying selling luggage trundling porter paying children shitting people spitting coming going begging bargaining reservation –checking”(300). The sentence while subverting ‘correct’ English is also an effective device in conveying the hustle and bustle at the railway platform. The rhythm of Indian English is distinct from that of orthodox English but can be achieved only at the expense of the slaughter of English grammar to fit the pulse of the indigenous languages.

While at times she takes liberties with spellings to provide an accurate pronunciation to words sometimes she alters them to sound native. Infinite joy is referred to as “Infinnate joy.”(142) Here Roy seems to coin a portmanteau word formed from the words ‘infinite’ and ‘innate’ to stress on the extent of the joy experienced. Moreover the substitution of the /i/ sound with /ei/ brings about an indigenous touch by lending it a Malayalam accent. Similarly minute is pronounced as “mint” (134) by Comrade Pillai. Through the voice of Estha, Roy tries to highlight the illogicality in English spellings. In a couple of stories written in his childhood Estha uses simplified spellings that give us the right phonetic articulation for words like fatal (fatle), accidents (accidnts), hospital (hospital), bought(bote), cupboard (coberd), feast (feest), (157-158) and exactly (“eggzackly”) (324).
It reflects the irony in the mismatch between English spelling and pronunciation. While such phonetic aberrations make a mockery of Queen’s English, Capitalizations and Italicizations are employed in abundance in the text to provide emphasis to certain words. Words are mostly seen to be italicized wherever stress is intended. To quote an example, Baby Kochamma tells Inspector Mathew “how it was not just what Velutha had said that had made her come to the police, but the way he said it…. As though he was actually proud of what he had done” (261). The italicized words above point to Baby Kochamma’s devious intentions in fixing a false allegation against Velutha. Similarly Ammu’s comment, “If it weren’t for you I would be free. I should have dumped you in an orphanage the day you were born. You’re the millstones around my neck” (291) just hangs lose in italics without quotations stressing the twins’ unbearable grief. In many places pronouns are italicized to emphasize a point or idea. These stylistic deviations accentuate meanings and modulate tones. Such techniques convey the sense of urgency underlying the tone and are substitutes for certain paralinguistic features that infuse life into the text. In the native language such tonal changes are made to an extent with the help of derivational inflexions. Thus by severing the ties between the signifier and signified and effecting tonal changes to imbue newer meanings, she is able to start afresh, without the stain and staleness of colonial English marking her language. Moreover this kind of approach makes her words dialogic.

Roy’s liberty with language is not merely a gimmick as pointed out by critics like C.D.Narasimhaiah. It is highly subversive and aesthetic at the same time. A polyphonic work must be created in a special way, Bakhtin argues, or it will inevitably become monologic. If the wrong creative methods are used, the work will not be a
genuine dialogue but rather an “objectivized and finalized image of a dialogue, of the sort usual for every mononlogic novel” (Bakhtin, PDP 63). Roy’s creativity is reflected in her ambiguous treatment of the English language that includes both love and refutation, a process seen throughout the novel and is thoroughly dialogic as it gives scope for the generation of multiple meanings.

The transgression of the rules of language is deliberate and a reference can be quoted from the novel: “They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how…The laws that make grandmothers grandmothers, uncles uncles, mothers mothers, cousins cousins, jam jam, and jelly jelly.” (31) While the reader imbibes the rules that establish relationship, he/she does not miss the author’s intention of highlighting the arbitrariness of the signifier – signified relationships. This arbitrariness is further established in the dialogue between Rahel and Velutha: “See you’re smiling!” Rahel said. “That means it was you. Smiling means ‘It was you.’

‘That’s only in English!’ Velutha said.’ In Malayalam my teacher always said that ‘smiling meant it wasn’t me’” (19).

In a dialogic encounter with Velutha, Roy imbues new meanings in an attempt to subvert the ideas of those traditional theorists who fix meanings. Evelyn Ch’ien states: “To read The God of Small Things is to witness anarchy against the mechanism of meaning concoction, since this mechanism also generates meanings that create oppressive practices. Roy thus subverts colonial English as a diseased practice” (172). Roy in an interview featured in the Shape of the Beast states that “even language has been co-opted. If you say ‘democracy’, it actually is neoliberalism. If you say ‘reforms’,
it actually means repression. Everything has been turned into something else. So we have to reclaim language now” (159). This kind of generating oppressive practices by way of meaning concoction is what Roy tries to subvert by her revolutionary text.

Roy’s text is replete with examples of linguistic innovations that mark her decolonization process. In fact it can be said that her attempt at decolonization of the English language stems from her essential feminine sensibility and is also reflected in her *écriture féminine*. This too is a hybrid variety of language that infuses feminine sensibilities into a patriarchal language, thus pushing the boundaries of meanings and discourses and deconstructing ideas. Thus such innovative uses can also be classified under specifically feminine language use which is highlighted later. Language has always been the central question in post-colonial studies. Writers like Rushdie talk about how working in new Englishes can be a therapeutic act of resistance, remaking a colonial language to reflect the postcolonial experience. In the essay “Imaginary Homelands” he explains that, far from being something that can simply be ignored or disposed of, the English language needs to be assessed from a newer perspective. He opines that English can never be used the way the British did and need to be reworked for native purposes. The ambiguity with which we approach the English language stimulates a linguistic struggle that is also the “reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work upon our societies. To conquer English may be to complete the process of making ourselves free,” says Rushdie (17). A kind of dialogic tension is seen to arise in the formation of this hybrid variety.
Rushdie’s words hold true for the inventive language of *The God of Small Things*. The linguistic struggle does reflect a number of themes in the novel: Ammu’s struggle against patriarchy; the twins’ struggle against the unjust world of the adults; the Dalit’s struggle against the upper caste; the struggle of growing up in a fractured, dysfunctional family and Nature’s struggle against culture. Roy has achieved that level of mastery of English from where she is free to bend it to her whims. The virtuosities displayed by her prove that she has freed herself from the stranglehold of British English and is thus able to generate fresh strategies to present her themes.

The indigenous expression she incorporates into the text is also an attempt to prove that the native spirit can be adeptly conveyed in a foreign tongue. This kind of inter-mixing of languages can be referred to as what Bakhtin calls heteroglossia. Roy’s use of the colonizing language has been overlaid and been adapted to fit an earlier culture, pushing the boundaries of expression. Hybridization, as illustrated, takes place not only in cultural and political spheres but linguistic as well. This kind of ‘linguistic cross breeding’ is exemplified in Roy’s novel. *Inglish* or rather indianisation of English is seen in many places in the novel. Roy’s incorporation of the native tongue into the novel is also an instance of subversiveness against the language of the colonizer.

Roy uses several indigenous expressions in the novel to express “heteroglossia”: Family relations like *mon*(son), *mol*(daughter), *ammavan*(uncle), *cheduthi* (elder sister, elder brother’s wife), *ammai* (father’s sister) (37), *kochamma* (a term of respect for ladies) *ammooma*(grandma), *appopan* (grandpa); dress items like – *mundu* (loin), *chatta* (blouse) (161), *kunukku* (a traditional earring)(113), *white churidar and shervani* (228); caste references like - *Paravan, Pulayan, Parayan*; food items like - *avalose*
oondas (sweet rice laddoos), avial (a mixed vegetable dish), chacka velichathu (jackfruit halwa), kappa(tapioca), parippu vadas (patties of lentils), “idiappam for breakfast, kanji and meen for lunch;” (21) “a hunger for kappa and meen navachathu,” (134) Revolutionary slogans such as Thozhilali Ekta Zindabad (66) and captions like Ruchi lokathinde Rajavu (Emperors of Realm of Taste) (46). One usually represents the translation of the numbers one, two, three as onnu, randu, munnu but here Roy is able to bring the apt native pronunciation by suffixing “-er” at the end of these words and thus, “Onner.Runder.Moonner” (64).

The inclusion of some expressions like aiyyo paavam (oh poor thing), Aiyyo kashtam (177) (what a pity), Ende daivomay! Ee Sadhanangal (143) (My God, these things), ivialy! (71), Ickileee, ickileee, ickilee! (178) (Tickle, tickle!), Enda (178) (what is it), Eda cherkka (101) (hey you, boy), Allay edi? (Isn’t that so? to a female), Modalali (80) (landlord), Orkunnundo (do you remember), orkunnilley (128) (don’t you remember), Sundarykutty (179) (beautiful girl), chenda (drum), kochu (small), Vellya (big) (228), Aiyiyyo ,Mon!Mol! (208), Madiyo (is it enough), madi aayirikkum (may be enough) (310), Chappu Tamburan (Lord Rubbish) (339) etc. also add to the local colouring and fluidity of the narrative. In fact the very first Malayalam word she introduces to the readers is a derogatory one: “veshyya” (8) meaning prostitute bringing in carnivalism of sorts. She uses translations only for a handful of words. When Sophie Mol arrives Mammachi asks the maid servant: “Kando, Kochu Mariye?” Mammachi said. ‘Can you see our Sophie Mol?

‘Kandoo, Kochamma,’ Kochu Maria said extra loud. “I can see her” (179).
But most of these native terms are left untranslated. The direct use of native expressions without any translation is the most effective way of appropriation. “As Ashcroft et al note they are metonymic of the culture they represent, compelling the reader of the master test to negotiate this encounter with the opposed cultural identity of the racial Other” (Driesen 367). Such native usages are only devices used to interrogate the colonizers. Even when she could have ended the novel with the one-word sentence “tomorrow,” the word “naaley” (340) precedes it to end on a note of dialogue for a peaceful coexistence within a hybrid culture.

Bringing such native rhythm into the colonizer’s language can be done only by a writer who is adept in the foreign language to the extent that she can speak back to the empire. India is a land of diversity with many different languages carrying different cultures and each language carrying different dialects. So the English spoken in India varies from state to state in its oddities. Perhaps Roy is the first writer to have exposed so much of Malayalam vocabulary to the world outside and by doing so she foregrounds the native culture as well.

Moreover, as Ngugi points out language and culture are inseparable, and that therefore the loss of the former results in the loss of the other. He believes that specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history. The main media of transmission of the particular culture and its images of the world is its written literature and orature. Language is thus the vehicle of cultural transactions. This is what allows for the comprehension of the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Language is thus inseparable from us as a community of human
beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world (Ngugi 15-16). Thus the entry of the specific Malayalam words exposes to the world certain aspects peculiar to the state of Kerala: food items, family relationships, its art forms and its aestheticism. Moreover, she is able to articulate the native experience with unparalleled skill. In his famous Foreword to *Kanthapura*, Raja Rao states that the tempo of the Indian life must be infused into the English expression and believed that an alien tongue may not be able to do full justice to the Indian spirit. She has proved what the great Indian novelist thought was difficult to achieve. The examples that follow substantiate Roy’s adeptness in the field.

Sometimes she uses both the languages within the boundaries of a single utterance: “‘Thanks Keto!’ … ‘Valarey thanks!’(70). This is another case of a hybrid utterance that Bakhtin talks of. Two languages indicate two consciousnesses which function on the same plane. This heteroglossia reflects Chacko’s hybrid existence from which he cannot escape. But when Comrade Pillai tries to incorporate English into his native tongue, the deliberate attempt to adopt an alien tongue is very evident. When Pillai introduces the grown up Rahel to a passerby:“‘His daughter’s daughter is this. In Amayrica now’” and when the passerby responds with a “‘Oower, oower,oower. In Amayrica now, isn’t it’” (129), their admiration for English as well as America is reflected. The spelling of ‘America’ is modified to fit a local accent. Moreover, Roy achieves the rhythm of Indian English by rearranging the lexical items in the above sentence. Pillai and his clan are differentiated against the twins in terms of language acquisition. The twins born in an anglophile family is more accustomed to the nuances of English.
This kind of dialogization of languages, dialogized heteroglossia, occurs constantly through a process of hybridization, both intentional and unintentional. Hybridization “is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor” (Bakhtin, DI 358). Hybridization is intentional as an artistic device in the novel as seen in the inclusion of many native words and the appropriation of pronunciation. It is also unintentional and as such is the primary means of change in a language, “a mixing of various languages co-existing within the boundaries of a single dialect, a single national language, a single branch, a single group of different branches or different groups of such branches, in the historical as well as paleontological past of languages” (Bakhtin, DI 358-59) as seen in the unconscious existence of the two languages in a single utterance.

Roy’s sense of place is emphasized both by references and allusions to folk and pop-cultures. Malayalam film songs, nursery rhymes and boat songs reverberate in the novel bringing in multiplicity of genres. The whistling and singing train: “Koo-koo kokum theevandi/ Kooki paadum theevandi/ Rapakal odum theevandi/ Thalannu nilkun ku kookum theevandi” (285) is a nursery rhyme and highlights the theme of playfulness of the children. Another familiar flavour of Kerala is the boat song of the oarsmen who sing it on their way to fishing in the tumultuous waters of the seas: ‘Thaivy thaivy thaka thaivy thaivy thome!’ (196). This song reverberates the turbulence in Estha’s mind churned by the abusive soft drink seller. The most remarkable melody is the famous all–time track from the award winning Malayalam film Chemeen:
Once a fishernan went to sea,
(The West Wind blew and swallowed his boat,) ……………………..
His wife on the shore went astray,
(So Mother Ocean rose and took him away) (219-220)

While at times, we find Roy deliberately acknowledging the presence of the native language by giving translations in English; mostly we find her allowing the entry of Malayalam words into the text as a means of direct confrontation with an alien reader. She also uses grotesque means to subvert English as exemplified in Kuttapen’s song that borders on scatology: Pa pera-pera-pera-perakka /Ende parambil thooralley/ Chetende paraambill thoorikko/ Pa pera-pera-pera-perakka (196) (Roughly meaning Mr. Gugga gug gug…guava/don’t shit in my compound/ shit in the brother’s field / Mr. Gugga..gug gug…guava). The incorporation of the transliteration of native limerick is a deliberate attempt on the part of Roy to subvert the English language. The use of English to represent native “shit” is in tune of Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque. Arundhati endorses a subversion of rules and values by her method of carnivalism. Such language as used by Kuttapan ‘valorizes the obscene, the nonsensical and the “marketplace speech’” (Chawla 344). This coarseness and impudence of the carnivalesque is seen to
reflect in the expressions like “Meeters from the Met, and Greeters from the Gret” (142) as well.

In short culture carries multiple consciousnesses, multiple voices and Bakhtin finds the language of fiction, an apt tool for bringing about this multiplicity as reflected in Roy’s fiction. His understanding of hybridity as a way in which language, and even a single sentence, mixes different voices, takes us to the concept of dialogism in the novel. The language of the novel is inherently dialogic, that is, characterized by the constant play of different discourses without necessarily assuming authorial control by any of them. This multiplicity of fictional voices points to the hybrid nature of the novel itself. Roy’s process of decolonisation, particularly involves the establishment of a dialogic relationship between the two languages by the process of heteroglossia.

Polyphony in the novel is manifested through the voices of the different characters, and the different techniques used by the author. Hybridity is reflected even in the similes and metaphors used by the author. These literary devices are drawn from the native experience as well as from her cosmopolitan and western leanings. When she describes the drowned Sophie Mol’s skin being as wrinkled as “a dhoby’s finger”(14) it is the Indian experience that is conveyed. When Roy states that Estha’s guilt torments him “like a mango-hair between the molars” (32), it immediately communicates to the Indian reader the nagging sense of Estha’s predicament. Ammu’s adornment before her marriage is considered futile and is compared to “polishing firewood” (44). In the same vein she uses similes with a western touch. A column of ants on the windowsill with their tilted bottoms upwards is compared to “a line of mincing chorus girls in a Busby Berkeley Musical” (155). Comrade Pillai’s nipples are likened to “St. Bernard’s eyes”
Roy’s dictum seems to be not to turn your back on the English language but to remould and refashion it to reflect your values.

Language consists of much more than words on paper. It should be able to create a sphere for responses to be created. The use of written language requires an understanding of its construction, its response to previous utterances, and a cultural context. Cultural context comes about as a result of writing as a member of a particular society or culture, enabling the writer with techniques, clichés, and phrases particular to the given society. When the writer writes about a specific culture in a hybrid language the scope for meanings is manifold. The dialogic tensions felt during the reading experience enables one to draw more from the textual words. Roy is successful in re-establishing a culture by means of her fiction. In the process she negotiates cultural hybridity and establishes selfhood at the same time. This is probably what Sri Aurobindo means by the third stage of Indian renaissance of which he states: “a process of new creation in which the spiritual power of the Indian mind remains supreme, recovers its truths, accepts whatever it finds sound or true, useful or inevitable of the modern idea and form, but so transmutes and Indianises it,….” Here it is the alien language and culture that is absorbed and transformed into the native experience “that its foreign character disappears and it becomes another harmonious element in the characteristic working of the ancient goddess, the Shakti of India mastering and taking possession of the modern influence, no longer possessed or overcome by it” (Sri Aurobindo).

This idea is reiterated by Ashcroft who considers the hybridized nature of postcolonial culture as strength rather than a weakness. It is not a case of the oppressor obliterating the oppressed or the colonizer silencing the colonized. In practice it stresses
the mutuality of the process. The clash of cultures can impact as much upon the colonizer as the colonized. In the Post-Colonial Studies Reader, it is mentioned how “hybridity and the power it releases may well be seen as the characteristic feature and contribution of the post-colonial, allowing a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth”( Ashcroft et al. 183).

Native writers must take cue from this and maintain those aspects of a colonized culture vital to their existence while manipulating them to serve as the building blocks of an independent society. Roy’s use of English is fashioned to suit her ideals and ideas. This is best described by Benita Parry:

In the ‘hybrid moment ‘what the native rewrites is not a copy of the colonialist original, but a qualitatively different thing-in-itself, where misreadings and incongruities expose the uncertainties and ambivalences of the colonialist text and deny it an authorizing presence. Thus a textual insurrection against the discourse of cultural authority is located in the natives’ interrogation of the English book within the terms of their own system of cultural meanings. (42)

As a result, it can be said that the use of English by those originally on the margins, that is, writers from former British colonies has resulted in the appropriation and dismantling of the ‘model of centre and margin’ and ‘ the notions of power inherent’ in being at the centre (Ashcroft et al., The Empire 83). The centre has pushed the consciousness of the colonies. The alienation process which initially served to relegate the post-colonial world to the “margin” turns upon itself and acts to push that world
through a kind of mental barrier into a position from which all experience could be viewed as uncentered, pluralistic and multifarious.

Marginality thus becomes a source of unprecedented creative energy. A major element in the postcolonial agenda is to disestablish Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values, and to expand the literary canon to include colonial and postcolonial writers. One way of materializing this agenda is to decolonize the English language by experimental writing such as Roy’s. What was once the centre is no longer the same. As for an Indian woman novelist, this is a double challenge as she has to overcome the double hurdles of gender and colonialism. “Spivak's well-known (and controversial) argument is that the subaltern cannot speak for him/herself because the very structure of colonialism prevents the speaking. For the colonized woman, this is even more impossible because the double bind of colonialism and patriarchy represses her completely” (Nayar 192). The answer to Spivak’s question, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, Roy's *The God of Small Things* is the answer and is a testimony to the inappropriateness of the word “subaltern” with reference to Indian women novelists.

Such issues are addressed in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s book *The Empire Writes Back*. They discuss the process of replacing the standard language with a local variant through abrogation and appropriation, where “Abrogation is a refusal of the categories of the imperial culture, its aesthetic, its illusory standard of normative or ‘correct’ usage, and its assumption of a traditional and fixed meaning ‘inscribed’ in the words” (Ashcroft *et al* 38) and “ Appropriation is the process by which the language is made to ‘bear the burden’ of one’s own cultural experience. . . . Language is adopted as a tool and utilized to express widely differing cultural
experiences” (Ashcroft et al. 38–39). Roy’s language marks both abrogation and appropriation unlike the Indian writers who wrote novels in English in the early part of this century. They “used the language carefully, with stiff correctness, always conscious that it was a foreign tongue” (Rama Rao 146). They did not dare to experiment with the colonizer’s language.

Post colonial literatures follow a transition or periodisation of three phases which can be termed as ‘Adopt’, ‘Adapt’ and ‘Adept’ (Barry 189). The writers of the ‘Adopt’ phase unquestioningly accepted the European models and considered them to be the standard. The ‘Adapt’ phase begins when the European form was modified to suit indigenous requirements. The third is the ‘Adept’ phase in which the new literature breaks away from all the previous norms and conventions and acquires indepence. Indian writing in English too has crossed these three phases in the years gone by. Interestingly, the three phases bear resemblance to the three stages of renaissance outlined by Sri Aurobindo and the fact is that Aurobindo, the visionary had discussed such stages way before the renowned postcolonial critics.

Roy herself, a hybrid is in a way gifted with the privileged third space. She belongs to what the post colonial critics call the Adept phase. Having mastered the colonizer’s language she is at free will to bend it to her whims. Roy’s subversive style reveals a consciousness which feels it has become mandatory to decolonize English because a language that is not able to convey the lived experience is bound to be bland. Earlier writers like R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai tried to creatively extend and expand the English language to accommodate the native experience but no structural changes were endeavoured. Writers like Raja Rao, G. V.
Desani and Salman Rushdie have consciously departed from Standard English in order to accommodate indigenous expressions and tried their hand at a kind of nativization of English. But Arundhati Roy is among the writers who dared to bend and modulate the rhythms and structure of the English language to suit the needs and nuances of Indian experience. Roy by her creative use of English tries to make English a more authentic vehicle of expression of the sensibility and the consciousness of the people. Roy, though a member of a hybrid culture, is not ready to blindly mimic her coloniser. Homi Babha views this kind of hybridity from a more positive angle: “Mimicry is thus the sign of double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which ‘appropriates’ the Other as it visualizes power. Thus the idea of mimicry as a homage to the coloniser is questioned here” (122).

The author makes her hybrid stance loud and clear by decolonizing the English language with the power she acquires from her privileged hybridity. Here she rejects the proposed mimicry of the British culture as practised by Pappachi, Mammachi and Baby Kochamma or the identity crisis experienced by Chacko. She strives to create an alternate space that does not depend wholly on western models, but rather involves a parallel process of renaissance outlined by Sri Aurobindo as the third phase. Her winning the Booker Prize in 1997 coincided with India’s fifty-year celebration of independence from Britain. This is considered by some critics as “a great deed of imperial retribution” (Aldama 52). Taking into consideration the multi-voiced and multi-styled texture of the novel, the postcolonial critical frame is only one way of reading *The God of Small Things*; not only how the narrative “writes back” to the centre with its innovative language, but also the expression of multiple hybrid consciousnesses.