



Review of various social issues in the novel "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" by Arundhati Roy

Navjot Gill

email: drnavjotgill06@gmail.com

Abstract:

Since the Indian subcontinent was liberated from colonial rule, post-colonial theory has been one of the most popular academic topics to study. The term subaltern is a product of the post-colonial condition that has spawned a plethora of literature. Subaltern's definition and features have changed greatly as a result of socioeconomic advancement. Arundhati Roy, a self-aware author, has used her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, to hide current social and political issues vital to the study of the "subaltern," particularly in the South Asian setting.. The book is dedicated to The Un consoled, a group of Indians who have been uprooted and disenfranchised by the country's fast change. The transgender problem was brought to light via the novel's protagonist or central character. Many other social and political issues, such as discrimination against women and people of color, caste, capitalism, and many more, were also addressed. Activist Arundhati Roy has published several works about capitalism, globalization, and democracy over her career. Consequently, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is unquestionably and intuitively an explosion of the author's observation of the "The New Subaltern" who are the victims of social and political unfairness in society. "The New Subaltern" shown in this article is examined via the lens of Roy's characters, who are placed in a post-colonial context. This article seeks to chronicle the evolution of subaltern studies in South Asia, which is always evolving. "Subaltern Studies" in broad post-colonial literary studies are given a boost by this piece, which shows Roy's vision of the new subaltern in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. This also examines the novel's characters, language, and socio-political setting offered by the author.

Key Words: Hierarchy, Power, Resistance, Suppression

Introduction

In addition to her work as a writer, Arundhati Roy is an accomplished political activist. A common theme in both her fiction and nonfiction works is the blatant mistreatment of Indians. Due to the social framework, which enforces a tight class system, she focuses on the marginalization of the lower classes. On top of that, she touches on issues such as political tyranny, capitalism, and environmental feminism. It took her twenty years after the publication



of her Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The God of Small Things* before she began writing fiction again. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, she works with a broad range of themes that are relevant to current Indian society. As a result of their oppression based on their class, gender, or religion, this tale has a large number of characters to choose from. 'Hijra' Anjum represents the sense of exclusion transgender persons experience in traditional Indian culture. As a result of the rejection she received from her family, she decided to leave the normal world and take up residence in the cemetery as a guesthouse. To get a low-level job, the Dalit disguises himself as Saddam Hussein and pretends to be him in order to conceal his identity. As a lower caste Hindu, he could do nothing except watch as a mob slaughtered his father because of rumours that he had killed a cow. is based on Roy's own personality. Student architect Cristian finds himself in Kashmir with a man who took up guns since the military forbade him to enjoy a peaceful family life.. Jannat Guest House is a place where these personalities meet, bringing together the many strands of their tumultuous lives. There is exploitation of power for all of these personalities.

It's been twenty years since Arundhati Roy wrote fiction, and with *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, she's back. As she puts it, 'Nonfiction is an... argument; fiction is an offering... a world... an invitation' returned to her as another formal potential of writing. Roy has also shed the confusing label of a single-novel author with the publication of her much anticipated second book. Roy's writing may be traced back via *The Ministry*, allowing us to begin comparing her screenplay for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1988) to her narrative fiction. However, in her second book, Roy's literary interests take center stage, and her first work's apparent uniqueness fades away. An examination of Roy's *The Ministry* will focus on the novel's unique construction of urban space in the form of a succession of often overlapping representational 'framings' of two particular cities: Delhi and Srinagar. An important part of my argument is that Roy's second book, "*The Ministry*," has a lengthy, historically grounded commentary on Indian citizenship, dissent, and conflict that is rooted in the novel's fictional landscape. The cemetery or necropolis serves as a predominating motif throughout the work, connecting both of its city locations and addressing broader problems of community and memory. Is Roy's second book an exploration of the living city, or of death and loss? If it is, then it is also a work of death, one that depicts the metropolis as a necropolis and investigates how the living deal with death and loss in their daily lives. Throughout her years as an activist and public intellectual, Roy has repeatedly returned to the cause of social inclusivity and equality: on a



national level in issues like caste, communal exclusion, land rights and the environment, and on a global level in her writing on global politics following 9/11. Furthermore, Roy's dissident portrayal of urban space as a location of alternative community is informed by these concerns, which are widely understood in contrast to the 'algebra of (in)justice', dubbed after America's self-appointed worldwide counterterror mission 'Operation Infinite Justice'⁶. People who live in cities, according to postcolonial critics, "hold no "necessary" link to the country," even though cities are frequently where print cultures and institutional structures that sustain collective national imaginations originated. An ambiguous place has been held by cities in Indian discourses of national identity for at least four decades following independence. ⁸ As such, it is no coincidence when she chooses to set her novel in the 'old' Mughal city of Shahjahanabad, an enclave increasingly marginalized by the Hindu nationalist vision promoted by the current BJP government, as the setting for her novel. This is a space of syncretic north Indian Islamic community. With her authentic, rebellious, and reformative voice, Arundhati Roy has emerged as one of today's most remarkable writers. In 1997, she was awarded the Man Booker Prize for "God of tiny things," her first book. The less beaten road she adopted in her writings set her apart from other female authors of the day. Many of her pieces deal with the unpleasant realities of modern life. She has no qualms about writing or speaking out on any criminal matter. Instead of writing fantasy or romance, she focuses her efforts on deciphering the plight of human beings. 'The Algebra of Infinite Justice' Capitalism is one of her other writings apart from God of Small Things. All of these publications deal with political, religious, war, capitalist, and nationalist themes, as well as the current state of humanity. She became well-known for her social activism and her involvement in several uprisings aimed at bringing about social change. Every move she does is motivated by a desire to improve the lives of others who are less fortunate than herself. Currently, she's an internationally recognized novelist and social activist. For her, there is no place for fabricated traditions or man-made history in her worldview. Throughout her work, she challenges the taboos, patriarchal norms, and governmental authority that are mirrored in her works. Complaints, rage, and sadness are all reflected in her paintings. "I believe that authors are always two persons," she says. There is a part of me that lives my life and a part of me that observes my life from a distance, and that part is the writer. A part of you sits on the ceiling fan and watches it and smiles or whatever; it doesn't lessen your enthusiasm for living your own life. Every action or inaction I've ever taken is tinged with resentment against those in positions of power, and I'm terrified of ever having



children because I don't want to be in charge of someone so little. Anyone who is in any way connected to me finds the situation extremely puzzling. It's because there's a constant skepticism of everything, every word. There are moments when it's like a wall, and that's exhausting. As a youngster, you may have been subjected to things that caused you to doubt, dread, or be angry, and nothing that occurs to you as an adult will ever erase those feelings. It's there for the taking. Despite this, I'm aware that Roy has been active in demonstrations, such as those against the Sardar Sarover Dam project, which took away people's houses. She was also against the construction of the Narmada dam. She wrote an article called 'The Greater Common Good' on it. As in her previous novel, *God of Tiny Things* (Kerala), Roy depicted the Ipe family's internal and exterior struggles, which took place in a small town called Ayemenem. Irritatingly depicts the Indian society's infatuation with class, untouchability and all forms of dirt as a source of resentment and violence. In addition, it's a narrative about family and how they interact. From Rahel's point of view, the narrative regularly shifts between infancy and maturity, describing Rahel's experiences. In both personal and political terms, the book challenges the accepted norms of society. In 'God of tiny things,' she questions the peculiarities of Indian thought. Roy adds, "They all violated the rules, too. They all strayed into the prohibited zone. All of them messed with the rules that dictate who and how much should be loved. Not even Roy's Ministry of Utmost Happiness is exempt from his distinctive fashion sense. After a lengthy hiatus from fiction writing, the novel was finally published in 2017. He provided character and plot life and soul via her meticulous work in sculpting the scene. Assassinations of innocent individuals were made easier because of racial and religious intolerance, as well as political dominance. The victims have been identified as suspects, and their murders are being carried out in the name of the law. Anjum, a transsexual who used to be known as Aftab, is the focus of the narrative. He was raised in an observant Muslim middle-class home. In her childhood, she was rejected by her father because of her looks. When Jahara Begum first saw her daughter, she felt her heart tighten and her bones turn to ash with dread. Because of this bias, she assumed that each and every Urdu term was either masculine or feminine. Nothing in this world separates her from her kid, yet that is exactly where she finds herself. She was fearful for her future, not knowing whether she would be accepted by society or if she would be abandoned. "Oh, she's so peaceful," everybody who knows me would tell you if you ask them." When it comes to my day-to-day interactions, I am really calm;



nevertheless, I am not at all calm when it comes to significant concerns or major questions, you know. This is not a hot-blooded fury; rather, it's a cold-blooded fury.

It was Arundhati Roy's magnificent work *God of Small Things* that earned her the Man Booker Prize in 1997, and she was widely hailed for her outstanding writing abilities at the time (1997). When it came to her portrayal of sexuality, however, it was criticized more than applauded. Roy, on the other hand, was unfazed. As mentioned in an interview with the *New York Times*, Roy said that she cut her hair after the win because she wanted to be remembered "as some attractive lady who authored a book" (Sehgal). She gave up all of her winnings to a good cause. Because she wanted to attract attention to the movements that were taking place in her country, Roy wasn't only writing for her own pleasure. Writing is the finest way for Toni Cade Bambara, an African-American novelist and a social activist, to raise consciousness about concerns and challenges in society. Like any other member of the society, a writer should strive to use her/his abilities for the greater good of the community. Arundhati Roy, on the other hand, was crystal clear. She's never wavered when it comes to speaking her mind. A longtime advocate for the oppressed and marginalized, in her most recent work *The Ministry of Utmost* she attempts to unite all the castaways of the Indian subcontinent. Using the concept of "personal is political," the story reveals her own political views in a straightforward and concise manner. Aside from gay politics and pogroms, she's also tackled violent casteism and neo-liberalism, as well as Emergency and Narmada. A time when phrases like "secularism" and "tolerance" are considered undesirable, Roy stepped up to expose the political and social fault lines of India's Indian subcontinent. She conjures up a tale that is both cruel and eerily accurate. The work is a tribute to those who have never been satisfied. Anjum, a transgender woman trying to establish a life for herself in Delhi, and Tilo, an architect turned activist, are the focus of the story, which is separated into 12 chapters and centers on their respective love lives. She tackled transgender issues first and foremost via her lead character Anjum in her novel. In the novel's first words, Roy hammers home the gravity of the situation:

Conclusion

In the Foucauldian understanding, power is not something that can be attained or possessed, but rather something that must be continually exerted in order to produce the intended results. People's attitudes and behaviors are influenced by an unseen force that operates via numerous organizations. The incorrect end of the power ladder is used to exert influence. Since that tyranny, resistance has been developed to destabilize the exact authority it is trying to weaken.



Arundhati Roy writes in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* on the numerous power centers that exist in society and in India specifically. She identifies the military, education, and the media as the power centers that have the ability to influence the public's perception of the world around them. It's easy for the media to dismiss any story that goes against their interests, even if it's true. The repression that results from these institutions has the effect of being institutionalized throughout society as a whole. The persons who are the target of this power no longer need any kind of monitoring. They begin to distrust one other, and their drive for survival makes them a suitable panopticon model. Throughout Roy's novel, many people demonstrate how this negative framework may give birth to resistance. Putting some elements of society on the other side of power centers leads to power being unstable in and of itself.

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