

OPPRESSIONS AND FISSURES IN INDIAN SOCIETY AND MARXIST POLITICIZATION
OF LITERARY FORM IN *THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS* BY ARUNDHATI
ROY

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Abstract

Arundhati Roy in her evocative style unleashes the ideological assault through fictional narration on the schisms and fissures in the Indian society presenting a panacea of a new world away from humdrum of daily life into a graveyard. Unlike her first novel, this piece presents a more sympathetic view to Marxist ideology and struggle and the likeness of Marxist literary theory can be traced in the entire narrative. There we find class struggle with a run for progress through industrialization and pursuit of technology coupled with eco hazards. The novel speaks the politics of its social period with caste and creed struggling to overpower the opponents. Cultural materialism is replete in every act and social move, and the political circumstances and their influences are apparent in the genre.

Keywords: Class, caste, Duniya, oppression, industrialization, state, democracy

Introduction

Karl Marx a great philosopher whose influence spans over centuries and multiple fields, whose worldwide reputation rest with *Communist Manifesto* of 1948, recognized as the most influential political work changing the course of history on the European continent. He is known for his work *Das Kapital* (1867) and its sub luminary text like *Critique of Political Economy* (1859) besides posthumous published *Theories of Surplus Values*. The official version of Marxism is in fact the amalgamation of his ideas formally shaped by his friend Frederick Engel and his disciples which provided the corner stone of all political and social movements till the disintegration of USSR. Marx ideas over the decades have received a scriptural value and divine validity influencing all thoughtful efforts in every field, whether it is natural and social sciences or performing and aesthetic arts. Marx influence in the literary genres is of no less validity and currency.

Marx like his friend Engel had a passionate knack for the literature and aesthetic arts due to his avid reading of literary studies both ancient and modern, though Marxism at very many times and levels have denied the utility and currency of it. His love and encyclopaedic knowledge of German literature with an elephantine memory quoting multiple references in his writings from ancient and modern literary figures coupled with his own youth knack of poetry and love for classic novelist and poets developed a special taste for literature. He was a great admirer of Shakespeare and as his daughter Eleanor narrates of Shakespearean works as the bible of their home and a regular quote in the day to day conversation, and there isn't any time without any work of Shakespeare under study or under discussion. Still there isn't any critical literary review by Marx and what all we deduct is out of his quoted literary works or his tendencies in the liking of literature. Two aspects in this regard are noticeable; one the relationship of writer with his works as a direct influence of his own life incidents and second the liking of perennial works and the tendency to like certain genre that speaks of his personal philosophy.

Marxist criticism presents literature as a broad social reality, presenting the social order, and the writer as representative of certain ideology, which he presents as a narrative through his mouthpiece characters with events and happenings of choice commensurate with perennial ideas. For Marx, the best author commingles his philosophy in a way that it makes the aesthetics apparent and a covert way is adopted to give ideology a space to be accepted unconsciously. The overt ideological narration can be propaganda of ideology but not an aesthetic piece of art. Marxist want to tell the political and philosophical truths but only through artistic means and not through a social political writing over ridden with party politics and ideological propaganda. That's what he said about the English novelist of his times who were successful in narrating 'more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politician, publicists and moralists put together'.

For the Marxist critics, novel is the genre most suitable for the 'social production of life', a great medium of imaginative expression, coterminous to the middle class whose joys and sorrows it shares. It's the genre which suits in building a narrative rightly desired for a better social change. Novel, as the leisure and luxury of middle class, provides aesthetic pleasure with moral building and can be exploited as a better tool for the expression of polemical views in the garb of aesthetics. F. R. Leavis claim that the Milton's aesthetics is a world apart from his politics and

the work of art is aesthetic ridden and to read political meaning out of it can be a reader's own approach. The Marxist fact of the matter is that the author political views having the social burden are the part of the writing. The Marxist believe the novel is a depiction of a broad picture of social reality, presenting sound political views of party line and providing a comprehensive blueprint for the social change. In fact, it's the tool rightly employed to build a narrative on the party lines.

Literature Review

Marxist literary theory perceives literature and art as outcomes shaped by historical circumstances, which can be analyzed through the material conditions under which they are created. This perspective centers on exploring the tensions between dominant and oppressed classes within a specific historical context. Essentially, Marxist literary theory asserts that literature should be interpreted within the broader framework of the social and historical realities of its society (Hamadi, 2017). Rajapandian et al. (2021) examine the intersection of class, caste, and cinematic representation. They point out that three Tamil-language films critique societal norms through their portrayals of caste, class, and gender inequalities. The films *Pariyerum Perumal*, *Asuran*, and *Karnan* expose high discriminatory practices and give voice to the proletariat members of the Indian society through an anti-caste lens.

Dinesh and Rajesh (2022) provide a comprehensive exploration of Aravind Adiga's novel *The White Tiger* through a Marxist lens, focusing on themes of class struggle, economic inequality, and societal exploitation. They analyze how the protagonist, Balram Halwai, challenges the status quo through his letters to the Premier of China. The novel connects Balram's narrative to Marxist ideology, discussing how capitalism perpetuates social divisions and reinforces oppression based on economic power and caste privilege. The novel is a critique of a money-dominated world where basic human rights are denied to the underprivileged, contrasting the luxurious lifestyles of the wealthy elite with the destitution of the working class.

Lihua (2005) examines the elements of social protest in the novel from a Marxist perspective, focusing on issues like the challenges faced by migrant workers, which are later elaborated in *The Grapes of Wrath*, as well as themes of racial discrimination and gender bias. He suggests that these elements of social critique are overshadowed by the story's more universal message.

The characters in the novel lack a clear social consciousness regarding their circumstances and the underlying causes of their suffering.

Wulandari(2008) explores the themes of class conflict and social stratification in Scott's novel through a Marxist lens. He begins by framing life as a constant struggle for survival. He posits that societal structures, such as feudalism and capitalism, disrupt natural production processes and lead to social stratification. Central to Wulandari's analysis is the concept of class struggle, defined as the active expression of conflict between social classes. This struggle arises from disparities in wealth, status, and power, prompting disadvantaged groups to seek equality and better conditions. Ivanhoe depicts conflicts between Anglo-Saxons, Normans, and Jews, highlighting the social divisions and struggles for emancipation during that historical period. Wulandari (2008) discusses Scott's portrayal of characters like Rebecca, a sympathetic Jewish figure, as emblematic of the novel's stance on social justice and equality.

Rajyalakshmi et. al., (2023) explore Neel Mukherjee's fiction with respect to power dynamics in relationships and societal structures, particularly in relation to class struggle and the oppression of lower classes by the ruling class during the British colonial period in Bengal. By examining these power dynamics, Rajyalakshmi et. al., (2023) critique the exploitative nature of colonialism and the capitalist system, highlighting how they perpetuate poverty and inequality. The novel *The Lives of Others* depicts the ways in which power, class, and economic conditions shape individuals and their relationships. *The Lives of Others* offer insightful perspectives on the challenges faced by marginalized communities. Through his writing, Mukherjee invites readers to explore the complexities of human relationships, the realities of class struggles, and the political issues faced by India.

Despite extensive research on *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, a notable research gap exists in examining how Roy's narrative techniques and characterizations elucidate and critique the intersections of caste, class, and gender oppression. Specifically, there is a need for a deeper exploration of how these elements are utilized to advance a Marxist critique of contemporary Indian society, a dimension that has not been extensively addressed in current literary analyses.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout human history, societal divisions based on class have persistently existed, reflecting enduring patterns of resentment and conflict (Marx, 1846).The Marxist approach begins by

examining two fundamental components: the base and the superstructure. According to Berger (2019), Karl Marx's theory defines the base as the primary determinant, representing the economic system specific to a society. This economic system subsequently influences 'the superstructure,' which encompasses a wide array of elements including legal systems, philosophy, religion, cultural ideas, arts, and societal institutions (Berger, 2019, p. 58).

Marx (1846) argues that the superstructure, shaped by the economic base, inevitably promotes the ideologies of the ruling class. Ideologies encompass the evolving ideas, values, and emotions through which individuals perceive their societies. They present the dominant beliefs as universally accepted, thereby obscuring the true functioning of society. According to Marxist theory, literature serves as a form of ideology that legitimizes the authority of the ruling elite. In *A Critique of the German Ideology*, Marx (1846) emphasizes that Marxist critics should approach literature, literary education, criticism, and theory as integral components of economic, political, and social life, not as creations of entirely independent writers. Marx (1846) asserts that "the production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is initially intertwined with the material activity and social interactions of people, the language of everyday life" (Marx, 1846). Marx's concept of 'ideology critique' involves exposing how class interests operate through various cultural forms, whether political, legal, religious, philosophical, educational, or literary (Hamadi, 2017).

According to Leitch (2001), Marx contends that ideology functions to obscure "the reality of class struggle from our awareness and consciousness." Marx further posits that working-class individuals, by unwittingly internalizing bourgeois values, become carriers of what he termed "false consciousness." Marx (1863) contends that a writer's role as a productive laborer is not solely based on generating ideas, but rather on how their work enriches the publisher who disseminates their writings, or if they function as a wage laborer under capitalist conditions (Marx, 1863). Marx (1859) explores the relationship between literature and the prevailing social and economic contexts. He contrasts Greek art with contemporary art forms, highlighting how the cultural importance of mythology and natural elements in ancient Greek society facilitated specific artistic expressions.

According to Marxist critics, art and literature are not isolated from society; rather, they function as social institutions with specific ideological roles, shaped by the background and beliefs of

their creators. In this framework, class struggle and relations of production take center stage. Early Marxist critics often adhered to what is known as “vulgar Marxism.” They viewed literary texts as part of the superstructure—a reflection of the economic base of a given society. Applying this lens to Arundhati Roy’s novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, would reveal caste, class, and gender oppression within the narrative.

Research Methodology

This research is based on the qualitative approach and in-depth textual analysis, which makes use of Marxist literary theory to analyze *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. It analyzes how oppression based on caste, class, and gender is represented in the narrative by applying the Marxist approach.

Discussion and Analysis

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is the second novel of Arundhati Roy having reflection of her own life and thoughts. The novel is a true depiction of a society struggling to be an ideal. It’s a search for a better world where all love and peace prevails. It’s a utopian wish to create a world of own making where the all oppressed gather together and set a life of peace and prosperity. The novel, other than having an overt tone of Marxism in the form of Maoist movement and story of Revathy, is replete with themes ideas and structure of Marxist literary theory. It has author’s life and ideas in the narrative delineated in the story and happenings of different characters. It talks about the progress in the society, may it be the ideological, social, political or economic. It talks to us through multiple narratives and knits them together to provide a bird eye view of the society, as it is, and then through a concave lens view, of the society, she desires or utopian society she creates through her narration. She makes us journey to different settings, showing us oppression, obsession, disease, disaster, love, loyalty and beating and betrayal, just to let us know and see the world of oppression through her lens and ideas. She represents her age and time, and makes us a historic journey of present days of India, in order to know the pulse of social period, its metamorphosis and future results. It’s the present happening of today that will decide the future course of action, and in this way, makes us decide, how to work for a better future for a better world, as per our aspirations and desires.

Roy is a true painter of cultural materialism of her times and so a huge critic. She is an advocate of humanistic values and denounces the materialistic pursuits bent upon the destruction of human

values and living. She has a keen eye on all social and political happenings around her with a foresight of future and its horrible outcomes. The modern industrialization and technological advancement with military might of nukes have produced devastating effects on environment and human living alike. Roy creates a drama of shock and effect through sit-ins and protest with stories of all types as of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury tales narrated by pilgrims in an inn. The cultural materialism, in the form of industrialization and multiple billion business interests in war and dams, is the running theme of JantarMantar- a place like Hyde Park, where stage-ins are set to happen.

Arundhati Roy's fiction is a true politicisation of her times in her fluent and flawless narrative where she touches multiple political themes related to Indian politics, internal or external affairs. Her narration encompasses all; emerging from the Delhi Muslim ghettos to Freedom struggle of Kashmir, Maoist Movement of Dalits to their political and social status, Gandhi's politics to Gandhi's murderers' party politics, Indira's emergency to Rahul's assassination, and Congress poet Prime Minister to the butcher of Gujarat. Her political acumen makes reader know all and understand all with a foresight to the future end result of metamorphosis of Indian democracy to BJP's Hindutva; The dream of India as a secular nation turning into a slogan of '*Mussalmankaek hi sthan! Qabristanya Pakistan!*' (Roy62). The emerging and existing fissures in the Indian society and then its sub division in sub-sub division never escapes the concave lens and surgical knife of Roy's keen and critical eye and vision alike. These fissures, as mark of distinction could have been a beauty to eye as variety is a spice to the vision, are devastating. It is killing the harmony of the society and is a struggle for hegemonic designs for own ideas, philosophy and creed. Roy's fiction is true depiction of political circumstances and their effects on the overall structure and construction of genre.

A cursory glance into different narrations provides a peep into the life and ideology of Roy. It can't be a simplistic coincidence of finding a resemblance in the narration and her life. It can be safely said that to alienate text from author is never possible and the tinge is apparent to some extent. The presence of author's personal life influence is the part of Marxist criticism theory's tenet, and from this theory's perspective the approach in the novel has many more resemblances of the author's life. Marxist showed their anger when The God of Small Things portrayed Marxists as a caricature. The main objection by Marxist was too distorted version of Marxism

and too much sex. Roy has shown a lot of sensitivity to the old objections and has shown a sympathetic view in politicizing her narration with Marxist ideology. The Maoist struggle in the form of Revathy and their positive and sympathetic portrayal might have proved some solace to the Marxist lovers. Nevertheless, Roy's biography is visible in her second novel besides her political concerns knitted cleverly and deftly in the entire narrative.

As the story of Revathy is an appeasement to the Marxist objections, Tillotima and Maryam Ipi can be identified in many ways biographically and ideologically to the life and struggle of Roy and her mother Mary Roy. Suzanna Arundhati Roy was born on 24 November 1961 in the north-eastern Indian state of Assam to a Syrian Christian mother, the teacher and human rights activist. We see the resemblance in Tillotima and Maryam Ipi in being teacher and activist. This resemblance though sketchy isn't farfetched. The ideological resemblance is more akin as Roy makes Maryam Ipi speak sense out of her non-sense gibberish rants. The political awareness, sensitivity to human sufferings, eco concerns, caste oppression and religious schism sensitivity is inherently bestowed from her mother's life struggle. Her mother's uncompromising attitude to the oppressions of society and social activism is apparent in the social encounter of Maryam Ipi. The life struggle of Maryam Ipi is clear expression of her paranoid state where she of a class and breed considered very cultured and mannered speaks a language of guttersnipe Malayalam due to COPD Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It was doctor who suggested to Tillotima that she must apologize to her mother for minding her words too much. It's not her mother who is uttering those ugly obscene words, it's her illness otherwise she is a wonderful woman. The doctor provides a pertinent response when she asks if she isn't uttering those words then who? 'Your mother is a remarkable woman. You must understand that it isn't she who is uttering those ugly words.'

'Oh. Who is it, then?'

'Someone else. Her illness. Her blood. Her suffering. Our conditioning, our prejudices, our history ...' (Roy 179)

This bitterness is of ages and of decades which passed through her life struggle in order to get the identity and status in society without attaining true love from society. Her love affair, out of caste or with low caste, gave birth to a child not acceptable to the society. 'She did many ridiculous

things in life' and one of them was giving birth to her. Tillotima's life and romance especially her a decade long marriage besides her profession has close link to the authors life.

The narration opens with the time "when the sun has gone but the light has not" and the darkness is imminent with a ray of hope, as there is a silver lining present to hope for. There is an imminent danger of ecological collapse with the friendly bird getting extinct due to chemical and biological hazards all around resultant from industrial intoxicants but there is little notice to this disaster as the disasters impending are of much more consequential. This is human disaster and of much more consequences and range, from individual to cosmos level. It's the story of Anjum who is living in a graveyard like a tree, but this tree is not a common one as it has 'endured the months of casual cruelty'. Anjum moved into graveyard and never looking back endured all the slurs and name, calling without paying attention rather used all these insults like a tree uses the morning breeze to cool itself. She used the music of these slurs as a balm to bring peace to her soul. She is a pariah who has found a place away from the city hustle bustle not in search of loneliness but in search of a world and Anjuman (gathering) where love and peace prevails without any caste creed and clan. Her name is Anjum but she calls herself Anjuman where everybody is invited. So she is a 'mehfil', a gathering. 'Of everybody and nobody, of everything and nothing'. It's not like E.M. Forsters' A Passage to India where young and old missionary finally decide to exclude someone from their gatherings here 'Everyone's invited.' (Roy, 4)

Roy beautifully portrays a mother's horror on discovering that all her hopes of giving birth to male child have ended up in a chaos and shock. This shock in her depiction is of multi layer and each layer unfolds the hypocrisy and dual standards of the society where a female is oppressed in multiple forms but more oppression are apparent in different shocks. Her countless reactions run like the "first reaction was to feel her heart constrict and her bones turn to ash. Her second reaction was to take another look to make sure she was not mistaken. Her third reaction was to recoil from what she had created while her bowels convulsed and a thin stream of shit ran down her legs. Her fourth reaction was to contemplate killing herself and her child. Her fifth reaction was to pick her baby up and hold him close while she fell through a crack between the world she knew and worlds she did not know existed. There, in the abyss, spinning through the darkness, everything she had been sure of until then, every single thing, from the smallest to the biggest,

ceased to make sense to her” (Roy, 5). The social and personal turmoil is opaque in all these reactions where she can't find any sense in her making as the God created this universe and then made sense in everything, in her case she created a thing and lost her sense too.

The Muslims of India are depicted as a community living in the ghettos of Delhi with multiple political and social assumptions. The living of Muslims in these ghettos tells of their lack of interest in assimilation and to carry their identity separate from the other communities. Their living, in the heart of Delhi, is giving impression to India's secular structure, inter faith tolerance and harmony. The social fabric is crumbling; as those who consider Muslims as a separate entity and don't like to see India as a secular state are gaining influence and political power as well. Roy knits the theme of segregation from an individual - Anjum to the social fabric with fissures and segregations. She also build the narration of trial and tribulations suffered by Anjum as an individual coupled with her theme of creating a new world, a world of equality, peace and tranquility.

Anjum, who left her home for the Khawabgah 'The House of Dreams', to know that it's an experiment gone wrong. It's an experiment of creating a creature capable of enduring the pain and misery, a creature incapable of happiness but still she enters into the Khawabgah as if she is entering into the gates of paradise. This world shifting from the real world to the house of dreams and then to the brutality of the real world provides a sense of creating a world of her own on the graveyard with an invitation for all and everyone. The meaning of happiness in mundane sense isn't prevalent too as the rant is who is happy here. Unhappiness is a common state with multiple layers of today's society where imperialistic snares are entangling all as "Who's happy here? It's all sham and fakery," Nimmo said laconically, not bothering to look up from the magazine. "No one's happy here. It's not possible. Arreyaar, think about it, what are the things you normal people get unhappy about? I don't mean you, but grown-ups like you – what makes them unhappy? Price-rise, children's school-admissions, husbands' beatings, wives' cheatings, Hindu-Muslim riots, Indo-Pak war – outside things that settle down eventually. But for us the price-rise and school-admissions and beating-husbands and cheating-wives are all inside us. The riot is inside us. The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't" (Roy, 23). The unhappiness in their world has inner and outer meanings alike. The wars otherwise outside are lying in their inside.

The social oppression started against Muslims with all force after 9/11 as if “Now, suddenly, as hostility towards Muslims grew, it began to seem to the Organization that the whole world was on its side” (Roy, 40). This oppression took the form from mob targeting Muslims to the state sponsored where young Muslim boys were being killed in what police claimed ‘encounters’. The happenings in the America provided them with an excuse to make state laws of oppression against Muslims as they claim the same can happen in India too. The government passed new anti terrorism laws and targeted Muslim youths.

Roy depicts Gujrat massacre as a true depiction of Indian BJP's fascist face where a small terrorist incident is used ‘to that every action {would} be met with an equal and opposite reaction’ but the reaction is neither equal nor opposite, but a volley of organized attacks start killing thousands of Muslim, looting their shops and burning their houses. The incident, where Anjum along with Zakir Mian faces those killing mobs, and she is spared life as she is “Sister-fucking Whore Hijra. Sister-fucking Muslim Whore Hijra” (Roy, 62). “Nothing scared those murderers more than the prospect of bad luck. After all, it was to ward off bad luck that the fingers that gripped the slashing swords and flashing daggers were studded with lucky stones embedded in thick gold rings. It was to ward off bad luck that the wrists wielding iron rods that bludgeoned people to death were festooned with red puja threads lovingly tied by adoring mothers. Having taken all these precautions, what would be the point of willfully courting bad luck?” (Roy 62). The hollowness of the social norms and values is depicted in this scene where courting bad luck is important to the life of a human being. The oppression unleashed by the (Roy 62) Gujaratka Lalla. Gujrat's beloved’ is ‘out hunting every resident djinn and spirit’ (Roy 62). The oppression faced by Anjum at individual level remained with her throughout life as a trauma and it never let her settle in Khawabgah. At least it leads her to a new way, a way to salvation for her and many others who’ll come to join her world away from this Duniya. Her living at graveyard provides her this chance of creating a world of her own away from this Duniya, inside and outside as well.

The idea, of a new world where the barriers of colour, creed, clan be merged in on family of human being, came from the episode of Rubina’s death- a prostitute who wasn’t finding any place to wash and burial. This world of graveyard accommodated the prostitute’s body with a bath, a burial and a cleric to perform final rituals. (Roy 62) So the Jannat Guest House took the

form of a complete funeral parlor and Jannat Burial Services for all those whom the world has rejected and ousted.

Concurrent with the narration, Roy knits the story of Saddam Hussein who is a witness of killing of his father along with three people on cow slaughter. He says that he was part of that mob that killed his father and his three friends, bringing them out of the police custody and killing them with iron and crow bars. The police incharge was least bothered about the cow slaughter, all this incident erupted as of his being intoxicated and asking for much more money than routine. These people had come to the police station to report their move with cow and paying token money to the station in charge. Roy tells that its least of a cow slaughter issue rather an economic one where the minorities are targeted for cow slaughtering only to get their property after either killing them or letting them on run.

Roy depicts the times of India's progress in the field of industrialization and making 'Mera Bharat Mahan'. This bulge of multinational brands found in every city and giving it a look of a developed country leaving aside the slums and poverty apparent even on the roads of Delhi. Besides this 'Skyscrapers and steel factories sprang up where forests used to be, rivers were bottled and sold in supermarkets, fish were tinned, mountains mined and turned into shining missiles. Massive dams lit up the cities like Christmas trees. Everyone was happy' seemingly. The natural life was getting extinct. The villages were emptied for establishing industries or making Dams and a massive deforestation was taking place to accommodate the new wave of progress and prosperity in the shape of industry and technology surge. The price of progress need to be paid and who could me more appropriate to pay than the poor and destitute.

Media is bustling with the image of this prosperity, which is killer of simple village life and poor peasants who are out on the streets, paying no attention to these poor or homeless and asking stupid questions of 'Tell me, brother, how does it feel to be ...? How does it feel to be poor, hungry, and destitute and shelter less? Media is airing these images to bolster the image of India the world over and not trying to look under the nose sheer poverty and ignorance. 'Experts aired their expert opinions for a fee: Somebody has to pay the price for Progress, they said expertly'.(Roy 99) The price to be paid by the destitute masses as politically things were too much complicated with, 'The summer of the city's resurrection had also been the summer of scams – coal scams, iron-ore scams, housing scams, insurance scams, stamp-paper scams,

phone-licence scams, land scams, dam scams, irrigation scams, arms and ammunition scams, petrol-pump scams, polio vaccine scams, electricity-bill scams, school-book scams, god-men scams, drought-relief scams, car-number-plate scams, voter-list scams, identity-card scams – in which politicians, businessmen, businessmen-politicians and politician-businessmen had made off with unimaginable quantities of public money’(Roy 93).

The politicization of the theme is replete with many political instances especially with the rise of BJP to power and popularity after the Gujrat KaLala coming on the political scenes. The image of butcher of Gujrat is presented as a savior who has come to erase the corrupt and a slogan ‘Enough Is Enough! and End Corruption’. His supporters wear such T-shirts with his image and message but the on ground reality is the story of massive corruption in all mega deals. ‘His dream of a society free of corruption was like a happy meadow in which everybody, including the most corrupt, could graze for a while’. This gave an opportunity to all powerful to gain as much as possible but on the other hand common masses enthralled by his slogans and body language as if he is there for their emancipation keeping ‘People who would normally have nothing to do with each other (the left-wing, the rightwing, the wingless) all flocked to him’.(Roy 94)

Roy makes a fiction with a true depiction of her times with changing social and political scenarios. She gives a clear portrayal of politics of betrayal which instead of emancipating masses makes them enslaved in the modern tools of industrialization and technology. The luxury of this advancement is the happy meadow for the rich; and the other side of the fence, poor and destitute suffering, as they remained suffering in the past. The modern Democracy as Roy calls it Demon Crazy holds true in the sense of Indian Politics; where the oppressed are shown dreams only without any fulfillment.

Roy not only exposes the hypocrisy of politics but also shows mirror to those involved in such tactics of hypocrisy. The old man with fasting politics----- is described in a befitting manner unleashing the exposure of his duplicity and politics of deception with gaining momentum of popularity. Roy presents us with his different techniques to appease all. When a conservative orthodox approaches he speaks their language and when liberal comes he sings to their tunes. He is presented with multiple tricks to appease all strata and groups of society. If Muslims get annoyed with the presence of fanatic Hindus, a Muslim Bollywood star appears with a Muslim cap on the stage with old man showing the world his immediacy to the Muslims at large. This

Bollywood star who in his daily life never claimed to be a Muslim or wore a Muslim cap is readily available for this political show. If Dalits get offended by any remarks, the next day a group of Dalits is shown on screens sipping tea together and sending a message of Unity in Diversity. Some low caste girls are brought and shown on the dais presenting food, water and other eatables to guest at the stage, presenting a look of equality and brotherhood without any caste recognition. “For militant moralists the old man’s slogan was Thieves must have their hands cut off! Terrorists must be hanged! For Nationalists of all stripes he roared, ‘Doodh mango gey to kheer dengey! Kashmir mango gey to chiirdengey!’ Ask for milk, we’ll give you cream! Ask for Kashmir, we’ll rip you open seam to seam!”(Roy 103). The political narrative pampered with the hypocrite duplicities and make belief tactics has been exposed. The political leaders try to hoodwink the simpletons and give them an impression of being messiah without doing any serious sincere thing for the salvation of poor masses. They just try to change colors with the need of the time to serve their purpose.

The two most important characters in the novel having direct link to the question under study are Dr. Azad Bhartiya and Sevathy; one a communist in spirit fighting a political fight and the other a Maoist fighter, actively engaged in an armed struggle for a free land and communist ideas.

Dr. Azad Bhartiya who is a communist spirit and we meet him when he is on a hunger strike with a manifesto

“I am fasting against the following issues: I am against the Capitalist Empire, plus against US Capitalism, Indian and American State Terrorism/ All Kinds of Nuclear Weapons and Crime, plus against the Bad Education System/ Corruption/ Violence/ Environmental Degradation and All Other Evils. Also I am against Unemployment. I am

also fasting for the complete obliteration of the entire Bourgeois class. Each day I remember the poor of the world, Workers/ Peasants/ Tribals/ Dalits/ Abandoned Ladies and Gents/ including Children and Handicapped People”(Roy 126).

Dr. Azad Bhartiya, whose real name is Inder.Y. Kumaar and he is presently living at the sight of JantarMantar with novice ideas of getting India liberated. This liberation is of many kinds and he doesn’t like the idea of Indian freedom as achieved by Gandhi. He doesn’t like Gandhi or his ideas and considers him the root cause of present Indian capitalist exploitation. He is a critic of



US their capitalism and its president and his dogs, but strangely he prefers dogs to those whom he considers as the killers of humanity. He calls himself a revolutionary, on fast and eating only to live and not living only to eat. Living on the bounty of offerings in the JantarMuntar, he with a pending PhD, thinking it to be dishonesty; but as he is doing politics and in politics you can counter lies only with lies and duplicity. He uses the epithet of doctor to give credentials to his sayings and getting attention. He is struggling since the last eleven years in the JantarMantar with his presence and listening to people who come all across the country. In his belief these people come to be listened and there is none to listen their grief and sorrows. He considers himself duty bound to listen to their problems and give them a sincere advice. He considers himself their representative and observes fast on their behalfso that they may go back to their juggis where the cows and buffalos are more important to people as they give them nourishment and living.

He is a casteless man and denounces religion. He claims to be of any religion, any creed and any caste other than the religion creed and caste of the majority and powerful. He hates the world Brahmin-America due its exploitative and expansionist policies. He tells that all great men denounced caste and so does he. He is against the world exploitative capitalist system and denounces the dollars causing concentration of wealth in the Hands of America- the world oppressor. Dr. Azad Bhartiya's political subjects include all sorts of social, economic, ecological, and industrial and environmentalist. He supports the struggle against harms of industrialization and chemical hazards due to lack of precautionary scientific measures. The protesters who lost lungs damaged in the poisonous industrial air are still looking for the compensation the company has changed its name and started doing business anew. This compensation, which was three crore and only three percent of it reached to the effected people. Rest all have been used by the tehsildars and other functionaries of the area. Dr. Azad Bhartiya thinks "India is ruled by donkeys, vultures and pigs"(Roy 133). For him capitalism is a poisoned Honey and it's eroding the world system slowly. There is nothing as a relief plan for the oppressed. Dr. Azad Bhartiya thinks

Mar gae Bulbul qaffas main

Kehgayeesayyaad se

Apnisunehrigaandmein

Tuthoons le fasl-e-bahaar

She died in her cage, the little bird,
These words she left for her captor –
Please take the spring harvest
And shove it up your gilded arse

(Roy 98)

The story of Revathy, unfolded through a letter brought at the end, a letter from an underground worker, so an underground letter from an underground political worker, knits the communist struggle theme with multiple other themes and stories knitted around the JantarMantar and Jannat Guest House. During the protest a baby is found, taken by Anjum and party through Tillotima to their custody. The baby is named Jabeen but her whereabouts is unknown. She is the centre of love of all outcasts residing in the graveyard; Jannat Guest House. The letter from her mother Revathy makes her identity clear as her name was Udaya, given to her at the time of her birth, meaning Sun Rise as the sun was rising at her birth time. Revathy is a revolutionary, and belongs to a backward caste, of a mother with a sound village status and a father who served in Army and was court marshaled. Revathy, before letting us know the communist journey, narrates the story of her life which depicts the backwardness, prejudices, poverty, ignorance, oppression and exploitation of weak especially woman in the society. Her mother married out of love but still on marriage day, her father's side demanded more dowries and threatened to cancel the marriage. This oppression and exploitation remained continue, even when she settled at in laws, beside daily domestic violence. Her maternal grandfather, on a visit, gave her mother lot many gifts but even then her mother was tortured and sent back home. With a broken heart, on way back home crossing the river, she jumped into the river with Revathy in her womb. She was rescued by boatman and delivered the child. The color of the child Revathy was black contrary to the fair color of her parents which brought the accusation from her father that she isn't her child. So she remained with her maternal grandfather and went to communist schools with Marxist teaching. She used to read Illustrated Weekly, Competition Success Review and Soviet Bhumi for her blind maternal grandfather. Though her mother remained at her parents but she kept seeing her husband now and then and this brought another pregnancy. The in laws gave

sacrificial of thirty black hens to get a black baby birth in order to establish her fidelity and loyalty to her husband. The baby was black and it brought happiness to all in laws but even then her father remained adamant and married some other woman.

The background of Revathy and her mother marriage and its ups and downs give true picture of precarious situation of women in the society and the families with prejudices against caste and women status alike. But, her real struggle starts when she joins communist party and being an educated young eloquent member was assigned task to travel to different villages and recruit communist workers and talk about class enemy and terrible conditions of poverty. This was very dangerous as one needs to go out of the safe den and roam in the villages where lot many informers kept an eye on the developments. She was caught by the police and taken to some ghost school used for police torture. Almost six policemen brutally tortured her beside gang rape. She could barely escape bleeding and bruised with burns and fortunately find a place of doctor who provided first aid and ten days nursing. There is a special mention of government announced Operation Green Hunt of 2008 against the communist and Maoist organization with unleashing police atrocities against communist workers especially women. PLGA (Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army) remained the main target whose fighter was shot at sight and women taken to custody to torture rape and maimed.

Jabeen (Udaya) was delivered, the baby that knits the Revathy to the Anjum, Tillotima, JantarMantar, besides making her centre of the entire narrative. She was born at the time of sun set, but her mother wanted her dead. She pointed a gun at her but could not. She couldn't tell her father's identity as she didn't know who out of six her father was. She couldn't muster courage to kill such a cute and handsome baby. She was assigned task to join the protest and keep the spirit alive by her eloquence staged at Delhi at JantarMantar. As she was carrying a baby, it was the best cover to reach and act without being identified. There was a war going on against people in the form of making Dams and deforestation, severely affecting the Adivasi people. When she reached the sight and found many good hearted people sacrificing their time and working for the emancipation of oppressed and weak, she realized that here she can find some good one who will give a shelter and good breed and nurture to her child. She left the child there and as per her expectation her child found the best group to look after her.

Revathy finally returns to the political theme again as she considers her party her family and wants to join them in serving people. She recognizes the imperfections and acknowledges that all isn't good even by Lenin, Stalin and Marx. She also acknowledges that the women though considered equal in Marxist philosophy and party manifesto but things in reality aren't like that. The people in the JantarMantar are good in the heart working for the common masses, but, Revathycant join them and she wants to continue her armed struggle back from the forest and tread the same precarious road of annihilation. Revathy wants to live and die by her gun and that makes the entire listeners present her Lal Salaam. The entire listener finds a unity in her narration where all meet at the point of common grief, oppression, prejudices and segregation. "Each of the listeners recognized, in their own separate ways, something of themselves and their own stories, their own Indo-Pak, in the story of this unknown, faraway woman who was no longer alive. It made them close ranks around Miss Jebeen the Second like a formation of trees, or adult elephants – an impenetrable fortress in which she, unlike her biological mother, would grow up protected and loved".(Roy 426) The story of Revathy culminates in the message of unity for the protection of Jabeen and providing her a protection and growth which was the dream of her mother who sacrificed her life for the rights of the people and struggled for liberation of oppressed and destitute masses. She was aware of the shortcomings of her party and its philosophy but she was convinced of its deliverance for common masses as it meant the welfare of common people instead hungry political mongering.

The true story knitting the narrative and themes together besides the central romance of the novel is the story of Kashmir. But, the narrator wants it to be a true story and not to scare only to make the youngster lead to sleep. The true story of Kashmir, which must encompass the entire beauty and ugliness of it, needs to be narrated without concoction. That's what Musa tells her little Jabeen to Know;

"Akhdaleelawann

Yethmanz ne kahnbalaiiaasi

Na aessohkunnijunglasmanzroazaan

Akhdaleelawann. Tell me a story. And then she would begin the story herself, shouting it out into the somber, curfewed night, her raucous delight dancing out of the windows and rousing the neighborhood. *Yethmanz ne kahnbalaiiaasi! Na aessohkunni jungle smanzroazaan!* There wasn't

a witch, and she *didn't* live in the jungle. Tell me a story, and can we cut the crap about the witch and the jungle? Can you tell me a *real* story?"(Roy 316)

The story of "Jis Kashmir kokhoon se seencha! Woh Kashmir hamarahai!The Kashmir we have irrigated with our blood! That Kashmir is ours!"(Roy 324)Its is no more like that. In fact, it's a story of grief, horror, oppression, exploitation, commercial and institutional interests and fissures and groups. The freedom struggle in Kashmir is the struggle for Islam and there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah and on ground there are eight or nine versions of "True Islam" fighting the infidels inside and outside for the Glory of their version of " True Islam". These versions have advocates who speak against the nationalism and talk about the larger Ummah. This concept of larger Ummah is spread through Mullahs who are on the payroll of the establishment in order to maintain the status quo and keep the efforts, to unite Kashmiries for their freedom, at bay. The commercial interests which are ripe for profit gain are for the status quo and this also keep the situation for 'peace process', a process good for the commercial interest of the Kashmiris as well. There were other interest of earning for the army too. The fighters who came from across the border and remained engaged for a long time were stuck due to border fencing. This provided an opportunity for those who could have material gains through the provision of 'safe passage' by overlooking the move through Gujjar shepherds knowing the mountain routes like the palm of their hands. It's not the safe passage only which was materially beneficial "on the market. There was also diesel, alcohol, bullets, grenades, army rations, razor wire and timber". The business suited to the Kashmir where " Whole forests were disappearing. Sawmills had been set up inside army camps". Kashmiri labour and Kashmiri carpenters utilized in making the best furniture of the most expensive walnut wood. The conveyance of all this furniture and wood which was otherwise illegal and prohibited could be moved by "trucks in the army convoy that brought supplies up to Kashmir from Jammu every day returned loaded with carved walnut-wood furniture". So to say, it is justified that If India doesn't have the best-equipped army, they are certainly the best-furnished "– if I may coin a phrase – army in the world". (Roy 124)

The oppression in Kashmir has its own jargons ranging from the language used by law enforcement to the one published in the press. So in the daily armed struggle of Kashmir has for

the Separatists speaking in slogans and the law enforcement agencies speaking in the form of press releases. Whenever army takes action and there is a ‘cordon-and-search’ operation, it’ll always be termed as ‘massive’. ‘Everybody they picked up was always ‘dreaded’ and there was ‘seldom less than ‘A-category’, and whatever they recovered from the fighters when arrested, they announced it as ‘war-like’. On the other side, the Kashmiries have grown into a habit of mourning, chanting slogans, going on strike and going on normal life again. This has become a cycle, known to the oppressors and exploited by them. They have grown habitual to this cycle of exploitation and know that whatever action state will take and how much atrocities committed by the state, the cycle starting from wailing and moaning will end up into forgetfulness till another martyr’s day. The dictionary of Kashmir starts with A that is Azadi besides other words “A:Azadi/army/Allah/America/Attack/AK-

47/Ammunition/Ambush/Aatankwadi/ArmedForcesSpecialPowersAct/AreaDomination/AlBadr/AlMansoorian/AlJihad/Afghan/AmarnathYatra, and the end of this dictionary is Z:Zulm(oppression)/ZplusSecurity”.(Roy 150)

The Kashmir struggle for freedom is encapsulated between A for Azadi with Ak-47 and all freedom fighter groups pitted against Z-Zulm oppression done by the security forces who claim to be

“We follow our own rules

Ferocious we are

Lethal in any form

Tamer of tides

We play with storms

U guessed it right

We are

Men in Uniform” (Roy 221)

The struggle for Kashmir freedom is the outcome of the crop sowed by bullets and it will reap only death, there isn’t any love or kindness shown on either side or this battle of bullets will remain side by side the reign of terror and oppression there.

Indian Army wants this insurgency to continue as it serves its commercial interests and provide them a big chunk out of the federal defence budget. When the terrorist is enquired about his

being trained in Pakistan, he says that he has been trained here in Kashmir with the provision of bullets and hand grenades purchased from the Indian army. Everyone is making money out of this armed struggle and so many actions and encounters are fake, for army only to be relevant and needed in the situation. “The terrorist brother” is shown a pleasantry look in the presence of media man but the atmosphere of Kashmir is full of deception and treachery. The informers are all around and an invisible eye who keeps on sifting passing byes as terrorist taken to the camps for torture. The language of Kashmir is different where questioning means insult, abuses, kicks and few slaps on the other hand interrogation means taken to custody and torture which may or may not end or may be a complete annihilation. They have their own stethoscopes which are capable of detecting the beat of hearts for the freedom. When this beat is detected, the line burst for questioning and investigation.

All those who are fighting aren't clear which true version of Islam they want and how they are going to accommodate the difference of opinion in their own ranks. For them everyone considers his version as true Islam with labeling others as Kaffir or Infidels. This division in their ranks is used as an exploitative tool by the law enforcement agencies and establishment employs Mullahs and religious scholars to keep this fissure intact. Narration has a wonderful instance of such fissure which is truly detrimental to the cause and Islam.

“I saw a man on a bridge about to jump.

I said, ‘Don’t do it!’

He said, ‘Nobody loves me.’

I said, ‘God loves you. Do you believe in God?’

He said, ‘Yes.’

I said, ‘Are you a Muslim or a non-Muslim?’

He said, ‘A Muslim.’

I said, ‘Shia or Sunni?’

He said, ‘Sunni.’

I said, ‘Me too! Deobandi or Barelvi?’

He said, ‘Barelvi.’

I said, ‘Me too! Tanzeehi or Tafkeeri?’

He said, ‘Tanzeehi.’

I said, 'Me too! TanzeehiAzmati or TanzeehiFarhati?'

He said, 'TanzeehiFarhati.'

I said, 'Me too! TanzeehiFarhatiJamiaulUloom Ajmer, or Tanzeehi FarhatiJamiaul Noor Mewat?'

He said, 'TanzeehiFarhatiJamiaul Noor Mewat.'

I said, 'Die, kafir!' and I pushed him over.'"(Roy 169)

The only way to hold on the dignity and win any respect if not freedom is to fight back and fight back in a way an army does. For that Kashmiries need to be united, standardized, thinking and doing in unison, leaving away our complexities and nuances aside. That's the only way to fight back united and as one force.

Knitted with the theme of oppression, that is the main thread in all the stories told in the novel, is the authors panacea to all these ills and that is the another world of Jannat Guest House-Graveyard established by Anjum where she landed not to live but to die. This utopian world is; without any ills of the society, and based on equality, fraternity and peace, without any distinction of caste, color and creed. Anjum leaves her home for the Dream World (Khawabgah) but that proves to be a world of oppression as well. She has to leave it and come to new world of graveyard where she makes a new world of her own establishing rules of peace and love only. The people of Dream World consider themselves coming from DoosriDuniya (another world) but their world might be unique in its structure but not in its rules and that too rules of oppression and exploitation. This creation of utopian world is the theme close to heart of the writer as she creates it out of her wish of a world based on love and peace. Anjum's world is the desired world of author which she wants all around her and she has always strived and written for that.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy is a true representative novel encompassing all aspects of Marxist literary criticism where we can see the writer's life reflection in ideas and themes and her very personal and dear to heart ideas materialized in the narration. We see an ongoing class struggle throughout the narration where the bourgeois and proletariat in multiple forms and shapes take the role of oppressed and oppressor. This class struggle is depicted in different narration s joining the main narration. Author is present in the background but her personal life is visible in the story through our protagonist Tillotima and her mother Maryam Ipi. All important characters speak for author and the main character Anjum

works for the attainment of panacea given by the author in the form of a new world without any oppression. Writer speaks of her times and shows the political rise and falls of her days of India. She gives the detailed picture of political treachery and deceit with the exploitation of masses for personal gains. The industrial and technological advancement and their resultant effects on the environment, causing human displacement and deforestation, and the effects of modernization with materialism having adverse effects on the culture is another binding themes running through the narration. The novel is truly an aesthetic pleasure with political aim of building a narrative of own ideas and philosophy. So the use of novel as a genre for political narrative building and being affected by the political circumstances of own time is clearly visible.

Conclusion

Roy depicts the many colors of democracy or the Demon Crazy of India bringing to fore multiple issues faced by its society. She touches many subjects ranging from personal romance to social hatred, love marriage to the marriage of convenience in interfaith and inter-religious harmony. She depicts the social upheavals with the political and ideological fissures. She shows the industrial progress with eco hazards through deforestation. She shows the human tragedy in love loss to territorial displacements, from hunger and disease to state oppression and tortures. The novel represents true philosophy of Marxist literary criticism where fiction can be utilized in telling such social truth which aren't told by lofty politicians and philosophers.

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