

Júlia VALLASEK
Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences
Babeş–Bolyai University
Cluj-Napoca, Romania
vallasek@fspac.ro

**FROM SMALL THINGS TO BIG SYMBOLS.
TRANSGRESSABILITY OF BORDERS IN ARUNDHATI ROY’S WORKS**

Recommended Citation: Vallasek, Júlia. “From Small Things to Bug Symbols. Transgressability of Borders in Arundhati Roy’s Works.” *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 4.2 (2018): <https://doi.org/10.24193/mjst.2018.6.09>

Abstract: While Arundhati Roy’s first novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997) mostly focused on the tragic outcomes of the rigid Indian caste system and found its place in the tradition of Marquezian magic realism and Salman Rushdie’s mythical and exotic portrayal of India, her second novel offers a complex description of a divided society. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) bears the mark of Roy’s vast experience in the field of political and environmental activism, her militant approach towards social injustice. The new novel is a patchwork of narratives focused around two main characters, the transsexual Anjum and Tilo, the ever revolting architect involved in the civil war in Kashmir. In the description of both hallucinatory violence and small, gentle moments of harmony and cooperation, Roy portrays the divided, postcolonial/neocolonial India where conflicts are constantly emerging on religious, political, social and sexual levels. Borders seem impossible to cross when the conflict is thoroughly interiorised like in the case of the Delhi hijras, or has grown uncontrollable like in the civil war for Kashmir’s independence, yet they prove transgressable in the characters’ everyday practice.

Keywords: India, Arundhati Roy, subcultures, postcolonial, neocolonial

“Never again will a single story be told as though it is the only one” (Roy, *The God of* 5). This was the motto of Arundhati Roy’s first novel, *The God of Small Things*, which

generated controversy at the time of its publication in 1997. Twenty years later, in 2017, the writer, recipient of the Man Booker Prize and a favourite of the global media, published a new novel entitled *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. While she dedicated her first novel to her mother, Mary Roy, a Syrian Christian from India, and a women's rights activist, the addressees of the new novel are the mysterious *Unconsoled*. The enigmatic motto of the book is a quote by the well-known modern Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet: "I mean it's all a matter of your heart..." (Roy, *The Ministry* 3).

Arundhati Roy's depicted world shifts from the personal and unique towards the general, abstract or collective experience, and from a story from which we can distance ourselves towards emotions that are independent of the storytelling. This is not surprising at all if we consider that since the publication of her much acclaimed debut novel published twenty years ago, the author has been far from being quiet (as many critics claimed at the publication of her new novel). On the contrary, she had a lot to say, albeit these ideas were not expressed by means of fiction. She published eighteen other volumes of non-fiction during the interval between the two novels, including collections of interviews, essays and pamphlets, all strongly marked by Roy's unequivocal political activism. Each title – *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *War Talk*, *Broken Republic*, *Walking with the Comrades*, *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom*, and the brilliant *Capitalism: a Ghost Story* – signifies by itself that the two decades during which she did not publish a novel she did not lead her life in the manner of some author of high aesthetic demand and low sociability who retreats into her artistic ivory tower and chisels her new novel to perfection, but was a busy political activist who worked, gained experience and wrote pieces which were primarily intended to mobilize people and, secondly, to document events. She was not Arundhati Roy the novelist, but the harsh critic of the Indian caste system and Hindu nationalism, of the nuclear politics of India and the militarism of the United States; not the recipient of the Booker Prize (and other awards), but the one who received a prison sentence because she was found guilty of contempt of the court; the one who supported the fights for independence in Kashmir, vehemently opposed the Narmada dam water regulation project that would have involved the evacuation of about half a million people, and roamed the jungles with Maoist/Naxalite rebels.

When Che Guevara writes about what a revolutionist should be like, he mentions not only his “ruthless hatred” of the enemy; he regards hatred simply as the indispensable tool of military victory, something similar to weapons or military strategies. In his view, a true revolutionist is not characterized by hatred but by love: “Assuming the risk of being ridiculous I must state that a true revolutionist is always led by the truly wonderful feeling of love. A real revolutionist lacking this emotional trait is unconceivable” (Guevara 225–226).

Therefore, the true revolutionist is someone who loves something (or believes in something) so much that he can (could) kill for it. Love and struggle are intertwined in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* as well, especially in the part taking place in Kashmir; nevertheless, it seems that the novel arrives to a different final conclusion.

Arundhati Roy’s new novel is marked by her passionate and confident political activism, but this does not mean that the new novel is of a poorer quality than the previous one, in which she would need to mask the artistic flaws with overwhelming actualization. In *The God of Small Things* the plot pivots around a forbidden relationship between Ammu, a Syrian Christian divorcee and Velutha, a low-caste, “untouchable” carpenter. Much of the narrative spanning from the arrival of a half-British cousin, Sophie Mol, through the beating and murder of Velutha by the police, and the death of Sophie is presented from the perspective of the twinned child protagonists, Ammu’s children. Behind the story of the unfortunate lovers, the ruined childhood and the story of a family that – similarly to the characters of Greek tragedies or Faulkner’s domestic novels – is heading towards an imminent fall, we also find constant hints at the complex political and social problems of India in the recent past. The aunt, Baby Kochamma, an almost ridiculously petty arch-evil character, is possessed by a passion that has been launched by a banter suffered at a communist manifestation, and leads to the tragedy of the protagonists at the end of the novel. Behind the personal fates heading towards tragedies or quiet self-denial, the leading cause is the crossing of the borders of the caste system officially eradicated, but nevertheless, existing in reality, which divides the world into the touchable and the untouchable. However, all these only gleam through from the background of the story, and the reader’s attention is guided towards the magic of the world depicted through a child’s eyes: Esta and Rachel’s two-person, brittle private world, the lyrical episode of the lovers meeting each other, or the film-like, suggestive

atmosphere of Ayemenem. From the very beginning of the novel, Arundhati Roy creates not only a sensual-exotic atmosphere almost expected from an Indian writer, but also the ominous prediction that the story will eventually lead to a tragic end.

May in Ayemenem is a hot, brooding month. The days are long and humid. The river shrinks and black crows gorge on bright mangoes in still, dustgreen trees. Red bananas ripen. Jackfruits burst. Dissolute bluebottles hum vacuously in the fruity air. Then they stun themselves against clear windowpanes and die, fatly baffled in the sun. The nights are clear, but suffused with sloth and sullen expectation. But by early June the southwest monsoon breaks and there are three months of wind and water with short spells of sharp, glittering sunshine that thrilled children snatch to play with. The countryside turns an immodest green. Boundaries blur as tapioca fences take root and bloom. Brick walls turn mossgreen. Pepper vines snake up electric poles. Wild creepers burst through laterite banks and spill across the flooded roads. Boats ply in the bazaars. And small fish appear in the puddles that fill the PWD potholes on the highways (Roy, *The God of 5*).

Politics and personal fate of the characters within the fictional world are much more closely intertwined in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*; all that belongs to the personal and private world of the characters also belongs to the world of politics, and all that is politics becomes, in the most personal and often traumatic way a defining factor of the private world. The story takes place during the past decade (some of its references reaching back to the fifties), and it is centred on the reaction of the social and political outcasts, as they create some sort of an idyllic world, reminiscent of prehistoric communities, in a cemetery of Delhi. At about two-thirds of the novel, during an anti-corruption demonstration in 2011, while settling the destiny of an abandoned infant, three persons meet unexpectedly: Anjum, an aging *hijra*; a young man of untouchable origin who calls himself Saddam Hussein, and who can manage among all circumstances; and a mysterious middle-aged, middle-class woman, Tilottama. The infant, of whose birth we have read earlier, turns out to be the orphan of a brutally tortured Naxalite guerrilla fighter, and is appointed the same role in the story as the children of unknown origin in myths and fairy tales. She symbolizes the future, a possible positive turn of tragic events, and life playing triumphantly over the tombs. The latter is literally expressed at the end of the novel, when the protagonists

take lodging in a cemetery, and the new dwellers' lodgings are built above the old tombs. Therefore, a new world without borders is achieved where the living and the dead, the Romanian dancer who has died of lovesickness and the young couple who find a home and establish a family, people and animals can live together in a community which welcomes everyone because its members have been cast out from everywhere.

The description of the 2011 anticorruption protest is an important moment in the narration, one that could offer a perfect opportunity for the writer to emphasize the intricate relationship between personal and political, yet the narrator of the story shifts the gaze from the media spectacle to the unmediated, to the invisible protest of population or segments of the population who are struggling to tell their own stories like the victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas disaster or the Association of the Mothers of the Disappeared from Kashmir. While no TV-camera is pointed at them, not even by mistake, the novel's spatial focus is clearly on them, on the background stories and on those who are losing ground in the face of the emerging neo-colonial India. In Roy's vision they are the "Unconsoled", the novel is dedicated to. Thus the term "unconsoled" becomes a synonym for the Spivakian *subaltern* (Spivak 1988) rendered to silence, this time not by a dominant white/western colonial power but by the emerging neocolonial approach.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness is a novel of contemporary India, a colourful and complex world consisting of many subcultures. Nevertheless, it does not attempt to present a symbolic, comprehensive image similar to the one in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. Instead, Arundhati Roy's attention is primarily focused on the small cultures, communities and ideologies that turn against the strengthening Hindu nationalism.

India, on its turn, has been historicised through several novels starting from the colonial period with E.M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling to the postcolonial with Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh and others, and the novels by Arundhati Roy also contribute to the historization of India. While Rushdie's image of the nation is closer to a universal, mythicised image, Roy in both her novels but especially in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* focuses on the point of view of the subaltern, the marginalized, and on the transgressability of borders dividing communities, revealing the same strong anti-elitist, anti-establishment and anti-neocolonialist attitude as in

her non-fictional works. When *The God of Small Things* appeared it was almost immediately linked to Rushdie's works and presented as an attempt to "create a new poetic prose that deconstructs the dominance of English grammar and opens a new chapter in magical realism." (Lane 2006) Intertextual linkages highly indicate this association, as they are noticeable both at the level of content and that of style. The presence of the telepathic child protagonists and their specific point of view both in *Midnight's Children* and *The God of Small Things* would be one of the most important narrative resemblance at the level of content, but Roy's pickle manufactory also reminds the reader of Rushdie's 'chutnified histories'. However, the stylistic linkages are even more prominent, "compound neologisms, extravagant capitalization, sentence fragments and excessive paragraph breaks, intrusive parenthesis, copious metaphoric transference, Joycean seriation and graphic juxtaposition and heterosemiothic intertextuality" (Dvorak 2002) are to be found in both writers' works.

However, Roy's works (especially her non-fiction books, and later *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*) tend to step away from the pattern of the Rushdie-marked postcolonial narrative as her attention gradually shifts from the interrogation of the effects of colonialization to the interrogation of the effects of the neo-colonial corporate power in India.

The starting point for neo-colonialist criticism is that even though India gained its political independence in 1947 it is still ruled by its former colonizers with the help of the new colonial elite through indirect, mostly economical pressure. Neo-colonialism thus is a form of indirect subjugation that gained strength after 1980 with the advent of corporate globalization and the worldwide dominance of the neoliberal capitalist ideology. If Rushdie in his early novels especially in *Grimus* (1975) *Midnight's Children*, (1981) *Shame* (1983) and even in *The Satanic Verses* (1988) focused mostly on the mythical description of decolonization, and the chaotic process of the birth of a nation many Indian English novelists emerging in the 2000-s (Aravind Adiga, Arundhati Roy etc.) in their works express a subversive attitude towards the neo-colonial process and its economic model.

This critical approach is achieved mostly through the portrayal of the trauma imposed on individuals, on communities and last but not least on the environment during the process of quick transformation. As Ksenia Svarc states in her essay about

the fictional representation of the traumas effected by abrupt economical changes in the Indian society as presented in Roy's first novel.

When these fictional accounts are compared with the factual detrimental effects of neocolonialism on the contemporary Indian society, it becomes evident that in this case fiction accurately reflects reality and provides a subversive critique of the neocolonial processes at hand (Svarc 14).

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness offers a wide range of descriptions of traumatic experiences. One of the two main storylines follows the transsexual Anjum's life – a hijra who spent her childhood as Aftab, the son of a Muslim family living in Delhi, and later moved into a home supported by hijras and started living as a woman. The despised, but at the same time privileged world of the hijras is, no doubt, attractive for Anjum, because it represents the irreconcilable opposition she experiences on the physical level. According to a member of the community, the hijra existence is God's scientific experiment to create a being that is "incapable of happiness." (Roy, *The Ministry* 36) People are usually made unhappy by external things (such as their private life, politics or illness), all of which exist within them in an interiorized form – says one of the older hijras to the almost-child Anjum, who is discovering her true/female identity: "The riot is inside us. The war is inside us. Indo-Pak is inside us. It will never settle down. It can't" (Roy, *The Ministry* 37).

The crisis in Anjum's life is not caused by her recognizing her transsexuality and the above-mentioned inner fight, but by the external world. Her family does not disown him, and after the first shock they only oppose her moving to the home of the hijras in Khwabgah similarly to the way a conservative family would oppose one of their children's decision to leave the family business and pursue a college degree in order to become a little valued artist or scientist. However, the struggle of the outer world thrusts Anjum into a state of unhappiness: during a pilgrimage she gets involved in an anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat (the greatest religious incident of the independent India that resulted in the death of approximately two thousand people). Being a transgender person saves her life: the despised hijra, not even regarded as a human being by the mob is not killed, but spared to "tell the tale" because the murderers believed this would bring bad luck on them: "...don't kill her, brother, killing hijras brings bad luck" (Roy, *The Ministry* 62). However, this incident marks

her permanently; after this experience she cannot fit into any community anymore, so she retreats into one of the old graveyards of Delhi. Here, other untouchables gather around her over time – broken people cast out of traditional human communities, carrying severe inner wounds, but practicing tolerance and acceptance of each other among all circumstances. Anjum leads a life of meditation and acceptance almost like a hermit, or a wise woman in the wilderness: “She lived in the graveyard like a tree. At dawn she saw the crows off and welcomed the bats home. At dusk she did the opposite” (Roy, *The Ministry* 3).

The other thread of events follows, over a couple of decades, the fate of the charming, egoistic and sometimes harsh architect girl Tilottama (Tilo) and her friends. As a student, Tilo gets acquainted with three of her classmates during the rehearsals of a play; all three boys fall in love with her, and the four lives crisscross each other several times over the next decades. Kashmir native Musa, Tilo’s colleague at the architecture faculty and her occasional lover later, becomes a fighter in the Kashmir independence war under the name of Commander Gulrez. Through him, Tilo gets acquainted to the civil war of the province trying to part from India. Naga, the agile journalist working for the Indian government but trying to maintain the appearance of being independent, at a certain point marries Tilo to save her from the captivity of the Indian Army interrogation officers. The third man, Biplab Dasgupta, an officer at the Indian Intelligence Service, quietly and hopelessly adores Tilo since his youth, and at several points of the story provides shelter to her or comes up with some solution. He will be the one whose not entirely selfless investigation – because it is done out of work duty – will reveal the destinies of the two other men (his friends in his youth and his enemies or paid-off allies in the present).

The two threads of the story differ in their prose style: the thread focusing on Anjum is an energetic, linear story that contains many playful remarks and surreal references (for example, the lynching Hindu mob is called steel-clawed saffron parrots). The Muslim world of the old Delhi is presented through many wonderfully depicted micro-portraits and mini-biographies, from the music teacher to the flower vendor, from the conversations with the imam to the typical clapping of the aggressively begging hijras; the author includes many scenes reminiscent of sociology in order to nuance some events in her hero’s life.

Events taking place in Kashmir are strongly marked by Roy's political activism and the writings that were born as a result of this activity. We can enjoy a richly detailed and colourful description of the area – the surroundings of Lake Dal that used to be a flourishing tourist resort, but by now has become a Civil War area and the old summer houses and hotels are used for new purposes, they serve as torture rooms and prison houses. Kashmir becomes a region where violent death is not the exception but the norm:

Death was everywhere. Death was everything. Career. Desire. Dream. Poetry. Love. Youth itself. Dying became just another way of living. Graveyards sprang up in parks and meadows, by streams and rivers in fields and forest glades. Tombstones grew out of the ground like young children's teeth. Every village, every locality had its own graveyard. Graveyards became as common as the multi-storey parking lots that were springing up in the burgeoning cities in the plains. (Roy, *The Ministry* 314)

Roy moves with confidence in this territory: she is highly familiar with the local military slang as well as the geographical surroundings; she knows the Kashmir houses, the investigation rooms, the scenes of shootings and the cherry plantations too. Concrete details and the irony lying in accurate observations (Musa, who is merely suspected of taking part in revolutionary activity, is visited by the Secret Service agents “at 4 am, the usual time for making visits” (Roy, *The Ministry* 433) to be taken to interrogation) are interspersed with lyrical descriptions of the emotional state of civilians living in areas afflicted by the civil war.

In Kashmir nightmares were promiscuous. They were unfaithful to their owners, they cartwheeled wantonly into other people's dreams, they acknowledged no precincts, they were the greatest ambush artists of all. No fortification, no fence-building could keep them in check. In Kashmir the only thing to do with nightmares was to embrace them like old friends and manage them like old enemies (Roy, *The Ministry* 307).

The people of Kashmir fighting for their independence are presented with an unquestionable sympathy and schematic descriptions, focusing on small details rather than an exhaustive image (similarly to the technique of description of the Naxalite youth in *Walking with the Comrades*). In countless short scenes, she points

out their courage, camaraderie and the love that was also called by Che Guevara the most important characteristic of a revolutionist.

Kashmir and the specific problems of the region occupy an important place in Arundhati Roy's work. In a volume of interviews *The Shape of the Beast*, Roy mostly speaks about the socio-political injustices of the immediate past: displacement of people by the dams and industry, genocide in Gujarat, the case of Maoist rebels and that of the independence of Kashmir Region. In one of the interviews Roy names Kashmir not only a geopolitical entity but as something central to her understanding of human condition as such and expresses her wish to keep on writing about it. She thinks that:

...for a writer (Kashmir) it's really a place that gives you an understanding of power, powerlessness, brutality, bravery and the dilemmas of human condition. (...) I would not want to write a book about Kashmir, I hope Kashmir will be in all the books I write (Roy, *The Shape* 244).

The Kashmirian thread of the novel is represented through the semi-autobiographical figure of Tilo, and her journeys to her lover, Musa, the freedom fighter.

As a rather *deus ex machina* solution, Anjum, Tilo and the other protagonists of the two main threads of the novel gather around the abandoned infant's character, and it is here, among the old tombstones of the cemetery, that they form a community, or perhaps even a family – even though they could be joined by other circumstances too, such as the experience of their outcast and marginalized state or their courageous withstanding of various forms of power and violence. What used to be a “place for fallen souls” (Roy, *The Ministry* 35) becomes *Jannat Guest House*. In Urdu, ‘Jannat’ means ‘paradise,’ the place of rest and reward. Although the term suggests irony, Anjum really turns the graveyard into a guest house, enclosing graves and building rooms on them, stealing electricity from the nearby mortuary and using the public hand pump for water, thus dissolving the otherwise uncrossable borders between life and death, between different castes, between Hindus, Christians and Muslims, between men and women.

Bearing in mind that on a fictional level the novel presents the endless row of antagonisms modern India as a state encounters, offering a glimpse into something that could be named as a “society in crisis”, Anjum's solution of creating a community

of outcasts has a strong symbolic meaning. The graveyard becomes a place of both life and death, a place for self-affirmation for all kinds of marginalized people. The closing scene of the novel is in fact Roy's fictional description of the solution to the crisis, a utopian community based on tolerance and collaboration, an independent and self-sustaining community outside the world organised around dominance.

We know that "characteristically postcolonial writers evoke or create a precolonial version of their own nation, rejecting the modern and the contemporary, which is tainted with the colonial status of their countries" (Barry 127). Anjum's Jannat Guest House might resemble a pure precolonial or even prehistoric paradise, its temporality and fragility in the face of unconditioned economic growth is strongly emphasised. As the place Saddam Hussein's father was murdered soon was turned into a shopping mall, the undisturbed corner of the cemetery could be turned into something else every minute.

The scenes taking place in Kashmir are nuanced by the camaraderie and courage manifested even in their defeated state, but here, at the end of the novel this unity seems rather an encouraging fairy tale meant to offer consolation during hardships. There, a kitten thrown into a lake pushes out its claws furiously before dying – it is as if the tiny animal defies the soldiers of the Indian army. On the last pages of the novel, it seems that the author, as if her pity for the protagonists has just been awakened, provides them with everything in a fairy tale-like manner: love, children, family and the idyllic peace of people who had been cast out from society. This is a symbolic point of rest, as the fragile harmony is only momentary, and does not take place within the frames of the society but independently of these, or rather in opposition to them, in the cemetery. The lives of Anjum, Tilo, Saddam Hussein and others reach a momentary harbour, appearing as the symbolic victory of subcultures that are forced to fight continuously and lose more and more ground against the dictatorship of the globalizing world, and also symbolizing the fact that these small, often opposing circles, movements and communities are in fact interdependent and can only succeed in close unity.

Arundhati Roy turns towards major symbols in her second novel, towards fictionalizing national/regional history, yet without sacrificing the point of view of the subaltern expressed in her first novel, *The God of Small Things* as well. There is a tendency among contemporary novelists worldwide to incorporate national history,

and at some point even the history of small regional communities and subcultures, into their fictional work. Manoj Sreenevasan notes that “When fiction and history blend together in the Indian context facilitated by the dominant ideology of the novelist-historian, it leads to the invention of the multiple images of nation manifesting as a strong zeitgeist, historicizing the fictional work” (Sreenevasan 111). Following Stephen Greenblatt’s ideas, (Greenblatt 128) who insisted on giving equal importance on literary texts and historical sources in the proper understanding of the past, we could say that fiction becomes an alternative image, even an alternative history of a community’s past. Typically an essay with a new historicist point of view places a literary text within the frame of a “non-literary” text. Documents are not subordinated to the literary creation as mere context but analysed in their own right. Roy’s novelistic technique is different, non-literary texts such as documents, articles etc. play a minor role in the novel, yet the reader’s attention is always drawn to the historical reality behind the fiction. In this respect both of Roy’s novels follow the ideas of Edward Said, who said that:

(...) reading and writing texts are never neutral activities: there are interests, powers, passions, pleasures entailed no matter how aesthetic or entertaining the work. Media, political economy, mass institutions— in fine, the tracings of secular power and the influence of the state—are part of what we call literature (Said 385).

The protagonists of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* painfully experience that fiction and history are linked together on many levels, as the historical events of India’s recent past become landmarks in their own personal fates. They are struggling with the fact that individual and personal decisions cannot be taken separately, but only interwoven with history: “We cannot choose to live non-historically: history is quite as much our destiny as death” – as Terry Eagleton wrote in *After Theory* (Eagleton 209).

Basically Roy’s works (both fiction and non-fiction) re-affirm the Foucauldian affirmation which stood at the basis of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* according to which knowledge is not innocent it is always operated by power, thus a textual universe constitutes a discourse on the *Other* using explanations and interpretations from a different, supposed to be superior point of view. However the colonizer and the colonized in the context of neo-colonialism and neoliberal market ideologies is not

the same any more. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* Roy gives voice not to the subaltern, but to various types of ‘subalterns’ trying to emphasize the importance of religious/ethnic/sexual etc. difference, the role of small communities and the way these could and should cooperate against the monolithic and oppressive narrative of the neo-colonial Indian nation-state.

Works Cited

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester University Press, 2002.
- Eagleton, Terry. *After Theory*. Penguin Books, 2004.
- Dvorak, Martha. “Translating the Foreign into Familiar. Arundhati Roy’s Postmodern Sleight of Hand.” Carol Durix and Jean Pierre Durix (eds.) *Reading Arundhati Roy’s The God of Small Things*. 2002.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*. California University Press, 1991.
- Guevara, Che. *Reader: Writings on Politics and Revolution*. Ocean Press, 2003.
- Lane, Richard J. *The Postcolonial Novel*. Polity Press, 2006.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things: A Novel*. Random House, 1997.
- Roy, Arundhati. *Walking with the Comrades*. Penguin, 2011.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The Shape of the Beast. Conversations with Arundhati Roy*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Penguin, 2017.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*. Flamingo, 2002.
- Roy, Arundhati. *War Talk*. South End Press, 2003.
- Roy, Arundhati. *Broken Republic: Three essays*. Hamish Hamilton, 2011.
- Roy, Arundhati. *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom*. Verso, 2011.
- Roy, Arundhati. *Capitalism: a Ghost Story*. Haymarket Books, 2014.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. Routledge, 1978.
- Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Vintage. 1994.
- Sreenevasan, Manoj. “Historicizing Fiction. Contemporary India in Arundhati Roy’s The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.” *Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, January–June 2017.

Svarc, Ksenia. "The Trauma of Neocolonization in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*". *Theory and Practice in English Studies*, Vol. VI. Issue 2, 2013.

Spivak, Gayatri. *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Macmillan, 1988.