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Generally speaking, in the postcolonial literary theory *the other* is represented as the object of colonization. The O/other is inevitable, essential and important to the defining of the subject identity in both cases - if we deal with the subordinate, marginalized and exploited other, or on the other hand with the Other who is itself the representation of the imperial discourse of power and in whose gaze the subordinate identity is being constructed and exists:

The ambivalence of colonial discourse lies in the fact that both these processes of 'othering' occur at the same time, the colonial subject being both a 'child' of empire and a primitive and degraded subject of imperial discourse. The construction of the dominant imperial Other occurs in the same process by which the colonial others came into being (Ashcroft et al., Key concepts 117).

In both cases the opposition simply must exist, it is usually the result of a basic distinction between the dominant and subordinate class and it is not rare that in post-colonial texts the process of *othering* may also become extremely violent. Simply speaking, the Empire by definition colonizes and subjugates the objects of colonization. Political independence of the former colonies did not bring equality to all social groups in the new countries, and the process of subordination continued in some other aspects and distinctions. Ania Loomba in the chapter named "Situating Postcolonial Studies" in her book *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* states the following:

The newly independent nation-state makes available the fruits of liberation only selectively and unevenly: the dismantling of colonial rule did not automatically bring about changes for the better in the status of women, the working class or the peasantry in most colonized countries. 'Colonialism' is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within (11-12).

This "duplication from within" suggests the continuation of the process of Self-formation and *othering* as immanent to societies, systems and human nature. The concept of the other within South-Asian Post-colonial studies is similar to the concept of the *subaltern* as "subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes" (Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts* 215). Stephen Morton in his "Poststructuralist Formulations" follows the development of the concept of the *subaltern*, from Antonio Gramsci to Ranajit Guha: Gramsci contrasted 'the subaltern classes to the ruling classes of the State. In postcolonial studies the term subaltern has been developed by Bhabha and Spivak. South Asian historians such as Ranajit Guha, Gyanendra Pandey, Dipesh Chakrabarty and David Arnold adopted the term "in the 1980s to describe 'the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way (Guha 1982: vii)" (Morton 167-168).

The central question that we deal with in this article leans against the question of the possibility of the Other as accepted neighbour, to be more specific, the questioning of the possibility of the incorporation of the other in some form of the Same, transforming it into the neighbour whom one might possibly love or accept. This article deals with the analysis of the novel from the postcolonial point of view through the concepts of dominant/subordinate, the O/other and subaltern. A novel that is used as a case study is a well-known literary accomplishment by Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*, published in 1997.

Following the principle dominant/subordinate within the postcolonial reading of the novel, the complex weaving of the resistant and the resilient web of O/others in this novel is based on class/caste, racial, gender, religious and every other possible distinction and it is being reconstructed with additional entries of the concepts of utopian systems such as Christianity and Communism. In the novel that web exists within and outside hegemonic postcolonial relations, within India and Indian tradition, but also within countries of the dominant western Anglo-American world. The terms of the *other* and *subaltern* in this postcolonial novel deeply question the dominance of the Eurocentric formation of that concept, at least in its historical application. The others that exist in societies as a subaltern, exploited and humiliated category never turn into any form that could be incorporated into the Self as its accepted or loved part, but slip away into new relations reconstructing the complex web of otherness. Basically, the opposition simply must exist and therefore the pattern that is followed

is the one that makes *the other* an integral part of the Self formation, but not of the Self. The multiplication of the process of the othering and its derailment into new interrelations is obvious within the story, mostly in the interrelations of the characters. One can almost say that it is one of the basic rules in the creation of the story. At the same time a similar concept of *the othering* finds its reflection in the analysis of the social and historical context and it also opens the question of certain theoretical hesitations within the South-Asian branch of English literary postcolonial studies, concerning the topic of the semantic coverage of the field.

The following analysis is divided into three mini-thematic units: the textual interpretation of the novel, the socio-historical context and certain dilemmas concerning the theoretical context. The interpretation of the fictional body of the text will be based on the crucial post-colonial analysis concerning *the other* as the object of colonization through the lens of the key-concepts (Ashcroft, Key concepts) of the empire, hegemony, language, culture and race. The concepts of class, caste, gender and religion become a very fruitful platform for the understanding of the postcolonial society of India, and Socialism and Christianity seem to be powerless in a society traditionally dominated by Hinduism. This return to authenticity, the superimposition of the Self over the other and the rejection of the other find its reflection in theory in Gayatri Spivak's "*the impossibility of "love" "in the one on one way for each human being"*" (Spivak 270).

The second consideration of the term the other would be the political and ethical engagement of Roy's fiction. Reflecting its social and historical background, the novel broadcasts an extremely powerful political message by foregrounding the question of human rights in one of the largest nation-states of the contemporary world. Through the story of the Dalits, the Untouchables, the invisible fifth caste of Indian society, Roy throws a glove in the face of globalization and the lack of basic human freedom and she does not offer a way out, but depicts *subordinate/subaltern* groups and individuals sacrificed to the great wheels of history, civilization and dominant systems.

Theoretical hesitations concerning the coverage of the semantic field of the term post-colonial in the South-Asian postcolonial literature and its "others" are based on the writings of John Thieme in its *Anthology of Postcolonial Literatures in English* published in 1996, Robert Y.C. Young's *Postcolonialism*, statements of Anshuman Mondal in the *Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (2007) about Vietnam literature and Aijaz Ahmad's concept of 'Indian Literature' (Ahmad 245).

Colonial and post-colonial O/others

The idea of the interpretation of this novel through the concepts of *the other* and *othering* suggests itself through the multitude of interrelations of the characters, but also in the space that they abide, their habits, life choices and in their final development as fictional characters. Roy's county of Kerala that is represented in the story takes us back to 1969, more that twenty years after India's independence, but that world is heavily burdened with post-colonial hegemony. The dominance of the British world is obvious in issues of language, race, culture, and in the minds of the characters the Empire still exists. The common malady in the family of Syrian Christians is Anglophilia; they admit it, they are pretty much aware of it and they have accepted the imposed idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority as something natural and unquestionable. Colonialism never ended, it simply changed the cloak, because the opposition can be detected in one or two characters only, and they are female characters, unable to stand for themselves in their own world, thereby there is no cure for Anglophilia in this story.

Hegemony as "the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all... exerted not by force... but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy... education and media" (Ashcroft et al. *Key Concepts* 116). Universal human values are embodied in an Englishman. The Englishman is the Self, and under his surveillance and in his gaze the other is being constructed:

The grandfather of the family once worked as an imperial entomologist who discovered a new species of moth, but his work was rejected and after his retirement an award was given for the same discovery to a British scientist. All his life Pappachi lived as an anglophile, trying through his life and in appearance to be worthy of the British Empire that he so adored. His aspiration to be accepted in the eyes of the dominant culture led him to absurdity: "He wore khaki jodhpurs though he had never ridden a horse in his life. His riding boot reflected the photographer' studio lights. An ivory handled riding crop lay neatly across his lap" (Roy 51).

Chacko studied at Oxford and married an Englishwoman, Margaret. She comes from the English working class and in the era of colonial expansion the working population of the United Kingdom were no less exploited than the colonized peoples.¹ Margaret's father does not approve of the marriage with an Indian, even if he is an upper class member in his society. "Margaret Kochamma's father had refused to attend the wedding. He disliked Indians, he thought of them as sly, dishonest people. He could not believe that his daughter was marrying one" (Roy 240); a prejudice that cannot be easily changed as it is deeply rooted into western constructions of the Orient, and Margaret incorporates the privileging of the imported culture over the colonized or post-colonial others. On the other hand, for Chacko's love affairs and fulfilment of his "man's needs" Mammachi had a special entrance built in order to keep the family safe from the possibility that some of the servant girls attached to the noble family. The

other in the first case is determined by culture and race and in the second by class, and that class distinction has nothing to do with the British empire; Naxalite girls are an internal question in Indian society and their subordinate position is the reflection of the economic truth that serves as the base for every class distinction.

The cultural hegemony of the West is present in the fascination with everything that is connected with Britain and the West in Ayemenem of the seventies seen through the eyes of children, but also later in the nineties after Rahel's return from America. Since early childhood, the children Rahel and Estha are forced to learn the English language. They read short versions of Shakespeare, and are severely punished if they make mistakes in their small literary assignments. It is all forced to the extent that at the moment when they meet Sophie, who lives in England, they do not understand that Sophie is not familiar with Shakespeare's *Tempest*, and they are nine years old. Estha has all Elvis's records and knows his songs. The whole family organizes a trip to the cinema to see the film "The Sound of Music", and not for the first time. They know all of the songs from the film by heart and the children admire the white faces of the children on the screen, aware that they will never be loved as Sophie-Mol, because she is white, pure and perfect, like some kind of a white childlike goddess. The imposed cultural expectations and the awareness of the culturally subordinate *others* that they will be excluded from the perfect Self conditions their behaviour of 'more English than English'.

Returning from the United States in the 1990's after her own divorce, Rahel finds Ayemenem and the family changed, but culturally and this time economically still deeply under the influence of the western cultures. Her father, a drunkard and bad character, after a complete failure in his country, looks for recourse and a second chance in the promised land of Australia. Roy refers here to the 19th century pattern when English convicts, as the bottom of British society, as well as and hopeless people that were looking for salvation were transported to the new lands. Rahel's father is a complete failure so accordingly he ends up in Australia. One more character finishes his life within the Commonwealth world, and that is Chacko. After the loss of his daughter Sophie and the loss of the factory Chacko moves to Canada and, symbolically again, runs an unsuccessful antiques business. Canada represents the last hope and a sanctuary in the minds of many. A psychological escape from trauma and the last peaceful place within the Anglo-Saxon world, it is itself culturally doubly marginalized in its attempts to follow in the first wave the British and, in the recent times, American cultural hegemony. Chacko has also lost his authenticity, not belonging anywhere any more, looking for confirmation of his existence. Both Rahel's uncle and her father, those who are supposed to be the pillars of their patriarchal society have lost their identity and are looking for sanctuary and approval, like a child in the eyes of the Mother Country, in the Commonwealth countries.

After Rahel's return in the nineties there are two cultural alterations dominantly present in the lives of the characters, in the space in which they abide and in their surrounding. These changes denote cultural as well as economic hegemony of the West and Anglophone world, in this case, American. Ayemenem and its tradition that was preserved for hundreds of years, such as Kathakali dancing,² has been changed to meet the needs of the contemporary tourist industry. Everything has been organized as a kind of hotel with a market stand for curious travellers, cultural fast-food, and therefore the indigenous culture seems to be displaced on the spot, eradicated from its true meaning, cut and put into a tourist vase of a neo-colonial world:

June is low season for kathakali. But there are some temples that a troupe will not pass by without performing in. The Ayemenem temple wasn't one of them, but these days, thanks to its geography, things had changed. In Ayemenem they danced to jettison their humiliation in the Heart of Darkness. Their truncated swimming pool performances. Their turning to tourism to stave off starvation. On their way back from the Heart of Darkness, they stopped at the temple to ask pardon of their gods. To apologize for corrupting their stories. For encasing their identities. Misappropriating their lives. (Roy 228-229)

Traditional culture converted into money and places of entertainment for rich tourists. Neo-colonialism in the form of possession by exploration and travel simply continues to divide the world into the dominant and subordinate and "where signifiers of stereotyped exotic difference are absent... they are constructed as part of so called resort developments" (Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts* 98). Underdeveloped societies are dependant on the global economy dictated by multinational corporations. Local inhabitants like Baby Kochamma and her servant Kochu Maria have two new obsessions, idleness and the oblivion of satellite TV. Baby Kochamma, once a devoted Catholic, installed a dish antenna on the roof and "presided over the World in her drawing room on satellite TV" (Roy 27). Her world was stuffed with BBC, Bill Clinton, NBA league games, Grand Slam tennis, Santa Barbara, *The Bold and the Beautiful* and "Her old fears of the Revolution and the Marxist-Leninist menace had been rekindled by new television worries about the growing numbers of desperate and dispossessed people. She viewed ethnic cleansing, famine and genocide as direct threats to her furniture" (Roy 28). The power of the media is irrevocable, and so is the imposition of the superiority of the western culture, as well as the fear of the others.

The contempt that Rahel feels for the world under the hegemony of American culture and economy, and the changes that transformed traditions like Kathakali is justified by her experience of life in America. She is the only character in the novel who has direct experience with both cultures and she is aware that class, race and cultural distinctions have also conditioned the others in America's own yard:

After they were divorced, Rahel worked for a few months as a waitress in an Indian restaurant in New York. And then for several years as a night clerk in a bullet-proof cabin at a gas station outside Washington, where drunks occasionally vomited into the money tray, and pimps propositioned her with more lucrative job offers. Twice she saw men being shot through their car windows. And once a man who had been stabbed, ejected from a moving car with a knife in his back (Roy 20).

Rahel's insight is in direct opposition to Margaret's pedestal positioning within the family, but she had to learn that for herself, and her individual knowledge is not sufficient to set the others free from their subordinate position, because that position is still inscribed in the post-colonial society, as it was in the colonial times, the direct and complex result of systematic domination through cultural hegemony and economic exploitation.

In all these examples the other is never accepted as some form of the Same, he is an unreachable false universal ideal or worthy of contempt, no matter if the other is dominant or subjugated. The modes such as emigration, transculturation or hybridity do not offer any solution. They do not equalize the relations, because the other simply slips away into new interrelations of power, may they be based on class, culture, race, ethnic, religious, gender or any other distinction.

The fixity of power in a stable hierarchical relationship of the empire that results in the creation of *others* as inferior, subordinate, exploited, humiliated, despised and even deviant is one layer of understanding and interpretation, but Roy offers a continuance of the web of *othering* by creating some form of internal theatre of India that is easily approachable through the concept of the subaltern. Internal class / caste and gender division in the traditional Hindu society of India denies the formation of the others as necessarily Eurocentric concept.

There are two characters in the novel that offer a very interesting analysis within the range of the term subaltern. First there is Ammu, a woman for whom her brother says that she does not possess the 'Locusts stand I'. She is divorced, or playing with the word 'divorced'. Roy says "die-vorced", symbolically describing the powerless position of a woman, divorced woman, in this society. Her position is of a double colonized: "both patriarchy and imperialism can be seen to exert analogous forms of domination over those they render subordinate" (Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts* 101). Describing the society in which they live, Ammu says: "Must we behave like some damn godforsaken tribe that's just been discovered?" (Roy 180), and describing herself as the prototype of a "fallen woman" in a patriarchal society: "She said that she felt like a road sign with birds shitting on her" (161). The free country of India did not secure freedom for everyone and in this case gender distinction is basically equalized with class:

Legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property.

Chacko told Rahel and Estha that Ammu had no Locusts Stand I.

Thanks to our wonderful male chauvinist society, Ammu said.

Chacko said, 'What's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine. (Roy 57)

Velutha, an Untouchable, is a member of an even lower positioned group on the social scale within Indian society. Besides being Dalit, Velutha is also a communist, but both systems, Christianity and Communism, failed here on the slippery ground of postcolonial India. Although belonging to the group of Syrian Christians who even built a school for Dalit children, in the moment of crisis the family behaves like the majority of Indian society, following long-established patterns of a caste stratified society. Untouchables are the fifth, or so called invisible caste, exploited and deprived people below the bottom of the social scale, whose position of subaltern was determined thousand of years before the British Empire or the East India Company³ set its boots on the Indian subcontinent. This internal division of Indian society is a three thousand years long tradition: "The Untouchables were the Dravidians, the aboriginal inhabitants of India, to whose ranks from time to time were added the pariahs, or outcasts, people expelled for religious or social sins from the classes into which they had been born."

(Caste(social)).⁴ The Untouchables⁵ in Indian society are considered to be less than dust and that *othering* has been traditionally accepted and religiously justified, so the term of the *other* and *subaltern* in this postcolonial novel deeply questions the dominance of the Eurocentric formation of that concept, at least in its historical application. Velutha's position in the Hindu dominated society of India is as deep as history itself, deeply intertwined with the laws of nature and the universe. It is repeated several times in the novel that Velutha has a scar on his shoulder that makes monsoons come on time. A description like this one represents the Untouchables as an integral and indivisible part of the culture to which they are daily humiliated as human beings. Their existence, according to Roy, defines India and its tradition. Explained in this way 'other/subaltern' is crucial for the formation of the subject's / India's identity. The family of Syrian Christians follows that tradition, and also Communists in Kerala. Through the character of Comrade Pillai, a communist leader who denies protection to Velutha, Roy describes how the big wheels of history and systems are turning:

You see, Comrade, from local standpoint, these caste issues are very deep-rooted... After all, whatever job he does, carpenter or electrician or whatever it is, for them he is just a Paravan. It is a conditioning they have from birth. This I myself have told them is wrong. But frankly speaking, Comrade, Change is one thing. Acceptance is

another. (278-279)

And these few sentences basically show the pattern that is followed in societies and local cultures and make the other an integral part of the Self formation, but not of the Self. The opposition simply must exist, economic wealth and power create class, even tradition creates castes and social egalitarianism is just a utopian vision. The explanation for that can be found in the child characters in the novel. There too Roy dissects the omnipresent process of the othering in a society; if Sophie, as the highest possible achievement in the family of anglophiles, incorporates hybridity and represents the direct biological integration of two cultures, she offers possibility of incorporation of the other in some form of the Same. However, Sophie dies in the novel. The twins, Rahel and Estha, twenty years later, as grown ups, felling some kind of soul connection and sharing pain as one person being torn apart, become in one moment incestuous, and symbolically that leaves out every possibility of incorporation of the other. It is a symbolic return to the Self, to the local culture, to authenticity, rejection of the other possibilities, quest for stability within and refusal of acceptance of love from the outside as well as giving it outside.

Maybe, as mentioned in the introduction, the best example for the complex web of otherness that this novel questions, besides being clearly politically conditioned, is offered in theory by Gayatri Spivak, in the *Translator's Preface to Mahasweta Devi's Imaginary Maps*:

Please note that I am not saying that ethics are impossible, but rather that ethics is the experience of the impossible. This understanding only sharpens the sense of the crucial and continuing need for collective political struggle. For a collective struggle supplemented by the impossibility of full ethical engagement - not in the rationalist sense of "doing things right", but in this more familiar sense of the impossibility of "love" in the one on one way for each human being - the future is always around the corner; there is no victory, but only victories that are also warnings. (270)

This kind of web is represented in Arundhati Roy's novel. This "impossibility of love" for human beings conditions the other as the opposition that simply must exist. This kind of explanation opens the second level of novel analysis, the one concerning basic human rights and Roy did not hesitate to question the achievements or failures of the modern civilization on that issue.

(Hi)Story vs. Ethics

Just as the post-colonial discourse plays a little with the text as well as with the context, in the similar way this analysis varies between these two spheres. Without any hesitation we can mark the novel as one of those that for its thematic controversies does not go unnoticed by national politics. The novel itself is to a great extent based on autobiographical facts. Roy was describing the Kerala of her childhood, and in an interview Roy said: "Kerala is a place where big religions meet and rub against each other: Hinduism, Christianity - and Marxism" (Dirda). Writing about the place and space where these three systems collide, and trying to understand how individual destinies carry the burden of these collisions resulted in a complex web of interrelations, and most of these distinctions can easily be returned to the initial class distinction. Caste is class, possession is power, and the fear of being dispossessed is a powerful motivator. When all the systems failed, Roy destroys the possibility of belief in an individual, and the individuals are punished by family and society through madness and death. It is impossible in this novel to escape from the web of interrelations based on the distinction of the other, and the web is being reconstructed continuously no matter if it is based on racial, ethnic, religious, class/caste or of course gender distinction. Not even the perfect systems are able to protect the individuals from the process of the *othering*, because it is in human nature to divide, to have fears, to yearn for power and control and Roy's descriptions are very powerful in that direction. Violence is inevitable and Velutha is beaten to death by six policemen. Roy's intervention is direct "And there it was again. Another religion turned against itself. Another edifice constructed by the human mind, decimated by human nature" (287).

The way dominant systems deal with the subjugated, exploited and subaltern groups or individuals, and the level of violence they use for their purpose breaks every courage that a human being can possess, and fear as a motivator reappears in all societies and empires and in all social levels of interrelations which nominally include dominant and subordinate positions. Roy describes: "Feelings of contempt born of inchoate, unacknowledged fear - civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of woman, power's fear of powerlessness. Man's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor deify" (308). This explanation is on the track of Spivak's "impossibility of love" as immanent to human nature.

Besides its unquestionable aesthetic value the novel incorporates the open discussion about the Untouchables as the ultimate *others* in Hindu dominated society. The final chapter of the novel, "The Cost of Living", raised certain controversies in that direction. It is a description of love making between Ammu and Velutha. Roy faced charges and demands that this chapter of the book should be removed because of its sexual content. But it seems that it was not the mild eroticism that caused disapproval, but the fact that the act of lovemaking involved Velutha, the Untouchable. It is traditionally accepted in India that in case an upper caste member gets into contact with an

Untouchable there is a ceremony of purification and cleaning, for the Touchable person, and punishment of course for the Dalit person. Yet it is a common phenomenon that upper caste men rape Untouchable women, and that is the only reason when these women become Touchable. And in the Dalit families, those who carry the heaviest burden of life and have to obey are Dalit women (*I am Dalit, how are you*). Interestingly enough, at the very bottom of the web of *othering* that real life creates in the society determined by caste distinction, there is still one lowest, and it is once again gender distinction.

Roy's novel relies on a historical and social background that clearly implicates the process of the othering as something unavoidable, may it be through Anglophilia and post-colonial world, Hinduism and a three thousand years old tradition, or through egalitarian utopian constructs of Marxism or Christianity. It is in human nature to dominate, colonize and create others, and seen in this way, colonization and othering turn into trans-historical concepts and result in the humiliation of the weakest and the lack of basic human rights. Historically conditioned, the other is never accepted as some form of the Same, but it is crucial and necessary as the opposition for the affirmation of the Self.

Theoretical hesitations

On one hand we have a novel and on the other, theory; the question of the other opens certain hesitation: Aijaz Ahmad in his book *In Theory* says the following: "At some level, of course, every book written by an Indian, inside the country or abroad, is part of a thing called 'Indian Literature'" (245). Even if written in English, for its topic, setting and political story this novel is dominantly Indian. Yet it is, exactly as many other novels about India, by Indians and from India, part of South-Asian post-colonial studies in English. The question of language and cultural hegemony is unquestionable and clear. But when it comes to South and East Asia, Anshuman Mondal suggests that there are also others within the methodology of post-colonial studies. Theoretical works of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak have secured Indian writing a dominant place within Asian post-colonial studies. But the *Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies* (2007) edited by John McLeod, although thematically dominated by English speaking territories, refers to French, Spanish and Portuguese empires as well, and Young in his *Postcolonialism* writes about French Africa as well. According to that, Mondal suggests the following:

Subsumed within the dynamics of the Cold War, the anti-colonial war in Vietnam has been displaced from the history of decolonization and resituated primarily as an arena for the ideological struggle between capitalism and communism... While acknowledging - and accepting - Young's insistence that postcolonial cultural critique has nothing to apologize for since cultural politics has frequently played a vital role in anti-colonial resistance (Young 2001:8), the sheer scale of the damage inflicted on people, property, infrastructure and environment during the almost thirty years of war in Vietnam (and which engulfed Cambodia and Laos too, resulting in 600,000 Cambodian deaths alone) marks this tragic history as particularly indigestible to the interests and methodologies of cultural critique. (143)

It seems that the web of post-colonial studies has its others too. If Mondal's assumption is correct, and historically speaking that part of the Asian continent was also colonized by one of the European imperial powers, this derailment would not be a new phenomenon in the approach to post-coloniality. Postcolonial literary expression covers a wide range of experiences and geographically encompasses cultures on every continent and that poses the question of reliability and the uniformity of approach. It is neither new nor strange that within this approach we come across different theoretical attitudes towards the coverage of the semantic field as well as the very name Postcolonial. In his *Introduction to The Anthology of Postcolonial Literatures in English*, published in 1996, John Thieme writes the following:

It also shows the extent to which they interrogate Eurocentric conceptions of culture and in so doing implicitly question the former canonical orthodoxies of 'English Studies'... there has been a major growth of interests in such literatures, as the field hitherto variously known as 'Commonwealth Literature', 'New Literatures in English' and 'World Literature in English' has been reinvented and reinvigorated as 'Post-Colonial Literature... Nevertheless 'post-colonial' has become the most widely accepted descriptive shorthand for referring to this group of literatures which contain much of the finest writing being produced in the contemporary world. (1)

In his *Anthology* Thieme did not include texts from Irish literature. In 1989 when Ashcroft, Tiffin and Griffiths published *The Empire Writes Back* neither did they include Irish literature but they stated two things: "We use the term 'post-colonial', however to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2) and also adds that the literature of the USA should also be placed in the same category but that the neo-colonizing role of the "current position of power" makes this kind of recognition a little bit difficult (2). In 1995, when editing *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, the same group of authors incorporated the text about the Irish literature by Richards and Cairns entitled "What is my nation?". Based on these sources it seems that the periodic rethinking of the semantic field covered by the term 'post-colonial' undergoes similar pattern of the *othering* and has its own web of interrelations based on political, economic and hegemonic conditioning of the basic distinction dominant/subordinate.

The analysis of Roy's novel through the concept of *othering* and aspects that condition that process in human behaviour and social processes is just the tip of the ice-berg. *The God of Small Things* captures the reader through a multitude of complex creative processes. In this astonishingly beautiful literary achievement, Roy plays with the language, offers a composition of a complex story told in a day and offers complicated interrelation of characters in their individual and deeply human struggle to survive on the slippery ground of a complex post-colonial Indian society burdened by religious, social, political, and class/caste stratification. The aesthetic value of this novel goes hand in hand with its powerful ethical engagement creating the inevitable human drama as the result of oppression and exploitation of the weakest as an everlasting human enterprise. Therefore this novel suggested itself as a fruitful platform for the exploration of the possibility of incorporation of the other in some form of the Self as its lovable neighbour. The analysis tried to understand how the fixity of power and the innate human need for psychological Self-assertion conditions a literary, historical, and theoretical, amoeba-like, resistant and resilient web of *othering*.

¹ Robert J.C. Young in his book *Postcolonialism, an Historical Introduction*, (2001): "Even now, at the time of writing, Britain is not constitutionally democratic: the upper chamber of the British parliament (the House of Lords) still contains aristocrats whose right to vote on the affairs of the country is determined solely by the accident of their noble birth. In the colonial era the British ruling class was as indifferent to its own working class as it was to the colonized peoples: both were subject to persistent devaluation of their own cultures and both were used instrumentally for the creation of private wealth." (9 -10)

² "Kathakali, the spectacular dance-drama form of the southern Indian region of Kerala, characterized by its complex language of mime and highly stylized and colorful makeup that resemble masks...Kathakali derives from both a rich folk culture and the religious plays traditionally performed in temples. It developed more specifically from *ramanattam*, a masque-like form involving music, dance, and drama, which evolved in the 17th century as an effective vehicle for the plays of the raja (prince) of Kottarakara. These plays were written in the regional language of Malayalam, making them more accessible to a wider audience than works in classical Sanskrit, a language known only by the upper castes...During the British rule of India (1885-1947), kathakali suffered a serious decline." (Kathakali."Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.)

³ The East India Company was granted its royal charter in 1600 as a private company, gradually evolved into a semi-autonomous state and was finally brought under state control in 1773 with the East India Company Regulating Act and, after the Indian Mutiny in 1857-58, the EIC government was replaced by direct rule from Britain (Maire ni Fhlathuin, The British Empire). For almost two centuries EIC governed the subcontinent as some form of multinational corporation.

⁴ "The traditional caste system of India developed more than 3000 years ago when Aryan-speaking nomadic groups migrated from the north to India in about 1500 BC...entirely outside the social order and limited to doing the most menial and unappealing tasks-were those people of no caste, formerly known as Untouchables. (In the 1930s Indian nationalist leader Mohandas Gandhi applied the term Harijans, or 'children of God,' to this group.) The Untouchables were the Dravidians, the aboriginal inhabitants of India, to whose ranks from time to time were added the pariahs, or outcasts, people expelled for religious or social sins from the classes into which they had been born. Thus created by the priests, the caste system was made a part of Hindu religious law, rendered secure by the claim of divine revelation." (Caste(social)) Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.)

⁵ Information about Untouchables can be found on web page International Dalit Solidarity Network, [www.idsn.org](http://idsn.org) and a short movie "I am Dalit, how are you" on <http://idsn.org/news-resources/video/im-dalit-how-are-you>

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