

ANJUM ROY'S THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS: POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY, RESISTANCE, AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

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Summary:

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* critiques postcolonial identity, resistance, and ecologically induced issues, filling a massive lacuna in the postcolonial literature. It unpacks how characters move and resist the afterlife of colonialism in contemporary India. Using Homi K. Bhabha's (1994) notion of hybridity with the hijra, Anjum Roy (2017) shows how a "third space" comes to be created where marginalized identities come to redefine against the binaries of society. According to Fanon (2004), it is through resistance that Tilo's acts of defiance against oppressive powers emerge. Roy has already brought to light how environmental degradation has ravaged the land, as one can see in Anjum's expression of grief connected with a polluted river, emphasizing the injustices of colonialism and capitalism. This urge made in it, therefore, goes against these historical narratives and patriarchal norms of reckoning identity and history about postcolonial contexts. The intricate narrative and the complex characters that Roy has woven critique the effect of colonialism and work toward reclaiming the marginalized spaces and stories that will help promote a better understanding of identity, history, and ecological justice in postcolonial discourse.

Introduction:

Postcolonial theory constructs the critical analysis of legacies of colonialism that bear on questions of identity, culture, and society. It challenges Eurocentric interpretative perspectives that have traditionally dominated historical and literary narratives by focusing on marginalized voices and experiences suppressed during and after colonial rule. Said (1978) posits that the theory interrogates the binary oppositions of "self" from the "other," outlining how these oppositions underline Eurocentrism, race stereotypes, and power imbalance (Bhabha, 1994).

Moreover, central to postcolonial theory is hybridity: a description of the mixing of indigenous and colonial cultures creating new, dynamic identities. Cross-fertilization between traditions becomes a form of resistance and evidence of resilience. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (2006) explain it as it is "a synthesis of traditions working together to produce something new." The Subaltern Studies group, heavily influenced by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, brought focus on the need to magnify the voices of those who have been marginalized and voiceless in dominant discourses (Spivak, 1988).

Moreover, postcolonial theorists have been assessing the role that language plays as a tool for control since most colonial languages set aside indigenous languages and reshaped cultural identity (Loomba, 1998). In contemporary literature, postcolonial theory informed the critical readings of texts in uncovering the discourses of remnants of colonial power in works pertaining to issues such as identity, resistance, and environmental degradation.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is inseparably intertwined with fluid identities, acts of resistance, and environmental critique throughout its narrative—postcolonial themes. The novel presents a wide tapestry of postcolonial concerns; at

the same time, it exposes gaps in how to grapple with their intersectionality amidst contemporary global discourses. This critical paper will seek to identify how Roy's work reflects some postcolonial theories while challenging others.

Literature Review:

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* has formed the basis for a rather large critical concern, and most of the scholars have worked on its narrative structure, themes, and socio-political commentary. This review synthesizes the available body of research on the subject while pointing out the gaps that exist and need to be filled up by further study and research.

The novel's narrative fragmentation and examination of identity politics are extensively recorded. Patel (2022) and Biswas (2023) argue that Roy's nonlinear narrative style effectively portrays the fragmented state of modern Indian society. Moreover, characters such as Tilo and Anjum challenge conventional ideas of identification and belonging. In comparison, Banerjee (2021) and Kumar (2022) highlight Roy's departure from traditional narrative techniques in order to expose the intricate interconnections of postcolonial identity.

Similarly, Ahmad & Ali (2020) entails the involvement of the U.S. in the rebellion movements that occurred in Indonesia from 1958-1963. It allows the readers to have insight into how subjugated and marginalized sections of Indonesian society fought against the pro-communist policies that President Sukarno had adopted in Indonesia. The US involvement on both sides, the Government and the rebels, against Soviet influence involved complex dynamics impacting Indonesia's stability and Cold War geopolitics.

According to Singh(2024), the blending of fact, fiction, history, and memory by Roy has created a complex mosaic for the narrative. Magical realism and myth resist conventional coherence with this approach, reflecting multifaceted realities for India. Available scholarship effectively covers narrative fragmentation, identity

politics, and socio-political commentary but falls short of exploring ecological dimensions within the novel. While Sharma (2022) and Dasgupta (2024) vaguely refer to how Roy critiques socioeconomic inequalities and ecological injustices, an ecocritical analysis is not done in detail. In addition, Mishra (2023) hinted that an ecocritical reading could bring to the fore how human experiences are tied with degradations in the environment and highlight the line where extant scholarship has not explored much.

Hence, although the investigation of narrative strategies and the socio-political themes is done, it cannot be said that the ecological aspects of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* are very well looked into. Further research should mend this lacuna by analyzing how the environmental issues represented by Roy transect with the human experience and socioeconomic contexts to give a fuller idea about the ecological consciousness of the novel and its bearing upon the contemporary environmental discourse.

Characters and Voices

A proper understanding of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* requires an in-depth analysis of the different characters and the voices represented through them. One study hub focuses on the expression of main characters and marginalized voices within the novel, drawing on insights from existing scholarship and close textual analysis.

Anjum: The Hijra Community's Voice: Anjum, a hijra woman who makes a home in a graveyard, is, in a way, the main protagonist or character in the narrative presented by (Roy, 2017). As Biswas(2023) puts it, "Anjum's story itself serves as a beautiful account and exploration of gender identity and belonging, against the backdrop of modern India—and majorly, toward an insight into the experiences of the Hijra community."(p13). Roy disrupts social norms or conventions with the

character of Anjum since this exposes readers to prejudices and biases held against the Hijra community.

Tilo: The Activist Architect: Tilo, an architect turned activist, within her person carries the spirit of resistance and social justice in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by Roy (2017). Patel(2022) explains that the trajectory of Tilo is a metaphor for an attempt at truth and redemption in the face of political repression and violence. In Roy's depictions of Tilo going through personal and political upheavals, subtlety captures the intricate nature of activism and, quite literally, what it costs to stand by what one believes.

Musa: Echoes of Kashmir: Through the character of Musa, a Kashmiri freedom fighter, he embodies this ideal of self-determination and struggle for dignity within this troubled land of Kashmir. Singh (2024) asserts that Musa's story is a scathing critique of 'state-sponsored' violence and oppression and exposes the human toll of political strife. Through Musa's character, Roy gives voice to the marginalized communities caught in the crossfire of geopolitical tensions and nationalist fervour.

These characters allow Roy to engage with ideas of marginalization, identity politics, and quests for recognition. Her practice takes the reader through crossing narratives to show just how experiences of oppression and discrimination lie at the heart of several forms of marginalization that exist in India. She gives voices to those on the fringes of society to challenge readers on the complexities involved in issues of privilege, power, and standing in solidarity (Mishra, 2023).

Furthermore, Roy brings out, through characterization, her works on issues of representation and empowerment. She gives voice to the different struggling communities of people at the fringes of society by placing them at the center of her narration. Apart from changing literacy modes, she merges into an extended fight for social justice and human rights(Biswas, 2023).

Overall, the characters and voices in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* provide a captivating depiction of marginalized realities and the enduring strength of the human spirit (Roy, 2017). Arundhati Roy's narratives compel us to see and acknowledge the hardships and victories experienced by those outside society. Ultimately, she prompts us to envision a more comprehensive and fair world.

Themes and Narratives:

In Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, there is an in-depth investigation into the interplay of identity and power, memory, environmental concerns, resilience, and multiple critiques of contemporary realities in the socio-political sphere.

Roy constructs identity and belonging at the very center of the narrative with characters like Anjum, Tilo, and Musa. Roy dramatizes the multiple and marginalized identities by portraying the social prejudices and biases attached to gender, religion, and nationality (Biswas, 2023). It is in this way that she universalizes a fragmented narrative structure as representative of the fluidity and convolution of identity within modern India. Indeed, such is the subtlety in this exploration that it extends beyond certain cultural contexts of self-realization and societal norms.

In addition, the experiences of Roy's characters are deep critiques of power and resistance. The novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* tends to expose systemic violence and exploitation of state and corporate entities, where Tilo and Musa represent the resistance against them at large (Patel, 2022). The way Roy describes these struggles shows non-neutrality and locates specific socio-political milieus of India; it finds a voice that speaks to the global social justice movement—one in which systemic injustices must be continuously fought (Singh, 2024).

The novel engages majorly with memory and trauma, as Roy's fragmented narrative reflects fragmented memories within her characters. This is a structural

element, mirroring how historical traumas like colonialism and internal conflicts affected contemporary society (Mishra, 2023). It is through vivid imagery and lyrical prose that Roy writes up the way collective memory shapes social narratives and, with that, power dynamics, bringing out a sense of injustice that has inured to continue affecting current realities.

Furthermore, environmental concerns are subtly interwoven into the novel's broader socio-political critique. Roy uses environmental degradation as a metaphor for human and ecological crises, underscoring that both socio-political inequalities and environmental issues are to be dealt with in tandem. This interlacing of the green theme with the rest of the narrative deepens the novel's comment on the interrelationship of human actions and environmental destruction, appealing for a 'rethink' in one's responsibilities towards nature amidst rapid urbanization and climate change (Mishra, 2023).

It is in this way that hope and resilience become the counterpoints to the themes of oppression and despair within this novel. In an ocean of struggle, moments of characters' defiance or solidarity bring out the message of hope and potential change that is possible within society. Roy's depiction of resilience against the odds underlines that, indeed, redemption and transformation are possible, encouraging readers to be critical of their role in making things better (Biswas, 2023)

In summary, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* weaves complex issues into a strap of critical reflection on contemporaneity. Entwining identity, power, memory, environmental concerns, and resilience, Roy has built a rich narrative that provokes readers to redefine their perception of socio-political and ecological dynamics. Within this complex structure, in its thematic depth, the novel underlines with an additional imperative the need for an integrated approach to tackling global inequalities and injustice.

Narrative Structure and Style

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy has an innovative structure of narration and style that provides a drive in the impact of this novel. First of all, it is nonlinear storytelling. Roy (2017) weaves different storylines and timelines to create a fragmented mosaic, evoking the nature of memory and experience rather than a chronological order in telling. Readers are made to piece together the narrative, reflecting the complexity of contemporary life.

Moreover, Roy takes up a multilevel point of view; she alternates from the first person to an omniscient narration. This serves to give a multilayered presentation of India, a country that gives voice to different classes, communities, and sub-cultures. This manner of multiperspective approach provokes the biases of the reader, hence greater empathy and understanding (Roy, 2017).

In this regard, Roy's prose is distinctly lyrical and enriched with symbolism. According to Mishra, in 2023, evocative imagery and poetics are used by Roy to layer meanings that surround readers with vivid emotional and physical landscapes of her characters. This sensory engagement stays with one for a long time after the novel is finished.

The novel is also full of intertextual references and allusions to several literary, cultural, and historical sources. Patel(2022) comments, "These allusions, thus, add to the thematic reverberations in the novel, anchoring them within a timelessness and spacelessness. Roy draws upon myth, folklore, and contemporary events to construct a tapestry of meaning.".(p.6)

The novel stands out in this sense because Roy also experiments with genre and form. Although Biswas (2023) confesses that her mixture of fiction, memoir, and social criticism easily beckons the challenge of literary forms and hustles readers into active meaning-making, she still supports these methods.

The tapestry woven out of nonlinear structure, multiperspective narrative, lyrical prose, and experimental forms makes it powerful and immersive at the same time. Each one of these elements allows readers to plunge deep into themes and characters at multiple levels, thereby underlining Roy's contribution to innovation in contemporary literature (Roy, 2017).

The Postcolonial Theory of Identity and Resilience:

Postcolonial theory stands as a critical framework that confronts and deconstructs the enduring impacts of colonialism on societies, cultures, and identities worldwide. It challenges the dominant Eurocentric narratives that have historically shaped historical and literary discourses, emphasizing the voices and experiences of traditionally marginalized communities often silenced during the colonial era and beyond (Said, 1978).

The theory fundamentally critiques the colonial binary of "self" and "other," highlighting the inherent power imbalances and the construction of racialized and cultural stereotypes perpetuated by colonial powers. This critical examination dismantles these binaries and exposes how they continue to influence contemporary socio-political landscapes globally (Bhabha, 1994).

Moreover, the postcolonial theory emphasizes the hybridity and syncretism characteristic of postcolonial societies, where Indigenous traditions and practices blend with those imposed by colonial powers. This cultural fusion not only becomes a site of resistance against hegemonic forces but also serves as a creative expression of identity and resilience (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006).

The field of Subaltern Studies, influenced significantly by scholars like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, explores the experiences of the subaltern, those marginalized and disenfranchised groups who lack the agency to articulate their narratives within dominant discourses (Spivak, 1988). This perspective underscores

the importance of amplifying these voices and challenging the narratives imposed by colonial and postcolonial power structures.

Furthermore, postcolonial theorists examine the role of language as a tool of control and domination, illustrating how colonial languages replaced and marginalized indigenous languages. This analysis reveals the complexities of communication and representation, shedding light on how language continues to shape cultural identities and power dynamics in postcolonial contexts (Loomba, 1998).

In contemporary literature and art, postcolonial theory informs critical engagements with works that challenge dominant aesthetics and critique the imperial gaze. Authors such as Chinua Achebe and contemporary artists confront colonial legacies through their creative expressions, contributing to ongoing discussions about identity, representation, and decolonization (Achebe, 1958).

Postcolonial theory remains relevant today in understanding global power dynamics, racial inequalities, and cultural conflicts. It provides insights into neocolonialism, the subtle forms of economic and political domination that persist beyond formal colonial rule, and it offers frameworks for analyzing the experiences of diasporic communities navigating multiple identities in a globalized world (Gandhi, 1998).

However, postcolonial theory is not without its criticisms. Some argue that it can be overly theoretical and detached from practical solutions to ongoing issues. Critics also highlight the challenge of representing diverse postcolonial experiences without falling into essentialism or oversimplification (Young, 2003).

Despite these critiques, the postcolonial theory remains a crucial tool for navigating the complexities of power, culture, and identity in our interconnected world. I can strive towards a more just and equitable global society that

acknowledges and respects diverse histories and voices by critically engaging with its concepts and applying its insights to contemporary challenges.

Postcolonial Identity, Resistance, and Ecological Critique in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*:

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is Arundhati Roy's magnificent effort to entwine postcolonial identity, resistance, and ecological critique into a profound comment on contemporary Indian society. Roy (2017) explores this fluidity of identity, the spirit of resistance, and the impact of environmental degradation with the aid of characters, their experiences, and vividly set territories of the novel. The following excerpts and analysis will explore how these themes have been articulated and their place within the broader scope of postcolonial theory.

Furthermore, the following excerpt evidences Anjum belonging to a dargah, a Muslim shrine, despite the marginalization done by society because she is a hijra, which means a transgender woman. In this respect, one may apply Postcolonial Theory and Homi K. Bhabha's idea of hybridity—namely, that the dargah works as a "third space" where Anjum negotiates her identity from mainstream society. It challenges fixed notions of identity imposed by colonial binaries and celebrates the fluidity and complexity of her experience. This quotation thematizes, with much force, how postcolonial literature reclaims places and stories submerged to the edges by colonial powers because of a site of resistance and belonging for characters like Anjum:

"The air was full of the sound of birds and the smell of flowers. Anjum leaned back against the cool wall of the dargah. She felt at peace here. This was where she belonged." (Roy, 2017, p. 87)

In addition, Anjum's identity does not only unravel the rigidity of postcolonial structures designed to fit individuals into bounded identities. Dwelling in a graveyard, Anjum dwells in a space that can be termed liminal, both

symbolically or theoretically: it is this space that underlines her right to experiment and break traditional protocols concerning gender:

"She lived in the graveyard like a tree. At dawn she saw the crows off and welcomed the bats home. At dusk she did the opposite. She was the tree in the graveyard, and nobody ever wrote to her." (Roy, 2017 p. 5)

This aligns with Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which avers that identities are formed in the "third space" created through cultural encounters. Anjum inhabiting the graveyard, surmounting life and death, represents the creation of new, liquid identities that refuse the binaries imposed by society, colonial and postcolonial. According to Murad(2021), the medieval Catholic Church was one that had strengthened its cultural identity with the call to holy war as a way of resisting extrinsic and intrinsic dangers by linking religious doctrines with militaristic policies to retain dominance and unity against non-Christian forces and internal dissent.

Moreover, this manifesto reflects the novel's grander theme of resistance, an enduring and vigilant fight against external forces of oppression. Resisting under Frantz Fanon's theories of liberation calls for psychological and existential modes:

"To love. To be loved. Never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget." (Roy, 2017p. 445)

The characters in Roy's work do so by refusing to succumb to the everydayness of violence and social inequality, with this quote stressing the compulsory consciousness and responsibility to empathize with maintaining one's humanity in the face of the dehumanizing experience of what it means to be

oppressed. Such resistance is personal, built upon the dedication to love, joy, and beauty for the characters in the face of hopelessly adverse circumstances.

Furthermore, acts of resistance against oppressive state forces have also been appealed in postcolonial contexts by the theories on resistance put forth by Frantz Fanon. Fanon(2004) has posited that colonial violence breeds counter-violence as a way of reclaiming agency and dignity. Through such gestures, Tilo raised her fist as a metaphoric act of refusal to bow down to colonial or postcolonial power structures set to grinding down dissent. The quote epitomizes how postcolonial literature reflects acts of resistance as central in the repossession of agency and in fighting back against domination and other structures of oppression and injustice:

"Tilo stood before the barricades, her fist raised in defiance. She refused to be silenced, to be cowed into submission. In that moment, she embodied the spirit of resistance, refusing to back down in the face of tyranny." (Roy, 2017, p. 201)

While in the next quote manifoldly shows how rapid urban development goes hand in glove with environmental destruction. To that end, the vanishing of birds is symbolic of a more significant ecological imbalance and loss of biodiversity. The critique can be understood within the lens provided by ecofeminism utilizing approaches concerned with links between environment degradation and social justice:

"The city has grown inward, swallowing up villages and fields, encroaching on rivers and water bodies, pushing the old inhabitants to the margins. The vultures are gone, the sparrows are gone, and now even the crows have become rare." (Roy, 2017 p. 126)

Roy accounts for the city's growth, showing how people and nature have been marginalized. At the same time, marginalized old residents stand for the human

cost, in contrast to the disappearing birds that represent the ecological cost; both manifest dual critique by calling for more sustainable and just ways of developing that recognize each environmental and human community in any place.

While Anjum's lament over the river spoiled by poison reflects Arundhati Roy's ecological critique in a postcolonial framework, the ecology of the damage evidenced in the novel underlines how postcolonial policies—tolerances, in this case— are devastating the natural environments and displacing their indigenous people. Anjum grieves for the river in that way, using sorrow to instantiate the larger environmental injustices emerging from capitalist exploitation and neglect—a harbinger of the connection between damage to postcolonial societies and damage to the environment:

"The river lay still, its waters polluted and lifeless. Anjum gazed upon its banks, haunted by memories of a time when it teemed with life. She mourned the loss of this once vibrant ecosystem, a casualty of human greed and indifference." (Roy, 2017, p. 305)

Moreover, Tilo's quest for identity and belonging in Old Delhi highly resonates with the theory of cultural hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha. This is where the city acts like a metaphorical "third space" within which Tilo haggles over her fragmented identity, inscribed by colonial and postcolonial histories. Her search challenges hegemonic narratives about fixed identities inscribed by colonial binaries and underscores the fluidity and complexity of identity formation in postcolonial contexts. The quote resonates with the postcolonial conditionals in literature, wherein its characters juggle several cultural and social frameworks, resisting essentialist categorization as they seek further reclamation of agency over one's identity:

"In her dreams, Tilo wandered through the streets of Old Delhi, searching for traces of her past. She longed for a sense of home, where she could

belong. However, the city was a maze of memories and lost connections, a reflection of her fractured identity." (Roy, 2017, p. 49)

Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a postcolonial identity, resistance, and ecological critique narrative. While Anjum disrupts rigid classification and celebrates hybridity, the manifesto of resistance mirrors systemic repression. Here, it projects the critique of environmental degradation and establishes an umbilical relationship between social and ecological justice; here is an appeal for a sustainable and inclusive development paradigm. The story offers a comprehensive critique of contemporary Indian society from the vantage point of postcolonialism.

The following quotation delineates the character of Musa, with his compassion and sensitivity extending across the divide—class, social, or other. So, in this very postcolonial framework, Musa comes to assume a resistant dimension to the hierarchies that the colonials instituted and work toward perpetuating: those based on religion, caste, and ethnicity. Arundhati Roy, therefore, presents the character/spiritual profile of Musa to raise a question over this divided and ruled tradition handed down by the legacy of colonialism, suggesting that true humanity edges out of artificial boundaries created by the colonials:

"The vast ocean of his tenderness and understanding stretched so far and wide that it submerged everything else in sight." (Roy, 2017, p. 159)

In the way Anjum reflects, one sees the epitome of how the novel wrestles with questions about the status of history and memory in postcolonial India. History is considered to be most often written from the vantage point of the colonizers by theorists like Edward Said, overlooking the voices and narratives of the subaltern, or in this case, those of the colonized. The diffuse feeling conveyed in Anjum's ruminations has an idea or air of recovering and narrating untold stories, therefore nodding toward historical revisionism and the decolonization of memory—both of which are thought of as imperatives for challenging dominant discourses of history.

"She wondered how many wars were fought between the past and the present, how many stories were waiting to be told." (Roy, 2017, p. 231)

Moreover, Jahanara's distinction between "big recorded history" and "small recorded history" underlines the novel's critique of official histories sidestepping alternative voices and perspectives. For postcolonial scholars, such as Ranajit Guha, subaltern histories—narratives fighting against dominant discourses of history, thus providing valuable insights into everyday realizations of subordinated groups—are necessary. (Guha, 1988). Jahanara's assertion contributes well to this critique, implying that natural history was intrinsically plural and mostly silenced:

"History, Jahanara said, has no witnesses—only records. There is the big recorded history and the small recorded history." (Roy, 2017, p. 112)

Biplab's usage of the term 'refugee blood' for that man describes the novel concerning displacement and belongingness in postcolonial India. Postcolonial theorists have discussed how colonial and neocolonial policies have dislocated people, broken communities, and caused identities to be shaped by displacement and diaspora (Gilroy, 1993). Biplab's statement reflected how the novel maps individuals whose identities were deeply imbricated with histories of migration and dispossession:

"He is a man," Biplab said, trying to find a way to define it. "There's not a drop of blood in him that is not made of the blood of refugees." (Roy, 2017, p. 276)

While following quotation epitomizes Arundhati Roy's critique of the politicization of religion and communal tensions in postcolonial India. In this quotation, she identifies the manipulation of identity and faith for political ends as central to the postcolonial discourse on nationalism and communalism. Roy exposes how the colonial and postcolonial powers have used religious identities to divide people and consolidate political power. Coupled with the rhetoric of nationalism

and hatred toward the enemies as perceived by him, this indoctrination of the boy speaks to Frantz Fanon's idea about colonial psychology, where violence and oppression are necessitated through ideological indoctrination. It is in the highlighting of such political, communal, and fascist ideological overlap that Roy implores a criticism that is more vigilant about the stakes of religious and nationalist passion in postcolonial societies:

"The smog is thinning, thinning enough to see the trees again. The trees are thinning, too. A boy who was born not far from here, a boy who spent his childhood within the sound of the azan, has been taught that his religion is a personal issue. That it is not political. Not communal. He has been taught that his faith should be practised quietly at home. He has been taught to laugh at and fear those who wear their faith on their sleeves, and then, in his late teens, he has been shown a great light. A cold and surgical light. He has been taught to love his country and hate his neighbour. To honour the army and fight those who ask questions. He has learned to shout the slogans that call for his enemy's blood to water his country's fields. One day, in the not-so-distant future, he will learn that, in the name of his religion, the political, the communal, and the outright fascist have made a beautiful home together." (Roy, 2017, p. 437)

While in the next statement examines societal norms and expectations imposed on women's bodies and choices in postcolonial India. Arundhati Roy critiques patriarchal attitudes towards women who defy traditional roles and expectations, such as choosing not to have children. The quotation reveals how colonial and postcolonial discourses have constructed rigid gender norms that police women's bodies and behaviors. Postcolonial feminist theorists like Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak would argue that women's agency and autonomy are often undermined by patriarchal structures that perpetuate control over their reproductive

rights (Spivak, 1988). Roy's portrayal underscores the intersectionality of gender and power dynamics, urging readers to confront the oppressive social norms that continue to limit women's freedoms in postcolonial contexts:

"A woman without a child could be forgiven anything. Even an illness as mysterious and misunderstood as hers. But a woman who had chosen to flout nature's most fundamental laws and then fallen ill—she could be forgiven nothing." (Roy, 2017, p. 110)

This descriptive quote provides vivid details about the heat and the forthcoming drought in Delhi, an emblem of the more general environmental degradation due to colonial and postcolonial policies. Arundhati Roy's description reverberates in the postcolonial ecocritical perspectives, which critique how industrialization and urbanization exploited natural resources and disrupted the ecosystems in India (Ghosh, 2016). Delayed monsoons and parched landscapes symbolized broader ecological crises affecting poor and marginalized communities. Roy's narrative thus provokes the reader to think about environmental injustice as perpetrated by colonial and neoliberal agendas and encourages a reevaluation of the human association with the natural world in the postcolonial era:

"The dry, harsh Indian summer had long since turned the city into a kiln. All the walls and pavements were hot to the touch. The leaves had been stripped from the trees. The air was full of the sounds of cicadas, the smell of sunbaked earth, the scent of night-blooming jasmine and raat ki rani. At night, they drank chilled water from earthen pots and slept with wet sheets over their bodies. The monsoon was late, and the ground was cracking open." (Roy, 2017, p. 63)

In the Ministry of Utmost Happiness, Arundhati Roy herself deftly interweaves strands of identity, resistance, and ecological degradation within a postcolonial framework. She evidences exits from the radically fixed binaries of the

colonial past with glee and joy for fluidity in identity prior to the "third space" posited by Homi K. Bhabha with cues from the characters of Anjum or Tilo. These are counterpoised with deeper critical analyses by enactments of resistance, matching Frantz Fanon's theories on counterviolence as a reappropriation of agency. Roy further criticizes environmental dimensions of colonial and capitalist exploitation as hedges to impress upon her narrative that social and ecological injustices are inseparable. In this way, through evocative descriptions and multi-dimensional characters, Roy critiques colonialism's historical and contemporary effects. He reclaims stories and spaces marginalized as belonging and resistance sites, begging for a reconsideration of identity, history, and the environment in postcolonial discourse.

Conclusion:

In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Arundhati Roy deftly weaves together the issues of identity, resistance, and degradation of the environment in the backdrop of postcolonialism. Roy (2017) celebrates fluid identities and, hence, the making of hybrid spaces to challenge the binaries of a colonizer. Indeed, acts of resistance are integral to how the characters reclaim agency via articulating Fanon's theories. Roy's notion of an ecological critique further underlines the inseparability between social justice and environmental justice. Through vivid descriptions and sophisticated characterization, Roy critiques colonialism's historical and contemporary impacts, reclaiming stories and spaces of erstwhile marginalized belonging and resisting locations. It is a narrative that calls for replicating identity, history, and the environment in postcolonial discourse, evidencing the ongoing struggle against colonial legacies.

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أنجوم مروي: وزارة أقصى السعادة: الهوية ما بعد الاستعمارية، المقاومة، والقضايا البيئية

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية ما بعد الاستعمارية، المقاومة، النقد البيئي، الهجنة، والمساحات المهمشة
الملخص:

تنتقد رواية أرونداتي روي 'وزارة أقصى السعادة' الهوية ما بعد الاستعمارية، والمقاومة، والقضايا البيئية الناجمة، حيث تملأ فجوة هائلة في الأدب ما بعد الاستعماري. تكشف كيف تتحرك الشخصيات وتقاوم آثار الاستعمار في الهند المعاصرة. باستخدام مفهوم التهجين لهومي ك. بهايما (1994) مع الهجرة، تُظهر أنجوم روي (2017) كيف يتم خلق 'مساحة ثالثة' حيث تأتي الهويات المهمشة لتعيد تعريف نفسها ضد الثنائيات الاجتماعية. وفقًا لفانون (2004)، من خلال المقاومة تنبثق أفعال التمرد التي تقوم بها تيلي ضد القوى القائمة. لقد أبرزت روي بالفعل كيف دمر التدهور البيئي الأرض، كما يتضح من تعبير أنجوم عن الحزن المرتبط بنهر ملوث، مما يسلط الضوء على ظلم الاستعمار والرأسمالية. هذا الدافع الذي يظهر في الرواية، يتعارض إذًا مع هذه السرديات التاريخية والأعراف الأبوية فيما يتعلق بالهوية والتاريخ في السياقات ما بعد الاستعمارية. السرد المعقد والشخصيات المتشابكة التي نسجتها روي تنتقد تأثير الاستعمار وتعمل على استعادة المساحات المهمشة والقصص التي ستساعد في تعزيز فهم أفضل للهوية والتاريخ والعدالة البيئية في الخطاب ما بعد الاستعماري.