

SUMMARY

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INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy got phenomenal success with her maiden Booker Prize winning novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997). However, the interesting thing is that instead of exploring the genre further she has shown tremendous interest in the contemporary socio-political, socio-economical and cultural affairs of India and the world. It is truly an extraordinary gesture for a writer in terms of generic preference. This transformation is largely due to her painful consciousness of a world where ruthless exploitation of the poor is done in the name of progress and development. And thereby, the obligation she felt as a writer to forge an alliance – a direct link between the personal and the public, between art and activism to narrativize the possible methods of resistance and the subsequent reconstruction.

Roy's transformation also opens up the debate between the writer and the activist as Roy herself quizzes : 'Why it should be that the person who wrote *The God of Small Things* is called writer, and the person who wrote the political essays is called an activist?' (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 196). It must be argued that an in-depth analysis of Roy's texts manifest itself clearly that in her case the literary and the political are not separate domains – there is no ideological break between the novelist-Roy and the activist-Roy. This generic mobility rather allows Roy to use multi-layered discourses of resistance so as to narrativize the pangs and pains of the subaltern people living a precarious life in the shadows of displacement, starvation, unemployment and even massacres.

Till date she has, to her credit, four volumes of non-fiction through which she dissects the contemporary global politics and shows how 'Democracy has

become Empire's euphemism for neoliberal capitalism (Roy, *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire* 155). From the structural point of view the essays are polemical in nature; they are logical, argumentative and her rhetoric is so powerful that she drags us into it. And from the thematic perspective the essays are myriad. They show Roy's multi-dimensional role as – ecologist, environmentalist, ethnographer, observer and commentator, traveler, anti-globalization and anti-corporatization writer, political-activist, anti-nuke and over all a chronicler of small things.

Roy is thus vibrant with a rebellious spirit that seeks to break away from the conventional paradigms of accepted norms. If in her *The God of Small Things* she champions the cause of the down-trodden thus voicing the de-voiced, in her polemical essays too she shows her dauntless courage and commitment to align herself with the concerns of the underdog. After discussing them she weaves them together by suggesting a common solution to all these issues. She says that the only way to tackle all these issues is to develop the culture of protest, the politics of opposition and the politics of voicing the de-voiced across the world to provide resistance to certain destructions.

As such this research work tries to explore the discursive ways by which Roy re-constructs the excluded voices and resists the politics of excision.

CHAPTER I

RECONSTRUCTION

Literally the word 'Reconstruction' simply refers to restoration. It implies the procedures and methods by which the entity that has been degraded, defiled, devalued or whose image has been tarnished will be restored to its former self. The Cambridge English Dictionary defines reconstruction as 'the process of building or creating something again that has been damaged or destroyed' ("Reconstruction").

From the definition it can be taken into consideration that reconstruction at least involves three steps. The first one is of degradation, defiling or devaluation; the second one is the consciousness of that supposed degradation or devaluation and thereafter putting resistance to it; and the third one is an attempt for the restoration of the thing to its original form.

But while making an attempt to define reconstruction in the theoretical context one experiences the veritable impediment without finding a succinct, codified theory to define it; the process rather invites a combination of multiple theories to explain it. The multiple theories range from Marxism to Feminism, from Post Colonialism to Subaltern Studies. It is interesting to note that as Arundhati Roy's sole concern is to expose and unmask the veiled bestial face of the imperialists / capitalists / hegemons and their tentacles by which they oppress, suppress, exploit the poor people / subject so she has used every possible means and method, first, to promote cultural awareness of the exploitation and marginalization of the poor people by providing physical evidences of the civil and terrestrial injustices inflicted upon them; and then to narrativize the possible methods of resistance and the subsequent reconstruction by contesting and reshaping the

‘western ideologies of development’ (Huggan and Tiffin 27). The present study, therefore, investigates the interface between these discourses of resistance in the non-fictional essays of Roy as her generic mobility, her art and activism, amalgamates within her narrative the multiple minoritarian perspectives.

The theoretical framework, for the present study, that helps us to arrive at a nuanced understanding of the discourses of resistance and the subsequent reconstruction begins with the Marxian reading of society in terms of class-conflict.

It is to be noted that the ‘simplest Marxist model of society sees it as constituted by a ‘base’ and a ‘superstructure’ (Barry 151). Base refers to the material means of production, distribution and consumption whereas all other systems like language, literature, culture, art, religion etc. as the overt manifestation refer to superstructure. ‘The essential Marxist view is that the latter things are not ‘innocent’, but are ‘determined’ (or shaped) by the nature of the economic base.

The French Marxist theoretician Louis Althusser, however, modified the ‘simplistic notions of a one-to-one correspondence between base and superstructure’ (Barry 157) and put forward the concept of ‘ideological structures or state ideological apparatuses’ (Barry 158) which are very subtle forms and practices brought upon by the capitalist state to ensure conformity to the normative order of capitalism itself. The police, court, army, prisons, government, administration are the constituents of this machine of repression. They function primarily through repression – by taking punitive action against those who refuse to fall in line. On the other hand, the ideological state apparatuses function primarily through ideology. Religion, educational institution, family, law, politics, communication, culture etc. are the key constituents of the ideological state apparatuses. Despite the plurality of

ideological state apparatuses, they are unified by the ideologies through which they function.

The discourse of Feminism, on the other hand, is a form of resistance against all forms of patriarchal domination, sexist exploitation and oppression. It interrogates the existing configuration of power - the ways in which this social order has fixed identities and thereafter seeks equal rights for women based on the idea of the equality of the sexes. Among the various forms of feminism, eco-feminism is particularly significant here as that would yield much fruitful analysis of Roy's critique 'on the hierarchy of dualisms' (Chae 519) that validates the manipulation 'of nature by the human, of women by men and of the oppressed by the powerful' (Chae 519).

To put it simply ecofeminism links ecology with feminism. It is the 'theory and praxis' (Puleo 28) and it envisages to come together and juxtapose themselves with the belief that 'dialogue will enrich both' (Puleo 28). The Oxford English Dictionary defines ecofeminism as 'a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as resulting from male domination of society' ("Ecofeminism"). In other words, environmental destruction and social injustice to woman have a common cause and it is none other than this patriarchal, androcentric attitude towards woman and nature. Ecofeminism, therefore, seeks to address the 'environmental issue from the categories of patriarchy, androcentrism, care, sexism and gender' (Puleo 30).

With the emergence of ecocriticism during the last decade of the 20th century environmental consciousness got another dimension. It takes a more holistic approach than ecofeminism because 'environmentalism is not always feminist'

(Puleo 28). As Arundhati Roy's narrative intersects Post Colonial concern with the issues of environmental degradation, an understanding of ecocriticism is, therefore, quite necessary.

Ecocriticism, often referred to as 'Green Studies', is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where there is an interface between the sciences and the humanities. In the words of Cheryll Glotfelty :

Eco-criticism is the study of relationship between literature and physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of models of production and economic class to its reading of text, eco-criticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty xviii)

Rejecting the concept of human supremacy eco-critical texts argue that our global environmental crisis stems not from the normal ecological functioning rather it is the effect ensuing from the polyvalent commercial, industrial and unsustainable developmental policies pursued at present. The rising awareness of the writers, from different arenas, has, therefore, made eco-criticism an umbrella term where there is the convergence of the other branches of the environmental studies ranging from anthropology, sociology, humanistic geography, ethics, history etc.

Since the discourses of resistance and the subsequent reconstruction aim to bring the unsung misfortunes of the left out millions into the centre by confronting the dominant and oppressive structures – an understanding of Post Colonialism and Subaltern Studies is, therefore, quite inevitable.

Based on ideological considerations such as opposition to Euro-centric universalism, cultural imperialism in the name of modernism, Post Colonial approaches to literature contest the very notion of essentialism by petitioning for ‘hybridity and cross-culturation’ (Nixon 235). By foregrounding differences and diversity, it considers plurality and ‘otherness’ as potential sources of vitality and change; and by rejecting notions like standardization, conformity, universalisation - which are viewed as sources of power, hegemony and domination – it demands that ‘history must be re-imagined and re-told by multiple and multi-ethnic voices’ (Nixon 235) so as to enable the subjugated voices re-construct their identities on their own terms. In other words Post Colonialism implies a movement to liberate the oppressed as well as to re-structure the colonized system by linking the missing links between the visible and the hidden, by de-centering the dominant centre; and eventually by centering the ‘Other’.

Subaltern Studies, an offshoot of Post Colonialism, also champion heterogeneity. By foregrounding the notion of ‘multiplicity of histories’ (Loomba 17) it attempts to retake history for the under classes by getting rid of the histories of elites and the Eurocentric bias of existing imperial history.

As Roy’s critique problematizes multi-faceted issues ranging from corporate globalization to privatization and commodification, from neo-fascism to terrorism, from eco-degradation to the pathetic plight of a large number of common people exploited and oppressed by their own government – an interface between these discourses of resistance, therefore, provides the critical framework for the present study.

CHAPTER II

REACTION AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

Ecocriticism is the study of relationship between literature and physical environment. Rejecting the concept of human supremacy ecocritical texts argue that our global crisis is not because how ecosystem functions rather it is because of the flawed developmental policies we are pursuing at present. It is to be noted at this point that a number of critics like Laura Pulido, Pablo Mukherjee, Graham Huggan, Helen Tiffin, Ramchandra Guha – have pointed out the intersections between postcolonialism and postcolonial ecocriticism because the major task for both of them is to ‘contest western ideologies of development’ (Huggan and Tiffin 27); and they also believe that environmental exploitation and degradation are happening largely due to the pursuance of neo-colonial economic, commercial and unsustainable development projects. Post Colonial Ecocriticism in this sense ‘emerges as an economic and ecological response to neocolonial globalization and development projects backed by global capital’ (Chae 520).

Author-activist Arundhati Roy, an astute critic of the rampant forces of neo-imperialism, has always been vocal against the terrible injustices meted out upon the Indian people and its environment as a result of globalization. She has utilized both the mediums of fiction and nonfiction to expose the violence of ‘globalization’ and ‘development’ – the two seemingly benign terms. The ecocritical reading of her texts underlines the fact that she has used her art and activism to not only bring the civil and terrestrial injustices to light but also to narrativize the possible methods to combat the oppressive all-consuming forces of globalization.

In the “End of Imagination” she has debated the effects of the detonation of India’s nuke with all its attendant Faustian bargains while in “The Greater Common Good” she has shown how in the fetish of building the gigantic Narmada Valley Project ‘legitimate rights of the marginalized are obfuscated to protect privileges of the few’ (Khan 194). Even the Morse Commission (an independent review committee of the World Bank) 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. (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 95-6).

It is interesting to note that the Indian Institute of Public Administration conducted a detailed study on 54 large dams of India. The study revealed astonishing facts and figures. The ‘average’ number of people displaced by a ‘Large Dam’ in India is 44,182’ (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 60). India has so far built around 3,300 dams. All the dams, however, are not big. So what Roy argues if the number of displaced people is lowered to 10,000 per dam then the total number of displaced people is $3,300 \times 10,000 = 33,000,000$. In other words at least thirty-three million people so far have been displaced in India for the construction of dams!

Such findings in themselves, besides the alternative strategies mediated, account for the strongest petition against the construction of mega dams and Roy’s discourse becomes a sheer indictment on flawed development policies we have been

pursuing since independence. Taking the cue from Slavoj Zizek we may argue that all these are 'low probability - high consequence risks' (Myers 47). These 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'(Myers 49).

CHAPTER III

RESISTANCE AGAINST NEO-IMPERIAL INJUSTICE

Globalization and neo-liberalism which were supposed to usher in a new age of economic prosperity and stability, of homogenous growth and development – instead have thrown most of the third world countries and the former Communist states ‘into unprecedented poverty and violence, where the economic terrorism of corporate globalization, the political terrorism of fascist, corporate police states, and the cultural fundamentalism and extremism spawn vicious cycles of violence, injustice, and fear’ (Shiva *India Divided* 54).

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. What is happening in India, Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, Argentina, Venezuela, Libya, Bolivia, Somalia, Syria etc cannot be the isolated examples of oppression and suppression rather they are a part of the grand mechanism of corporate globalization. Even Joseph Stiglitz, who was the former Chief Economist at the World Bank and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2001, stated that :

I saw firsthand the devastating effect that globalization can have on developing countries, and especially the poor within those countries. I believe that globalization...can be a force for good and that it has the *potential* to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor. But I also believe that if this is to be the case, the way globalization has been managed...need to be radically rethought. (Stiglitz ix-x)

Arundhati Roy’s appearance into the literary firmament coincides with India’s opening up the market to the foreign countries by signing in the GATT and

GAT. And with this came the terms – globalization, neo-globalization, liberal economy, corporate globalization. At that time globalization was lauded as the panacea for the social discord and malady. But things began to fall apart when the pledge of shining India instead resulted in the glaring discontent between two Indias – one about homelessness, rural destitution, unemployment, deprivation, transplantation, exploitation; and the other, the concentration of fabulous amount of wealth and money to a handful of people.

Under the given circumstances, leaving aside all the moral hypocrisy and false sentimentalism, an outspoken Roy engages her in a polemical expose to lay bare ‘the machinations of transnational corporations as well as the cruelties of privatization and development politics’ (Comfort 119).

As a social-activist, Roy is also critical about the myopic vision of our political leadership who are unable to understand or simply not looking into the subtler means of western imperialism. The debts provided by the World Bank or other International Funding Agencies are only entrapping us in further debt.

Besides renouncing India’s fetish for building big dams, the other single thing that Roy has consistently been concerned with is American imperialism that operates, overtly and covertly, through the means of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and the treaties like General Agreement on Trade (GAT), Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) etc.

Roy has also debated at length how neo-liberal capitalism that has evolved in the form of corporate globalization has simply subverted the role of media by making it mouth-piece to serve its own purpose. Corporate media not only just

serves the capitalist interest but also circulates ‘paid news’. Suppressing the truth they often dupe the laymen by concocting parallel discourse of information by erasing the boundaries of real and unreal.

It is interesting to note that Noam Chomsky, one of the global voices of American dissent, also states that how the mass communication media of the US :

...are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system – supportive propaganda function, by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without over coercion, by means of the propaganda model of communication (Herman and Chomsky 306).

Roy, however, has not limited her only by critiquing the devastating consequences of imperialism; she has also narrativized ways to confront empire. In “Confronting Empire” she has debated it at length. She has argued that the first step is to expose the insidious means and methods by which the empire appropriates the subalterns. 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 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).

CHAPTER IV
STATE SPONSORED COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND GENOCIDE - A
CRITIQUE

Genocide is inherently a political phenomenon. It is about obtaining and maximizing power and control for hegemonic expansion. The victims are viewed as economic, religious, existential or strategic obstacle, therefore, must be eliminated. When one talks of genocide the Nazi holocaust memories come first. However, besides the Nazi holocaust, in history there are also several instances where thousands of people have been massacred in the hands of the dominant group. Mention can be made of Armenian genocide by Ottoman Turks, East Timorese in the 1970s by the Indonesian military, the Rakhines in Myanmar, the Tamils in Sri Lanka etc. To resist this barbarian, inhuman act the United Nations in 1948 even approved the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. But the sad thing is that even in this postmodern world this crime against humanity has not stopped. It is still being pursued and practised. And in many ways neo-imperial policies are largely responsible for this. Since the 1990s, with the dissolution of the USSR, US foreign policies now dictate the world. The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, several trade related treaties are but the tools and tentacles of US imperialism. They serve to fulfil the purpose of US's coveted hegemonic ambition. Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria are but the classic examples of the devastating consequences of US imperialism. Millions of people – men, women and children have been massacred, mercilessly killed and wiped out.

While in India we see globalization and corporatization are making deep inroads into the sustained plurality and diversity of India. Modern India becomes a

divided India where the rich people oppress her poor people. However, what is even more worrying – more insidious and sinister is that with the rise of *Hindutva*-based political entities – state and non-state activists are attacking the liberal values together. The political leadership is breeding and feeding hatred and outsourcing the violence to the mob so as to polarize the people to such an extent where they would gain political mileage through jingoism.

As a concerned writer, Roy has also, time and again, raised her voice against communal violence and genocide, engineered by the dirty politicians for their dirty politics. In her essay, “Democracy : Who’s She When She’s at Home” she has vehemently criticized the 2002-Gujarat Pogrom which was in many ways a state sponsored genocide of the Muslims by the Hindus. For Roy it was an orchestrated violence - planned, co-ordinated and executed by the political leaders, state bureaucracy and the police with lethal precision to terrorise and subjugate the Muslim people so that they will live in continual fear in the coming days.

In another essay, “Listening to Grasshoppers” Roy was once again vocal about state sponsored genocide but this time against the Armenian genocide in Turkey.

It must be argued that ‘monolithic religious states’ (Roy, *Listening to Grasshoppers* 183) that dictate its people to tie them down in rigid ‘social and moral code’ (Roy, *Listening to Grasshoppers* 183) – be it Islamic or *Hindutva*, will only destroy the diversity, plurality and tolerance of any society. It would lead the people towards militant nationalism purely based on religious identity. It would rob the people of their cultural spaces for assimilation. Such an autocrat, authoritarian society is not welcomed.

Besides the state sponsored genocides, both in India and Turkey, Roy has also expressed her deep concern about the pathetic plight of the numerous Kashmiri people caught in the crossfire of oppression, suppression, domination, militancy and terrorism.

CHAPTER V

A REVIEW OF MAOIST INSURRECTION

Since her very independence India has been plagued with so many internal problems. However, among them the Maoist problem seems to be the most critical of all because this persistently nagging problem has taken a heavy toll not only on the lives of a large number of poor people – the dalits and Adivasis but also posed the biggest internal security threat India has ever faced. The situation became so grave that in October 2009 the then Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh commissioned Operation Green Hunt against the Red rebels headquartered in the jungles of central India. This decision has been hotly debated and discussed because on either side the victims were Indians. Moreover, many viewed the war a ploy of the state to wipe out the Adivasis and tribal people from their homeland so as to get hold of the lucrative mineral resources. As a concerned writer, Roy also became vocal and her *Broken Republic*, a collection of three outstanding essays, is a scathing attack on the atrocities of the state that not only allows a wholesale corporate takeover of its people's land and resources but also tries to alienate them from the mainstream by demonizing their insurrection through the means of manufacturing consent as simply Naxalite-Maoist uprising. Roy's essays outline the context and through them she tries to find out the real reasons for their insurrection – the condition, the situation, the people, and the policy which led them to rise against their own motherland. In the process of fact-finding she also provides us with corrective to the prevalent notion of the government or the elites regarding these so-called Maoists.

Roy's constant concern for these people is the symptomatic reading of her text. This is her texture. She has consistently been vocal against the current practice of western consumerism and corporate globalization and advocates for a pluralistic egalitarian society that follows the principles of sustainable development for an inclusive growth.

CONCLUSION

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, 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.'

Under the given circumstances being gravely worried about the future of humankind, Roy has channelized all her energy not only to contest the neoliberal policies of corporate globalization but also to narrativize the possible alternatives 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). At this point it must be noted that in the debate India's precarious terrestrial location, the compelling security reasons - basically the threat from China has not been taken into consideration.

Roy's poignant petitions against environmental injustice, however, found its eloquent expression in her essay, "The Greater Common Good" where she has

debated at length the environmental costs of such a gigantic project. 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 led into. The displaced people are simply dispossessed without any proper re-settlement plan. There lies the deep rooted crisis.

Such findings in themselves, besides the alternative strategies mediated, account for the strongest case against the construction of mega dams 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, through her art and activism Roy has been relentlessly and stridently vocal 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. 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. A recent report of the UN is

once again a grim reminder of the sheer apathy of these rich people towards the poor people. 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.

What is happening in Bolivia, Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco, Libya, Syria, Venezuela etc. cannot be the 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. The irony lies in the fact that the democratic government, instead of protecting the poor people from being exploited, is actively working for these corporate giants. 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.

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 from a world gone horribly wrong' (Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* 234) – that this attack was the symptom not the disease itself.

Thirdly, through the narrative power of her art Roy has also pointed out the dangers of the toxic politics of communal polarization that is currently being practised in India. Given India's tradition of promoting dissent, pluralism and communal solidarity it is indeed a matter of great shame that at present attacks on the religious minorities and marginalized communities have not just become a 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.

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 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. The genocide of Gujarat was not an aberration – an isolated instance of spontaneous mob violence.

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... (Guha 100)

After assessing these historical evidences and the present ground reality he comes to the 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. 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.

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. 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 the kind of policies that exist for 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. 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.

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.

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.