
ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS: A POSTCOLONIAL STUDY OF THE NEW SUBALTERN IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S

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Abstract

: Since the Indian subcontinent gained its independence from colonial rule, postcolonial theory has consistently ranked among the most popular academic topics of study in the world. It is the result of a post-colonial condition that has resulted in a massive amount of literature being written about "subaltern" people. The concept of "subaltern," as well as the features connected with the word, have changed significantly as a result of improvements in socio-economic conditions. As a conscientious writer, Arundhati Roy has focussed her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, on concealing modern socio-political issues that are significant to the study of "subalterns," notably in the South Asian setting, via the lens of fiction. Due to the book's dedication to "The Unconsoled," it is essentially about everyone and everything that is occurring in fast changing India, notably regarding displaced and disadvantaged people.

The transgender problem was brought up in the book by the protagonist or the major character of the story. Other persistent issues, such as gender discrimination, caste inequality, capitalism, and a slew of other socio-political truths, were addressed on an equal footing. In addition to being an active activist, Arundhati Roy has a productive writing career, having written books on capitalism, globalisation, and democracy. As a result, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is unquestionably and intuitively an explosion of the author's observations of "The New Subaltern," who are the victims of social and political injustice, as expressed in the novel. The purpose of this thesis is to examine Roy's portrayal of "The New Subaltern" in a democratic India context via the characters she creates and how she frames them in a post-colonial environment. Due to the fact that the study of subalterns is always evolving, this article makes an effort to track the evolution of subaltern studies in South Asia. Contribution/originality: Using Roy's book, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, to demonstrate her perspective of the new subaltern, this paper adds a new dimension to the field of 'Subaltern Studies' in the broader field of postcolonial literary studies. Additionally, the novel's characters, language, and the socio-political setting portrayed by the author are scrutinised in this process.

INTRODUCTION

Her non-fiction writing has garnered a lot of attention from critics, which is understandable. Following the publication of her second book, *The God of Small Things*, Roy has progressively transitioned from being a novelist to being a non-fiction writer and an activist for social justice. She has always been outspoken and unambiguous in her opinions. As a direct opponent of India's nuclear explosion in 1998, she demonstrated her socio-political ideals. The policies of the United States in Afghanistan and Israel in West Asia are similar. Roy uses a similar approach. She has a strong interest in national politics and makes her

position on Kashmir clear in books such as *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom* (2011), as well as *The Hanging of Afzal Guru* and *The Stranger* (2011), are excellent films. *Attack on the Indian Parliament: A Case in Point* (2013).

Furthermore, Roy is an outspoken opponent of social injustice, which is particularly prevalent in South-Asian societies. context. Roy has long served as a reminder of the widening divide between the powerful and the rest of society. In modern India, you are helpless. 'At some point, we have to [.....] come to terms with the fact that that the level of inequality in our society has reached an unsustainable level Take, for example, the refrain that says India is a nation with a population of one billion people.... The reality is that we are a country of 50 million people. million individuals, while the remainder are not considered human beings (Tickell, 2007). Alongside Occupation on the basis of gender and religion is the most natural kind of social oppression. The caste system in India is a source of injustice. One of the most obvious manifestations of caste discrimination is the formation of Roy was critical of the issue in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, and Roy was critical of the topic in the book. *The Cost of Living* magazine has issued a statement opposing the Narmada river dam projects. In this instance, Roy (2001) makes use of The following is an architectural metaphor for the social building of the caste system: 'What proportion of the persons involved in the planning of these massive [dam] projects are women?' [untouchable or tribal...] or perhaps a person from a remote area? Zero. There is no equitable social interaction in this environment. There is no difference between the two universes. At the core of the misery of what is going on is the fact that In the midst of this stratified, horizontally divided society with no vertical bolt, there is the caste system. There is no bond — there is no intermarriage, there is no social mixing, there is no human – humanitarian – engagement. The glue that keeps the layers together. As a result, when the lowest half of society just rips away and collapses It takes place in the background without being seen. It is not responsible for the torsion, the upheaval, the blowout, or the explosion. If there had been the equivalent of vertical bolts, it may have caused significant structural damage. This works out nicely for the people who are supporting these programmes.' If Roy is persistent in her devotion to "little things," it would be apparent that she is a good person to know. In the first, it was mostly children who were affected by silence and emptiness; in the second, it is a diverse group of people. a group of dispossessed and underprivileged persons who have taken up residence among the local population 'tombstones' is an abbreviation for tombstones (Kanjirakkat, 2017; Jobin, 2017). Roy has shown to be a tremendous social butterfly. "Her eyes remain intensely wonderful even as she reflects the greater Indian reality of today," says one observer. This article explains the Hijra (transgender) population in Delhi and the nuances of the caste system. (Kanjirakkat et al., 2017; Jobin et al., 2017; Kanjirakkat This work serves as the gravestone for oppressed people everywhere. Pankaj Mishra, a friend of Roy's, has said that her sympathies are always with the weak and downtrodden. This distinguishes *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* from other significant books of the period. During the last half century Roy's preoccupation with the disadvantaged, as well as her work as a social activist As a result of the publishing of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, there have been an increasing number of Essays that are critical. However, before diving into these passages, it's important to evaluate how they were written. Roy's preoccupation with the plight of the socially oppressed serves as the basis for the conceptual inquiry. The issue of "subaltern" has been a major source of worry for Indian historians and intellectuals. Postcolonial theorists and critics *The European Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Theoretical Background

Postcolonial theory is an umbrella term that encompasses a wide range of perspectives and perspectives on postcolonial theory. As a result, there is no precise definition for this notion itself at this time. In a nutshell, post-colonialism is essentially the study of the beliefs, cultures, and socio-economic conditions of the people who lived after colonisation. Both the imperial process and camouflaged imperialism are under consideration. According to McLeod (2011), *Beginning Post Colonialism*, a book on postcolonialism, asserts that "the phrase 'postcolonialism' is not the same thing as postcolonialism." It is not the same as 'after colonisation,' but rather an endeavour to break free from colonial rule. "It all stems from the issue of understanding colonial modes of life." Gramscian An officer's point of view on the term "Subaltern": Subaltern refers to an officer in the first place. holding a military rank in the British army that is slightly below that of a captain This phrase was created. a political word that was coined by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in the early twentieth century his piece "Notes on Italian History," which was eventually included in his internationally acclaimed collection *Prison Notebooks*, a work published between 1929 and 1930, is a good example of this. Gramsci's work may be found here.

The point of view is somewhat different from the straight-line of Marxist classic studies that is often held. The decision was plainly based on economics. Gramsci distinguished between two types of subalterns using the concept of subaltern. in local history, a lesser class or group of individuals who were denied their identities because of their social standing Culture under the direct and hegemonic control of the social elite class is defined as follows: Gramsci It was my intention to use the phrase "subaltern" rather than "proletarian" in order to avoid using the blue pencil, but it did not work. Peasants and other less organised working class groups, such as peasants and farmers, came to be associated with the term shortly after. worker on a farm (Spivak, 2000). Gramsci wanted to give them (subalterns) a voice and to transform them. they were not included in the historical narrative of their own civilization since they were missing from it The primary governing classes are referred to as Gramsci (1971) made the following statement: Subaltern classes by definition are not united and cannot unify unless they are able to join.' (source) As a result, their history is entwined with that of civil society, and they have struggled to establish a "state." As a result, the history of states and groupings of states is covered. Gramsci included six phases in his work with a view to studying the history of subaltern people in the world. group with that of the hegemonic classes and hypothesised that they both had the same set of values history. Gramsci's creativity and unique notion of the subaltern proved to be important in establishing a new social order. ground for the peasantry and recognised their status as a separate social class The "Subaltern Studies" group is preoccupied with Gramsci's concept of the subaltern, as well as other 20th century thinkers. Scholars studying with Indian peasants history in the twentieth century expanded the scope of the field. subaltern is defined as follows: Ranjit Guha and other South Asian leaders were in charge of this organisation. Atabaki and Shahid Amin are examples of historians, social critics, and academics like Touraj Atabaki, Dipesh Shah and others. Chakrabarty, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, Gyan Pandey, and David Hardiman Sumit Sarkar, a member of the group who left because of the organization's disappointing swing toward postmodernism, was one among those who left (Louai, 2012). Subaltern Studies, according to Ranjit Guha, are "a moniker for the study of the oppressed." Subordination is a general characteristic of South Asian civilization, regardless of how it is presented. In terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office, or in any other manner, we are all equal (Guha, 1982). Instructed As directed by the group's founder, Guha, the members began

researching subaltern communities as an experiment. as a 'objective appraisal of the function of the elite and a criticism of elitist interpretations' of the world in relation to that function (Guha, 1982). This argument arose from the belief that Indians were a race. Both colonial elitism and nationalist-bourgeois ideology contributed to the preservation of national history.

Women as "Subaltern" in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*: The storylines of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* revolve on a female character, Tilo, who is partly Dalit and full of questions. Taking Spivak's definition of "subaltern" as a gendered category in which women are marginalised as an example, Tilo may be distinguished as an evident subaltern figure while being double obscured. The members of the family Because Tilo's mother had an affair with "the other," his family's history is significant in this respect. Consequently, a guy who belonged to a 'untouchable caste' had been dispensed with in ways highcaste families in India — in this instance Syrian Christians from Kerala — had not been dealt with, and as a result, he was killed. "Her family disowned her (155)," says the author. This immediately brings to mind Ammu and Velutha's romance. and both of the incidents are significant to the portrayal of subalterns in Tickell's novel. According to (2007), 'by portraying Ammu and Velutha's romance as one of the primary moments of the play Roy seems to show a probable similarity in both — although distinct — approaches to TGST. 'I've had the experience of subalternity.' Maryam Ipe and her low-caste lovers, such as Ammu, are present. Velutha "represent the oppressive convergence of historically sanctioned systems of oppression," according to the group. The subjugation (in this instance caste and gender) that constitutes the theoretical category of exploitation subaltern" means "subaltern." Tilo, although being born a half-Dalit as well as a subaltern, does not exhibit any characteristics of either group. Lady who is conventionally refined. According to Roy (2017), Tilo "does not respond" in her interview.

Women behave in ways that are expected of them, and thus takes Kitter out of the picture. Tilo, for his part, is An independent young lady who lives on her own and does whatever she wants. She is a single lady, and as such she is a A subtle danger to the traditional patriarchal system of society in which a woman is unable to live alone. In the same way that Biplab Dasgupta is vulnerable in a structured society, so is she. "She was like a paper boat on a choppy sea (160)," according to the author. Spivak (1991) makes the argument that Rather of disappearing into immaculate oblivion, Hindu women were forced into violent shuttling, according to the author. which is the misplaced figuration of the 'third-world lady,' who is stuck between tradition and modernity as well as modernity." Tilo, who is a third country lady, is also imprisoned between two worlds. Tradition and modernity are intertwined. Despite the fact that Tilo is educated and self-sufficient, Biplab Dasgupta is an Indian businessman. could not marry her since his 'Brahmin Parents' would never accept her — the girl — because she was not one of their own. The family (161) accepts someone who has no previous history or caste. Despite all of this, Tilo maintains his composure. maintained her struggle against the system, as well as "The backstory of a disturbed young man" Little Tilo's subtle but persistent opposition to the regime is made clear through her bond with her mother. system (informal phrase) (Lahiri, 2017). " As a result, Tilo established herself as a quiet revolutionary and a revolutionary leader. groundbreaker.

Development as a Means to Deprive "Subalterns": Roy's persistent pessimism towards the development process *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a place where development projects are prominently displayed. The Projects run by global corporations that are grabbing hold of our identities and damaging the environment Roy seemed to be worried by the emergence of such a basic environment. She put it into words. Many statements are made in the novel, including one that reads, "Skyscrapers and steel industries." grew built where

woods used to be, rivers were bottled and sold in supermarkets, and fish were caught and sold in the wild Mountains were mined and transformed into gleaming missiles after being tinned (98). Sinha (2015) published in *Reconceptualizing Hegemony and Resistance in Contemporary Subaltern Politics (New Subaltern Politics) India* criticised the government of not being "an active agent of primitive accumulation" and of failing to protect its citizens. drew attention to the fact that the state may occasionally evict subalterns using brutal means building a free trade zone and a globalised metropolis (p.230). Surprisingly, this assertion is correct. The worry about "surplus individuals" living in "slums and squatter camps" expressed by Roy was important. The "unauthorised colonies" and were removed from their respective settlements and resettlement camps in 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness,' as it is known. It was Roy who made the sardonic comment, "Someone has to pay." It is related to Spivak's worry about "the cost of development, they remarked skillfully (99)" In the novel *The Spivak Reader*, a subaltern lives in a socialised capitalist society. In this case, Spivak 'The subaltern is influenced by socialised capital from a distance,' as said. It's only that in the case of Production of subaltern topic matter The procedure is being carried out remotely. Especially relevant now, when one speaks about It would be difficult to discover information regarding Colonial history and the financialized world [...] 'A group that is not influenced by socialised capital,' according to 1996, p. 292. In the Ministry of the Interior, The price of a globalised metropolis is paid by these surplus individuals, a group of people who are the happiest people on the planet. of the subaltern

Problems with "Representing Subalterns" include the following: Roy is in the process of writing for subalterns in both her fiction and non-fiction, and she is interested in She is often depicted as a subaltern by the media. Roy's sympathies are always with those who are disadvantaged. individuals, and Spivak issued a warning: 'Frequently, what occurs is that [...] intellectuals [...] who are well-intentioned [...] becoming spokespersons for subalternity and being treated as symbolic subalterns (1996, 292). ' Thus Roy is on the verge of becoming a second-class citizen. Roy is adamant about not discussing the topic of subalterns. There is a strategy through which intellectuals and specialists are seen as experts in their fields. The threat to stifle the voice of the subaltern in the course of representing or speaking for others. them. This, in turn, brings up a similar issue, that of Roy's ability to represent and advocate for others. as a result, the subaltern herself may be rendered voiceless (Tickell, 2007). However, when it comes to portraying subalterns, In literature, representation is not done inside a Western or colonial framework, but rather via the creation of new frameworks. With each new link, the subaltern is getting more and more integrated. Furthermore, according to Spivak's According to theoretical considerations, literature may serve as "an alternative rhetorical space for communicating the Women from underprivileged backgrounds have their own tales to tell."

Conclusion

To summarise, it may be claimed that *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* depicts the awful living circumstances of the subaltern population. The primary goal of this research is to examine how marginalised individuals are represented in the South Asian environment. It is also discussed in this paper. sought to reconstruct the development of the word "subaltern," as well as how subalterns are faring now. in our technologically sophisticated and globally integrated world As a result of the investigation of the portrayal of The "subaltern" It is apparent that the subaltern's situation has not altered much over time. In They were the victims of colonialism during the colonial era, and they are today the victims of a new colonisation. The social cycle of dominance is a subtle and long-lasting cycle that is shaped

by socialised power. capitalism. The bulk of the characters may be found in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Subaltern people are classified according to their gender, caste, social status, and so on. An investigation reveals how Anjum, The transsexual protagonist, who is a victim of social and political deprivation, sets sail to construct a new life. a paradise of her own, where those who had fallen from all corners of society came together. This A case study is also conducted to examine the worst case of discrimination in the name of caste disparity. It also demonstrates Roy's depiction of the fragility of subalterns in a globalised metropolis, as well as a civilization dominated by capitalism

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