

Representation of ‘The Other’: Tracing the ‘Otherized’ Segments of Contemporary Indian Society in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the post-colonial nation’s history (India) from perspectives of marginalized minorities in Arundhati Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The aim of this research is to explore the marginalization of “the Others” and traces the otherized segments of contemporary Indian society that are marginalized on the basis of being a hijra, a Dalit, a woman, a Muslim and an Untouchable. This paper analyzes ‘binarism’ and the conflict between the center and periphery: between Hindus and Muslims, between male, female and intersex, between Touchables and Untouchables, as well as between the graveyard and the surrounding wider city. Anjum, an intersex, Revathy, a Maoist comrade, Dayachand, an Untouchable, Tilotamma, a wandering Syrian origin half-Dalit woman, Musa Yeswi, a forced Kashmiri freedom fighter—narrate the untold and unheard tales about failure of a secular democratic country. This paper tours the fault lines of India and highlights the struggle of socially excluded people of society, against the established standards of the culture hence challenging contemporary stereotypical representation of “the Others” and eventually resistance. Roy explicitly advocates religious, racial and territorial degenerative system and reflects the challenges of telling national narrative from a multiple minoritarian perspective. The novel has multi-layered and multi-dimensional plot-structure and investigate the causes behind Roy’s attempt to give voice to the voiceless (Indians). This research is carried out applying Edward Said’s theoretical framework of “The Self” and “The Other”, “Us” and “Them”, and “Binary Opposition”.

Key words: **The Other, Hijra, Dalit, Kashmiri, Minorities, Resistance, Woman**

Introduction

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is the second novel of Arundhati Roy, a well-known humanitarian, political activist, and a radical thinker, who has raised concerns regarding humanity sufferings, social stratification and classism. In this novel, she voices about the rights of “have-nots”, the exploitation of lower classes by the capitalist system, environmental concerns, and habitat degradation. She also engages in a political discourse in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and highlights the atrocities of the Indian Army in Indian held Jammu and Kashmir. Roy has exposed such acts of barbarity and cruelty in her nonfiction books

including, *An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*, *The Cost of Living*, *Walking with the Comrades*, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom* and *Broken Republic*. She claims that the long-held disputed territory of "Kashmir was not an integral part of India". She also unveils the darker side of capitalism and shows how capitalism has subjugated and vanquished billions of people in India and how capitalism contributes in the rise of racism, human and environmental exploitation, and degradation in her book *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*. She also faces death threats and sedition charges by the extremists and fundamentals of India due to her these revolutionary and progressive views.

In her first novel, *The God of Small Things*, Roy explores the racial, ethnic, and cultural tensions between the Touchable and Untouchable. She further reflects that due to the historical, social exclusion, and segregation, Untouchables has internalized the class system and even in contemporary India inter-caste marriage and sexual relations are strictly forbidden. However, despite the strong criticism on present-day Indian society, she steadily and persistently writes against Indian atrocities in Kashmir, class system, industrialization, modernization, environmental causes, and globalization. In one of her interviews, she said, "I spoke about justice for the people of Kashmir who live under one of the most brutal military occupations in the world; for Dalit soldiers killed in Kashmir whose graves I visited on garbage heaps in their villages in Cuddalore; for the Indian poor who pay the price of this occupation in material ways and who are now learning to live in the terror of what is becoming a police state." (qtd. in Chamberlain). In her second novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* she deals with various social vices, crimes and articulates her political philosophy along with her literary genius. Arundhati Roy's stance is to uplift the fallen ones. In this novel, Roy spotlights the cry of the suppressed and marginalized ones. She tells the disturbing stories of casteism, women subjugation, and increasing extremism in present-day Indian society in such a way that it looks close to reality.

This book consists of twelve chapters. The whole novel is divided in two large sections. Roy dedicated this book "To the Unconsoled" these unconsoled are "the others" who are otherized either socially, politically or culturally and live on the margins of the society. Through this novel Roy tries to give the voice to the voiceless (Indians) because most of the book is written from the perspective of marginalized segments of the Indian society. There are two main narratives in the novel, one narrative is of a transgender Anjum born as Aftab and dejected segments of Indian society. The second narrative is of Tilotamma and Musa on Kashmir politics and dilapidated condition of nature. The convergence of these narratives occurs at the end of the novel at Anjum's graveyard residency. The opening section deals with the story of Anjum who is an intersex and then surveys the marginalized segments for instance Dalits, women and Untouchables. Roy also expands her political philosophy and incorporates many political issues in this first section notably, Godhra Train Burning, Gujarat Riots 2002, rise of Hindu Nationalism, Sikh Massacre 1984, Union Carbide Gas Disaster 1984, Demolition of Babri Mosque 1992 etc. Roy candidly voices-over the violent politics of Jammu

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and Kashmir through the character of Musa and Tilottama and increasing eco-systematic imbalance in the second section of the novel. Moreover, this novel incorporates diverse stories and characters which makes the storyline of the novel more complex and fragmented. Alex Clark (2017) in his critique said, “*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a curious beast: baggy, bewilderingly overpopulated with characters, frequently achronological, written in an often careless and haphazard style and yet capable of breathtakingly composed and powerful interludes.” Parody of politicians, for instance, “Gujarat ka Lalla” and “the Lispering Prime Minister” is traced in the first section of the novel, which leads to the sinister tragedy that has been unfolded in the second section of the book. Hindutva, ideology of Hindus’ hegemony especially in terms of religious radicalism, which is also called “Hinduness”, has risen to an alarming degree in previous few decades’ specifically extreme right wing government in India which is also highlighted through the novel.

The present novel covers past twenty years of Indian history seen through the eyes of multiple outcastes and otherized segments of the society. This novel is particularly about India and in larger sense it is about Indian subcontinent. The first six chapters of the novel mainly deal with transgender identity, marginalized people of the society and hatred of society towards their existence. The second section chapters of the novel mostly deal with war-torn Kashmir and state terrorism. Roy turned her attention to the abject condition of the minorities and people’s movements all over the India, new wave of resistance and liberation in Kashmiri young men, Indian Army occupation, Adivasi tribal community of Central India fighting for the protection of their ancestral lands. The second section of the novel is about Kashmir fighting against the occupation forces. Roy is clear headed about her stance on the issue of Kashmir. She is an advocate of Kashmir independence. This section shows Tilo as a major character, an architect turned into an activist (she seems to be modelled on Roy herself). The story begins and ends in a graveyard. This graveyard is populated and inhabited by the minorities, outsiders, in short the others.

Literature review

Countries with colonial heritage like India still cry out due to unbearable pangs of colonial remnants, inherited colonial government system and particularly incomplete and unjust partitions of colonized countries by the mighty colonial powers of twentieth century. Postcolonial novels like Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* narrate the stories of fragmented nations in terms of geographical realities, gender, religion, and race. Postcolonial fiction confronts the “failure of postcolonial nation states” which failed to deliver to colonized natives, hollow promises of democracy and after independence “anti-colonial nationalist quickly turned into dictators”. From

M. G. Vassanji and Ngugi Wa Thiong to Salman Rushdi and Chinua Achebe; these writers encounter the same question of postcolonial nations' socio-political atmosphere after getting independence. Questioning the established postcolonial socio-political atmosphere, critic Nalini Iyer (2017) explores *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* from post-colonial theoretical framework. She points out that Anjum's family history is located in Partition of Subcontinent, 1947. The Partition has still its impacts on the people of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Ayesha Jalal, a famous historian of Pakistan writes that Partition is a "defining moment that has neither beginning nor end" (2013, p.1). Vazira Zamindar terms the Division of Subcontinent "the Long Partition" she asserts "the division can only be understood beyond the events of 1947". Partition divided the subcontinent solely on the religious basis and other diverse, cultural, ethnic identities and geographical realities were equally ignored. The fault lines and problems of present-day subcontinent has its roots in Partition. This novel detects that how Partition effect caste, gender and sexuality. She argues that problems of postcolonial India have its roots in past, the colonial British Subcontinent and still people of subcontinent are paying huge price for the unjust territorial division. If the issue of Kashmir is resolved, it can give peace to subcontinent.

Roy has successfully detected the gender, political, social, racial, geographical, and religious "marginalities" in present-day Indian society. These marginalities are the evidence of disintegrated India. These marginalities are binaries of "Duniya versus Jannat, dissent versus consent, democracy versus revolution and so forth". Critic Swati Ganguly, visualizes the prevailing unbroken marginalities in the novel, says the novel is "an exploration of a grotesque hybrid existence that the Indian State has force its people" (2017). She argues that Roy has skillfully exposed the Corporate and State nexus "that has sustained itself by exploiting the country's human beings and natural resources by brutally squashing people's resistance". Roy gives an upper hand to left wing liberal intelligentsia and disfavors the right wing conservative forces; later one has once issues death threat." Ganguly in this essay slightly touched this novel with the perspective of binary opposition and marginalities, which is not enough. This paper explores the theoretical framework of "the Others", primarily focusing on binary opposition, marginalities, and concept of *us* and *them*, *self* and the *other* in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, in its craft and nature, looks like a journalistic work, a report or commentary on the previous events in India particularly of last three decades. Shafi Khan (2017) in his essay "Truth has a Habit to Prevail" discovers that Roy's stories and names in her novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* are not fictional but they are basically "non-fictional". Major Amrik Singh is Major Avtar Singh. Aggarval is the depiction of Arvind Kejriwal, the current chief minister of the Indian Capital New Delhi. Jalib Qadri's sketch is based on actual Adv. Jalil Qadri. Major Amrik Singh is purely the portrayal of actual Major Avtar Singh. Major Avtar Singh was one of the sadist and heartless military officer in Indian Army. His jingoistic attitude toward liberation movement

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of Kashmir compelled him to kill many Kashmiri freedom seekers and innocent civilians. Jantar Mantar, a place in Indian Capital Delhi, where protests took place is like Russell's London or Jean Paul Sartre's Paris. As Dicken tells the story of the celebrated French Revolution in his novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, Roy in her novel tells the tragic stories of human rights abuses and otherized India. Roy is not selling us an American Dream but uncovers the reality of Indian society which is hidden under the multiple covers of extremism, jingoistic nationalism, Hindutva and 'rising India'.

Somak Ghoshal (2017) reviews the novel from the perspective of structure, plot and stylistics. The novel goes back and forth in history and refuses to be a linear narrative. He says that this novel is shockingly "soaring to flights of irony and poetry one moment, plunging into anodyne reportage the next, it appears to be composed by several minds and hands, unable to decide its tone and texture". Plot of the novel is very vast, multiple strands of narratives are stick together by literary scotch tape. The novel is full of "dreadful clichés" about east and west. Roy's prose glitter's off the page and storyline is artistically crafted. The novel is dazzling, sour in its taste and dull in its color. The first section of the novel seems like a novella, second section is also same like the first one: cast, plot and narrative are grandiloquent. There are almost fifty characters; minor digression adds twist in the novel. It is a skillfully composed novel that unifies the multifarious strands into a humorous whole. If *The God of Small Things* is small and colorful than *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is vast and dull.

The novel reflects the writer's "political philosophy" that is articulated in the text. The novel mostly deals with those issues that are political in nature like Kashmir conflict, Manipur Nationalist Movement, displacement of Adivasi tribal people, Maoist insurgency in Central Indian forests, and Gujarat Massacre 2002. Jagdish Batra also comments on the nature of novel and says that the novel is "a political novel by all means". He further elaborates that this novel refers to the political personages and these are the "political issues at its core that trigger the most of the action". Sehgal describes it as "A companion piece of Roy's political writing". Sharp caricaturing of Indian Politician "The Poet Prime Minister" (Atal Bihari Vajpayee), "trapped rabbit" (Manmohan Singh), "Ghandian" (Anna Hazare), "Mr. Aggerval" (Arvind Kejriwal), "Gujarat ka lalla" (Narender Modi), Roy shows the political engagement of narrative and political circus of Indian politics of last three decades.

Multiple dimensions of this novel have been explored. Although this novel is recently published but a lot of work is done on this text. Different researchers are exploring the different sides of this novel yet there is not a single work done on Edward Said's theoretical framework of "the Self" "the Other". This research paper gives new dimension to see this piece of work and provides a new perspective about it. This paper also critically evaluates the reviews and explores the gap. It also helps us to analyze that in what way Roy inculcates the various

contemporary social and political issue in the novel and how she manages to give voice to the voiceless people.

Research methodology

The method of this research is qualitative and it is based on a deep and thorough textual analysis of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Other related works, for instance, *The God of Small Things* (1997), *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) will be used as secondary resources. This paper mainly focuses on the critical analysis of the representation of ‘the Others’ in the novel. The present research is carried out through Edward Said theoretical framework of “*The Self*” and “*The Other*” in which former is privileged and later is marginalized and subjugated. This dissertation investigates the novel through the theoretical lens of “*us*” and “*them*” in which “*us*” is at the center of socio-political system and “*them*” is at the peripheries. A key thematic concern given by Said in *Orientalism*, ‘*Binary Opposition*’ which assisted to explore the ‘binarism’ in contemporary Indian society and locates the dejection of minorities by the majoritarian states. All the voiceless segments of the Indian society which are highlighted in this novel seems displacing from one place to another, mostly from better to worse place, predominately from city to graveyard. Roy extends her narrative and spotlights on the anthropocentric Indian society in which nature is ‘the Other’.

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Arundhati Roy says “‘Others’ have horrible stories” (Roy, 2017, p. 26). Edward Said in his celebrated book *Orientalism* unveils that Western literary canon, historically and literarily, views Orient as “mysterious”, sluggish, lazy, underdeveloped and under-nourished. He says Occident’s view about the East is made through literature and especially through a new genre of literature, “novel”. He asserts that there is no logical reasoning behind this prejudiced look of Occident about The East. Said, in *Orientalism*, says Occident is “The Self” and The Orient is “the Other” in which “Self” is superior, privileged and has a vintage point to define or rebuild the silent, weak and passive “The Other”. Furthermore, relationship between “The Self” and “The Other” becomes the relationship of dominance, hegemony and power. Misrepresentation of the Orient by the Occident is clearly manifested in Said’s book and the western writers, dramatists and poets contributed to the creation of “Binary Opposition” between “The Self” and “The Other”. Boundary between “The Self” and “The Other” is artificial, imaginary and the approval with the prior self is advantaged and later is disadvantaged. Self has otherized its other. Said has closely woven this concept of self and other, giving a new field of inquiring the truth seeing this in binary opposition.

Self “does not like the Other” (Roy, 2017, p. 41). Edward Said stated in *Orientalism* (1978) “the othered are essentialized, spoken of and for but always

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silenced and excluded". These were the orientalists who constructed The East as the "other". That is exactly the idea in Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* that those who are in power created a new definition and labeling for the less privileged ones "the Other". Ultimate outcome of this othering is the building of "binary opposition" as Said voiced in *Orientalism*. This binary opposition divides the whole population of society into different small segments, creates the two main groups "the Self" and "the Other". Moosavinia in his essay "Edward Said's *Orientalism* and the Study of the Self and "the Other" in Orwell's *Burmese Days*" paints a realistic picture of binarism in these words,

The Self and the Other can be translated to the Occident / Orient, us /them, The West /the rest, center/margin, metropolitan/colonial subjects, vocal/silent. In all these cases Western literary and cultural canon defines "its other" in relation to himself, the other is an alien and alter ago, to and of the self, as the inferior reflection of Europe.

In the "process of othering", 'Self' does not treat the Other fully as humans, result is the dehumanization of 'the Others'. "Othering codifies and fixes 'the Self'" as a superior, mentally and physically fully grown and the Others are savages, inferior, Untouchables and easy to be subjugated. Self does not stay fix or remain fix to self, rather it goes to a higher degree "Proper Self". Self remains very much conscious about "the others" and others are just put down upon the process of political, social and cultural exclusion from the mainstream. Otherizing people on the basis of gender; as Anjum is portrayed as 'the Other' since she lives in "graveyard", purely marginalized on third gender basis because her gender does not match with majority of the people of society. Dayachand, a Dalit belonging to the low caste of the Hinduism stratification, later abandons his faith of social stratification and classism and converts to Islam, is marginalized due to his Untouchability. He revolts against this marginalization and takes refuge in Islam, a belief system which strongly discourages caste system in a society. By revolting against one othering, he jumps into a new othering which are the Muslims of India, being othered by the nationalism of India which only includes the majority of Hindus and excludes the rest. Self and other is the distinction between Dalits and Brahmins, intersex and male, valley and plains, untouchable and touchable, Muslims and Hindus. Musa Yeswi, a resident of Kashmir, is being marginalized purely on the geographical basis. His wife and three years old daughter were brutally killed by Indian Army. A set of clichés and stereotypes are attached and attributed to the Others, the marginalized segments, making further hard the gulf between *us* and *them*. In this novel, Otherness is stamped on less privileged classes, minorities, gender and this marginalization and social exclusion is a threat for "*us*" i.e. elite class that must be avoided. Relationship between a Kashmiri and

non-Kashmiri, Dalit and Non-Dalit, transgender and non-transgender in the present novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* and is in accordance with Edward Said's relevant idea and theoretical framework of 'Self' and the 'Other', "us" versus "them", "binary opposition" and "stereotypes". The drift between us and them is so huge and so gigantic that keeps the both parties attached in their own positions. In whole novel self is mostly at the background and other are in front, suffering by identity problems, created by those who are in power for those who are out.

There are five salient 'Others' projected and fictionalized in the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Anjum, an intersex, Musa Yeswi, a Kashmiri Muslim, Saddam Hussian, born as Dayachand, a Dalit, and Adivasi tribes of South India and one non-human, nature. First and foremost, 'Other' in the novel is Anjum. In the novel, Anjum is mocked on her existence, targeted, labeled and physically teased. She is molested and sexually assaulted. She is ignored and sexually abused. She is socially considered as a curse whose existence is not a good omen for the family and society. That is the reason why family disowns Aftab. When her father Mulaqat Ali understands this fact that nothing can be done about her "unformed" biological body parts, he rejects her and never greets her again in life.

The history of Anjum's family, 'the Other' and the protagonist of the novel, starts with the Partition and Roy, through the Muslim character Anjum and her Muslim family, detects the impacts of Partition on Muslims of India, especially taking the setting of Delhi, Gujarat and Kashmir, places renowned for Muslim's genocide. One of Anjum's uncles migrated to Pakistan and worked in the Rooh Afza country branch. Roy presents the glimpses of Partition in throughout her novel and conveys this idea that how a country started its journey as a secular democratic state and steadily became the Hindu India, a majoritarian state. Rise of Hindu fundamentalism can easily be traced in the mass killing of Sikh minority in 1984. Anti-Sikh riots took away the lives of 7000 Sikhs (*The New York Times*, 2013). Especially, after the tragic incident of 9/11, Anjum visualizes that hatred for Muslims increased all over the world to the highest degree. Communal violence against Muslims in India also escalated. Anjum, having hijra and Muslim identity feel insecure in Gujarat Riots 2002 when a violent mob of Hindu extremists exterminated hundreds of Muslims. Same kind of ethnic cleansing also observed when right wing extremists demolished sixteenth century Babri Mosque where "more than 1000 Muslims" were brutally killed (*The New York Times*, 2013). Anjum in the novel is symbolically presented and represents the otherized hijra community and every transgender living in a democratic country.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness deals with different social affairs, politics and environmental concerns in Indian society. Anjum as the representation of the hijra community of Indian society is 'the Other', who struggles to survive in her culture by remaining within the boundaries set by society for hijras. When she fails to cope with her spiritual satisfaction, Anjum's struggles to create a life for her outside the boundaries set by society for her gender for which she chooses graveyard, a very odd place to live for worldly people as they consider it an end of

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life. But for Anjum, graveyard is the beginning of her life her spiritual journey as she feels inspired at this place. In short, Anjum breaks the barriers of the society put on her and her gender by living an anti-normative life.

The contemporary India seems fragmented as the characters are. This fragmentation affects the society badly. Every character is restless. Nobody is at peace. This restlessness is due to the memories, unsaid feelings and dreams which are unrealized. Important wars and riots are inside, not outside, as one of the character says. That's why Roy brings so many varied voices in this novel. These voices, at times, feel political because they highlight those who are overlooked by the mainstream socio-political structure of secular democratic India. The characters face injustice and inequality in their society. Experience of loss is common to all the characters in the novel. Someone loses best friend, someone loses father and someone identity.

Dalits are another "Other" who are being treated inhumanely. They are unaccepted and neglected. Dalit are not given any chance to develop themselves. Lack of strong racial identity, awareness, and historical exclusion, they, time and time again, become the victims of unfairness and inequity. In this novel, Saddam Hussain represents the Dalit community of India, who was born as Dayachand, is an Untouchable. His father was a 'Chamar', a low caste in India reserved for leather workers. Once, his father was coming back after taking the carcass of a cow. At check post, Station House Officer demanded heavy bribes which his father could not afford. SHO puts his father in lock up and eventually a violent mob of devotees of "cow mother" brutally kills his father. He further added, "Everybody watched, nobody stopped them" and "I was the part of the mob that killed my father" (Roy, 2017, p. 89). Disheartened, Dayachand denounces his faith of untouchability, social stratification and accepts Islam. Later on, he does a job in hospital as a toilet and shit cleaner. Working in the hospital he exposes this fact that all the toilet cleaners in the hospital are basically 'Dalits', Untouchables. Saddam Hussain later abandons this job and comes to reside in Anjum's Jannat Guest House, the place of dejected, marginalized and fallen ones.

Roy takes the setting of hospital and mirrors up the social exclusion of Untouchables. Hindu doctors, most of them were Brahmins, do not touch the sweepers for fear of being polluted. They would stand at distance with handkerchief masking their noses and shout instructs to the Untouchables. Then the narrator moves towards the historical exclusion and marginalization of untouchables and narrates that these untouchables, "evil demons were really dark-skinned Dravidians – indigenous – rulers and Hindu gods who vanquished them (and turned them into Untouchables and the oppressed castes who would spend their lives in the service of the new rulers) were the Aryan invaders" (Roy, 2017, p. 86-87). Eventually, the narrator moves to the history of modern India and quotes Gandhi that he said "Caste system was India's salvation. Each caste must do the work it has been born to do, but all works must be respected" (Roy, 2017, p. 103).

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In the novel *Untouchables*' cremation grounds are shown "right next to village dump" (Roy, 2017, p. 317). Untouchability is so deeply rooted even in contemporary India that the upper caste Hindu people can touch dogs and cats but do not touch human beings, the otherized *Untouchables*. Nasrullah Mambrol in his essay "Dalit Identity and Literary Criticism" quotes a Dalit writer who exposes the religious discrimination of the Dalits at the hands of upper caste Hindus. He writes:

"The church bell rang
Everyone entered in.
The ajan heard from mosque
Everyone entered in.
The bell of temple rang
Some entered in,
And some stood out".

In this novel, Roy tours the fault lines of India and exposes the ongoing movements of communists, pointless displacement of Adivasi people, and rise of Maoists, one of the otherized segment Roy highlights in this book. The novel timelines the insurgency of Naxalite-Maoists. Adivasi people are the native inhabitants of Central India. They comprise the 8.6% total population of India. Adivasi tribes face displacement, institutionalized segregation and state terrorism. Roy's book '*Walking with the Comrades*' also reflects the Maoist insurgency in the Central Indian forests. State oppression and despotism with Adivasi people and the Maoist movement in the forests of Central India have clearly been shown in the characterization of Maoist activist Revathy. She, in her letter to her illegitimate daughter, unfolds the unheard stories about herself and jungles of Central India. Revathy is a Maoist insurgent from East Godavari district of a coastal Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Comrade Revathy is tortured physically abused and eventually raped by the policemen of Andhra Pradesh in the forest. Result was the birth of Udaya, who is also called Miss Jabeen the Second. Revathy had to go back to forest, central place of left wing activists, that is the reason she leaves her illegitimate daughter Miss Jabeen the Second at Jantar Manter, Old Delhi. Tribal communities, Maoist rebels and left wing activists are all fighting against the hearing-impaired Indian government authorities for their civil rights and protection of their indigenous lands.

Georg W. Hegel introduces the idea of "Other" and says the Other is a "constituent part of human preoccupation self". He states that the notion of "the self requires the existence of other as the counterpart entity required for defining the self". The other appears as the "radical threat to the existence of the self". Other is needed for the Self. Other is socially constructed. Critic Pratul Ahuja in his essay "The Fire Within: Naxalite Insurgency Violence in India" remarks that India is facing a rising polarization between the urban and rural, rich and poor; large number of suicides by the indebted and penniless peasants. These inequalities spur the resistance movements and underground activities. Prime

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Minister Manmohan Singh, PM of India at the time of Naxalite Insurgency, attested these threats. Indian bourgeoisie class has suppressed and exploited the Dalits, Adivasi tribes, and poor peasants during the initial years of Independence. Similarly, on the name of development projects millions of people were displaced and were given no proper compensation. He remarked that these threats are dangerous for the territorial integrity of India. Naxalites Insurgency, which is called "people's war", is easily evident in southern, eastern and central India.

Udaya Chandra, a professor of religious and ethical diversity studies, states that "Communist Party of India [CPI (Maoist)], called for a New Democratic Revolution". She says that Indian Maoist have denounced the parliamentary democracy which have failed to address the problems of majority of its citizens. Approximately, four-fifth of the total population of India earns less than 2 US\$ per day. Maoists in their party program identify post-colonial India as an "autocratic" and "reactionary" state. Communist Party of India (CPI) strives for "worker-peasant alliance" for overthrow of "imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism" by a revolutionary struggle, an armed resistance and a guerrilla war. CPI is mostly active in those parts of the country where the human progression and development level is amongst the "lowest in the world" (Chandra): thick forests of Central India, rocky terrain, and surreal jungles makes guerrilla war easier. People of lower castes are predominant in CPI in terms of numbers. Estimated Maoists in India are around forty thousand in a country of 1.2 billion citizens, excluding the sympathizers and non-combatants. These thinly spread Maoist radicals exist in what scholars and policy-makers say Red Corridor in India. Udaya Jabeen's mother, a radical Maoist, is from the same part of India and fights against the corrupt system of contemporary India.

Roy's narrative empowerment of female Maoist guerrilla fighter is a remarkable technique she employed in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, to give representation to Indian women and Left Wing Movements in contemporary India. Revathy is a militant in People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) that is a militant wing of CPI. Revathy becomes the represent and voice of Maoist activists in the novel along with the other shattered tales of insecure characters; striving to live on the peripheries of the society. These communists are officially declared as "terrorists" by Indian state official. At the end of the novel, Revathy's letter appears in which she unfolds her story, which is full of the prevailing social evils, sorrows, physical and sexual abuses that a women of Central India faces in home outside society. Her father frequently physically tortures Revathy's own mother. She says, "I want to be a lawyer and put my father behind bars forever" (Roy, 2017, p. 425). She was inhumanely raped by the policemen and then they savagely cut her "skin with a knife blade", a repetition of physical ferocity and violence her father imposed on her mother. After rape Revathy admits, "This is the experience of so many women in the forest (Roy, 2017, p. 429).

These Maoist, Naxalites, and communists are, in fact, deprived Dalits who are deposed of their property and compelled to leave their native place, place reserved for industrialization, international corporations and deforestation. They are disadvantaged of their very essential human rights like property, equality, and freedom of expression. Roy has realistically portrayed the life of Naxals in the woods. When these suppressed and marginalized segments of the society ask for rights, no rights are given but state terrorism and oppression starts against them. They had to choose to lift their arms up with guns, snatch their rights from the one who own all the privileges. In the letter of Miss Jabeen the Second's mother explains the tragic incidents. She left her beloved daughter because she was not in a position to take care of her upbringing. Police men raped her and result is Miss Jabeen the Second. Maoist mother has to live in the jungle that's why for Udaya's secure future; she left her sweetheart in Jantar Mantar, Old Delhi. These are the unheard and painful stories of women oppression, rape and social exclusion. India has become the "most dangerous country" for women (*Reuters*, 2018). Poor women's screams always remained unheard in subcontinent. In Indian society where women are nothing but the Others who had to shut their mouths instead of speaking truth in dominant patriarchal society of India. In short, Roy highlights harsh realities of today's otherized women of India with a fictional story.

Michel Foucault (1972) in his book *The Archeology of Knowledge* said "where there is power, there is resistance." He analytically examines the situation of people who exists on the peripheries of the society. He emphasizes on the unveiling of "negative structure" of society that has excluded some certain groups from the established social order. Foucault discloses that in number of ways exercise of established power can be resisted. He argues that at one certain point of time coexistence turns into resistance, due to the imbalance power sharing between the two groups like in India. He adds that no matter how oppressive the system is, there is always possibility of resistance. Although most of the narrative in the novel is written from the perspective of marginalized minorities and third sex people. There is a certain part of the story told from the point of view of a "power-holder" civil servant, a bureaucrat Biplab Dasgupta who unpleasantly smells the strong roots of elitism in the country, an obedience of tradition, modern hierarchal structures and banality. Incorporating the narrative of 'authorities', Roy spotlights the both accounts and discloses what rubbish is hidden under the carpet.

Casteism and racial discrimination is also very much prevalent in Tilo's story who is 'the Other', unconventional, a rambling woman and the protagonist of the second section of the novel. Tilo's attempt to resist against the established authority can be traced from her own terrible history. Tilo was the "illegitimate child of an Untouchable" father and a Christian mother of Syrian origin. Her mother, to conceal her sin, gave her new baby girl to an orphan house and then went back and adopted her. Tilo emerges as an ardent freedom fighter of Kashmir. Being deprived from the essential necessities of life like home, proper upbringing, and parents, she turns to be a rebel against the established norms of the society. Tilo has strong ideological and physical relations with Kashmiri freedom fighter

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Musa Yeswi. She also adopted a baby girl, who was born in Central Indian jungles to another resistance fighter Revathy. Her name was Miss Jabeen the Second, illegitimate daughter of Revathy. Tilo being the daughter of Christian mother and Dalit father is the Other in Indian society, who protests against the social exclusion of Christian and Dalits born Indians and shows resistance through her anti-normative character. For a novel that seeks to tell the stories of all the marginalities produced under the shadow of jingoistic nationalism, majoritarian state, and global capital, its closure seems a fairy-tale wish-fulfillment.

It is the dark side of multicultural and multi-faith country that Roy has portrayed in this novel. No doubt, India is a country of different castes, races, languages, religions and spiritual beliefs. But in contemporary democratic India, followers of different faiths and religions have lost their balance. This imbalance ends up in fragmentation and degradation of the society. The main clashes often occur between the largest majority Hindus and biggest minority Muslims in India. Roy quoted the plight of Kashmiri Pundits as well. Hundreds and thousands of Hindu Pundits of Kashmir Valley were killed and murdered brutally in 1990 decade. Government could not protect them and eventually they started living in the plains. Many Kashmiri Pundits became homeless and faced unending sufferings. Replica of this heartrending plight occurred in Gujarat Massacre when Hindu extremist mob cruelly killed more than seven hundred Muslims, thousands of people injured and lacs of people were internally displaced.

Roy exposes the contemporary sensitive and critical socio-political cosmos of India. Under the guise and cover of world biggest democracy and the secularism, injustice, racism and discrimination commonly are being practiced. Living and the dead both are living in the same place, graveyard. No place has left for "the Other" to live except cemetery. Distinction between the living and dead has ended. People are killed and buried in the dark. The current India has lost its balance that once used to be in Mughal Era. Extremism has risen to a frightening degree. This text is an unbearable truth about the current state of India. By choosing a transgender character she tried her best to draw readers' attention towards the inequalities that exist in the society. The stigma of class discrimination, along with other discriminations and prejudices is very much prevalent in the novel. This novel is a patchwork of various narratives.

Gurpreet Singh explicates that Roy "gives voice to the most condemned group in the world's so-called largest secular democracy". He further argues that from Dalits to the Adivasi tribal and intersex people, they all appear in the novel. He says that Roy has specifically focused on the marginalized and socially excluded Dalits and Muslim community who are far away from socio-political system of democratic state; the Muslims in India are 'the Others' and are compelled to live under persistent threat which is currently ruled by the right wing nationalist Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). Dayachand is a symbolic representation of the entire suffering of Dalits. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, there are four

traditional social *Varnas*, castes or classes in traditional social classes in Hinduism, (1) “Brahmins - priests, teachers, (2) Kshatryas - warriors, rulers, (3) Vaishyas - traders, (4) Shudras – laborers”. The insertion of Shudras in Four-Class System bestowed a measure of regality and dignity on them. Interestingly, Untouchables are not even included in the Four Varna System. They are outcast and outside of the caste-system such as tribal groups. Caste, in subcontinent, does not only states one’s occupation, but also is linked with one’s identity. Duties of Untouchables are garbage removal and toilet cleansing: mostly they deal with wastage bodily fluids. That is why they are being considered polluted and not allowed to be touched. Untouchable must have to drink from separate wells and they have separated entrances to homes. According to Indian Census 2011 there are “200 million Untouchables” in India which comprises the “17.7% of total population” (*The Times of India*, 2001). Roy in her interview to *The Guardian* said,

Caste is about dividing people up in ways that preclude every form of solidarity, because even in the lowest castes there are divisions and sub-castes, and everyone’s co-opted into the business of this hierarchical, silo-ised society. This is the politics of making a grid of class, of caste, of ethnicity, of religion.

According to geographical realities of India, Kashmir is the Other and Kashmiri’s are not “us” but “them” for India. Second half of Roy’s novel has its setting in Kashmir, whose fate was not decided at the time of the Partition. So, Kashmir conflict has its roots in colonial Subcontinent. Post-colonial states of India and Pakistan have witnessed three wars on the issue of Kashmir. NaliniIyer explains the current politics on Kashmir issue in her essay;

Kashmir is the unresolved issue from Partition and decolonization that continues to structure not just India-Pakistan relations but also the relationship of the Indian state and army with the people of Kashmir. Roy ties the US war on terror to the politics of Kashmir emphasizing that the Kashmiri struggle is no longer a subcontinental issue but a global one where the Indian occupation is bolstered by the American war on terror.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the representation of ‘the Others’, their way of survival in a society that has rejected them from the mainstream of its structure. Roy has dedicated this novel “To the Unconsoled”, these unconsoled are the Others who are otherized either socially, politically or culturally and are forced to live on the margins of the society. The researcher has explored that through this book Roy

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gives voice to the voiceless (Indians) in the world's so-called largest secular democracy, since most of the book is written from the point of view of marginalized segments of the society. Roy brings spotlight on all "the Others" of contemporary Indian society, Anjum, Dayachand, Musa Yeswi, Comrade Revathy and Adivasi tribes who are 'otherized' on the basis of being a hijra, an Untouchable, a Kashmiri, a woman, and race respectively. The novel covers the span of past twenty years of Indian history seen through the eyes of multiple outsiders and the Other. Otherness is a threat which must be avoided. The narrator shifts back and forth and exposes the ongoing movements of change, pointless displacement of Adivasi people, and rise of Hindu nationalism. It is the bleak picture of multi-faith and multicultural country that Roy has portrayed in this novel. India is a country of different castes, races, languages, religions and spiritual beliefs. But in present-day India, followers of different faiths, religions and ideologies have lost their balance. Only Anjum's graveyard residency functions as a multi-faith and a secular sanctuary that is protected from cruel and turbulent outside "Duniya". By employing historical realism, Roy shows things as they are to expose the contemporary caste system, identity crisis, and state oppression in the present-day India. In short, researcher concludes that Roy tours the fault lines of India, tells the story of the failure of postcolonial nation (India), and successfully detects the gender, political, social, racial, geographical, and religious "marginalities" in present-day Indian society.

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