

Portrayal of Woman in Mulk Raj Anand's the old woman and the cow and Arundhati Roy's "the Ministry of Utmost Happiness

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Abstract - The arrival of a woman is like the first light of dawn, dispelling the shadows. She has the power to dispel any anxiety that arises from mental shadows, like the sun that illuminates the world. Essentially, life begins with women. The fact that women are the ones who brought this universe into being is an undeniable fact. A strong belief in women's inherent worth as human beings is fundamental to feminism. It identifies shifts in cultural norms that repress women and works to alter those norms. Feminism examines and analyses the repressed position of women in a socio-political setting by pursuing such an effort. Equal rights and status for women are the goals of this movement. The Indian author Mulk Raj Anand also wrote short stories. The Indian social fabric is something that Arundhati Rao has a keen eye for. As a revolutionary spark for the litterateurs of the twenty-first century, he fights for the rights of the marginalised and oppressed. In his books, Anand depicts the impoverished people of India in a realistic light. This article uses Arundhati Rao's The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) as a lens through which to examine Mulk Raj Anand's 1960 novel The Old Woman and the Cow via the feminist topic of gender inequalities. There is a noticeable trend in modern English-language literature towards works written by Indian women. From a societal and personal perspective, this study examines the achievements of Indian women.

Keywords: The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, The Old Woman and The Cow, Fiction, Novels, Women Empowerment

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INTRODUCTION

A society's literature is its verbal representation of its reality. It shows how people in society perceive, comprehend, or make sense of the things they encounter on a daily basis. It is the society's preconceived notions, biases, and values that are hardwired into the system via the medium of literature. Anyone may see into the mind of another, even a nonexistent one, once they begin reading it. Throughout the ages, literature has provided a clear window into the world's events and situations. Thus, it unites individuals who were previously unaware of each other, making it the pinnacle of human creativity. Rather of being a depiction of the actual world, literature enriches it. It improves the necessary skills and information for everyday living. People may travel through the most important and the most trivial parts of human history via literature. The great literature, according to Ezra Pound, "is just language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." Among the many pressing and divisive issues that contemporary authors, philosophers, and activists

must address is ecofeminism. One definition of ecofeminism is a worldview that sees the exploitation of both women and the environment as inseparable. Françoise d'Eaubonne first used the word "ecofeminism" in her 1968 book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*. She argued in her piece that the dominance of women and nature in contemporary culture are inseparable. Both the work of Antoinette Fouque on the subject of women's bodies as weapons in the struggle against oppression and that of Simone de Beauvoir on patriarchy had an impact on her perspective. Renowned author Arundhati Roy has long been associated with feminism in her writings, but the label of "ecofeminist" has only recently been applied to her work. While some critics have seen feminist undercurrents in Roy's earlier works, fans of her work have pointed out that the author never states her political or philosophical leanings or opinions. Because of this, some have said that Roy is not a feminist, however this is not entirely accurate.

It is required that women in patriarchal societies have a composed demeanour. They lay down particular requirements for her early on, laying the groundwork for her life trajectory. The woman's credibility, evaluation of her character, and advancement are all severely harmed by the association of pessimism with factors like immaturity, sentimentality, apathy, and insanity. The categorization of women into roles such as seductress, ideal woman, prostitute, femme fatale, and wife further serve to divide the female realm. Society looks up to women who fit certain roles wives, mothers, or idealised figures of devotion, selflessness, and sacrifice, as Devi Sita from the Ramayana or Draupadi from Mahabharata if they want to be revered (Mahabhat). Anita Nair asserts that literature has always shown mixed feelings on the portrayal of female characters. Good women, defined here as those who conformed to social expectations, lived happily ever after.

Dominance by the West has left its mark on Indian literature, particularly novels. The story delves into the depths of patriarchy and poverty to show the reader the shameful and unethical uses of power and the misery it unleashes. Novelists who wrote extensively on feminism emerged in the post-colonial era. However, prior to the apogee of feminist writing by figures like Nayantara Sehgal, Bharati Mukherjee, Shashi Deshpande, etc., novelists like Mulk Raj Anand, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, and R.K. Narayan failed to make any reference to such topics or interests in their works. From their point of view, a woman really stands out when she boldly asserts her individuality and temperament in support of her own gender rights. A "woman" of this kind considers and analyses her role as a woman in the grand scheme of things, which encompasses the ethical, spiritual, and social realms. In sum, they aim for loftier ideals of femininity while grappling with the most fundamental and fundamental issues facing women in their articles. She revised the official version with every word she wrote, as author Carolyn See once put it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gandhi, Sanjeev (2019) Anand understands the plight of Indian women on a deep and compassionate level. He realistically depicts an Indian mother in labour with tears in her eyes in his writings. The arrival of a female kid is really seen as a portent of doom in our nation. "Cleaning and washing and cooking and cleaning again" are a woman's life's dull cycle. Her domestic situation is reminiscent of a subaltern woman "bound and fecund for the service of the hearth." By examining the plight of individuals he knows, Anand reveals the current state of affairs. In his environment, where males are given pride of place, the women who live there are all victims of habit, and their social and cultural exclusion is confirmed.

Yadav, Shashi. (2015) In his book "Gauri," Mulk Raj Anand conveys his undeniable empathy for the plight of India's people. It makes one wonder about the

Indian woman's character. We honour women with titles like "Mother" and "Goddess" and assert that this has always been the case in our culture. Concurrently, we either set them on fire or force them to leave the home. The hypocrisy in our culture is well shown in *Gauri*, a book by Mulk Raj Anand. In addition to strongly denouncing the mistreatment of women, it uses *Gauri* to examine the path to freedom for women in India.

Pundir, Ishita & Singh, Alankrita. (2019) The arrival of a woman is like the first light of dawn, dispelling the shadows. She has the power to dispel any anxiety that arises from mental shadows, like the sun that illuminates the world. Essentially, life begins with women. The fact that women are the ones who brought this universe into being is an undeniable fact. As a wife, mother, sister, and daughter, the woman bolsters the family unit by loving everyone without condition. When given the chance to flourish, women have the power to improve not just the lives of women around them but also men via their work as entrepreneurs, artists, authors, counsellors, mystics, and scientists. This study traces the evolution of women from the Vedic period all the way up to the modern day.

Jahan, Nusrat & Rahman, Muhammad Mushfiqur. (2020) Those on the margins of society who endure maltreatment together have a common grasp of many social standards; this is the tale told in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Gender inequality is a complex issue that stems from discrimination based on gender and the fact that it stands in the way of people achieving their most fundamental human rights. Conversely, when women and girls are treated equally, there will be no more discrimination, harmful behaviours, or violence against them. This article examines Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* through the lens of collective consciousness theory, specifically focusing on the issue of gender equality. In order to differentiate between previous trends and predict future models, this article uses non-structural qualitative analysis. In her book *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, Arundhati Roy makes a compelling case for how common perceptions and values might work together to eliminate gender disparity. In this book, the author demonstrates that the only way to change the world's unfairness is for the voices to be united. This study delves at the ways in which a gathering in a cemetery is organised by the interconnected desires for power, justice, and strength, and how it contributes to the fight for gender equality.

Babar, Urooj & Ahmed, Shehryar. (2023) An analysis of "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" by Arundhati Roy is the basis of this study, which seeks to understand marginalisation. In an effort to restore the once-great Indian social structure, we want to understand how Roy uses her creative abilities to unite the underprivileged with the majority. This analysis examines the book through the prism of eastern discourse, focusing on the novel's rebellious

inventiveness, uncommon thinking, and alternate lifestyles as a means to gain a footing inside the existing system. This analysis delves into the complex web of relationships that weave through the novel's many stories, revealing the ugly truths of modern life like the oppression of certain groups, the degradation of transgender people, the ineptness of government, the fight against the Naxalites, rape, murder, social injustice, and prejudice. By examining "Otherness" in "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*," Arundhati Roy delves into the topic of social classification. People who don't conform to society's expectations, like Anjum, have difficulties, especially when it comes to their transgender identity. The story continues this investigation by focusing on political "Otherness" via characters like Musaa and Talio, who are involved in the Kashmiri war. Finding and studying India's oppressed "Others," including the poor, those labelled as "apostates," foreigners, and third-gender people, who are often victims of oppression or subjection, is the primary goal of this research. Anjum or Aftab, the novel's protagonists, celebrate their miserable situation and the survival ingenuity of these "Others" in their acute precarity; this research concentrates on the theory surrounding the examination of orientalist discourse and the "Otherness" of these characters.

ARUNDHATI ROY AND MULK RAJ ANAND

Arundhati Roy

Famous for her award-winning book *The God of Small Things* (1997) and her commitment in environmental and human rights concerns, which led to several legal issues, Arundhati Roy is an Indian novelist and political activist. She was born on November 24, 1961, in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. Christian of Syrian origin, Roy's mother successfully sued to change India's inheritance rules so that Christian women may inherit the same percentage as their Christian dads. Roy's father was a tea planter from Bengal. Roy aspired to be a writer rather than an architect, despite her training in the field. She created the screenplay for *Electric Moon* (1992) and many television dramas before writing and co-starring in the 1989 film *In Which Annie Gives It to Those Ones*. Her background includes working as an aerobics teacher and as an artist.

Her 1997 Booker Prize-winning book, *The God of Small Things*, has gone on to sell more than six million copies around the globe. Despite its rapid success and simultaneous publication in sixteen languages and nineteen countries, the novel's depiction of a love affair between a Christian Syrian and a Hindu "untouchable" sparked controversy in India. The narrative takes place in the remote southern Indian region of Ayemenem, where twins Rahel and Estha reunite after a separation of 23 years. There, they reminisce about the circumstances leading up to their cousin Sophie Mol's untimely death in 1969.

She has written non-fiction works such as *Power Politics* (2001), an essay collection, and *The Algebra*

of Infinite Justice (2001), a collection of journalism, and *The Cost of Living* (1999), a scathing criticism of the Indian government's handling of the contentious Narmada Valley dam project and its nuclear testing programme. It was released in 2004. It is called *The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*. *Listening to Grasshoppers: Field Notes on Democracy* (2009) is her second book of articles that delves into the shadowy side of modern Indian democracy. The Lannan Prize for Cultural Freedom was bestowed to Arundhati Roy in 2003. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is her second novel, and it is also her most recent work. It made it to the final round of the National Book Critics Circle Award in the United States and was on the Man Booker Prize longlist.

Mulk Raj Anand

The life of the lower castes in traditional Indian culture was vividly portrayed by the English-speaking Indian writer Mulk Raj Anand (12 December 1905 – 28 September 2004). He was among the first Indian authors working in English to attract readers outside of India; other pioneers in this genre were R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali, and Raja Rao. Classics of contemporary Indian English literature, Anand's novels and short tales are beloved for their insightful depictions of oppression, poverty, exploitation, and tragedy, as well as their piercing insights into the lives of the downtrodden. Several of his writings, including *Coolie* (1936) and *Two Leaves and a Bud*, focused on the plight of the impoverished Indian population after his 1935 protest book *Untouchable* (1937). The Padma Bhushan was bestowed upon him as a civilian distinction, and he is renowned for being one of the pioneers who brought Hindustani and Punjabi idioms into English.

Peshawar, which is now in Pakistan, is where Anand Ji was born. Lal Chand was his father and Ishwar Kaur his mother. He graduated from Khalsa College, Amritsar, in 1924 with honours. Soon after, he uprooted his life and headed to England, where he enrolled at University College London. He supplemented his income by working at the nearby restaurant. He went on to get a doctorate in philosophy from Cambridge University in 1929. Friendships with members of the Bloomsbury Group formed at this time. One of his buddies, Picasso, also sent him a painting as a gift. The International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation of the League of Nations in Geneva was another venue for lectures delivered by Mulk Raj Ji. Anand was a prolific writer who first became well-known for his works that tackled the issues of poverty in Indian culture, such as *Untouchable* (1935) and *Coolie* (1936). He went back to Bombay (now Mumbai) in 1945 to push for changes on a national level. Works such as *The Big Heart* (1945; rev. ed. 1980), *The Sword and the Sickle* (1942), and *The Village* (1939) are among his other great works. Anand started MARG, an art quarterly, in 1946, and went on to write and edit a number of periodicals and journals, including further novels and collections of short stories. In the years

between 1951 and 1984, he published four volumes of his planned seven-volume autobiography *Seven Ages of Man: Seven Summers, Morning Face, Confession of a Lover, and The Bubble*.

THE OLD WOMAN AND THE COW, A NOVEL BY MULK RAJ ANAND, AND THE RISE OF THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST

While the average woman's situation has been very pitiful, Indian women are lordly esteemed by certain holy names as goddesses, Matas (mothers), and Laxmi's (goddesses who bestow riches and prosperity). We continue to publicly and privately misuse these sacred names and distinctions. She is also seen as a sexual object and a machine for producing children. Patriarchy views women as second-class citizens or as inferior to men. Whether it's in the home or in public, males use their authority to limit women. (Seldon 131–132) Women in Indian culture is seen as subordinate and controlled by men, despite the fact that they are an essential part of male society and deserve respect.

A female protagonist is at the heart of "*The Old Woman and the Cow*" by Mulk Raj Anand. Issues and struggles faced by women are depicted in this book. *Gauri* is a straightforward rural girl who is kind, submissive, and the protagonist. Wedding day arrives, and Panchi, the groom, couldn't be happier. We take a quick peek at "... a light wheat brown face with regular strong peasant features and the blossom of innocence in it" when the young bride *Gauri* removes her dupatta during the wedding ceremonies. In his dream, Panchi finds his future bride, who would "adorn his house and help him with the work on the land." (Anand 29) His in-laws' remark, "*Gauri* is like a cow, very gentle," also sticks out in his mind. Anand 11 Going out to marry the small cow, *Gauri*, Panchi feels like a sacred bull. On the other hand, he holds to the traditional husband view that a woman should be submissive at all times. Love and woo are drowned out in the lengthy negotiating, dowry demand, and emotional wedding that takes place in the book. The groom and bride engage in a bartering ceremony similar to that which occurs when buying an item at a store. A masculine barbaric side of life is on display on the first night of the marriage. You are aware that every Aryan rapes the defenceless woman on the first night of an Indian arranged marriage," Anand writes in a letter to Saros Cowasjee, describing the tragic circumstance. The sound of the music outside muffles the screams. Even still, a large number of our modernists acknowledge Vedic ceremonies at their nuptials. The hypocrisy here is terrible. (Darjee 8) Because of her spouse, *Gauri* is unable to think or act independently. In the evenings, she is expected to cook, clean, and appease her husband.

It is possible to read "*The Old Woman and the Cow*" on three separate levels. The first two chapters make up the first level, and they depict *Gauri* as a kind and courteous cow. Her mother-in-law and husband

subject her to silent torture. Over the course of the next four chapters, we see *Gauri*'s descent into a pitiful state, marking the second level of the narrative. She is forcibly removed from her home and forced to reside in Hoshiarpur. In the last chapter, *Gauri* goes back to her hometown to abandon her spouse and end her marriage engagement, marking the ultimate stage of the story. By the conclusion of the story, readers will be able to identify *Gauri* as a courageous and victorious rebel, despite the fact that Anand portrays her in all her guises, from young girl to married woman, mother, faithful wife, and tormented. Panchi is a typical husband; he blames his wife for his failures, losses, and sorrows, despite *Gauri*'s submissiveness and devotion to him. In his portrayal of Panchi, Mulk Raj Anand demonstrates this. Piplan Kalan was hit hard by a drought and famine, but Panchi accused his wife bitterly, saying, "Only after I have married, have all my troubles begun." (Anand 29) *Gauri* begins her role as a submissive wife. That she conforms to patriarchal social standards and gives in to her husband's every whim is obvious. She follows her mother's advice and strives to be "Sita" in her fantasies of a successful future. She chooses the path of marriage and fidelity. She understands her husband's needs since she is a caring wife. She presents Panchi with the gold ear rings that were her husband's wedding gift. She asks him to put them up for pawn. We may use the money to buy seed, lentils, and rice until the next crop. (Anand 63)

"*The Old Woman and the Cow*" is Anand's passionate attempt to convey the idea that men and women alike should be aware and conscious enough to create their own fortunes. Everyone, male and female alike, should be aware that every human being has the power to shape his or her own fate in order to become famous and respected, as humans are inherently the most honourable of all living things. In his book "*The Old Woman and the Cow*," Anand aimed to demonstrate that all women, like the novel's heroine *Gauri*, must stand up against societal abuse. She fought back against the archaic and conventional practices that threatened her right to live peacefully with humans.

Representation of Women in "*The Old Woman and the Cow*" by Mulk Raj Anand

Not only does Anand only depict women's struggles and hardships in *The Old Woman and the Cow*, but it is also the only book in his canon that has a female protagonist. The story's protagonist, *Gauri*, goes from being submissive, mild, and timid to a strong-willed individual during the course of the narrative. In this work, Anand passionately expresses his deep compassion for the disadvantaged gender. Even if Anand's repressed heroes include a female protagonist, *Gauri*, who ultimately sides with them. The tale depicts a marriage devoid of passion, where love—the driving factor for marriage—is diluted by the protracted dowry discussion. In these types of weddings, the parents do not care about the partner's preferences; they just compel them to

marry. On the first night of such a marriage, the men may act barbaric because to the inhibitive nature of the union. You are aware that every Aryan rapes the defenceless woman on the first night of an Indian arranged marriage, according to one of Anand's letters to Saros Cowasjee. Outside, the music is so loud that it muffles the screams. Though many of our contemporary thinkers acknowledge Vedic ceremonies throughout their nuptials. "This double standard stinks." (Cowasjee 8) The fact that Panchi had premarital expectations of his bride reveals something about the typical husband's view of his future wife. As Panchi saw it, a woman should be subservient to her husband from the moment they were married. She should be "a girl he could fold in his arms at night and kick during the day, who would adorn his house and help him with the work on the land..." she said. It is usual for men to blame their wives for any kind of hardship or loss (Anand 5). Through Panchi, Anand demonstrates this. Piplar Kalan has been experiencing natural disasters including drought and starvation for some time, but Panchi claims that her problems started "only after I have married..." (Anand's 29) Panchi would want that his wife live a traditional life. Without any resistance, he makes Gauri give in to his impatience and petty demands. Even to Gauri, he explains his stance:

It is the husband's responsibility to correct his wife when she messes up (Paul 49). Her responsibilities include domestic activities like cooking and cleaning as well as submissiveness to male chauvinism and physical aggression in order to fulfil her husband's libidinous wants. While they are making love, Gauri takes advantage of the circumstance and begs Panchi not to beat her again, as Kesaro had requested. "But the husband has to chastise the wife if she goes wrong" he says without hesitating, reminding her of his customary right to beat her even at that passionate time. (Anand 49)

Most Indian women see marriage as a pitfall leading to psychological and physical abuse, and they never encounter a mother-in-law who is compassionate and understanding. Anger and envy drive the mother-in-law to mistreat her daughter-in-law. Because of her unassailable status and power in the household, the daughter-in-law becomes her mother-in-law's nemesis. Only a responsible and future-oriented husband would dare to stand by his wife in such a situation. Panchi and Kesaros, who show no shame in the tears shed by Gauri, make up the vast majority of Indian households in this book. Panchi's cowardice in protecting Gauri from Kesaro's cruel words is emblematic of the painful and immoral reality of everyday family life. Her feelings of mental and physical deprivation are made worse by Gauri's desolation. She tears every time she thinks of her parents, whom she lost at a young age. Someone who can help a woman overcome her emotional baggage by lavishing her with love and attention would be an ideal spouse for a woman with a history of emotional

uneasiness and dissatisfaction. However, Panchi falls short of her standards.

As Gauri's cruel mother-in-law, Kesaro maintains her hatred campaign. She calls Gauri a whore from Piplar and insults her. When Mola Ram was not around, Kesaro would lavish attention on Panchi. Kesaro hates Gauri because of her hidden crush for Panchi. According to D. Riemenschneider, Kesaro stands for the claim that society has on Panchi. (Paul 118-119) Gauri, she says, is to fault since she leaves the dupatta at home. She even brings up Panchi's horoscope in conversation. If an unlucky female were to visit our home, everything would fall apart (Anand 96). After Gauri returns from Hoshiarpur, Kesaro pays Panchi a visit, but Panchi refuses to let her in. Once Kesaro learns that the "prostitute" from Hoshiarpur has arrived, he informs the others in the lane about it. Naturally, Kesaro starts to be consumed by his accusations about Gauri's life in Hoshiarpur. His demon side begins to manifest as he sobs, "Tell me the truth, bitch." He then asks, "What evidence do you have of your innocence?" (Anand 281-282) Hoor Banu's brutality breaks Gauri, and she scolds him, calling him a "weak spoilt creature." Kesaro spoiled him. Among the villagers' men, he acted out the role of a lion. According to Anand, he is a coward in reality.

Since their marriage, Gauri had not experienced much kindness from her husband, who had powerful legs. Helplessly torn between his love for Gauri and the oppressive influence of Kesaro, Panchi is unable to break free of his society's outdated practices and societal taboos about women. Even as she is locked up in Seth Jai Ram Das's home, Panchi willingly gives up her ear-rings, her only piece of jewellery, and prays for Panchi and his crop. This profound love stands in stark contrast to Panchi's superficial attempts at courtship, during which he uses Hamam soap and stolen mangoes.

Their separation has given Gauri a renewed sense of purpose in life. She pulls back the jhund of her head scarf, showing her spouse her whole face as she confides with him about her troubles. "If I speak, my mother is blamed for something: if I remain silent, my father is called a donkey" (Anand 63), she recalls with pain the ordeal she endured at her mother-in-law's home. Not only is Gauri a loving wife, but she is also a very accepting one. "It will help us pay for the seed, the lentils and the rice till the next harvest," she says, referring to her husband's financial problems, before lending him her earring. "Anand 63" Superstitions plague the locals, and they often confuse them with religion. Saying that they have had terrible luck ever since Gauri stepped foot in their home is sure to seem ridiculous to anybody with common sense, but Kesaro seems to think otherwise. Panchi has never been one to believe in superstition and has teased his mother and Kesaro about their religious traditions. However, he is starting to feel the effects of Kesaro's campaign of

hatred against Gauri, which is based on her horoscope and bad stars:

As the supposedly dire conditions brought forth by Gauri's entrance persisted, the thought of her awful stars lingered in his mind: It seemed like the drought would never end; more birds had died from the heat in the fields; wells were drying up entirely; and cattle numbers were dropping because their owners were selling their cows, buffalo, and bullocks to slaughterhouses in the villages farther down the valley, towards Hoshiarpur town. (Anand 99)

One of Gauri's victims is superstition. Superstition instilled in him by Kesaro causes Panchi, who is first pleased of her lovely and innocent beauty and her cow-like mildness, to construct a whole other image of her:

"She has wrecked my life... The dark goddess Kali, who lays naked whole villages with her breath and destroys everything in her path, is embodied in this bride, as my aunt Kesaro correctly states. In the same way as the goddess Kali Mai of Dharamsala's temple wears a necklace adorned with skulls".... (Anand 29)

She goes back to her mom's house after Panchi tells her to leave because she wants to feel loved and happy there. However, superstition regains its control over Gauri. "Her husband has turned her out," Amru, Lakmi's uncle, tells her straight. Just as she caused us problems, this unfortunate girl must have given him much more grief. (Anand 10) The claim that Gauri is unlucky exemplifies how superstition has caused women problems.

Panchi acts in a very illogical manner. With her arms up in a threatening posture, Panchi kicked her and yelled out, "You've cut my nose, you skank from Piplan Kalan! What a curse it is that my marriage to you has been blessed, you whore's daughter!" (Anand 282) Despite her intense pain from his baseless charge, Gauri refuses to be intimidated by his threats. Her inner purity gives her the confidence to stand up to her unreasonable husband and the gossiping people in her society. "And if you strike me again, I will hit back...", she says, revealing that she is no longer a submissive and submissive wife. strike me again, I will hit back..." (Anand 283) Her husband's image has been tarnished, but she is determined to get it cleared. In response to Hoor Banu's attempts to reassure her over her husband's naiveté, Panchi conducts a thorough evaluation of her husband's character and actions (Anand 283). "Nahin, Chachi..." Gauri exclaims. He's not naive. Oh, such a spoiled brat! Hit by Kesaro's star. Assuming the role of one of the village guys, he acted out the part. (Anand 285) Throughout the whole book, several individuals take advantage of Gauri. From her spouse forward, others

like Amru and Dr. Batra continue the maltreatment, which culminates with her husband expelling her. Gauri, who at first seems to be a conventional submissive wife, abruptly shifts into a more active position as a result of the constant abuse and her will to live a more contemporary life. She says that in her closing remarks. Everyone suspected Sita's purity throughout her time with Ravana, so Ram cast her out, they inform him. I will just fade into oblivion; I am not Sita, and the world will not burst open to take me. (Anand 283)

PROBLEMS OF GENDER IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S *THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS*

A revolutionary and rebellious voice, Arundhati Roy is one of the most remarkable writers of our modern day. The novels written by Roy are not as emotionally engaging as those of other female authors. Tragedies from real life are a part of her plays. Never once has Arundhati Roy shown any reluctance to speak out or write about an unfair problem. Instead than focusing on the plight of humanity, Roy has always been more interested in writing about fairy tales, romances, and fantasies. The religious, political, nationalist, capitalist, and human condition at this critical juncture are all themes that run throughout her works. Arundhati Roy is relentless in her pursuit of a better world for the underprivileged. Social stigmas, patriarchal culture, and the legitimacy of governmental power are all issues that Roy brings up. Her sympathy, dissatisfaction, and fury are reflected in her paintings. This is what Roy says when speaking with Kathy Arlyn Sokol. [I] believe that every writer is really a duo. You see, there's a part of me that's a writer, and that half is kind of detached from everything and just observes while the other part lives my life. It won't dampen your enthusiasm for living your own life, but you can't help but feel like a little kid again when you sit on the ceiling fan and watch it spin, grinning or whatever. My animosity for authority permeates all aspect of my life; in fact, I'm terrified of becoming a parent for the simple reason that I do not want to be in charge of someone so young. Everyone involved, including me, finds it quite perplexing. Because it's simply this never-ending process of scrutinising each and every syllable. The fact that it becomes a wall might be exhausting at times. My guess is that these feelings are usually dormant until some traumatic event in childhood triggers them, and then nothing you do as an adult can make them go away. Its presence is eternal. "Oh, she's so calm." is something I'm sure everybody who knows me would tell you if you asked. When it comes to little talk and everyday interactions, I am really rather composed. However, when it comes to big topics or concerns, I lose my composure completely. That wrath of mine is icy and unfeeling, not the yelling type.

Some parts of India are experiencing a national identity crisis among the Indian population. People still feel like they're living in a foreign country, even

though they're citizens and the Constitution guarantees them freedom. The racially varied culture was too much for them to handle. They want to be free from their own nation and live in seclusion as a result. They are stuck as they aren't sure whether they are Indian or not. Disobedience and scorn are fueled by this need for approval. The narrative follows Anjum, who was born Aftab, and critiques the naturalised binary gender categorization. In the city of Kwabgah, Aftab was born to Jahanara Begum and Mulaqat Ali. The mother is so terrified by her child's sexual identity that she conceals it from everyone, including her husband, for a while. Surprisingly, it was neither a boy nor a girl, even though they had both anticipated a son. All things—carpets, garments, books, pencils, and musical instruments—had a gender in Urdu, the only language she knew," Jahanara Begum pondered. There was no grey area; everything was either a guy or a woman. With the exception of her child. Living apart from language and traditional ideas of life seemed quite paradoxical to her. The assumption that there are just two sexes is firmly dedicated to European and American society," Fausto Sterling says, expressing a similar perspective. Whether one is a male or a woman counts in actual ways; even our language rejects alternative options. His father, Mulaqat Ali, is trying to make his son fit in with society's expectations of what it means to be "normal," but he struggles to do so since his son does not identify with either sex. Because of his gender fluidity—he was called "a he and a she"—the other kids teased Aftab, who was either a Hijra or a Kinnar. Because of the pressure from others to conform to traditional norms, Aftab is experiencing emotional and physical distress. Because of his physique, Aftab defied easy categorization as either masculine or female. The difficulties of surviving in a culture defined by an essentialist understanding of gender are laid bare in Aftab's narrative. For youngsters, the process of coming to terms with their own gender is the first step in developing a sense of identity. It is also believed that there is a consistent relationship between sex and certain kinds of conduct. In the view of feminist thinkers, such a gendered differentiation serves to perpetuate existing gender disparities. Biologist Fausto Sterling maintains that gender diversity is entirely natural. Her research on babies with surgically altered genitalia demonstrates the difficulty of consistently conforming to a binary gender structure. According to Fausto and other biologists, there are five distinct genders: male, female, hermaphrodite (one with an ovary and the other with testes), Mermes (males with testes and some female genital traits), and Ferms (females with testes and some female genital traits).

Those that the logical world has shunned, like Anjum, find refuge and hope in Kwabgah, the home of dreams. Anjum yearned to break free of the internal struggle between the sexes. Every character in the book, even Anjum, has a boundary between themselves and the outside world. As a half-woman, she finds satisfaction in taking on the role of a mother figure by caring for Zainab, a street-abandoned child.

Zainab develops in an unconventional manner with the help of several moms, including Anjum. Anjum seeks to reimagine her life as a woman as she goes through her metamorphoses from a boy to someone who is neither biologically a boy nor a female and finally a woman in her mind. Because of her complex identity, which includes parts of both sexes, Anjum travels to many parts of the globe. The Hijra seek refuge in Kwabgah in the hopes of freeing their "Holy Soul" from the bonds of their corrupt bodies. Kwabgah means "another world" since it is different from our own. This is the world that Anjum calls Duniya, and she says it doesn't care about the Hijra's plight. The "special people" or "blessed people" who "came with their dreams that could not be realised in the Duniya" (Roy 53) are said to have made their home on Kwabgah, an entirely other planet. Similar to Anjum, Tilotama is a significant figure whose origins are unclear. If the plot of *The God of Small Things* had a different ending, she would have been the fictional child of Ammu and Velutha, says Arundhati Roy. That is to say, Estha and Rahel see her as an imagined sister. Not only are Anjum and Tilotama diametrically opposed, but their personalities and behaviours are also incompatible with one another. When Anjum is happy or sad, she shows it to the world, but when Tilotama stays silent, it throws people off. Tilotama stifles Zainab's naturally feminine emotions, in contrast to Anjum, who serves as a positive mother figure to her. Women of varying emotional and physical states are shown in Anjum and Tilo. Both protagonists and antagonists represent the polar opposites of the gay and heterosexual communities. The inner and exterior worlds collide, and they stand for the difficulty of dealing with a dynamic existence. Each exemplifies existential dialectics via its internal and external conflicts.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, due to the historically inferior position women have occupied in civilizations controlled by males, there is a history of depicting women in literature as meek and docile. In the framework of feminism, this research study examines the high regard for women as human beings striving for equal rights and position. In his portrayal of Gauri, Anand promotes feminism. Therefore, feminism is a strategy for altering the current power and behaviour dynamics between sexes. The struggles, revolutionary deeds, and ongoing narratives of resistance of suppressed gender identities are shown from the viewpoint of third-space experiences. In the process of deterritorializing and re-territorializing, their ongoing conflicts reshape the assemblages that determine human existence in communities. This research shows that gender is always associated with societal influences on women, such as class and culture.

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