

## **CONCLUSION**

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In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, King Lear, late at night, standing on the cliffs, expresses his wonder to the blind Earl of Gloucester : 'Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse / in a light; yet you see how this world goes' (4.5.141-42) and the blind man Gloucester replies 'I see it feelingly' (4.5.143). At this juncture in a postmodern world, four hundred years after *King Lear*, the need to 'see' the world 'feelingly' is much more than ever and if there is anything that Roy's texts ask us about – it is to see the world 'feelingly'.

Since the publication of *The God of Small Things*, Roy's sincere concern, expressed through her art and activism for the deprived and the exploited, has established her as one of India's most powerful and articulate voices of dissent. Over the years she has demonstrated her 'ability to put her finger, unerringly and unfailingly, on the pulse of the nation, a pulse that the media neglects to read, politicians prefer not to hear, and the middle-class urban Indians pretend doesn't exist' (Someshwar). A crusader on behalf of all people exploited and manipulated by the economics of modernity, Roy's texts are essentially a sheer indictment on the flawed development policies pursued at present. What Roy has argued, time and again, is that the capitalist greed for limitless growth is driving this planet towards apocalypse, where all creation ends, and destruction takes over. Very interestingly Roy's concern is also echoed by a recent report of the UN prepared by the Global Environment Outlook (GEO). While presenting the report UN Secretary-General, Antonio Gutierrez in unambiguous terms stated that:

Our environmental and climatic breakdown is driven by an economic model that pursues endless growth at all costs...There is a clear prognosis of what will happen if we continue with business as usual.<sup>1</sup>

Under the given circumstances, being gravely worried about the bleak future of humankind, Roy has channelized all her energy not only to contest the neoliberal policies of corporate globalization but also to narrativize possible alternatives, socially just and environmentally sustainable, to counteract the lurking dangers.

The present study is based on the findings and inferences derived from the researcher's critical evaluation of Roy's non-fictional works on four counts –

*Firstly*, while problematizing the debate over India's nuclear armament Roy has always maintained her stance by pointing out 'the colossal, epochal immorality of nuclear weapons' (Bidwal). She has blatantly argued that :

If there is a nuclear war, our foes will not be China or America or even each other. Our foe will be the earth herself. The very elements – the sky, the air, the land, the wind and water – will all turn against us. Their wrath will be terrible. (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 5-6)

So the race of nuclear armament is ultimately a race of death, a journey towards doomsday.

While tracing the origin of the current crisis Roy states that it is capitalism with the consequence of its unbridled greed that has led the world to the brink of nuclear apocalypse. Hegemonic interest or the untamed greed to appropriate and exploit 'other people's share of the planet's precious resources' (Shiva, *India Divided* 68) has created this death race. Instead of all-inclusive growth and equal

distribution of wealth it has centralized power and wealth in the hands of a few plutocrats and tycoons. With an eye to their dominance over the hegemony and their own supremacy these people have always pleaded in favour of lethal weapons. Indeed, the progress of civilization ironically coincides with the development of deadlier weapons that can kill and destroy human beings in great numbers at a single go. India's embracing of nuclearization, therefore, indicates the postcolonial nation's inherent desire for global dominance.

At this point it must be taken into account that in the debate India's precarious terrestrial location, the compelling security reasons - basically the threat from China has not been taken into consideration. The problem is that there is no such global regulatory regime to address the growing menace of militarization. In this regulatory vacuum, India has obviously legitimate reasons to develop deterrence for security of her own people and assets.

Roy's poignant petition against environmental injustice, however, found its eloquent expression in her essay, "The Greater Common Good" where she has debated at length the environmental consequences of the gigantic Narmada Valley Project that envisages building 30 large-sized reservoirs, 135 moderate-sized reservoirs and 3,000 minor reservoirs. Analysing the facts and figures, published by the dam authorities, Roy has substantiated her argument by exposing their false claims. Her unmediated empirical experiences among the distressed people also led her to conclude that dams are being constructed less for the poor people to solve their problem of water, flood and electricity than for the rich and affluent.

Moreover, the environmental costs of such a gigantic project are immense. The project, besides devastating human lives, would also destroy the biodiversity by

submerging thousands of acres of forests and farming land. Besides, these reservoirs would affect the normal flow in both upstream and downstream and that would consequently turn the majestic Narmada river into a series of stagnant water bodies. It is a threat to the endangered Marsh Crocodile species. Once again, it would foil the high-yielding Hilsa Fishery in India along with the giant fresh water prawn. From another angle these dams are nothing but untenable encroachment on nature. They involve 'low probability – high consequence' (Myers 47) risks.

A deeper insight into the controversial SSP and NSP reveals that people are not against the development project rather they are against the environmental and humanitarian crisis they are dragged into due to the sheer apathy of the government to rehabilitate and resettle them. The displaced people are simply dispossessed without any proper re-settlement plan. There lies the deep rooted crisis. Even the independent review committee of the World Bank, the Morse Commission clearly stated that :

We think the Sardar Sarovar Projects as they stand are flawed, that resettlement and rehabilitation of all those displaced by the Projects is not possible under prevailing circumstances, and that environmental impacts of the Projects have not been properly considered or adequately addressed. Moreover, we believe that the Bank shares responsibility with the borrower for the situation that has developed ... it seems clear that engineering and economic imperatives have driven the Projects to the exclusion of human and environmental concerns ...As a result, we think that the wisest course would be for

the Bank to step back from the Projects and consider them afresh...

(Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 95-96)

Such detection in themselves, besides the possible other alternatives mediated, account for the strongest petition against the construction of mega reservoirs and Roy's discourse becomes a sheer indictment on flawed western development policies we have been pursuing since independence. Tabassum Ruhi Khan, therefore, has justly argued that :

The Narmada Dam debate is important not only because it exemplifies perseverance for human rights in the face of rising stridency in the struggle over precious resources in neoliberal globalizing India but also because it marks the emerging importance of mediated spaces as the site for both enunciation and contestation of environmental issues. (Khan 194)

**Secondly**, besides renouncing India's fetish for building big dams, the other single thing that Roy has consistently been concerned with is - 'the machinations of transnational corporations as well as the cruelties of privatization and development politics' (Comfort 119). Through her art and activism Roy has been persistently and stridently vociferous against hegemony of all sorts. The postmodern world, for Roy, is a world of globalization, economic liberalization, corporatization and privatization and in this world the first world countries, basically America and her allies, are exploiting the third world countries for their own hegemonic interest through the means of IMF, World Bank, WTO, and several other trade related treaties. In the guise of 'creating a good climate investment' (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 203) there is the systematic invasion of American neo-imperialism. It is to be noted

that at that time globalization and neo-liberalism were lauded as the panacea for the social discord and malady. They were presented in such a manner as if they would bring forth a happy world ensuring everybody a more prosperous, stable and benevolent world.

But very soon the stories of real suffering, deprivation, exploitation, stark poverty and the pathetic plight of a large section of people began to surface. The structural adjustment policies of IMF – which were supposed to help a country get rid of the financial crisis, often led to hunger and riots. Bolivia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Morocco and a host of other countries have become the victims of such terrible conditions. However, Iraq seems to be the classic example of the devastating consequences of globalization and neo-liberalism. During the 1990s more than 500,000 Iraqi children had died’ (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 225) because of the financial and commercial restrictions imposed on them. A recent report of the UN is once again a grim reminder of the sheer apathy of these rich people towards the poor and the deprived. The report published in the media states that :

The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the United Nations was founded in 1945 with more than 20 million people in four countries facing starvation and famine, the UN humanitarian Chief said on Friday. Stephen O’Brien told the UN Security Council that ‘without collective and co-ordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death’ and ‘many more will suffer and die from disease’.

He urged an immediate injection of funds for Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria, plus safe and unimpeded access for

humanitarian aid ‘to avert a catastrophe’. ‘To be precise we need \$ 4.4 billion by July,’ O’Brien said.<sup>2</sup>

What is happening in Bolivia, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco, Libya, Syria, Venezuela etc. cannot be considered isolated examples of suppression and exploitation rather they are a part of the diabolical mechanism of corporate globalization.

The similar picture of what is happening in these countries is visible in India too. This glaring disconnect becomes evident when one sees that in the last 50 odd years ‘around 50 million people’ (Salve) have been evicted from their homes to make room for the development projects, ‘42 percent of the world’s’ (Maginer) malnourished infants and children belong to this country, ‘2,50,000 debt-ridden farmers have committed suicide’ (Shiva, *Making Peace* 8), the food grain consumption ratio of ‘40 percent of the rural population’ (Roy, *Listening to Grasshoppers* 31) of India is similar to that of sub-Saharan Africa – on the other hand, there are the business tycoons like Ambanis, Tatas, Poonawallas, Birlas, Mittals, Adanis. It is for these rich industrialists and businessmen SEZs are generated, dams are built, large tracts of farming land are appropriated, subsidy is granted, dues and liabilities are waived. At present Mukesh Ambani’s accumulated personal worth is \$35.2 billion.<sup>3</sup> The palatial 27-storied house, ‘Antila’ he resides - is considered to be the world’s most extravagant residential property next to the Royal Palace of Buckingham.<sup>4</sup>

This dismal picture gets authenticated by a recent report<sup>5</sup> released by rights group Oxfam. The 2017-report reveals the astonishing fact that India’s affluent 1 percent now holds a huge 58 percent of the country’s total wealth and just 57

billionaires in India now have equivalent amount of capital as that of the bottom 70 percent population of the country. Growth thus, instead of being all-inclusive, has become all-exclusive for a minority of capitalist people.

The tragedy lies in the fact that the welfare government, instead of safeguarding these wretched of the earth from being exploited, is actively working for these corporate giants. Moreover, this conglomerate of the rich is so powerful that they run the virtual government undermining the democratic set up. The police, the independent judicial system, the administration and even the different platforms of popular print and electronic mass media are appropriated to serve the elite interest. Vandana Shiva has justly stated that :

After two decades of corporate globalization, we now have evidence of its ecological and social costs. A deregulated financial economy gave us the financial crisis; a deregulated food economy has given us a food crisis; a deregulated mining economy has turned every mineral-rich area into a war zone. (Shiva, *Making Peace* 5-6)

The day-light robbery is visible in a recent Lokayukta Report that shows in ‘..Karnataka for every tonne of iron ore mined by a private company the government gets a royalty of Rs 27 and the mining company makes Rs. 5000. In the bauxite and aluminium sector the figures are even worse’ (Roy, *Broken Republic* 32).

Thus, one clearly understands how the Ambanis, Tatas, Mittals, Adanis have accumulated their wealth. They have cheated the poor people by denying them their due shares. It is their blood money which they are taking home.

Globalization, liberalization thus which were supposed to usher in an era of inclusive growth for all, instead excluded the poor people – the dalits, the Adivasis,

the tribal people, totally from their grand narratives of growth. They are rather viewed as an embarrassment, a stumbling block lying athwart on the road of economic prosperity and national development.

Moreover, the way these commercial, industrial and economic developments are taking place is a veritable threat to these people of the earth for corporate control violates all ethical and ecological limits. Forcible appropriation of land, rivers, mountains, forests, minerals, waters, modification of genes for limitless growth have dragged the world into a state of war against Nature itself. It is leading humankind simply to apocalypse.

One is here reminded of the Hollywood blockbuster science-fiction movie *Avatar*. In the movie we see how human beings have destroyed the earth because of their inclination to unbridled capitalism. The over-populated and resource-depleted planet is besieged by natural cataclysms and man-made disasters, in the wake of which human beings are scouring outer space for resources. The movie is indeed a grim reminder of our bleak future we are moving headlong into.

The observation of Slavoj Zizek is worth quoting here. For him the policy pursuit by corporate globalization involves ‘low probability – high consequence’ (Myers 47) risks. He cautions us by stating that :

A vital aspect of each of these risks is that they are ‘manufactured risks’, which is to say that they are the products of human intervention in the natural world. Furthermore, they are such substantial interventions that we can no longer allow nature to correct itself and so solve the problem for us because each risk involves the derailment of nature itself. The only way to lessen the effect of these

risks, therefore, is by further scientific and technological intervention, which, in turn, will produce other unforeseen outcomes. We are thus caught in a self-reflexive loop where the effective diminishment of one risk results in the generation of a fresh risk, with each new attempt to control our environment creating new uncertainties.

(Myers 49)

The noted German sociologist, Ulrich Beck also pointed out the dangerous consequences of this blind growth propelled by an ‘irresponsible techno-economic model’ (Puleo 28).

Roy has constantly been vocal against these earth degrading, flawed and misleading principles of capitalism and corporate globalization. The grand narratives of growth and development, as propagated with much fanfare by the advocates of economic liberalization and corporate globalization, ring hollow as their growth is not all-inclusive rather all-exclusive. Capitalism, thus instead of providing us better products through competition, robust economic growth benefiting the members of society one and all, as well as being the most efficacious system known for allocation of resources, has centralized power and wealth in the hands of a minority capitalist class surviving through the exploitation of a working class majority; and that has turned into an engine of inequality and economic instabilities. Truly the narratives of capitalism have become a ghost story – a story of deprivation and exploitation for the excluded voices.

Besides exposing the ugly manipulative nature of US imperialism, neo-imperialism and contemporary state capitalism, Roy has also debated at length how America’s ‘War on Terror’ instead of wiping out terror has globalized it. She has

argued that the 9/11 attack by the Al-Qaeda led terrorists that destroyed the iconic World Trade Centre and a wing of Pentagon, the US Department of Defense ‘was a monstrous calling card’ (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 234) from a world where severe injustice has been inflicted upon – that this attack was the symptom not the disease itself. Roy’s argument holds water as America’s oil-greed has not only destabilized Iraq but it has led the entire region into chaos and anarchy also. It is true that Osama bin Laden has been killed<sup>6</sup> but the inevitable truth is several other Ladens have been resurrected. Mother of all bombs<sup>7</sup> has been dropped but it has only globalized terror. Now along with America its allies are also fast becoming the prime targets of terror attack. Madrid, Brussels, Paris, Nice, Berlin, Manchester – everywhere there is ghastly bloodshed. The situation is even grimmer in the third world countries. Civil war is going on in many countries like Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Syria etc. Indian peninsula also is no immune to it. Indian Parliament has been attacked, 26/11 terrorist onslaught in Mumbai has shaken the entire country. The world has also witnessed the horror and cruelty of the extremist group, ISIS. Roy’s concern is, therefore, genuine.

**Thirdly**, through the narrative power of her art Roy has also pointed out the dangers of hyper nationalism – whipped up to serve an ulterior purpose. It is to be noted that while patriotism is continuum, ultra-nationalism requires an event, an external stimulus to periodically invoke it. There is also the danger that if unchecked, this heightened nationalism can degenerate into jingoism or xenophobia. The last two are irrational mindsets. It is very difficult to counter them with logic, because the very attempt to be logical rather than emotional is perceived as an act of betrayal.

This forecloses the possibility to question or interrogate for that is seen as anti-national. Jingoism works to subsume other priorities that need attention and compresses all national debate to a single issue. In such situations ordinary citizens are faced with an existential dilemma. If they do not join the orchestrated chorus of nationalistic hysteria, their patriotism is considered inferior. If they do join the chorus they have to stop behaving in the normal way of being patriotic. This is because patriotism is by definition inclusive, while hyper-nationalism thrives on exclusion, the conjuring of the 'other', against which the anger and animosity of the converted has to be directed.

In a mature democracy, patriotism is an embellishment. It ennobles the project of nationhood. Nationalism, if unchecked or deliberately hyped, coarsens the democratic discourse. Its cynical misuse devalues patriotism, conflates dissent with sedition, seeks to deflect attention from legitimate critique, sanctions mob violence, and encourages hatred.

But unfortunately this is what is happening at present in India. Given India's hoary tradition of promoting dissent, pluralism and communal solidarity – where Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were born; where Christianity has existed for more than 500 years; where the oldest Jewish synagogues and Jewish communities have resided since the Romans burnt their temple; where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile reside; where the Zoroastrians from Persia have thrived since being thrown out of their ancient homeland; where Armenians, Syrians and many others have come to live; where three Muslim Presidents have been elected; where a Sikh was Prime Minister and the present President comes from the dalit community - it is indeed a matter of great shame that

at present attacks on the religious minorities and marginalized communities have not just become a serious threat but also a norm in new India. Crackdowns on the right to freedom of expression have been intensified. Sedition laws are being used to criminalise freedom of expression. The political leadership is breeding and feeding hatred and outsourcing violence to the mob so as to polarize the people to such an extent where they would gain political mileage through jingoism. The so-called enthusiasts are creating a climate in which people are feeling stifled. The metamorphosis of the mob is really scaring as anyone who has witnessed a riot would know how perfectly normal people could turn into blood thirsty beasts, looting and killing with mindless abandon in the space of a few hours or a few days. The sad thing is that these ‘programmed’ people are ‘whole-heartedly proud of what they did, and can’t see it any other way’ (Bunsha xvi).

Another significant deviation is that this mob is no longer the faceless groups of lumpens and thugs – these ideologically radicalised mob is part of our very own middle class – men and women, who have now become aggressive advocates of the macho ‘new’ India.

While problematising the issue of communal violence and genocide Roy has debated at length the 2002 Gujarat Pogrom. It is to be noted that the violence in Gujarat was not the first of its kind; in India there were several other instances of communal violence. Mention can be made of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the 1992 anti-Muslim violence after the Babri Masjid demolition episode etc. However, what made it the stand alone instance is the complicity of state machinery from the highest to the lowest level. Roy’s genuine concern is also echoed in the voice of Dionne Bunsha who says :

Gujarat's violence wasn't a spontaneous Hindu versus Muslim conflict. It was politically engineered violence with a communal excuse. A planned, deliberate attempt to wipe out as many Muslims as possible. The targeting of Muslims had shades of the persecution of Jews by the Nazis in pre-Second World War Germany. (Bunsha xx-xxi)

The genocide of Gujarat was not an aberration – an isolated instance of spontaneous mob violence. Gujarat was BJP's 'Hindutva Laboratory' and it was regarded a victory for *Hindutva*'s hardliners. The VHP's international president, Praveen Togadia, hailed it as 'the start of the Hindu Rashtra' (Bunsha 12). The unfortunate human tragedy of the burning train episode was, therefore, politically manipulated to serve as Modi's ticket to victory.

While debating the Gujarat violence along with the dirty politics of communal polarization Roy has also argued that such militant Hindutva will only worsen the aggrieved situation of Kashmir. It is to be noted that Roy has always maintained a strong anti-establishment view on Kashmir, which is a far cry from the mainstream view of Kashmir being an integral part of India. For her India is an occupying force in Kashmir.

As far as Kashmir conflict is concerned Ramchandra Guha seems to offer a more pragmatic and holistic view than Roy. His analytical study considering the violence of Kashmir with reference to the different historical trajectories of western liberal democracies led him to say that :

...many western countries had to pass through bloody civil wars before they could emerge as nations. The United States, Spain, Italy,

France, the United Kingdom et al – all had to undergo decades, or even centuries, of civil strife and sectarian conflict before they could constitute themselves as nations with secure boundaries and a clearly demarcated territory, the residents of which had a willing allegiance to the state and its symbols. (Guha 100)

After assessing these historical evidences and the present ground reality he comes to the conclusion with his firm conviction that ‘it is virtually impossible, in the short or long term ... an independent Kashmir to come into being’ (Guha 101).

Under the given circumstances to curb the menace of extremism and terrorism in Kashmir, instead of merely upping the level of retributive violence through the augmentation of military personnel or by implementing tougher law, multi-pronged initiative for meaningful peace process must be taken up by the government. War is not the solution. It will only breed hatred, disperse terrorism and that would eventually make India more vulnerable to terror attacks. Moreover, it will only bolster Islamic extremists and terrorists like Hafiz Saeed (founder of Lashkar-e-Toiba), Masood Azhar (founder and leader of UN-designated terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed) etc. to spew venom, vengeance and so as to groom insane suicide bombers, mujahideens and jihadis to wage jihad until their Islam rules the world.

Therefore, the government has to seriously get down to the task of finding or creating interlocutors with whom a meaningful dialogue could begin. Besides taking up confidence building measures, the government has to create jobs so as to channelize the unemployed Kashmiri youths towards a better future. The educated and sensible Indian Muslim community also has a significant role to play. They

must have to protect their fellow brothers from becoming pawns in the larger games of other nations.

India government's recent decision to scrap Article 370 - that enabled the Jammu and Kashmiri people to be entitled to a degree of autonomy – has added another dimension in the ongoing conflict. The government's decision invited sharp reaction from certain quarters. It also caught arch-rival Pakistan off the guard. The status quo being changed whether it does any good to resolve the Kashmir conflict or not time alone will justify it.

*Fourthly*, besides the toxic politics of communal violence and genocide, Roy has also debated at length the impact of India's New Economic Policy upon the tribal heart land of India and the subsequent Maoist insurrection fuelling a serious internal crisis in the country. The situation became so grave that the government of India commissioned Operation Green Hunt against the Maoist rebels headquartered in the jungles of central India. Clear-eyed Roy understood that the debate - about Maoist violence and the reactive violence or the preventive measures of the state - was turning the whole attention away from the real issues on the ground – that an awareness of the living conditions of the tribal people who are caught between the two is missing. And the other interesting thing, which has consciously been concealed, is that the map of the Naxalite-affected states is also the map of the Indian minerals.

Under the given circumstances Roy's *Broken Republic* not only exposes 'the fundamental causes of the multi-faceted alienation of the marginalized group spread across several states' (Sinha 4) but also points out in unambiguous terms that had the government implemented effective policies for the virtual uplift of the poor, the

Maoist would have no ground to stand on. The Naxalites gained their support only by offering India's rural poor something the government has largely failed to deliver. The fact, therefore, remains that the tribal people have been systematically isolated; they have faced deprivation and severe injustice from the government. The irony lies in the fact that the democratic government, instead of trying to address the fundamental tribal issues by an alternate economic policy, which would be socially just and environmentally sustainable, is allowing the multinational companies a wholesale corporate takeover over their land and resources. Quite logically this Operation Green Hunt, this militarization of the state will not solve the crisis – rather it would bring catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Roy, therefore, has justly argued that the so-called Left Wing Extremism or Maoist insurrection is not the disease itself rather it is the symptomatic reading of the larger ideological crisis the tribal people are thrust into.

Besides an alternate economic policy, the urgent need of the time is to modernize the colonial era forest law to expand India's forests along with the well-being of traditional forest-dwellers. These forests play a key role in moderating the lives of not just the Adivasis and other traditional dwellers, but everyone in the subcontinent, through their impact on the climate and monsoons. Their health can be improved only through collaboration. The new forest law must, therefore, aim to reduce conflicts, incentivize tribal people and stop diversion for non-forest uses. This can be achieved by recognizing all suitable landscapes as forests and insulating them from commercial exploitation. Such an approach requires a partnership with communities on the one hand, and scientists on the other. For decades now, the Forest Department has resisted independent scientific evaluation of forest health and bio-diversity conservation outcomes. In parallel, environmental policy has weakened

public scrutiny of decisions on diversion of forests for destructive activities such as mining and large dam construction. Impact assessment reports have mostly been reduced to a farce, and the public hearing process has been diluted. Under the given circumstances the government needs to launch a process of consultation, beginning with the state governments to ensure that a progressive law is adopted by all states, including those that have their own versions of the existing act. The centre must pay heed to the voice of all stakeholders and communities, including independent scientific experts for a new beginning.

From the emergence of Hindutva's narrow communalism and the subsequent state-sponsored genocide in Gujarat; to the uncertainty and chaos of Kashmir as scores of civilians are killed – Roy's texts indeed reveal a convergence of corporate globalization, privatization and commoditization, neo-fascism and terrorism and the plight of a large section of common people exploited and oppressed by their own government. The issues are myriad but the common thread that binds them together is the importance given to the subalterns and the marginalized people and the culture of protest they generate among us.

Besides problematizing the grave issues, Roy has also narrativized ways to confront these oppressive forces. She has argued that the first step is to expose the insidious means and methods by which the empire appropriates the margin. The common people, the poor peasants, the Adivasis, the tribals, the farmers – who are always on the receiving end, who are gullible and can easily be duped by the grand narratives of growth and development – they have to be made aware about the exploitative nature of corporate globalization. They have to be made united to regenerate the culture of protest so that the government will not be able to take any

decision arbitrarily which satisfies the corporate greed undermining the greater interest of common people. And here the writers, the authors, the film-makers, the intellectuals, the print and social media – have a great role to play because the strategy is :

...not only to confront Empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe. (Roy, *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* 86)

Given India's present context of communal polarization where crackdowns on the right to freedom of expression have been a norm, where the writers and activists are becoming victims of a smear campaign that sought to paint them as 'urban Naxals', where liberals are branded as anti-national traitors, the credibility of Roy lies in the fact that she has not only spoken out with clarity and force against hegemony of all sorts but also tried her best to open up a space for intellectual debate and constructive criticism to map the territory about alternative futures. And while doing so she has always championed the god of small things.