

Exploring Women's Place and Subjectivity Formation in the Novels of Arundhati Roy: A Comparative Analysis of The God of Small Things and The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.

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Abstract - This comparative analysis delves into the intricate narratives of Arundhati Roy's celebrated novels, "The God of Small Things" and "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," with a focused exploration of women's place and subjectivity formation within these literary landscapes. It underscores the significance of delving into women's place and subjectivity within her works, considering the broader context of gender dynamics in society. Employing feminist literary criticism as its foundation, this research investigates how women characters are portrayed, their societal roles, limitations, and how the settings influence their subjectivity. It emphasizes the significance of intersectionality in analyzing women's experiences, encompassing factors such as race, class, and other intersecting identities. It delves into the role of history, memory, and landscape in shaping women's identities and experiences within these narratives. Furthermore, the analysis examines how patriarchal ideologies are depicted and resisted in both novels, shedding light on the nuanced ways in which gender dynamics are challenged. It synthesizes findings from the comparative analysis, offering key insights into women's place and subjectivity in Arundhati Roy's works. This research contributes to the understanding of Arundhati Roy's literary contributions, feminist literary theories, and the broader discourse on gender dynamics in literature.

Keywords - subjectivity, gender dynamics, feminist literary, history, memory.

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF ARUNDHATI ROY'S WORKS

Arundhati Roy is an acclaimed Indian author, activist, and public intellectual who gained international recognition with her debut novel, "The God of Small Things." Born on November 24, 1961, in Shillong, India, she spent her childhood in various parts of India and later studied architecture in Delhi. Her diverse experiences and her keen sense of social justice have deeply influenced her writing and activism.

"The God of Small Things" (1997) catapulted Arundhati Roy to literary stardom. It is a semi-autobiographical work set in the state of Kerala, India. The story revolves around the lives of fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha, and their family, exploring themes of caste, social discrimination, forbidden love, and the impact of colonialism (ROY). The novel won the Man Booker Prize in 1997 and received widespread critical acclaim. Arundhati Roy is not just known for her literary contributions but also for her outspoken activism on a range of social and political issues. She has been a vocal critic of globalization, neoliberalism,

and the adverse effects of economic policies on marginalized communities in India. Her essays and speeches often tackle subjects such as human rights, environmental concerns, and the struggles of indigenous communities.

After a long hiatus from fiction, Arundhati Roy returned with her second novel, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness." This novel is a sprawling narrative that takes readers from Delhi's bustling streets to the conflict-ridden region of Kashmir. It weaves together the stories of a diverse cast of characters, highlighting the complexities of contemporary India and its political challenges (Raina).

In addition to her novels, Roy has authored numerous essays and non-fiction works. Some of her notable collections include "The Cost of Living" and "Field Notes on Democracy." These writings delve into issues like corporate power, nationalism, the erosion of civil liberties, and the global impact of political decisions.

Arundhati Roy's literary works and activism have made her a prominent figure in contemporary Indian and global literature and politics. Her ability to blend storytelling with social commentary has had a profound influence on both the literary and activist communities.

Significance of studying women's place and subjectivity formation

Studying women's place and subjectivity formation is of significant importance for several reasons. It provides insights into the complex and often unequal dynamics of gender relations in society. Examining how women's roles, positions, and identities are constructed and negotiated helps us comprehend the broader social, cultural, and historical context in which gender operates. It challenges and deconstructs gender stereotypes and assumptions about women's roles and capabilities (outlook). By examining how women's subjectivities are formed, researchers can highlight the diversity of women's experiences and counter one-dimensional portrayals of women. The study of subjectivity formation can empower women by acknowledging their agency and resilience. It recognizes that women are active participants in shaping their own identities and navigating societal expectations.

Understanding women's place in society is essential (Mulins) for addressing gender-based discrimination and inequality. It sheds light on the structural and systemic barriers that women face, leading to informed advocacy for gender equality and women's rights. Women's subjectivity formation is influenced by intersecting factors such as race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and more. Researching this intersectionality helps uncover the complexities of women's experiences and highlights the need for an inclusive and nuanced approach to gender studies.

In literature and the arts, exploring women's subjectivities enriches our understanding of character development and storytelling. It allows for the exploration of diverse female perspectives and narratives. Findings from research on women's subjectivity formation can inform policy decisions and social interventions aimed at promoting gender equality, improving women's lives, and challenging discriminatory practices. Studying women's subjectivities within different historical periods provides valuable insights into how societal norms, expectations, and opportunities for women have evolved over time. It helps us appreciate the progress made and identify persistent challenges.

Women's subjectivity formation often involves personal narratives and collective memories. These stories are integral to cultural and historical identities, and their preservation and examination contribute to a richer understanding of societies. Advancing research in this field contributes to the academic study of gender and women's studies. It encourages scholars to develop innovative theories and methodologies for studying

women's subjectivity formation (McKee). In summary, studying women's place and subjectivity formation is significant for promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and advancing our understanding of the complexities of women's lives in various social, cultural, and historical contexts. It has practical implications for policy, activism, and social change, making it a vital area of research and scholarship.

Purpose of the comparative analysis

By comparing two novels by the same author, Arundhati Roy, we aim to identify recurring patterns, themes, and narrative techniques used in her works. Additionally, we seek to highlight the contrasts and variations between the selected novels, 'The God of Small Things' and 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness,' to gain a deeper understanding of her evolving literary style and themes. The comparative analysis allows us to examine the continuity and change in Arundhati Roy's treatment of women's place and subjectivity formation across her literary career. We can explore how her portrayal of women, their roles, and their struggles has evolved over time, considering the historical and social context in which each novel was written.

By analyzing two specific novels by the same author, we can delve into Arundhati Roy's choices as a writer. This includes her selection of themes, characters, settings, and narrative strategies concerning women's experiences and identities. It provides insights into why certain aspects of women's lives are emphasized or challenged in her works. Through the comparative analysis, we aim to highlight the unique contributions of each novel to the broader discourse on women's place and subjectivity formation. This involves identifying distinct narrative techniques, character developments, and thematic explorations that set each novel apart.

We intend to explore how each novel responds to and reflects the social, political, and cultural context in which it was written. Understanding how these contexts shape the narratives and the representation of women in Roy's works is a key objective. The comparative analysis contributes to existing scholarship on Arundhati Roy's novels and their treatment of gender-related themes. It provides an opportunity to generate new insights, interpretations, and perspectives that may enrich the academic discourse surrounding her works. The comparative analysis directly addresses the research questions posed in the study, allowing us to investigate how history, memory, landscape, and patriarchal ideology intersect in the selected novels and how these intersections contribute to the formation of women's subjectivities.

By examining multiple aspects of the novels in a comparative manner, we aim to offer a comprehensive view of how women's place and subjectivity formation are depicted and explored in

Roy's literary oeuvre. This goes beyond individual novel analyses to provide a holistic perspective. In summary, the comparative analysis serves as a valuable methodological approach to gain a nuanced understanding of Arundhati Roy's treatment of women's place and subjectivity formation in her novels. It enables us to uncover underlying themes, authorial choices, and contextual influences while also contributing to the broader scholarship on gender and literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arundhati Roy is a renowned Indian author known for her literary contributions that span across novels, essays, and non-fiction works. Her writings have made a significant impact on both the literary world and contemporary socio-political discourse. Arundhati Roy's debut novel, "The God of Small Things," is perhaps her most celebrated work. The novel won the prestigious Man Booker Prize in 1997, making her the first Indian woman to receive this honor (Macwan). Set in the state of Kerala, India, the novel intricately weaves together themes of family, love, caste discrimination, and societal norms. It is known for its lyrical prose, non-linear narrative, and its exploration of the lives of fraternal twins, Estha and Rahel.

Apart from her fiction, Arundhati Roy is recognized for her thought-provoking essays and non-fiction works. She has been an outspoken critic of political and economic injustices, both in India and globally. Her essays cover a wide range of topics, including environmental issues, human rights, globalization, and the consequences of neoliberalism. Notable essay collections include "The Cost of Living" (1999) and "Field Notes on Democracy" (2009). Roy is not just a writer but also an activist. She has been actively involved in various social and political movements, such as advocating for the rights of tribal communities in India and opposing large-scale dam projects (Santonniccolo et al.). Her public speeches and lectures have drawn attention to critical issues, and she is often invited to speak at international conferences and events.

After a long hiatus from fiction, Arundhati Roy released her second novel, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," in 2017. The novel is a sprawling narrative that takes readers on a journey through various landscapes, including Delhi and Kashmir. It delves into themes of conflict, identity, and the complex tapestry of Indian society. While it received mixed reviews, it reaffirmed Roy's position as a significant literary voice. In addition to her novels and essays, Roy has also ventured into screenwriting. She wrote the screenplay for the film "In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones" (1989) and has contributed short stories to various anthologies.

Arundhati Roy's literary contributions have earned her international recognition and awards. Her works have been translated into numerous languages, allowing her ideas to reach a global audience. She has received

accolades for her courage in speaking out on contentious issues and her ability to blend storytelling with political commentary. Arundhati Roy's writings have had a profound influence on contemporary Indian literature. Her willingness to challenge established norms and her unique narrative style have inspired a new generation of writers to explore unconventional themes and experiment with storytelling techniques.

In summary, Arundhati Roy's literary contributions encompass novels, essays, activism, and public speaking engagements. She is celebrated for her literary achievements, but her influence extends beyond the realm of literature, as she continues to engage with pressing global issues and advocate for social justice.

Feminist literary criticism and its relevance to the study

Feminist literary criticism is a critical approach to literature that seeks to analyze and understand how gender and the representation of women are portrayed in literary texts. It emerged as a significant theoretical and analytical framework during the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s and has since evolved into various schools of thought within the larger field of literary criticism. Feminist literary criticism allows you to critically examine how female characters are depicted in the novels of Arundhati Roy. It enables you to explore whether these representations reinforce or challenge traditional gender stereotypes and roles. This analysis can shed light on the authors' perspectives on women's place in society.

Feminist criticism provides a framework to study how female characters in the novels form their subjectivity and identities. It allows you to investigate the internal and external factors that shape their experiences, choices, and self-perceptions (Becker). This is particularly relevant if you are exploring the development of women's subjectivity in the context of societal norms and expectations.

Feminist literary criticism often incorporates intersectionality, which recognizes that women's experiences and identities are shaped not only by gender but also by factors such as race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Given the diverse social and cultural contexts of Arundhati Roy's novels, an intersectional feminist approach can help you analyze how multiple aspects of identity intersect and influence women's lives.

Feminist criticism can help you investigate power dynamics within the narratives. This includes examining how patriarchy and other systems of oppression affect women's agency, relationships, and opportunities. You can explore how female characters negotiate and resist these power structures. Understanding the feminist perspectives and beliefs of Arundhati Roy herself can provide

insights into the motivations behind her portrayals of female characters. Analyzing her authorial choices through a feminist lens can reveal whether she intends to challenge or reinforce gender norms and hierarchies.

Feminist literary criticism can also help you consider how readers and critics have received and interpreted Arundhati Roy's novels, especially in terms of their feminist implications. Examining critical responses through a feminist lens can provide a broader perspective on the novels' significance. Incorporating feminist literary criticism into your study allows you to engage critically with the gender dynamics, female characters, and thematic concerns in the novels of Arundhati Roy. It offers a valuable framework for analyzing how these works contribute to discussions about women's place and subjectivity in society, making it a relevant and insightful approach for your comparative analysis.

Previous studies on women's roles and subjectivity in Roy's novels

Many scholars have explored how Arundhati Roy's female characters negotiate their identities within the context of a patriarchal society. They examine how characters like Ammu in "The God of Small Things" and Anjum in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" confront societal norms and expectations to assert their individuality and autonomy.

Some studies focus on the intersectionality of identity in Roy's novels (Coaston). They analyze how gender intersects with other factors such as class, caste, religion, and ethnicity to shape the experiences of female characters. These studies often highlight the complexities of identity formation. Researchers have investigated how Roy's novels challenge and subvert patriarchal structures. They examine instances of resistance, rebellion, and non-conformity by female characters and how these actions disrupt traditional gender roles (Riba and Nyori) (Mckee).

Motherhood is a recurring theme in Roy's works. Scholars explore how motherhood is portrayed and how it influences women's subjectivity. This includes looking at both biological and non-biological forms of motherhood. Some studies delve into the representation of female sexuality and desire in Roy's novels. They analyze how female characters navigate issues of desire, intimacy, and relationships, often in the face of societal taboos. Researchers also analyze Roy's narrative techniques and storytelling strategies in portraying women's subjectivity. They may examine the use of first-person narratives, flashbacks, and shifts in perspective to convey the inner lives of female characters.

Studies on reader reception and interpretation of Roy's novels from a feminist perspective explore how readers engage with and interpret the female characters and themes related to women's roles and subjectivity. Some scholars seek to understand

Arundhati Roy's own feminist beliefs and intentions in her writing. They explore how her activism and public statements align with or influence the feminist themes in her novels. These research areas reflect the rich terrain of feminist literary analysis in Arundhati Roy's works.

Identifying gaps and the need for a comparative analysis

Gap may be the scarcity of comparative studies that analyze multiple works by Arundhati Roy together. Many existing studies tend to focus on individual novels in isolation. A comparative analysis can provide a broader perspective by examining common themes, character types, and authorial strategies across multiple works.

Roy's writing has evolved over time, and her later works, such as "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," may contain different or more nuanced portrayals of women's roles and subjectivity compared to her earlier work, "The God of Small Things." A comparative analysis can highlight how these themes have developed over the course of her career. While studies on women's roles in Roy's novels are valuable, there may be a gap in examining how gender intersects with other identity factors. A comparative analysis can explore how issues of class, caste, religion, and ethnicity intersect with gender in the narratives.

Roy's novels often engage with both global and local socio-political issues. A comparative study can assess how women's subjectivity is portrayed in response to global forces (e.g., globalization, political activism) and local contexts (e.g., Kerala society, Kashmir conflict). By identifying these gaps and the need for a comparative analysis, researcher can emphasize the unique contributions, research can make to the existing scholarship on Arundhati Roy's novels. It allows to address broader questions about gender, identity, and literature, contributing to a deeper understanding of how women's roles and subjectivity are portrayed in contemporary fiction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminist literary theories and their applicability

Feminist literary theories encompass a range of approaches and perspectives that analyze literature through the lens of gender and seek to uncover and challenge patriarchal ideologies and representations. Gender criticism examines how gender roles, identities, and expectations are constructed and represented in literature. It can be applied to Roy's novels to explore how characters' gender identities are portrayed, challenged, or reinforced.

Intersectional feminism recognizes that gender intersects with other aspects of identity, such as race, class, and sexuality. Given the diverse characters and contexts in Roy's novels, an

intersectional approach can be valuable for understanding how various forms of identity intersect and impact women's subjectivity. Ecofeminism explores the connections between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. This theory can be applied to Roy's works to analyze how women's relationships with the natural world and landscapes contribute to their subjectivity.

Roy's novels often engage with postcolonial themes, making postcolonial feminist theory relevant. It examines how colonialism and imperialism intersect with gender, and it can shed light on how women's subjectivity is affected by postcolonial contexts. Psychoanalytic feminist theory, influenced by thinkers like Freud and Lacan, can be applied to analyze characters' subconscious desires, fears, and the ways in which gender roles are internalized and performed. Queer theory challenges normative ideas of gender and sexuality. While not all of Roy's characters identify as queer, a queer theory approach can explore non-normative sexualities and gender expressions in her novels.

Concepts of women's place and subjectivity formation

The concepts of "women's place" and "subjectivity formation" are central to the study of gender and literature, especially in the context of feminist literary analysis.

Women's place

"Women's place" refers to the social and cultural positions and roles assigned to women in a given society. It encompasses both physical spaces and societal roles. These roles can vary significantly across cultures and historical periods. Traditionally, women were often confined to the domestic sphere, which included roles such as caregiving, homemaking, and child-rearing. In contrast, the "public sphere" was associated with men and activities outside the home, such as politics, work, and education. Women's place is not a monolithic concept but intersects with other aspects of identity, such as race, class, and sexuality. Intersectional analysis recognizes that women's experiences and societal positions are shaped by multiple factors.

Subjectivity Formation

Subjectivity refers to an individual's internal experiences, thoughts, emotions, and self-identity. It encompasses how a person perceives themselves and their place in the world. Subjectivity formation involves the processes through which individuals develop their self-identities. It includes the influence of external factors, such as societal norms, family, culture, and personal experiences, on an individual's sense of self. Subjectivity formation can be influenced by both agency (individual choices and actions) and constraints (societal limitations and expectations). It's

a dynamic process shaped by interactions between the individual and their social context. Feminist theory often examines how women's subjectivities are constructed and constrained by patriarchal norms and gender expectations. It explores how women negotiate and resist these influences to assert their identities.

In the context of literature, analyzing "women's place" and "subjectivity formation" involves examining how female characters are positioned within the narrative, what roles they are assigned, and how they navigate and negotiate their identities. It also entails exploring how authors represent and challenge societal norms related to gender and how these representations contribute to the broader discourse on women's experiences.

Intersectionality and its role in analyzing women's experiences

Intersectionality is a crucial concept in feminist and gender studies that recognizes the interconnected nature of social identities and the ways in which they interact to shape individuals' experiences and social positions. It plays a significant role in analyzing women's experiences by highlighting that gender does not operate in isolation but intersects with other social categories, such as race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, and more.

Intersectionality emphasizes that individuals have multiple social identities that can privilege or disadvantage them in society. When analyzing women's experiences, it's important to consider not just gender but also how factors like race, class, and sexuality intersect to create unique experiences.

Intersectionality reveals that individuals may experience both privilege and oppression simultaneously, depending on the specific aspects of their identity. For example, a white woman may experience gender-based discrimination but also benefits from white privilege. Intersectionality calls for a contextual understanding of women's experiences. It recognizes that women from different backgrounds face distinct challenges and opportunities. Analyzing the experiences of women within their specific social, cultural, and historical contexts is essential. Intersectionality highlights the importance of amplifying the voices of women at the intersections of multiple marginalized identities. Women who occupy less privileged positions within society often face compounded forms of discrimination, and their experiences may be less visible in mainstream discourse.

Intersectionality informs policy and activism by advocating for approaches that address the unique needs and challenges faced by diverse groups of women. It encourages the development of policies and initiatives that are inclusive and responsive to the intersecting identities of women. Analyzing women's experiences through an intersectional lens

requires a complex analysis that considers how various identity factors interact and influence outcomes. Researchers often use qualitative methods and engage with the lived experiences of women to gain a comprehensive understanding.

Intersectionality challenges one-dimensional stereotypes of women by acknowledging the diversity of women's experiences. It disrupts essentialist notions of what it means to be a woman and recognizes that there is no single, universal "women's experience."

METHODOLOGY

Data collection is done with the help of various methods like Close reading, which involves a meticulous examination of the text to extract meaningful insights. Focus on specific passages, sentences, or even individual words that relate to your research questions. Analyze the language, imagery, symbolism, and narrative techniques employed by Arundhati Roy to convey women's experiences, subjectivity, and their place in society. Thematic Analysis, which involves Identify and extract recurring themes, motifs, and symbols related to women's place and subjectivity in both novels. Categorize these themes and explore how they evolve or differ between the two novels. Utilize existing scholarly articles, critical essays, and academic publications related to the novels. Extract insights, theories, and interpretations from these sources to support analysis.

To analyze the data collected comparative analysis is used. To systematically compare and contrast how women's place and subjectivity are portrayed in "The God of Small Things" and "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness."

DISCUSSION

Women's Place in "The God of Small Things"

Analyzing the portrayal of women in "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy requires a comprehensive examination of the various female characters and their roles within the novel.

Amu, also known as Ammu, is one of the central characters and a complex figure in the novel. She is a divorced woman and mother of fraternal twins, Rahel and Estha. Amu's character represents the struggle of a woman who faces societal stigma and discrimination due to her failed marriage. Her quest for love and companionship highlights the challenges women like her face. Despite societal pressures, Amu pursues a relationship with Velutha, a lower-caste man, challenging both caste and gender norms. Her defiance of these norms leads to tragic consequences.

Mammachi is Amu's mother and a prominent character in the novel. She embodies the traditional roles and expectations imposed on women in a patriarchal society. As the matriarch of the Ipe family, she

adheres to societal norms and values. Mammachi's character highlights the intergenerational dynamics of gender roles, as she perpetuates traditional expectations of her daughter, Amu, and granddaughter, Rahel.

Baby Kochamma (Aunt Mary) is Mammachi's sister and a central antagonist in the novel. Her character is marked by religious fanaticism and a sense of entitlement. She represents the toxic consequences of rigid gender and religious norms. Baby Kochamma's jealousy and obsession with Father Mulligan exemplify how societal expectations can lead to the repression of women's desires and the perpetuation of patriarchal values.

Sophie Mol, though not a central character, plays a significant role as a symbol of innocence and youthful rebellion. Her character reflects the limited agency and vulnerability of young women in a traditional society. Sophie Mol's tragic fate highlights the consequences of societal constraints on women.

Margaret represents the experiences of a woman who escapes the confines of her traditional role by leaving her husband, Chacko. Her character reflects the tension between societal expectations and women's aspirations for independence and self-determination. Ammu's interactions with her friends from the "pickle factory" provide insight into the lives of working-class women who navigate economic challenges and the constraints of patriarchy.

Examination of their societal roles and limitations

Examining the societal roles and limitations of the female characters in "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy provides insight into the oppressive and patriarchal nature of the society depicted in the novel. Amu (Ammu) As a divorced woman and mother, Amu occupies a marginalized position in society. She is expected to be submissive and adhere to traditional norms, but she challenges these expectations. Amu's limitations are primarily imposed by caste and societal norms. Her relationship with Velutha, a lower-caste man, is deemed unacceptable by society, leading to severe consequences.

Mammachi conforms to the traditional role of a matriarch and caretaker of the family. She represents the older generation's adherence to established gender roles. Her limitations stem from her loyalty to tradition, which restricts her from questioning the injustices faced by her daughter, Amu, and granddaughter, Rahel.

Baby Kochamma embodies religious devotion and an adherence to patriarchal norms, which include enforcing strict gender roles. Her limitations are self-imposed, driven by her obsessive love for Father Mulligan. This obsession blinds her to the suffering

of those around her and results in destructive actions.

Sophie Mol represents the innocence and vulnerability of young women. Her role is defined by her family's expectations and societal norms. Sophie Mol's limitations are evident when she is unable to escape the constraints of societal expectations, ultimately leading to her tragic fate.

Margaret rejects her traditional role as a wife and mother by leaving her husband, Chacko. Her role reflects a desire for independence. Despite breaking free from traditional roles, Margaret's limitations are imposed by societal judgments and the challenges of single motherhood.

Ammu's friends represent the struggles of working-class women. Their roles involve laboring in the pickle factory to support their families. Economic limitations and the need to provide for their families force them into challenging working conditions. Their limited agency is a result of both economic and gender-related constraints. In "The God of Small Things," societal roles are deeply intertwined with caste, religion, and gender. Women are often expected to conform to traditional roles, and deviation from these roles can lead to severe consequences. The limitations placed on these female characters reflect the broader patriarchal and oppressive societal structures that shape their lives. Arundhati Roy's portrayal of these limitations serves as a critique of the societal norms that restrict women's agency and subjectivity.

How place influences their subjectivity

In "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy, the setting and place have a significant influence on the subjectivity of the female characters. Amu's subjectivity is deeply affected by the Meenachal River and the Ayemenem House. The river symbolizes liberation and forbidden love, as her relationship with Velutha develops along its banks. The house, on the other hand, represents confinement and tradition. Amu's subjectivity is torn between these contrasting spaces. Her experiences by the river allow her to challenge societal norms and discover a sense of self, while the Ayemenem House reinforces the limitations placed on her as a woman.

The pickle factory where Ammu's friends work influences their subjectivity. It symbolizes economic necessity and the harsh realities of working-class women. The factory represents a space where their agency is limited by both gender-related and economic constraints. Their subjectivity is shaped by the grueling labor conditions and the need to provide for their families. It highlights the intersection of gender and class in influencing subjectivity.

The temple and the Kochamma House, where Baby Kochamma lives, symbolize religious devotion and the strict adherence to patriarchal norms. These places

reinforce her subjectivity as a devout Catholic and an enforcer of societal norms. Her rigid subjectivity is deeply rooted in her religious beliefs and her role as the family's matriarch.

The school and Sophie Mol's grave represent the world of childhood innocence and tragedy. Sophie's subjectivity is shaped by her experiences in these places. Her tragic fate at a young age leaves a lasting impact on the characters and the reader, highlighting the vulnerability of young women in the novel's society. Margaret's subjectivity is influenced by her decision to leave India and live in England as a single mother. The change in place represents her pursuit of independence and a break from traditional roles. Her subjectivity is marked by the challenges and opportunities presented by this new environment.

The twins' subjectivity is shaped by their experiences in places such as the factory and the abandoned house. These locations represent both the harsh realities of their lives and the escape from those realities. Their subjectivity is characterized by a sense of duality, as they navigate between the oppressive aspects of their society and moments of imaginative freedom. In "The God of Small Things," place serves as a powerful backdrop that shapes the subjectivity of the female characters. The contrasting settings symbolize the tensions and contradictions within the characters' lives and their struggles to assert their identities within the confines of a patriarchal and oppressive society. Place becomes a reflection of the characters' inner conflicts and desires, ultimately influencing their subjectivity and the choices they make.

Women's Place in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness"

In "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" by Arundhati Roy, the depiction of women and their place in the narrative is complex and multifaceted. The novel features a diverse cast of female characters, each with her own unique experiences, challenges, and contributions to the story. Tilo is one of the central characters in the novel. She is a transgender woman who undergoes a journey of self-discovery and transformation. Her place in the narrative is characterized by her quest for identity and belonging. Tilo challenges traditional gender norms and societal expectations, making her a symbol of resilience and resistance against oppression.

Amrik Singh is another significant character who, later in the novel, identifies as a transgender woman named Anjum. Her experiences as a transgender person in India shed light on the struggles faced by the transgender community in a society that often marginalizes and discriminates against them. Anjum's place in the narrative underscores the importance of acceptance and understanding of gender diversity. Miss Jebeen represents the innocence of childhood in the novel. Her place in the

narrative serves as a reminder of the impact of societal conflicts and political turmoil on the lives of women and children. Her story highlights the vulnerability of women and girls in a war-torn environment.

Tawaa Sadaat is a fearless and determined female character who becomes a prominent figure in the resistance movement in Kashmir. Her place in the narrative embodies the spirit of resistance against oppression and the struggle for justice. She represents the strength and resilience of Kashmiri women in the face of conflict. The Khwabgah is a sanctuary for transgender individuals in the novel. The women of the Khwabgah, including Anjum, form a tight-knit community that offers support and acceptance to those who have been marginalized by society. Their place in the narrative highlights the importance of chosen families and the bonds that can be formed outside of traditional norms.

Dr. Azad Bhartiya, a male character, plays a significant role in the lives of the women in the novel. His relationships with Tilo and Anjum illustrate the complexities of love and desire. His place in the narrative reflects the intersections of gender, sexuality, and personal identity. Throughout the novel, there are references to female activists and politicians who are engaged in social and political causes. Their place in the narrative emphasizes the role of women in shaping the future of India and advocating for change.

Overall, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" explores the diverse experiences and roles of women in Indian society, addressing themes of gender identity, discrimination, resilience, and resistance. The novel portrays women as central figures in the narrative, each contributing to the rich tapestry of stories that make up the larger narrative of the novel. Arundhati Roy's portrayal of women's place in the novel reflects the complexities and contradictions of contemporary India.

Ammu is one of the central characters and represents a complex blend of defiance and vulnerability. She is a woman who is trapped in an unhappy marriage and is willing to break societal norms to seek love and happiness. Her character highlights the limitations placed on women in a traditional Indian society and the consequences of challenging those norms. Rahel is Ammu's daughter and one of the protagonists. She represents the younger generation's struggle to break free from the shackles of tradition and societal expectations. Her character reflects the desire for personal freedom and the impact of familial and societal pressures on women's lives.

Baby Kochamma is another complex character. She embodies the conservative values of the older generation and is often antagonistic towards her niece, Ammu. Her character serves as a symbol of the oppressive forces within the family and society that restrict women's choices. Although Sophie Mol's character is primarily seen through the lens of memory and nostalgia, she represents the innocence and

vulnerability of childhood. Her tragic fate highlights the harsh realities faced by young girls in a society that values social hierarchy and tradition over individual well-being.

Mammachi is Ammu's mother and a talented artist. Her character reflects the constraints placed on women's creative expression in a traditional setting. Her story showcases the resilience of women in the face of adversity and the potential for personal growth and self-discovery. Kochu Maria is a servant in the Ipe household. Her character represents the marginalized and voiceless women who occupy lower social strata. Her experiences highlight the disparities in treatment and opportunities for women based on their social status.

Pappachi's wife is a relatively silent character in the novel. Her story, however, illustrates the emotional toll of domestic violence and the societal reluctance to address such issues. Her character underscores the prevalence of abuse against women in both public and private spheres. Margaret, an Englishwoman, enters the narrative as an outsider. Her character symbolizes the clash of cultures and perspectives in post-colonial India. Her experiences reveal the complexities of navigating a foreign land and adapting to new societal norms.

The female characters in "The God of Small Things" collectively depict the multi-dimensional roles and struggles of women in a society marked by class, caste, gender, and tradition. Through their stories, Arundhati Roy explores themes of love, rebellion, sacrifice, and the quest for individual identity and freedom in a setting where societal expectations often stifle these desires.

Examination of their societal roles and limitations

In "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy, the female characters' societal roles and the limitations imposed on them are central themes. The novel provides a vivid portrayal of the traditional Kerala society in India, where gender roles and expectations are deeply ingrained.

Ammu is initially expected to conform to the role of a dutiful wife and mother within her arranged marriage. Later, as a divorced woman, she faces societal ostracization and condemnation. Ammu's separation from her husband and her love affair with Velutha challenge the societal norms of her time. Her actions lead to her being marginalized and considered "untouchable" by her own family and community. Rahel's role is shaped by her youth and her status as a child in the beginning of the novel. However, as she grows older, societal expectations for her to conform to traditional gender roles also grow. Rahel's potential is limited by societal expectations that dictate her behavior, especially as a woman. Her struggles with personal freedom and her

complex family dynamics illustrate the constraints placed on women.

Baby Kochamma, as an older member of the family, is expected to uphold traditional values and maintain the family's reputation. Her adherence to societal norms, such as her support for Ammu's exile, reveals the extent to which women are complicit in perpetuating patriarchal structures. Sophie Mol represents the innocence and purity expected of young girls in a conservative society. Sophie Mol's tragic fate exemplifies the harsh consequences of rigid societal hierarchies and the lack of agency young girls have in shaping their destinies.

Mammachi's role as an artist is unusual for women in her community. She challenges traditional roles by pursuing her passion for making pickles. Despite her talent, Mammachi's artistic pursuits are not fully embraced, and she faces the limitations placed on women's creative expression. Kochu Maria's role as a servant highlights the subjugation of women from lower social strata who are often relegated to servitude. Her marginalized position in society underscores the lack of agency and opportunities available to women of lower social classes.

Pappachi's wife conforms to the traditional role of a wife, even in the face of domestic violence. Her character reflects the widespread issue of domestic abuse faced by many women in a society where such matters often go unaddressed.

Margaret represents the role of an outsider who must navigate the complexities of a foreign society. Her character demonstrates the challenges of adapting to a new culture and the biases and prejudices that women may encounter when they do not conform to societal norms.

In "The God of Small Things," Arundhati Roy illustrates how the characters' lives are shaped and restricted by societal roles and limitations, especially those imposed on women. The novel critiques the oppressive aspects of traditional gender norms and the consequences of defying them.

How place influences their subjectivity

In Arundhati Roy's "The God of Small Things," the setting and place play a significant role in shaping the subjectivity of the female characters. Kerala, India, serves as a complex and multifaceted backdrop that influences how these women perceive themselves and their roles in society.

Kerala's Social Hierarchy: Kerala has a deeply entrenched caste system and social hierarchy. The characters, especially Ammu and Velutha, are aware of their positions within this hierarchy. Ammu's subjectivity is influenced by her awareness that she is from a higher caste, and her forbidden relationship with Velutha challenges these norms. The caste

system restricts the choices and freedoms of women like Ammu, who are expected to marry within their caste and adhere to societal expectations. Their subjectivity is shaped by the limitations imposed by this hierarchical society.

Ayemenem and the Family House: The family house in Ayemenem symbolizes tradition, patriarchy, and the weight of history. The female characters, particularly Baby Kochamma, are bound by the traditions associated with this house. The physical space of the house reflects the confinement and limitations placed on women within the family. It serves as a locus of control, shaping the subjectivity of the women who inhabit it.

The River and the Forbidden Love: The river, symbolizing both life and death, is a central element in the novel. It becomes a space where Ammu and Velutha's love defies societal norms. The river represents a temporary escape from the rigid structures of society. The secret meetings at the riverbank and the eventual tragedy that unfolds there are pivotal moments in the characters' subjectivity. Their actions by the river challenge the boundaries of caste and convention.

The Political Landscape: Kerala's political landscape, with its communist movements and social change, serves as a backdrop to the characters' lives. The changing political climate affects how women like Ammu and Mammachi view their roles and possibilities. The political upheaval offers some women a glimmer of hope for change and empowerment, influencing their subjectivity by making them question the status quo.

The Influence of History: The history of the region, including its colonial past, affects the characters' subjectivity. Ammu's relationships with Sophie Mol and Margaret Kochamma, who come from different cultural backgrounds, demonstrate the impact of history on identity and belonging. The characters are aware of the historical baggage that shapes their perceptions of themselves and their place in society.

The Natural Environment: The lush and vibrant natural environment of Kerala contrasts with the societal constraints placed on the characters. For women like Ammu, nature provides moments of respite and a sense of freedom. The natural world, with its beauty and unpredictability, influences the subjectivity of the female characters, highlighting the contrast between their inner desires and external restrictions. In "The God of Small Things," place serves as a dynamic force that both constrains and liberates the subjectivity of the female characters. It underscores the tension between tradition and change, personal desires and societal expectations, and the individual and the collective. Through the lens of Kerala's intricate social and physical

landscapes, Arundhati Roy explores how place shapes the inner worlds of her female characters.

Identifying common themes across the two novels

In a comparative analysis of Arundhati Roy's "*The God of Small Things*" and "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," several common themes emerge despite the differences in the novels' settings and characters. These themes offer insights into Roy's consistent exploration of complex societal issues and human experiences.

Social Injustice and Inequality: Both novels depict the harsh realities of social injustice and inequality in India. They highlight the discrimination faced by marginalized groups, including lower castes, transgender individuals, and religious minorities. In "*The God of Small Things*," the caste system and its impact on characters like Velutha and Ammu are central to the narrative. In "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," the characters' struggles for recognition and justice reflect broader societal issues.

Forbidden Love and Relationships: Love that defies societal norms is a recurring theme. In "*The God of Small Things*," Ammu's relationship with Velutha challenges caste boundaries, leading to tragic consequences. In "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," Anjum's love for Saddam Hussein challenges gender and sexual norms. Roy explores the complexities and consequences of love and desire that exist outside societal expectations, often resulting in characters being ostracized or punished.

Marginality and Identity: Marginalized characters who exist on the fringes of society play central roles in both novels. These characters, such as Velutha in "*The God of Small Things*" and Anjum in "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," navigate complex identities and experiences. Roy delves into questions of identity, belonging, and self-discovery as her characters grapple with their marginalized status and seek to assert their unique identities.

Political and Social Activism: Political and social activism feature prominently in both novels. Characters engage with political movements and social causes as a way to address injustice and bring about change. The novels explore the intersection of personal lives with broader political struggles, highlighting the commitment of individuals to effect meaningful societal transformation.

The Impact of History: Historical events and contexts are woven into the narratives of both novels. "*The God of Small Things*" is set against the backdrop of India's post-independence history, while "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" encompasses a wide range of historical events. Roy's characters are deeply influenced by historical forces, and their personal stories are intertwined with the broader historical landscape of India.

Gender and Sexuality: Gender roles, sexual identity, and the experiences of LGBTQ+ characters are explored in both novels. "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" features the character of Anjum, a transgender woman, whose journey is central to the narrative. Roy's novels challenge conventional norms and prejudices related to gender and sexuality, advocating for greater acceptance and understanding.

While "*The God of Small Things*" and "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" are distinct in their narratives and settings, these common themes underscore Arundhati Roy's commitment to exploring pressing societal issues, advocating for marginalized voices, and delving into the complexities of human experiences in contemporary India.

Contrasting differences in the portrayal of women's place and subjectivity

While Arundhati Roy's novels, "*The God of Small Things*" and "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," share common themes and social concerns, there are notable differences in the portrayal of women's place and subjectivity in these two works. These differences are shaped by the distinct settings, characters, and narrative focuses of each novel. "*The God of Small Things*" is primarily set in the southern Indian state of Kerala, where the caste system and social hierarchies play a significant role in shaping characters' lives. The novel provides a microcosm of the societal norms and prejudices of Kerala during the 1960s. "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" presents a broader canvas, spanning various locations across India. It explores contemporary issues, including political conflicts, religious tensions, and the struggles of marginalized communities in a rapidly changing India.

In "*The God of Small Things*," the caste system is a central theme, and characters like Ammu and Velutha face discrimination and oppression due to their lower-caste status. The novel delves deep into the rigid social hierarchy of Kerala. In "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," caste dynamics are still present, but the narrative expands to include characters like Anjum, who is a transgender woman and a member of the Hijra community. The novel explores the intersection of caste, gender, and sexual identity.

"*The God of Small Things*" portrays the forbidden love between Ammu and Velutha, which defies not only societal norms but also caste boundaries. Their love leads to tragic consequences, highlighting the harsh consequences of transgressing these boundaries. In "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," there are various unconventional and non-normative relationships, including Anjum's relationships with men. The novel challenges traditional norms related to love, desire, and sexual identity.

Both novels address issues related to gender and sexuality. "*The God of Small Things*" includes

instances of sexual abuse and societal expectations placed on women like Ammu. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" prominently features Anjum, a transgender woman, and her experiences navigating her gender identity in a society that often marginalizes and misunderstands transgender individuals.

In "The God of Small Things," characters like Ammu struggle against societal norms and expectations, but their agency is limited by the oppressive environment. The tragic fate of certain characters underscores the challenges they face. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" presents characters who actively engage in political and social activism, demonstrating a greater sense of agency and resistance. Anjum, in particular, asserts her identity and creates a space for herself and others.

"The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" places a stronger emphasis on political and social activism as characters engage with various social justice movements and political struggles, reflecting the changing landscape of India. While activism is present in "The God of Small Things," it takes a somewhat different form and is intertwined with personal narratives rather than broader political movements.

"The God of Small Things" employs a non-linear narrative structure with shifts in time, which adds complexity to the storytelling. The novel explores memory and the lasting impact of events on characters. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" features a more sprawling narrative that weaves together multiple storylines and characters. It offers a panoramic view of contemporary India, with an emphasis on current events and political developments.

In summary, while both novels delve into the challenges and complexities of women's lives in India, they do so within different contexts and with varying narrative approaches. "The God of Small Things" is deeply rooted in Kerala's social milieu and explores the constraints imposed by caste and societal norms. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" expands its focus to encompass broader issues of gender, sexuality, and political activism in a rapidly changing India. These differences contribute to the contrasting portrayals of women's place and subjectivity in the two works.

Impact on women's subjectivity in both novels

The impact of intersectionality on women's subjectivity in both novels, "The God of Small Things" and "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" by Arundhati Roy, is profound and multifaceted. In "The God of Small Things," characters like Ammu and Velutha experience the intersection of caste and gender. Ammu, a Syrian Christian woman, faces discrimination not only for her gender but also for her relationship with Velutha, a Dalit (lower-caste) man. Similarly, in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," Roy explores the lives of marginalized communities, including hijras

(transgender individuals). These characters face discrimination due to their gender identity and their marginalized status.

Both novels depict the impact of social class on women's subjectivity. In "The God of Small Things," the economic struggles of characters like Ammu and Velutha intersect with their gendered experiences, influencing their choices and self-perception. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" portrays the lives of working-class women, including Anjum, who faces economic challenges that intersect with her gender identity as a hijra.

Arundhati Roy's works touch on the intersection of sexual orientation and gender identity. In "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," Anjum is a transgender woman who navigates societal perceptions of gender and sexuality. The character of Ammu in "The God of Small Things" experiences societal judgment and marginalization due to her romantic involvement with Velutha, highlighting the intersection of sexual orientation and gender.

Both novels explore the intersection of culture and gender. In "The God of Small Things," cultural norms within the Syrian Christian community impact Ammu's subjectivity and choices. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" delves into the diversity of cultures and ethnicities in India, with characters like Tilo and Anjum embodying the intersection of their cultural identities with their experiences as women. The novels depict how age intersects with gender to shape subjectivity. Young female characters, such as Rahel in "The God of Small Things" and Miss Jha in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," grapple with societal expectations, body image, and identity formation. Older women in both novels, like Baby Kochamma and Tilottama, face unique challenges related to aging and societal attitudes.

In summary, Arundhati Roy's novels offer a rich exploration of intersectionality, showing how various factors intersect with gender to shape women's subjectivity. These intersections influence their choices, identities, and the challenges they face in the complex social and cultural landscape of India. The novels shed light on the diverse and nuanced experiences of women, emphasizing the need for a holistic understanding of subjectivity that considers multiple intersecting factors.

CONCLUSION

The research on "Exploring Women's Place and Subjectivity Formation in the Novels of Arundhati Roy: A Comparative Analysis of The God of Small Things and The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" has yielded significant findings and contributions to the understanding of women's roles and subjectivity in literature.

The study revealed that Arundhati Roy's treatment of women's place and subjectivity has evolved significantly between her novels. While "The God of Small Things" primarily explores the domestic sphere and family dynamics, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" expands to address a wider range of female characters from diverse backgrounds, incorporating themes of marginalization and resistance. The comparative analysis highlighted the intersectionality of women's experiences, emphasizing how factors like race, class, and regional identity intersect with gender to shape subjectivity. Roy's novels depict the complex web of privileges and oppressions that women navigate. The study found that Roy's narrative style evolved from lyrical prose in "The God of Small Things" to a fragmented and polyphonic style in "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness." This narrative shift aligns with her exploration of diverse female voices and experiences. Both novels underscored the significance of solidarity among women. "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" placed a greater emphasis on the collective strength and resilience of women, showcasing how they come together across differences to support each other. Roy's later novel, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness," incorporated a more overt political and social commentary. It engaged with issues such as the Kashmir conflict, displacement of communities, and state violence, demonstrating how women's subjectivity intersects with larger socio-political struggles.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The research contributes to expanding literary analysis by examining the evolving treatment of women's place and subjectivity in Arundhati Roy's works. It offers insights into how an author's perspective on gender dynamics can evolve over time. The study contributes to the understanding of intersectionality in literature, emphasizing the importance of considering how multiple aspects of identity intersect to shape characters' experiences. By analyzing changes in narrative style, the research sheds light on how authors use storytelling techniques to convey evolving themes and perspectives. The research aligns with feminist literary critique by exploring women's roles, experiences, and subjectivity within the context of broader societal and political structures. The study promotes inclusivity in literature by highlighting the importance of giving voice to marginalized characters and addressing their subjectivity in narratives.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of Arundhati Roy's novels has revealed an evolution in her treatment of women's place and subjectivity, offering valuable insights into the intersectionality of women's experiences and the role of literature in portraying diverse voices and struggles.

REITERATION OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study on "Exploring Women's Place and Subjectivity Formation in the Novels of Arundhati Roy: A Comparative Analysis of *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" lies in its multifaceted contributions to literary scholarship, gender studies, and broader discussions of societal dynamics. To reiterate its significance, this study contributes to the advancement of literary analysis by offering a comprehensive exploration of how Arundhati Roy's treatment of women's place and subjectivity has evolved across her novels. It demonstrates how authors can use literature as a medium to engage with complex gender dynamics.

By emphasizing the intersectionality of women's experiences in the novels, the research underscores the importance of considering multiple aspects of identity, such as race, class, and regional background, in literary studies. It highlights how these intersecting factors shape characters' subjectivity. The study sheds light on the evolution of narrative styles and techniques employed by authors to convey changing thematic perspectives. It exemplifies how narrative choices can align with an author's exploration of diverse female voices and experiences.

This research aligns with feminist literary critique by delving into the portrayal of women's roles, experiences, and subjectivity within the context of broader societal and political structures. It adds depth to the feminist discourse in literature. By focusing on marginalized characters and their subjectivity, the study promotes inclusivity in literature. It advocates for the inclusion of diverse voices and experiences, enabling a more comprehensive representation of women's lives. In summary, this comparative analysis not only enriches our understanding of Arundhati Roy's works but also offers valuable insights into the complex interplay of gender, identity, and societal structures. It contributes to the broader scholarly conversation on literature's role in addressing and reflecting upon the multifaceted experiences of women in a changing world.

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