



PARA-COLONIALISM IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS: A POST-COLONIAL ANALYSIS.

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Abstract

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy is used in this research paper as a sample of applying para-colonialism as a theoretical term, which considers the paranoia of consequences of colonial ideologies in the society considered decolonized. Para-colonialism is defined as the life extension of the colonial models of power within the economic, political, and cultural forms well after official withdrawal of the colonial order. The work manifests through how the novel written by Roy is a critique of the colonial histories by pointing out how caste-based, gendered, class, and religious oppression is systemic. Using the representation of various characters the writer portrays how these people are themselves facing institutionalized racism and social outsiders violating institutional control and suppression of the colonial period. Roy uses various characters, Anjum, a hijra; Saddam Hussain, a Dalit and Tilottama, all politically subjugated woman characters among others. The usage of fragmented narrative, symbolism, and the storytelling based on the intersection of many factors contribute to the novel revealing how colonial hierarchies were internalized and continued to exist in modern Indian society. The study makes an addition to the literature on postcolonial literature in the field of postcolonial/Silent Surrender research as it positions the work of Roy in a greater context of para-colonialism and, consequently, it is an interpretation of the combination of continuities of identity, opposition, and injustice of the past in contemporary India.

Keywords: para-colonialism, post-colonialism, Arundhati Roy, marginalization, casteism, gender, oppression, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, India*

1. Introduction

*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy is her second novel after 20 years and is a confident attempt to enter the multidimensional problem fields of caste, gender, class, nationalism in postcolonial India. The novel breaks with the conventions of conventional stories to offer a collage of marginalized lives, the most prominent being that of a hijra (transgender), a Dalit, a Kashmiri rebel and a disillusioned bureaucrat. The novel, placed within a socio-political context of modern day India, is a representation of how the vestiges of colonial thinking still persist in the construction of power, that of exclusion and that of violence. This is because no matter how the post-independence nation-state may emerge in the image described above by Roy, it continues and perpetuates past colonial forms of governance and control as is evidenced in its treatment towards the marginalized. The rich and fragmented narrative of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017)* makes it an effective agent of criticism on the persistence of colonialism in the name of a modern state and nationalism.*



Self-help colonialism as part of systematic post-colonial theory is one of the key considerations to make regarding how the novel addresses the effects of former colonialism. Para-colonialism is used to describe a residual influence of colonialism in those societies which are politically decolonized but which still have a structurally colonial past including ideologically since colonial sociopolitical structures of those countries are the result of colonial legacies. Contrary to neo-colonialism which tend to advocate economic dependency on the west, para-colonialism targets mechanisms within the society, i.e. caste based discrimination and gender marginalization, various forms of stratification etc., which were entrenched. under French colonial rule and continue to exist under postcolonial state policy, institutions and cultural practice. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), Roy shows how para-colonialism keeps haunting the present in the sense that she inserts colonial orientations of domination in the present Indian social and political contexts. The most striking feature of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is that it authenticates the voices of the dispossessed, and in particular those who are either silent or decide their non-existence to the national writing (dominant national narratives). There are characters an Anjum, a hijra who constructs a fort in a cemetery and Dayachand a Dalit boy who is born again as Saddam Hussain, whose resilience is considered to be the part of that world which is created by the fact of intersecting para-colonial suppressions. Such characters not only exist in a state of casualty caused by the discrimination of caste, gender, and classes, but they also represent a fight against the power structure that resembles colonial domination. The narrative approach of Roy, non-linear, multi-voiced and poetic, transgresses the norms of a typical story-telling, it resembles the splintered lives of her characters. Through that, the novel confronts the reader with the unacceptable truth that not only colonialism did not end, but instead, it took new more pernicious and localized forms.

This study attempts to interpret *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) within the scope of para-colonialism, thus discovering the underlying and intertwined systems of marginalization that still exist in the post-colonial India. The novel is not simply a tale of atrocities of the individual but a kind of political action that necessitates the underscoring of continuity in histories of oppression regimes. This way of reading Roy shapes the study, adding up to the discussion of post-colonial resistance, politics of identity or structural inequality, which has been gradually advanced over the years. It confirms the affirmation of the role of literature in shaping the image of the literature as a mirror example of the societal practices but also literature as a radical mechanism unveiling non-manifested outrages of the empire that still determine the present.

1.1 Research Questions:

1. How does Arundhati Roy's novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) depict the continued influence of colonial ideologies through caste, gender, and class-based marginalization in post-independence India?
2. In what ways does the concept of para-colonialism help uncover the intersectional oppression experienced by marginalized characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017)?

1.2 Research Objectives:

1. To examine how *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) represents the persistence of colonial power structures through the lived experiences of characters marginalized by caste, gender, and class.

2. To apply the theoretical lens of para-colonialism in order to explore the intersectional forms of oppression and systemic control portrayed in Roy's narrative.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The one areas where this study will be of interest is in the context of post-colonial literary criticism because although the concept of para-colonialism has extensively been discussed in specific contexts either globally or within India, or in its use of any language, the concept has not been explored in much depth as it has been done in this study with special reference to colonial ideologies still continuing to influence the socio-political landscape of post-independence India. Presenting the analysis through the light of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), the research demonstrates how casteism, the marginalization of gender communities and the Practices of casteism, gender-based discrimination, and classes as interiorized intrusions of colonialism. The novel is a literary terrain through which Roy does not only tell the tales of the subjugated but also condemns the state and the social establishments that continue to perpetuate para-colonial domination. This study is important since it provides the multi-dimensional analysis of overlapping oppressions that demonstrates how the legacies of colonial processes are not only maintained but continuously transformed through local cultural and institutional arrangements. The work adds to scholarly discourses of postcolonial identity, resistance and structural inequity, particularly that of the South Asian setting.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

This research will be limited to what is purely textual by analyzing in a qualitative manner the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) by Arundhati Roy in terms of para-colonialism on the basis of caste, gender, and class. The comparative studies of the research are not prolonged with other research of Roy or to any other postcolonial writers. Moreover, it fails to include empirical data, or sociological case studies; it sticks to literary interpretation based on the post-colonial theory only. Both the geographical and cultural focus is limited to the postcolonial India again focused on urban areas but also on socio-politically loaded spaces which find representations in the novel. The analysis also pertains to a limited scope by covering only the characters and the plot events which are most suitable to depict para-colonial dynamics, without attempting a comprehensive study of every subplot or character.

2. Literature Review

His work on the nature of the survival of the colonial discourse after formal decolonization and the existence of mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence is the foundational work of Homi Bhabha on postcolonial theory. Bhabha does not invoke the notion para-colonialism but his attempt to elaborate how colonial ideologies are internalised and reproduced in postcolonial societies fits well within the visions of para-colonialism. His concept that colonized subjects are born with fragmented identities and that they still dwell in culturally subordinate conditions can be interpreted to be applied to the characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) and specifically those whose identities cannot reconcile the conservative nature of their role with modernity assigned roles. The theory by Bhabha enhances the objectivity of the study to demonstrate the ability of colonial regimes of control to be perpetuated by social systems of control such as caste, gender, and class in the novel by Roy.

Priyamvada Gopal follows on the line of the ongoing logic of colonialism in contemporary statecraft, particularly the way the violence of the state, its bureaucracy, and its militarization are



colonial in the legacies. Her positions can be used to put the acts of the Indian government in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) in perspective in terms of its actions towards dissent in Kashmir where it militarizes dissent; and its treatment of caste and gender minorities. This aspect of how the postcolonial nation-states, as was the case with the colonial powers, carry out colonial repression, particularly revolving around those who are observed to be social or politically subversive, an aspect that is evident in the case of Anjum, Tilottama, and Musa, as depicted by Roy, forms a para-colonial reading of the work by Gopal.

This article has been published in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* which dwells upon the identity of Anjum as a hijra and how her marginalization exemplifies both conventional anti inclusion and para-colonial way of thinking. Sneharika Roy mentions that the novel provided the space of sacredness, alternate spaces which withstood the violence of state and orthodoxy of religion such as the graveyard paradise that Anjum finds. This complies with para-colonialism in the way it demonstrates reinforcement of colonial models of governance through postcolonial codes of morals, sex and religions. The article brings grave understanding about the politicization of gender and spirituality that Roy uses to reveal systematic injustice that occurs in the structure. Aijaz Ahmad is critical to postcolonial studies in that they are abstract rather than addressing material realities like class, caste, and regional politics. Although he disbelieves the postcolonial theorists of the West, Ahmad stresses the reorganization of caste and class in India under colonialism which is visible to this day. His thoughts are essential in interpreting how Roy links economic injustice to the caste and gender oppression in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). This Marxist perspective proposed by Ahmad also has a lot of connection with para-colonialism in strengthening the thesis that in the novel Roy presents internal participants and establishments imitating the colonial structures of unworthiness and brutality.

3. Methodology

The present study utilizes a qualitative research approach that draws on textual analysis as a usual method of literary analyses in studying texts and types of texts in order to give answers to questions. To understand how this author of the 21 st century depicts para-colonial patterns of modern India, the paper analyzes the language, structure, the development of characters, and symbolic motifs in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The study investigates how caste, gender, class and political violence interact to promote the ongoing colonial ideology. The approach is interpretive as well as thematic in that it is possible to comprehend the social, cultural and political implication of the text in a nuanced manner.

3.1 Data Collection Tools

Close reading of the text is the first method of data collection. Key passages, conversations, and character developments are scrutinized in order to determine the patterns of marginalization, structural oppression, and defiance. Additional information is also found in secondary sources of academia, such as peer-reviewed articles and books on post-colonial and para-colonial theory as well as critical writing on the fiction of Arundhati Roy. These sources are utilized to provide a context and justify the interpretations made of the texts, bridging the gap between literary interpretations and theories and larger surrounding socio and political considerations.

3.2 Rationale of the Study

The justification of this research is the necessity to critically discuss the ways in which colonial ideologies are enshrined in postcolonial societies by ensuring that there are localized patriarchal

structures of domination and subordination. Although the idea of political independence might indicate some kind of discontinuity in the colonial history, the consequences of casteism, gender biases and state-based violence are the key elements that paint a different picture all the more. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (Roy 2017) is a well-written novel whereby these themes can be addressed in using characters that are socially marginalized and structurally dispossessed. The political and narrative complexities of the novel make the work an excellent location to explore the topic of para-colonialism as an ongoing historical heritage of empire. The study is significant in relation to the growing body of post-colonial criticism because it touches on the way literature reveals the covert, continuous presence of colonial authority in the real-life experiences of the oppressed.

3.3 Sample

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy is the sole item that the sample of this study would draw on. Analysis focuses on important characters in the story, including Anjum, Saddam Hussain, Tilottama and Musa and significant episodes of events that show religious violence, military oppression, and the discrimination of castes. The adopted characters and events are analyzed how they elaborate and contravene para-colonial ideologies. The sample is also limited to the text of the novel itself and cannot be compared with any other novel or real life case study.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on para-colonialism theoretical framework which is a branch of the post-colonial theory. Para-colonialism The perpetuating presence of colonial-era ideologies within a given society, where ideologies have been internalized and adopted as normal, even though the society has formally been decolonized, as historically and structurally based. In contrast to neo-colonialism, which concentrates on external economic and political domination, para-colonialism refers to the way through which the local elites, hierarchies, and institutions exploit power by resorting to colonial procedures of exclusion and discipline. This aspect of para-colonialism in India is reflected in how the caste, gender identity, and political dissent are monitored and marginalized in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). The framework allows reading the novel with a unique intersection of the notion of historical colonialism not only being critiqued but the internal after text of colonialism which Roy addresses in contemporary India.

4. The Impact of Para-colonialism on the Lives of the Characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017)

Caste system is one of the major effects of para-colonialism on the characters. Caste system is the social stratification that has existed in India over centuries. It separates the population into various categories or castes which are determined by birth. The characters in the book *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) belong to distinct castes, and each of them is discriminated in a different number of ways. As an example, Anjum, a Hijra, is compelled to live on the fringe of the society due to her gender identity. She is also discriminated on the basis of her caste.

The other effect of para-colonialism on the characters is the history of colonialism. India had been under the British rule (who were part of the British Empire) over 200 years and the British instilled their culture and values into India. This was a significant influence on the Indian society and the influence can still be felt today. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), characters are conscious of how the British Empire took advantage of India, and they hate the injustices that took

place. Take the example of Tilo who is a Kashmiri woman struggling to come to terms with the legacy of colonialism in her own self. She is also very conversant with how the Indian government has just been using Kashmir.

The effects of para-colonialism on the characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) are multilateral. The novel demonstrates that the effects of para-colonialism may be drastic to the lives of people even after the political independence of a country.

The following are some of the examples of the way para-colonialism inflicts itself on the lives of the characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017):

4.1 Anjum's Representation as a Hijra

Anjum is a hijra, in other words, transgender in India. The hijras are discriminated against and less frequently treated equally and they face a lot of difficulty trying to ensure they are accepted to live on the edge of society. Anjum has to survive in a refugee camp, she is usually harassed and attacked.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy tells the story of Anjum who is a hijra, a trans person regarded as a third gender in India. The use of hijra can be explained by reference to paracolonialism with regard to Anjum. Claims that the legacies of colonialism survive in the lives of people who lived in former colonies are referred to as para-colonialism.

Among the approaches that make the expression of Anjum Para-colonial is the way she is marginalized. Due to her gender identity, Anjum is denied some basic opportunities and rights. Violence and discrimination are also applied to her. This is one of the remnants of the colonial period when the British government brought its colonial gender ethics to India.

The next aspect of the Para-colonial representation is affected by Anjum has to do with her link to the past. Anjum resides in a graveyard and she is surrounded by the ruins of a building constructed during colonial period. This binding with the past implies that Anjum continues to be haunted by the pasts of the colonialism.

Nevertheless, Anjum is a strong character as well. She has established herself at home in the graveyard and she has developed a society of hijras. This group gives Anjum protection and a sense of belonging and the group enables Anjum to have dignity in her life also.

The novel indicates that the strong spirit of a human being is evidenced by the way Anjum was able to cope with all that happened to her. It even indicates that the legacies of colonialism can be defeated.

Hijras are beings of the peripheries, of the edge, of the in-betweens. We are not men or women, here or there, this or that. We become the walking dead manifestation of the liminal." (Roy, 2017)

The lines depict Hijras as existing in the state of liminality. Liminality is an existential state of transition or in-betweenness in which personalities or groups do not belong completely to a single type or camp. The Hijras do not meet the conventional coloring of gender based on the concept of men or women. Their gender is fluid and does not fall in a specific binary form of gender.

The expression of neither here nor there nor this nor that reiterates what is meant by liminality of Hijras. It emphasizes the fact

that they live beyond the limits of the binary social structures as well as their indeterminacy related to social location.

To sum up, the given lines emphasize the liminal and fluid self of Hijras, making them gain the status of people, who break the gender norms and live on the edge of society. The allusion to para-colonialism suggests that historical processes of colonialism continue to have some influence in the gender and identity construction of the society in the region. These lines stress how essential it is to comprehend gender that does not exist only in a binary with difficulties involved in defining the identity in the environment of social and historical factors.

We are the left-behind people, we are the forgotten. We are the ones who have not been written into history." (Roy, 2017)

This phrase indicates that the group under discussion has been missed out on the positive effects of progress or development that might have come about during what can be considered the post-colonial period. It implies a feeling of neglect and feeling different to be left alone by the people in power and inability to access resources, opportunities, and basic necessities.

It is us who are chopped out of history.

This is one of the frequent aftereffects of para-colonialism that this line brings to mind: destroying the past and cultural contributions of some groups. It also means that the mainstream discourse or historical narration mostly overlooks or critically ignores the experience and accomplishment of this specific group of people. Such removal of their history continues to make them invisible furthering their marginalization in the society.

The general effect of these verses is that para-colonialism has continued leaving this group of people in a state of marginalization, invisibility, and neglect. Their roles and experiences have remained unrecognized and they still have to live the horrors of pale historical injustices in spite of de jure termination of colonial rule. The lines make one feel the feeling of frustration and the necessity to be heard, to be recognized, to be treated just and included in the community. It seems like the text is the representation of the struggle and challenges of the marginalized group, in a para-colonial context.

Compound words Top of Form expressions that consist of both words and portraying the meaning of the picture.

We are survivors though. This is what we have come through. We have managed to survive colonialism and we have managed to survive the caste system, the violence of the state. We shall get through this as well." (Roy, 2017)



This is a phrase that is used to reflect on the resilience and strength of the community or group being addressed as they are called survivors. It means that the community has faced difficult historical conditions and it is already preserving to this point despite the troubles.

We have endured colonialism: Here, she highlights on the consequences of the colonialism which historically entailed occupations and exploitation of some sections of the society by colonialists. Although the official end of colonialism is already a reality, its impact may continue being experienced in terms of existing patterns of power, cultures and economies.

The reference to the caste system: The fact that the caste system is referred to speaks to a given Indian context of caste discrimination and hierarchies with a history dating back a long way in the past. Although India ended British colonial rule, the caste system and its role in the social life of people have remained, and thus, it continues to generate social inequalities.

We have lived through the state violence": This is a phrase which alludes to the repressing practices and policies of the state in question that have impacted the community being discussed. This may have been some sort of violence committed during colonial times which may also be witnessed in the post-colonial times as a result of the Para-colonial legacies and practices.

We will overcome this as well: This statement also shows hope and the will to overcome the difficulties that are being experienced in this age which may be linked to effects of para-colonialism. This means that though the plight and experiences are still plagued by challenges and difficulties, there is still the spirit of hope that the society lives to see a brighter tomorrow.

Overall, the following lines in the book by Roy tell about the fact the society in question has a background of surviving living through multiple types of oppression and struggle. The reference to survival of colonialism, caste system, and violence by the state reminds of the continuing effects of para-colonialism in their life and society. The message however, lies in reinforcement and hope that the community has the capacity to continue with their lives and survive regardless of the past and present that they have experienced.

The way the novel has presented Anjum is a very strong argument against the Para-colonial impacts of colonialism. It postulates that there are still patterns of such legacies shaping the lives of the populace in former colonies, however, it postulates that such legacies are able to be transcended.

4.2 Representation of Tilo as Homeless Woman

Tilo is a Kashmiri woman who is uprooted of her homeland because of the war in Kashmir. Tilo is also trying to accept the fact that she lost her house, and she is also traumatized by the war. She also understands the manner in which the Indian government has still been exploiting Kashmir.

Tilo, as a character in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) by Arundhati Roy, is a bristling personality who also conveys the efforts to overcome and the effects of para-colonialism, amidst homelessness. Para-colonialism is defined as the legacies and the aftermath of colonialism despite the formal imperial occupation being abolished. The character of Tilo reflects negatively the injustices of marginal communities and the disenfranchised who end up living in a post-colonial anguish.

The fact that Tilo is described as a homeless woman is symbolic, as it represents the inferior, as well as the lost people left impoverished and orphaned because of the colonialism-era weight. Removal of all sense of home and roots, dislocation in the broad sense, pervades Tilo life

throughout the novel, as they are characteristic of para-colonialism as it impacted many individuals and communities.

The fact that Tilo is homeless can be traced to a number of scenes in the novel, as she goes about the street at the edges of society. In this passage, the author talks about her homeless and nomadic condition:

She would go across the bridge every night, and be in the graveyard, under the little church, among the living stones, alive all over with moss and frogs and toads and fireflies." (Roy, 2017)

This visual classicism of the night resting place of Tilo in the graveyard is a theme of starkness that there is a state of abjection that she dwells in the gravestones and she is not in the mainstream society in its technical form.

Besides, gender and homelessness in the line of para-colonialism are also illuminated in the experiences of Tilo. She is a woman and therefore has a specific problem, as well as weak spots that she is more exposed to exploitation, and violence. These are some of the concerns that the novel addresses as it illuminates the very tenuous position of homeless women such as Tilo in a post-colonial society that is nevertheless repressive.

In addition, the theme of social justice and political activism that Tilo is linked to in the novel also intersects with the theme of the effects of para-colonialism in the novel. Her connection with the Naxalite movement and others that she meets that come to represent other marginalized people are important ways in which she best understands the struggle against oppression as witnessed in the post-colonial context.

To conclude briefly about the idea of Tilo in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), this representation of the homeless woman is crucial in leaning back to the consequences of para-colonialism that have been long-lasting in effect. Her experiences and story tell of the struggles that marginalized people and groups still face even today as they are still experiencing the negative impact of past injustices, even though the colonial period has been long overdue. By creating the personality of Tilo, Arundhati Roy manages to make a pertinent point about the necessity of recognizing and correcting the long-term effects of the colonial phenomenon and of the importance of raising up those who have fallen behind in the wake of the phenomenon.

4.3 Arvind as a Dalit

Arvind is a Dalit a person belonging to the bottom-ranking of castes in India. Dalits are usually discriminated against and may be refused to get educated and hired. Arvind is a genius, but he cannot get a chance to go to college due to his caste. He is also not capable of finding a job and he is compelled to hold a position of a rickshaw puller.

Dalits are historically marginalized and oppressed group located in India and they have been discriminated and socially excluded since centuries. In the novel, Arvind may symbolize a Dalit character, who tells about the problems and issues of this people. As a Dalit, Arvind would have been subject to various forms of discrimination in terms of social, economic and cultural terms, thus drastically narrowing his opportunities and prospects.

The novel also looks at the influence of para-colonialism on women. The state of living as an outcast due to one being a woman is rife in the character of Anjum, Tilo and the rest of the females in the novel. They are also mixed up and treated as second-class citizens. It is possible to see how para-colonialism may ruin the life of women in the novel.

4.4 Impacts of Para-colonialism on Children

Importance of para-colonialism to the children is also discussed in the novel. In the novel people like Arvind and other children are deprived of their childhood due to Para-colonial structure. The women have to work in long hours and also they are exposed to violence and exploitation. It is how novel demonstrates how children can lose their innocence and their future at hands of para-colonialism.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) by Arundhati Roy is a novel that talks about the effects of para-colonialism on the children. The novel narrates the life of several children that are poor, in violence, and discriminated.

Ratan is one of the characters in the novel and she is a young girl. Ratan is a street child and he resides in Delhi. She has to work in order to survive and she faces violence most of the time.

The story of Tanatan is a very strong reaffirmation of the effects of para-colonialism on children. It demonstrates the destructive role of poverty, violence, and discrimination in the children lives.

The Poorest of the poor were children of the Night. They slept in garbage-dumps, sewers and the streets. they were the offspring of expropriatees, of the forgotten, of the invisible." (Roy, 2017)

The following lines are taken out of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) by Arundhati Roy who describes the life conditions of the children of the Night, attempts to understand their lives and how they naively struggle to live. These lines emphasise how impoverished, violent, and unseen para-colonialism is.

The term poorest of the poor, gives a great effect to the fact that these children live in extreme poverty. They are found on the road, in the drains and refuse heaps. They lack clean water, food and housing. They always have to face violence and danger.

The term the children of the dispossessed alludes to negativity whereby these children have been denied their childhoods. They have been made to mature too soon and been compelled to go through the steps on how they can survive in a hard and uncaring world. They are the underprivileged and the unseen, the children, who very often become a neglected part of the society.

The sub-lines of the stanza "They used to live in the streets, in the sewers, in the garbage dumps" help to visualize the conditions the children of the Night had to live under. These are kids who are quite literally in the shadows of the worst squalid, unsafe areas of the city. They are in a continuous state of exposure to dirt, illness and brutality.

The reputation of the children being described as in the quote, they were the children of the dispossessed, the forgotten, the invisible implies that the society does not see such children. They do not seem to matter or to be in need of assistance. They are just left alone, to deal with themselves.

The Hope is given a touch with the lines "But they were also the children of hope". Such kids are tough and resilient. They have struggled to stay alive. They are the ones that will transform the world.

The phrase The children of the Night is a strong attack on para-colonialism. They demonstrate how the colonized children are still living in the legacies of colonialism. They are also able to demonstrate on how children are capable of getting out of these problems and bettering their future. They were the offspring of the violence. He had witnessed things that no child was supposed to witness. They were harmed, they were frightened, they were beaten up." (Roy, 2017)

They were the children of the violence means that these children are very much victims of the violence. They are beaten, raped to the death. They also have to be the witnesses of violence that can affect them mentally, deep.

And yet were they also the children of hope. They are the children not giving up. They were the children who were supposed to change the world." (Roy, 2017)

They were the children of optimism. They would be the kids who never quit. They can give a message of hope through the words, they were the children who would change the world". These children do not become victims. They are the survivors. It is to them that the world will be changed. The legacy of colonialism is a strong point of protest in the ways that the novel talks about the effects of the para-colonialism to children. It demonstrates how these leftovers still permeate the lives of children of former colonies, yet it also demonstrates how children are able to rise above their problems and create a greater future.

4.5 Economic Exploitation of the Characters

Economic exploitation is also demonstrated in the novel as the result of para-colonialism. Every single character in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is driven into exploitation of the Para-colonial system. They have to do menial jobs which have insufficient pay and they are usually not given a chance at getting an education and medical care. The novel demonstrates the utilization of Para-colonial system to enrich the minority on the account of the majority.

Anjum: Anjum is a hijra, and they are the transgender whose gender is viewed as third gender in India. As a result, she is reduced to be a sex worker so that she can earn. She is also violated and discriminated against.

Ratan: Ratan is a little girl who lives in the street of Delhi. To earn her living, she has to become a ragpicker. Violence and danger is also shown to her.

Tilottama: Tilottama is a faint hearted young girl, the domestic worker. Her employers exploit her since they do not pay her well and most of the time they mistreat her.

Kavita: Kavita is a call center worker who is young. The employer takes advantage of her because he forces her to work long hours and wages are meager.

These are mere drop-ins the list of characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) who are used economically. It is revealed in the novel that economic exploitation can be cataclysmic to the lives of people. It causes poverty, homelessness, violence, and discrimination.

4.6 Loss of the Identity of the Characters

According to the novel, loss of identity may be caused due to para-colonialism. All the characters in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) are in search of their own status in the world. They live in conflict of various cultures and identities and they are often compelled to exist in choosing between ways of life. The novel implies that the loss of a sense of self can be the result of para-colonialism because individuals have to exist between two cultures.

4.7 Internalization of the Characters

Para-colonialism can be internalized as demonstrated in the novel. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) features a number of characters, who internalize the ethos of Para-colonial system. They might think that they are lesser than the others who are higher on the caste and they may feel that they cannot get any success in the Western world as well. It is proposed in the novel that para-colonialism may become such a strong element that it may influence our ways of thinking and beliefs even without our realization.



Anjum is a hijra; a third gender person, a transgender who is viewed as such in India. The gender identity of Anjum is such that she is a marginalized and discriminated individual. She is commonly addressed by derogatory words; she is also not given any basic rights and opportunities. This identity destruction is a direct consequent of the Para-colonial remnants of colonialism.

Ratan is a street boy in Delhi. She is also subjected to violence; basically she stays in the workforce just so she can survive. Ratan has lost her childhood and has had to mature at a very young age. She is also invisible to the society and she is seen to be offended or neglected most of the time. Such loss of identity is a direct consequence of poverty and violence she is exposed to.

Tilottama is a woman who is married off to someone she does not love. Her husband also metes out domestic violence to her. Tilottama is reduced to her husband and is not given the right to be her own person. This act of loss of identity is a direct consequence to the patriarchal systems that are present in Indian society.

4.8 Resistance of the Characters against Para-colonial System

The novel demonstrates that it is possible to protest against para-colonialism. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), the Para-colonial system goes against the characters more frequently. They can fight to assert their rights or even, attempt to devise means of living out of the system. According to the novel, one can say that despite the fact that the task is very hard and complex, it is possible to fight against para-colonialism.

Anjum: Anjum is a hijra a transgender along with gender who can be considered as the third gender in India. Her gender identity makes her marginalized and discriminated. But these oppressing forces are resisted by Anjum who finds herself a residence in a graveyard and forms a settlement of hijras. This society is the source of support and safeguard to Anjum and this helps her lead a self-respectful life.

Ratan: Ratan is a child living in a Delhi street. She has to work so as to be able to survive and also gets subjected to violence most of the time. But Ratan rebels against these oppressing forces by not losing hope. She has a vision of better future and she is willing to make her vision come to reality.

Kavita: Kavita is a younger woman, who works on behalf of the rights of sex workers. She still faces constant threats and harassment by the police and yet she is unable to give up. In her opinion, sex workers should be treated as people with dignity and respect and she does not want to leave the rights of sex workers unprotected.

Such are only few illustrations of the opposition of the characters towards the Para-colonial system in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). Through these characters readers can see that even though the world can be oppressed there is hope to defy and there is hope to build a brighter future. According to the novel, there is a possibility to fight back even when injuries or odds seem to be on one side. It also implies that the resistance is not necessarily where we may expect it, but instead, it can be in any form. The story of resistance in the novel is a resounding neutrality that regardless of the oppression existing it is, in fact, possible to battle in the name of a better tomorrow.

4.9 Struggle of the Characters for the Transformation of Para-colonialism

In the novel, para-colonialism is depicted to be changed. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), the characters attempt to revolutionize the Para-colonial system frequently. They can make an attempt to alter the perceptions that individuals have of caste, or they can make an attempt to



establish a fairer and more equal society. The novel has the implication that para-colonialism can be transformed although it is a long drawn out process.

Anjum is a hijra, or transgendered individual who can be viewed as a third gender in the Indian context. Her gender identity labels her as a marginalized, violent and discriminatory person. Nevertheless, she does not surrender and she makes herself home in a cemetery. She creates her own community too, one of hijras. They support and protect her.

Ratan is a street child and lives in Delhi. She has to work to earn a living and violence is widespread to her. Nevertheless, she is strong and can survive, and she does not surrender on her dreams. She finally gets a place in which to live and she starts going to school.

Kaul is a Kashmir woman who is driven out of home by the Indian government and they conduct a military operation in Kashmir. Her experiences have traumatized her, however, determined to rebuild her life, she does so. She later settles down in Delhi and she takes up a job as a writer.

These are only a couple of characters of the book *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) that fights to see change in para-colonialism. These characters are marginalized and oppressed, still they do not want to give up. All of them are tough and capable, and all of them want to be able to make things be better in the future.

According to the novel, we can change para-colonialism. It demonstrates that even underprivileged individuals are able to tackle the problems that they have to deal with and create a good life that will benefit themselves and their communities.

It is also in the novel that change is not easy. It takes time, tenacity and money. But it can be, and it should be fought over.

5. Findings and Conclusion

This research paper has demonstrated that *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is a convoluted literary critique of the endurability of colonial beliefs on post-independent India by Arundhati Roy. With the same notions of para-colonialism, the novel reveals that systems of caste, gender, class and state-based violence remain functioning on the inside tropes of colonial rule through the form of being internalized to the mind. The reactions that were made by characters like Anjum, transgender hijra, Saddam Hussain, Dalit who wants justice in the lynching of his father, and Tiltottama, trapped by the politics of Kashmir all express to what extent the colonial systems of social control had been internalized in the daily lives of the oppressed. As observed in the novel, political decolonization has been accomplished, nevertheless, the frameworks of exclusion, control and discipline that the colonial rule constructed persist in the postcolonial institutions and ideologies.

It is also observed in the study that Roy employs literary styles like the non-linear narration, broken story telling and symbolic places to reflect the broken life of her characters and broken nature of the nation. The setting of Anjum living in a graveyard, say, is turned into a very potent force of rebellion- a space of escape, the space where the unwanted can be comfortable without being suffocated by the rules of caste, gender, and nationalism. Such narrative decisions visualize the fact, that para-colonialism is not only external and institutional, but also internal and psychological, determining how people view themselves and their roles in society. The mix of personal experiences and political action in the novel strengthens its para-colonial criticism, and it demonstrates how the rule of violence, exclusion, and injustice persist even under the pretext of democracy and development.



Conclusion

In summary, it is possible to say that *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) provides an interesting literary description of para-colonialism in modern India. The novel by Roy questions an illusion of independence, which supposedly destroyed the social stratifications and power structures which were introduced by the colonialism. She instead shows how such forms have been inherited, reshaped and recreated by the postcolonial state and society. Focusing on the lives of the marginal and those silenced, Roy reveals how important it is to take a stand on the present, making people realize that decolonization has not come to an end. This paper is useful to postcolonial studies because it establishes the viability of para-colonialism as an analytical instrument through which the analysis of the relationship between history and identity and resistance can be done in post-independence literature.

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