



Examining Counter Discursivity in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article History:

Received: April 12, 2022

Revised: May 14, 2022

Accepted: May 15, 2022

Available Online: May 22, 2022

Keywords:

Arundhati Roy
Marginalization
Transgender
Critical Discourse Analysis
Counter Discursivity

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

The paper intends to examine the socio-political implications of Arundhati Roy's discourse in her novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. It aims to analyze the linguistic significance of the selected text and its role in countering the established social discourses. Further, it will be seen how the author's use of particular words challenges and undermines the existing dominant social structures. Roy uses persuasive language to make the downtrodden sections i.e. trans-genders, Dalits, and Kashmiris in Indian society reject marginalization. It is qualitative research that employs Norman Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model along with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. Persuasive Linguistic Devices are identified and used as tools to analyze the linguistic significance of the selected excerpts from the text. The analysis of the text reveals that Roy's unapologetic and powerful language allowed her characters to realize their potential and consider themselves a valuable part of Indian society.

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1. Introduction

Suzanna Arundhati Roy is a social activist, a radical thinker and the recipient of several prestigious awards, including the most recent 2022 St. Louis Literary Award. She has struggled for the welfare of the downgraded and ostracized people and social stratification, both politically via her interviews and aesthetically through her novels. Nayar (2017) praises Roy for her activism that empowers those who are against the tyrannical and autocratic political policies of the state. She actually provides the common man moral support to keep on fighting for the cause of justice (p. 46). Sushree Raj has praised Roy for not only writing novels against tyranny but also for her social activism and participation in rebellious movements in order to bring positive change in Indian society (p. 3).

The language one speaks also reflects the socio-cultural aspects of one's surroundings. Language and literature have always been significant for each other. Literary texts can be studied, interpreted, analysed and researched by discerning the language in which they are written. However, Enkvist, Spencer, and Gregory (1964) argue that it is not sensible to think that language is used only to write literature. In fact, it is the most important source of spreading one's culture by using it in a literary text (p. 60). Thus, when we look at Roy's novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), first we have to contextualize the language and second, we need to examine how the author undermines the normative ideas within the Indian society by using unconventional and unorthodox words or expressions.

Language can be used through verbal or written expressions. The different oral or written texts can be differentiated by looking at their unique and specific style. For this purpose, stylistics can be of great help because, being an important tool of linguistics, it helps in interpreting a certain piece of written or oral text and assists researchers to look at

particular socio-cultural aspects used in the text. It is through the use of stylistic techniques that the researchers inferred how the author, in the concerned novel, uses specific, strong and unapologetic linguistic expressions to elevate the downtrodden sections of the society.

According to Ellis (1970), stylistic devices consist of the unconventional, unorthodox and unprecedented use of words and sentences (p. 67). This also includes the use of new forms of grammatical pattern and application of figurative language i.e. hyperbole, metaphors, similes, alliteration, personifications etc. (Ahmad, Hashmi, Shehzadi, & Nawaz, 2021). Paul Simpson asserts that stylistics is concerned with the author's use of language in a particular way. It focuses on the way author uses "raw material" to craft a literary text (p. 98). This simply means that two words can be used, replaced by each other or can be used as antonyms for each other. By using words differently, the writer leads the reader to a world of different meanings. This dissimilarity or difference in the usage of the words is dependent on the way a writer uses those words or a speaker speaks those words (Ellis, p.70). This paper explores how language used by the author plays a significant role in revealing the importance of underprivileged people in making a wholesome society.

In order to undergo this exploration the following research question guided the researchers: What persuasive linguistic devices are used by Roy in order to give importance to the underprivileged section of the Indian society and to counter the dominant discourse?

2. Literature Review

Postcolonial countries like India and Pakistan still have to bear the pain of colonial invasion and its impact. Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (henceforth *Ministry*) describes the postcolonial nations with respect to race, religion and gender while dealing with the disappointing performance of postcolonial nations and their political system. Many postcolonial writers from different continents shed light on the dreadful situation prevalent in these independent countries. Writers like Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdi have made the socio-political condition of postcolonial nations the main themes of their works. They have criticized the working of native rulers after independence (Rizwan & Zoya, 2019).

Iyer (2018) sees *Ministry* from postcolonial perspective. She mentions that family history of Anjum is deeply affected by the partition of the subcontinent which was divided only on the basis of religion despite the socio-cultural and ethnic similarities. This novel identifies how the partition of the subcontinent influences gender and caste system. Iyer asserts that the unjust partition is the cause of the problems that postcolonial India is facing right now. Kashmir, as we all know, is the biggest stumbling block in achieving peace in the region (Abbas, Kharal, & Shahzadi, 2021).

Various perspectives pertaining to identity, marginalization, power politics etc. have been put forth by critics in an attempt to underscore the dynamic discourse of the novel. Kashyap (2019) describes the dilemma of identity crisis in Roy's novel. She observes that the characters are in search for their lost identity. They are struggling to survive and are interested in the historical lineage to which they belong. Ganguly (2017) observes marginalization in the novel and states that the novel focuses on the policies of the Indian state that force people to live outside the mainstream society. She argues that Roy has exposed the "the State and Corporate nexus" that exploit common man and does not give them the right to resist. Common man is an ostracized entity in the society (p. 133), according to Roy.

Mendes and Lau (2020) express their concern about the lives of India's others. They assert that Roy's novel describes "the conditions of precarity experienced by the recurrently Othered in India" (p. 2). They argue that the precariat embraces the situation of precarity willingly instead of being thrown out of the society forcibly.

Batra (2017) observes that there are hidden references to the political personalities and most of the events narrated in the novel are of political nature (p. 429). He considers the novel as political nonfiction disguised as a fiction. Maurya and Kumar (2019) also observe the "political overtones and allusions" (p. 829) in *Ministry*. They think that the novel sums up the reality of Indian democracy, poor condition of marginalized section of the society and Kashmir

issue. There are several political incidents the author refers to in the novel such as The Emergency of 1975, Bhopal Gas Tragedy which happened in 1984, and Gujarat Massacre in 2002. The critics assert that the novel challenges the socio-political condition of the country. Suleman, Mohamed, and Ahmmmed (2020) have also noted that *Ministry* has raised the political and gendered issues prevalent in the Indian society. They opine that political and gendered hegemony is forcing the oppressed genders to live in a "third space" (p. 6). Besides women, other genders like transgenders are also struggling to preserve their identity (Nawaz, Afzal, & Shehzadi, 2013). The gendered marginalization is legitimized by the support from political institutions (p. 5).

Besides political issues, Roy has always raised her concerns about environmental degradation. Mohsin and Taskeen (2017) see glimpses of Roy's concern for the environment in *Ministry*. They say that Roy has portrayed the bad environmental condition of Delhi as personified in an "old woman." The economic boom, urbanization, and capitalist system along with the never-ending process of deforestation, dam and factories construction have been instrumental in environmental degradation of the country. The capitalists always think about their profit at every cost. They have no concern for the health of individuals which is connected with healthy environment (p. 81). Choudhary (2018) also talks about the issue of environmental degradation. She argues that Roy is worried for the death of "old bird" because of the inclusion of a new chemical into the ecosystem. She states that Roy has criticized the human eagerness to become more industrialized without thinking of its negative repercussions (p. 789).

Ministry reveals the traumatic lives of human beings inhabiting the Indian society. Devanesam and Manimozhi (2020) delineate how the social pressures push transgenders to the wall and as a result they suffer from mental and physical trauma. Although transgenders are forced to leave mainstream society, they open their arms to help other socially degraded people as Anjum opens a guest house for them to live peacefully (p. 3668). On the other hand, Jahan (2021) asserts that Roy has addressed the phenomenon of "The New Subaltern" in *Ministry* (1). She observes that the novel reveals and endorses the life of the subaltern by making its othered characters strong, powerful and authoritative. Jahan believes that Roy is not sympathizing with the subaltern; rather she is giving them the confidence to take their decisions themselves (p. 9).

From the foregoing, it appears that researches by various critics have not yet focused in detail on the critical discourse analysis that allows readers to look at how the author uses persuasive language at lexical and sentential level to make the underprivileged sections i.e. transgenders, Dalits and Kashmiris in Indian society reject marginalization, racism and intolerance in this novel.

3. Research Methodology

This research is qualitative and concentrates on the Critical Discourse Analysis (Henceforth CDA) that allows the reader to look at how the author uses persuasive language at lexical level to make the underprivileged sections i.e. transgenders, Dalits and Kashmiris reject marginalization, racism and intolerance in Arundhati Roy's *Ministry*.

While there are many aspects of CDA, it rests on the notion that discourse helps in establishing social practices and in turn social practices propagate certain discourses (Fairclough, 1992). Van Dijk (1993) asserts that unlike other discourse analyses, critical discourse analysis is directed towards the comprehension of social issues (p. 252). Fairclough (1989) three-dimensional model i.e. the connection between text, its production and interpretation, and particular social setting strengthens this research that underscores the connection between discourse and social practices.

3.1 Fairclough's 3-D Model:

In order to explain the intricate link between discourse and social structures, (Fairclough, 1989) provides a discursive model that outlines three dimensions of any discourse i.e. text; discourse practice; and social practice. Fairclough's model explains the relation between social practices and discourse in three ways. Firstly, it concentrates on the linguistic features of the written or spoken text. In this, it examines the manner in which it disseminates the subject by using particular words or grammatical structures. Secondly, it emphasizes the

"production and interpretation" of the text (p. 25). It also deals with the manner in which social institutions support or discourage the text. Thirdly, it analyses the sociocultural conditions that affect the social structures and institutions.

While explaining his model, Fairclough asserts that the outer dimensions affect the inner ones. He suggests that the social conditions have a great impact on the resources that people use to produce texts and in turn this influences the interpretation of the text. This shows that language used in the text is always influenced by socio-cultural factors of the society (*Language and Power*, p.25). He asserts that all the three sections of his model are not separate, rather they are interdependent.

The analysis of the text explains the authorial choice of language, words and discourses within a text (Taylor, 2004). Fairclough explains his idea of analysing a text in his book *Discourse and Social Change* (1992). This includes the process of looking at the linguistic characteristics i.e. "words, grammatical structures, vocabulary, coherence and cohesion" (p. 137). The analysis of a text depends on the notion that writers have the liberty to compile a text as they want. This use of choice by authors indicates their power to construct social identities and realities. Fairclough uses Halliday's systemic linguistic and its functional parameters for analysis at the textual level. The ideational analysis represents author's understanding of the world whereas Interpersonal Functions are used for the analysis of social relations customary among the participants in an interaction. Lastly, the textual analysis is about the linguistic features and context of the text.

3.2 Discursive practices

Textual analysis is not done separately rather it is always connected with discursive practices. The study and investigation of discursive practices always stress on the manner in which the texts are produced and interpreted. This particular sequence of discourse used is actually the representation of the socially accepted practices through language. By examining the discursive practices, a researcher can recognize the manner in which social orders of discourse are drawn upon (Mullins, 2013). A particular sequence of discourse can tell about the notion of power and hegemony perpetrated by the social structures.

3.3 Context

Socio-cultural setting is significant in the analysis of the context because it analysis the text and social practices situated in a particular environment. Here, the analysis examines not only the influence of social structures in the formation of discourses but also the role of discourses in establishing social structures. Fairclough is concerned with the discourse as the main driving force in the formation of ideological power.

4. Analysis of the Text

The prevailing discourse in India is that the Muslims, Dalits and transgenders are nothing more than useless part of the society. They can easily be killed or pushed to the periphery and do not possess the right to live peacefully in the mainstream society. The transgenders are being looked down upon by the "established genders". They are considered a curse and their identity is not disclosed to the world such as in the case of Aftab. Burdened by the social dictates, his father tries to make him a "man" by taking him to surgeons and doctors. He uses every possible tactic to make his "transgender" progeny a "male". Roy, by portraying the strong and daring character of Aftab, makes a socially relevant case for transgenders. She uses unapologetic language to show that transgenders like Aftab have the right to decide their own future. Roy does not, at any moment, portray Aftab's character as weak or dependent. She presents him as a character who dares to reject established social norms and becomes what he wants to. He makes his own decisions and stands by them. He not only took a daring step to leave his home but also rejected his male identity imposed on him and as a result "Aftab became Anjum" (p. 25).

4.1 Expert opinion/ Evidence

Fairclough (1989) asserts that the authors have the freedom to write what they want. This authorial intention gives them the ability to construct new realities and identities. The prevailing discourse in the Indian society is that transgenders are a curse and devoid of any historical ties. Roy takes help from the authorial intention to negate this established notion by

providing the expert opinion or evidence: "When Shahenshah Shah Jahan built the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid, when he built this walled city, he built our little haveli too" (p. 49). Thus, through her discourse, Roy tries to construct social reality that connects transgenders with the history of the Sub-continent. They are not born to make this world miserable and filthy; instead they share history with the great emperors of India. Roy not only negates the dominant discourse but also claims that "To be present in history, even as nothing more than a chuckle, was a universe away from being absent from it, from being written out of it altogether" (p. 51). Roy further says that there must be a reason behind transgenders' continued existence although the emperors are long gone. She thinks that their existence is the evidence of their significance in the present era as she states, "They're all gone now, those mighty emperors and their queens. But we are still here. Think about that and ask yourselves why that should be" (p. 49). She is giving a food for thought to her readers about the history and about present-day significance of transgenders' existence.

Roy gave names to the places or differentiates between two things deliberately to reject the socially constructed bifurcations. She described the home of socially banished people as "Khwabgah" and the main stream society as "Duniya". Then she explained that it was called Khwabgah "because it was where special people, blessed people, came with their dreams that could not be realized in the Duniya" (p. 53). This division between the two worlds actually went against the established discourse of considering "Duniya" as the hub of happy and satisfied people. Roy denied this prevailing narrative by making the home of the socially rejected people as a place of dreams where the people from "Duniya" cannot live. This place is only for special people like transgenders.

Roy dismisses the idea of transgenders being associated with a particular religion. She provided the evidence of their significant existence in Hindu religion when Gudiya told everyone that "Hijras had a special place of love and respect in Hindu mythology" (p. 51). Here, Roy not only made it clear that transgenders were a part of Muslim and Hindu religious history but also portrayed that they are harmless to other religions. They do not engage in religious fights as in "Khwabgah", transgenders from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity were used to live peacefully (Jamil, Farooq, Sajid, & Shehzadi, 2021). Roy highlighted this point of view to create a discourse that humanity outlives religious fights. By comparing the killing of Muslims by Hindus and the harmony between transgenders belonging to different religions, Roy criticized the established social structures and discourses.

4.2 Rhetoric questions

"Rhetoric questioning" is another device used by Roy to counter the discourse about the insignificance of underprivileged section of the Indian society. This technique helps to take feedback from the characters about certain situations. Roy throughout her novel uses this tool to make her own discourse. While discussing the biasness of "Duniya", Roy through the character of Kulsoom Bi, talks about the lives, miseries and problems of the transgenders. She asserts that transgenders are human beings just like other people and they face same kind of problems as others face. Everyone has to make sacrifices to make life better and transgenders are no exception. She asks "Ordinary people in the Duniya – what did they know about what it takes to live the life of a Hijra?" (p. 53). Ordinary people know nothing about transgenders and they assume things on their own. Roy takes the liberty, as Fairclough's Three-D model asserts, to re-write her own social reality in favour of transgenders.

Another prevailing discourse in the society is that transgenders are kidnappers. They kidnap small children and castrate them. By countering this discourse, Roy delineates upon the first rule in "hijra Gharana" that is based on "*manzoori*" (consent) (p. 53). Unlike the so called normal people, they do not force anyone to live with them. This discourse was further strengthened when they asked Zainab whether she wanted to go with Anjum or not.

Caste system has great significance in the Indian society. The prevalent notion was, and still is, that lower-class Hindus are meant to serve the upper-class Hindus. With time the narrative shaped into a social practice. Now Indian society believes that there is a marked distinction between the two classes and it is supported by their religion. That is why lower-caste people are not allowed the right to live according to their will. This dominant discourse is then used for political purposes. The discourse of caste system is predominant throughout the novel. Roy, by using the device of rhetoric questions, quashes this discourse and overrides it

with her discourse. When Azad Bhartiya was asked about his caste, he rejected this caste system by asking "What caste am I? That is your question? With such a huge political agenda as mine, you tell me, what caste should I be? What caste were Jesus and Gautam Buddha? What caste was Marx? What caste was Prophet Mohammed?" (p. 129). This clearly shows Roy's intentions to counter the dominant discourse of caste system in the Indian society.

4.3 Simile

Roy takes help from simile, a figurative device, to build a narrative in favour of less privileged section of the Indian society. Similes are used for unapologetic expressions. According to Fairclough, a society becomes habitual of performing certain actions and with the passage of time these actions become legitimized. This can be seen throughout the novel, as the actions of powerful people against socially deprived lower Hindu classes and transgenders become legitimized. Fairclough's CDA also deals with the social injustices like gendered, social and religious marginalization and inequalities

The dominant discourse in the Indian society is that the transgenders and poor people were insignificant and that is why there is no place for them in the mainstream society. This discourse is then embedded in the social fabric and the society started pushing the weak towards the periphery. In the selected novel, Roy gives importance to Anjum as she projects his existence "like a tree" (p. 1). Roy portrays Anjum's selfless image which negates the established social discourse. Roy used the simile of a tree to counter the notion of Anjum, a transgender, considered as "bad luck" (p. 62). Socially banished people were welcomed warmly in his guest house. In fact, Anjum, a transgender, helped people to live with her in the "Jannat Guest House" regardless of their caste, religion and gender (p. 68). Roy describes the social abuses that the transgenders have to face but she also draws a parallel attitude which values them. Despite these injustices, Anjum did not react and "she let the hurt blow through her branches like a breeze and used the music of her rustling leaves as balm to ease the pain" (p. 1). She takes all the pain but in return she helps the other marginalized people by giving them space in her guest house.

Ministry projects the established social discourse of separating transgenders from the mainstream society and pushing them towards the periphery. The social discourse about transgenders is not welcoming. Their personal features are given different names and this creates a bias against them. This discourse then creates an impression that the transgenders are not normal. The use of the word "Hijra tendencies" (p. 17) by Dr. Nabi, in the novel, clearly shows the kind of disgust and disrespect the society nurtures for transgenders. But Roy portrays them as beautiful human beings: "Short and chubby with thick, curly hair, stunning eyebrows curved like a pair of scimitars, and exceptionally thick eyelashes" (p. 22).

By giving voice to the ostracized transgenders, Roy not only gives them importance but also re-writes history through them. By letting Kulsoom Bi speak, she actually constructs social realities, and this is the main focus of Fairclough's model. Roy is helping transgenders to emerge as victorious as she says "'There!' Ustad Kulsoom Bi would say, like a triumphant lepidopterist who has just netted a rare moth: 'Did you hear that?' That is us" (p. 51). This shows Roy's efforts to ascribe significance to this community. She reiterates support and space for them, so they achieve their dreams. She counters the discourse of uselessness of transgenders when she writes "See, this is what I wanted to look like when I was young. I had a real fashion sense. But nobody understood. I was too far ahead of our times" (p. 410).

Besides transgenders, Roy makes a strong case, through her discourse, for other marginalized sections of the Indian society. In order to make cities modern and industrialized, the government pushed the poor people and dragged them to the periphery. These poor people were forced to leave their homes and live elsewhere. They were advised not to come back and were left without help. By writing on this topic, Roy actually reprises that poor people have no rights because they have no power. They are being oppressed by the powerful industrialists while the government institutions also help powerful people. These powerful people then make up a discourse of progress which is an endorsement of Fairclough's point of view that discourse and social practices are controlled by the powerful institutions.

Roy portrays the miserable condition of poor people. Their homes were bulldozed and "Surplus mothers perched like sparrows on the debris of what used to be their homes and sang their surplus children to sleep" (p. 100). They needed someone to raise voice against this discrimination and oppression and they found an old man, Azad Bhartiya. Roy says that, "Like a good prospector, the old man had tapped into a rich seam, a reservoir of public anger, and much to his own surprise had become a cult figure overnight" (p. 102). Roy, by making him a hero, gives importance to a common and relegated man.

Roy has also talked about the atrocities done to Kashmiris. She is very critical about the dominant discourse of the Kashmiris being terrorists. She is repulsed by the fact that innocent Kashmiris are killed and then their bodies are thrown in dumpsters. Roy builds up a narrative for the dead Kashmiris by arranging a graveyard for them as she writes: "Everyone understood how important it was to bury martyrs' bodies in collective burial grounds and not leave them scattered" (p. 311). She describes the condition of graveyard in these words: "When they ran out of space, some graves became double-deckered, like the buses in Srinagar that once ferried tourists between Lal Chowk and the Boulevard" (p. 319).

Other religious characters are also introduced by Roy in her novel. She makes them important by giving voice to them. These characters are rejected by their religious communities and they have to live alone. One such character is Tilottama, who belongs to a Christian family from Kerala. Throughout the novel, she is shown as an unhappy and unfortunate woman. But Roy changes this by praising her personality and saying that she was "like an Ethiopian queen" (p.386).

In the same vein, in the Indian society, the lower-class Hindus are treated inhumanely. The dominant social discourse is to stay away from them as they are "untouchables" (Roy 73). They work as cleaners and sweepers and help the upper-caste Hindus to dispose of dead cows. This discourse of degrading *chamars* actually promotes the social action of their killing by upper-caste Hindus without any grave consequences. By exemplifying lower-class Hindus, Roy rejects the injustices done to them by powerful Hindu institutions. Saddam's father was killed by a mob and his dead body was disposed of brutally. He was not given proper burial. Roy, in the novel, goes against the social norms and gives burial to a Hindu *chamar* as "they decided they would buy a shirt in his name from one of the shops (like people bought chadars in dargahs) and bury it in the old graveyard" (p. 412).

4.4 Repetition

Repetition is another persuasive device used by Roy. The writer has used this technique to lay emphasis on certain critical and important issues and to reinforce her message. For instance, she takes help from this technique to highlight the miserable condition of people who cannot even afford a home to live in. Capitalism had a great role to play in forced displacement of people from their homes in the slums. The economic and political state narrative asserted that instead of letting these people live in these areas, new factories must be allowed to build. This would allow the country to grow economically. These people were considered so much insignificant to the society that this state narrative was supported by the decision of a Supreme Court Judge who ordered that "People who can't afford to live in cities shouldn't come here" (p. 97). This narrative then embedded in the society and people started thinking that it was a right practice to shoo away these poor people from the mainstream city life. Roy not only criticized this practice of ignoring poor people but also gave them importance by writing on their social condition (Shehzadi, 2018). Her repetitive use of certain words like "bit by bit, humiliation by humiliation" (p. 53) created a new discourse which would provide the reader with the food for thought about the social injustices done to the poor section of the society. She countered the discourse of economic progress by portraying the pathetic living condition of these people as she said: "Sleeping bodies of homeless people lined their high, narrow pavements, head to toe, head to toe, head to toe, looping into the distance" (p. 96).

She then compared the situation of these people with the billboards. She criticized the capitalist approach of giving importance to the material things such as huge billboards instead of working on making human lives better. Poor people are so insignificant for the capitalistic world that nobody cares about their pathetic living conditions; they have to sleep on roads without any social security whereas the billboards were protected by the guards (p. 97).

The social discourse of considering transgenders as “bad luck” has been the mainstay of Indian society. This discourse changes the mind-set of people and forces parents to change the gender of their transgender offspring. Roy counters this discourse by using the figurative technique of repetition. During her visit to Ajmer Sharif, Gujarat Riots of 2002 erupted after a railway coach was burnt by some extremists. This incident provided an opportunity to the Gujarat Government to initiate a state narrative against the Muslims. One of the cabinet ministers of Gujarat Government accused Pakistani government in particular and Muslims in general of being involved in this incident. He claimed that “Muslim Terrorists do not deserve Human Rights!” (p. 115). This created a narrative in the society that Muslims were against Hindus and they were working against the Indian state. This led to the state led campaign against Muslims initiating political and social victimization. The police started arresting and killing Muslims. Anjum experienced this entire incident and saw Zakir Mian, a Muslim, being killed by Hindu mob.

Through repetition Roy reveals the repercussions of this state narrative which labelled Muslims as terrorists. Anjum was an eye witness to this event: “She tried to un-know what they had done to all the others – how they had folded the men and unfolded the women” (p. 61). The repetitive use of the words “folded” “unfolded” provides an evidence of Roy’s emphasis on the horrific nature of the incident. Hindu mobs and the police were acting like butchers pulling Muslims “apart limb from limb and set them on fire. But she knew very well that she knew” (p. 62). The repeated use of words “limb” and “knew” highlights the gravity of the situation. Anjum remained safe during this whole episode not because she was not a Muslim but because she was a transgender. The prevalent discourse that killing a transgender would bring bad luck saved her and “She knew very well that she knew very well that she knew very well” (p. 63). The repetitive use of “knew very well” emphasizes the insignificant nature of transgender’s existence. Had he not been a transgender, he would have been killed. But thanks to her transgender status, she survived the whole episode.

Kashmir has always been mal-administered by the Indian government. Indian state considers it its part but the Kashmiri people negate this claim. The Kashmiris are struggling for independence from the Indian army since ages. Roy repeated the word “Kashmir” and “our” to give a glimpse of how much badly and enthusiastically Kashmiris want freedom as she wrote: “The Kashmir we have irrigated with our blood! That Kashmir is ours!” (p. 324).

4.5 Parallelism

Parallelism is another persuasive technique used by Roy to give significance to the less privileged sections of Indian society as well as to create a counter discourse to the established discourses. The social narrative of pushing transgenders and lower-class Hindus towards the periphery made them question the purpose of their existence. Anjum considered his life useless and was living alone in a graveyard. The killing of Saddam’s father forced him to change his name. Roy, by using the technique of parallelism, described the lives and emotions of both the characters in these words: “Anjum waited to die....Saddam waited to kill” (p. 92).

She used this technique to reveal the misconception of Indian political leaders about the Muslims. The Indian Prime Minister accused Muslims of being terrorists and this created a state narrative against Muslims. Roy portrayed his words in a poetic form to stress on the meaning and significance of words as she wrote “The Mussalman, he doesn’t like the other. His faith, he spreads through Terror”(p. 41). This narrative then led to the slaughter of Indian Muslims. During the whole Gujarat massacre, Hindus shouted “*Mussalman ka ek hi sthan! Qabristan ya Pakistan!*” (p. 62). Roy endorses Fairclough’s model by using parallelism technique to expose the link between the established discourse and the social practices.

4.6 Alliteration

Roy takes help from another figurative device i.e. alliteration to give importance to the marginalized and unheard sections of the Indian society. She negates the social discourse of ignoring under privileged people and provides them with the voice to speak for their rights. She uses her words to construct social realities as Fairclough asserts that the use of certain words and sentences by the author means that he/ she is trying to re-construct social realities (Mullins, 2013). In the selected novel, the protest against the state backed capitalism was led by the old man. But Roy uses her authorial intentions to project old man’s words. She

described this situation through alliteration as she wrote: "The old man's rustic rhetoric" (p. 102) got attention and newspapers and social media started promoting his ideas against the state. This promotion of anti-state narrative was actually the starting point of a counter narrative which was promoted by the news agencies and social media.

Roy's intentional use of alliterative device makes the reader realize that she is emphasizing a certain point of view. She says that "He made stirring speeches" and this "seemed to touch the very soul of the nation" (p. 103). The use of alliteration makes the reader to give attention to the old man's speeches against the state as anti-discourse.

Roy uses this persuasive device to compare the lives of people living in "Jannat Guest House" and in "Duniya". She negated the dominant narrative of mainstream society being perfect for everyone. She also rejected the idea that socially relegated people could not live happily and satisfactorily in the periphery: "So all in all, with a People's Pool, a People's Zoo and a People's School" the life was in its full bloom and people were not craving to return to the mainstream society (p. 400). The reason was that the "Duniya" was not as perfect as the dominant narrative claimed it to be. In fact, the marginalized people were happier in their own world as compared to the people of "Duniya".

The discourse regarding transgenders is that they live a miserable life because they are banished people. Roy countered this notion by giving voice to Anjum. Through Anjum's character, Roy refused to accept the narrative of transgenders living doomed lives. She made use of alliterative device in the conversation between Anjum and Nimmo to promote the idea that transgenders also live a happy and satisfactory life: Anjum "desperately wanted to contradict her, to tell her she was dead wrong, because he was happy, happier than he had ever been before. He was living proof that Nimmo Gorakhpuri was wrong, was he not? (p. 23).

Roy not only used questions in her novel but also gave reasons to facilitate readers' comprehension. Through certain examples, she gave importance to the socially ostracized sections of the society. Patriarchy has a strong foothold in the Indian society and this can be seen through the example of Anjum's father's efforts to make him a "man". Roy used her authorial intention to recreate the social reality and tried to counter the dominant discourse of patriarchal superiority. In his quest to inculcate manliness in Anjum, his father tried to impress him with the stories of his male predecessors. Roy rejected the discourse of patriarchy when Anjum despite hearing the stories of his "warrior ancestors" wanted to be "Borte Khatun" (p. 17). In fact, she countered this male dominant discourse by showing that Anjum wanted to be "women-like" rather than "man-like" character in the novel. His insistence to look like a woman countered the established social discourse of patriarchal superiority.

Being a transgender, Anjum was different from others. Despite his father's efforts to make him a "man", he did not give up on becoming what he wanted to be. By allowing a transgender to make his own decisions, Roy promoted the narrative of free will. Anjum followed his instinct to act like a transgender. He was not interested in becoming a man or a woman rather he was more interested in living a life of a transgender. For instance, Roy states: "Aftab wanted to be her" although "The woman Aftab followed could dress as she was dressed and walk the way she did only because she wasn't a woman" (p. 19).

Being a male is a sense of pride in the Indian society. Men are socially superior to women. Throughout the novel, Anjum dressed like a woman but his male parts were a constant worry for him. To get rid of his male parts, he consulted doctors but nothing satisfactory happened. Whenever he dressed up in female attire, his male parts were a constant "humiliation" for him (p. 27). Roy presented this part of the story to undermine the dominant social discourse of patriarchy being superior to other genders.

Anjum's free will to leave his home and live in "Khwabgah" was also Roy's masterstroke against the dominant social discourse about transgenders as "kidnappers". She provided Anjum the chance to change the social reality by allowing her to leave his home "regardless of what admonition and punishment awaited him, Aftab would return to his post stubbornly, day after day" (p. 19). He kept on insisting to live in "Khwabgah" and ultimately achieved it against the social norms and traditions. This step allowed Roy to make a narrative that transgenders are not forced to leave their homes rather they themselves take these decisions.

Roy provided reasons to reject the political and social realities projected by the Indian state. She did not embrace the false narrative that Indian society is progressing and people are living a happy life. Instead she revealed the capitalist monopoly behind displacement of poor people from their homeland. The corrupt political system was the main reason behind the miserable economic condition of the country. Throughout the novel, Roy threw light on the protests and gave importance to the underprivileged sections of the society. She provides evidence and reasons to justify her point of view as she wrote: "Thousands have gathered here because corrupt politicians have made our lives unbearable" (p. 121). She condemned the established political structure by calling it "circus ring" (p. 121).

Roy's characters were not from the elite class of the society. She portrayed men from the less privileged, ostracized and suppressed sections of the society. She gave importance to those whose voice was not heard by the social and political hierarchies. She presented "revolutionary" (p. 128) men who did not conform to the existing political structures and went against the state organizations.

4.7 Modal verbs

Roy also uses modal verbs to project Anjum as a strong character who walked against the social norms. Anjum's male part was a constant worry for him and he wanted to get rid of it. He consulted a doctor who recommended Anjum to undergo surgery. Roy takes help from the modal verb "should" to explain the whole scenario and it is surprisingly daring that Anjum decided matter in just "three whole minutes" (p. 28). Hence, Roy counters the social discourse of patriarchal superiority by giving Anjum a choice to prioritize female body parts over male body parts. This clearly endorses Fairclough's Three-D model's notion that subjects have the authority to re-write their own social realities.

Roy uses modality to challenge and change the social norms. Caste system is the biggest reality in the Indian society. Roy challenged the established hierarchy of this caste system by stating that: "Each caste must do the work it has been born to do, but all work must be respected." (p. 103). She rejected the notion of one caste being superior to the other and asserted that human beings are equal and they must be equally respected.

Roy utilizes modality to separate truth from falsehood. She does not take side with the state narrative that considers freedom fighters in Kashmir as terrorists. Through Nagaraj Hariharan, an upright journalist, Roy exposed the Indian political and military system and highlights the difference between false state narrative and ground realities. By providing Hariharan the chance to talk to a native Kashmiri freedom fighter, Roy revealed the role of the print media in promoting false state narrative. The freedom fighter urged the journalist "If you write about me you must write the truth. It's not true what he - Ashfaq Sahib - said" (p. 227). Roy counters the prevalent narrative of Kashmiris being terrorists with sound arguments.

By using adjectives Roy gives importance to the oppressed classes of the Indian society. She made Anjum such a bold and strong character that "None of the municipal officers who visited her was man enough" (p. 67). The qualities created problems for her in the graveyard because of her "legendary abilities" (p. 67).

Roy uses adjectives to give powerful aura to transgenders' personality. She considered their beauty "exaggerated" and "outrageous" (p. 26) which made them look far better than women. Moreover, through Kulsoom Bi's character, Roy described the whole living system of transgenders' house. The established social discourse undermined transgenders and marginalized them. Roy condemned this attitude and praised them for living "principled" lives and following "iron discipline" (p. 53).

Transgenders were considered unlucky and the Hindu fundamentalists did not kill Anjum because it would bring bad luck to them. Roy narrated this incident to provide the information regarding the established social discourse. Later on, she rejected this discourse and considered them "Holy Souls trapped in the wrong bodies" (p. 53). The association of such adjectives with transgenders clearly defies the social practice and discourse.

Roy aptly uses adjectives to criticize capitalist system and its damning effects on common man. Throughout the novel, the state narrative considered capitalist system as the symbol of progress. But Roy countered it by considering it catastrophic for the less privileged sections of Indian society. The forced evacuation of slum areas in the city actually created more problems than good. People had to leave their homes and "surplus children" had to sleep on footpaths (p. 101). The use of the adjective "surplus" by Roy was a criticism on the government's insensitive actions in the name of progress.

5. Conclusion

This research aimed at exploring the linguistic significance of Arundhati Roy's discourse and its role in rejecting the socially established norms and practices in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. It examined how words can be used powerfully to undermine the normative social notions and institutions. It reveals that Roy uses persuasive language at lexical and sentential level to make deprived people including transgenders, religious minorities like Dalits and Muslims, and Kashmiris to speak up for their social and political rights. Critical Discourse Analysis is used to analyse the text as it is an appropriate method to explore the use of particular language in order to create a discourse against socially established discourses.

Roy provided the expert opinion/ evidence from the past to prove existential significance of transgenders. She alluded to the events that focused on promoting the notion of social importance of transgenders. Moreover, she used the rhetorical questions technique to elicit feedback from her readers. These questions allowed the characters to develop their opinion. She also used simile to clarify socio-political concepts. Adjectives were used for the weak and suppressed sections to help them prove their value. She also laid stress on certain things or events by using the technique of repetition. She repeated particular words or sentences to throw light on the importance of certain point of views or perspectives. Roy also used modality to allow characters to speak their minds out. Finally, she used alliteration and parallelism to add to the gravity of the issues.

This research highlights the socio-political and religious marginalization of transgenders, Dalits and Kashmiris in the Indian society. These findings are connected with the three levels of Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model. Firstly, an interaction of the dominant and the subjugated is happening between Hindus and Muslims, and state and citizens. Secondly, the discourse is produced through interaction between the state and the people and the researchers have used CDA as a tool to extract relevant excerpts from the text. Thirdly, this interaction affects the language used in the selected text.

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