

Transgender Congruence and Gendered Spatial Experiences with reference to Arundhati Roy's 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness'

Dr. Shilpi Bhattacharya, Professor, Department of English, Kalinga University, Raipur(C.G.)

Abstract: The expressions of culture and experiences of gender, in several ways, reveal the dynamic and complex relationship in spatiality that becomes a significant analyzing component of the same. Literature explains, in an aesthetically diverse way, the different forms of art which is in a way direct and straightforward. Relationship of gender and space is explained by Arundhati Roy in multiple ways, where language emerged to display the relationship in her recent novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* as a tool of imbrication. The personal journey in this novel takes us across the Indian subcontinent, that consists of many years—the neighborhood that was cramped at Old Delhi and the pouch roads of the newly established city that is taken beyond the valleys of Kashmir and the high mountains. The novel talks about the female characters in the Kashmir valley, that is conflict-ridden and the protagonist of the novel, who is a transgender and resides in the heterotopic space of the cemetery, sustain themselves with various possibilities specially by the most apt and prominent tool of various linguistic styles. The present paper is an attempt to study and postulate the heterotopia by Foucault and Soja in the third space framework and to analyze the transgender congruence in the novel through Queer's theory. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is loaded up with an assurance to discover triumph, expectation and, indeed, satisfaction, in spite of a mind-boggling feeling of despairing.

Key Words: transgender, space, heterotopia, congruence, identity

INTRODUCTION:

Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, activist, and human rights campaigner. Her first novel published in 1997, *The God of Small Things*, was the work that received the Man Booker Prize for Fiction. Since then she has published several works of non-fiction, including *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, *Listening to Grasshoppers* and *Broken Republic*. She was born in 1961 and now lives in New Delhi, India.

Arundhati Roy's tale *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is a broad, Delhi-set story that highlights a huge cast of characters and addresses probably the darkest and roughest episodes in current Indian history, including the 2002 Godhra prepare assault and the continuous battling in Kashmir. Highlighting a differing gathering of characters from crosswise over Indian culture, including a trans lady (or hijra), a designer who conflicts with society, and a proprietor with a second life in the insight benefits, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* tells us the Indian culture that is existing today and the clashes that are happening due to conflicts in society and between relationships. Widely praised, in spite of the fact that it didn't make the quick progress of Roy's

presentation *The God of Small Things*, it was for quite some time recorded for two noteworthy abstract honors—The Hindu Literary Prize and the Man Booker Prize.

It is challenging in the Indian scenario for any scholar to understand the complicated relation between space and gender. The present age will see oppression in gender in novel and in multiple forms. Sometimes, an experiment in semiotic and stylistic features could be done to understand the dilemmas of the identities that are truncated as an effect of postmodern, post-globalized selves of Indian scenario and is clearly unique in its approach and representation of literary influences exists that encompasses these novel selves in more than one form. The multitudes in India who have their destinies mired in a very complicated socio-political, religious and, above all, economical stratas, multidimensional narratives that are demanded are encompassed within the structures of effective complexity. Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* invited mixed reviews, and that was especially because the narrative of this book is complex and rambling and the Indian social structure attempts to encompass the entire world with the identities of class and castes along with the conflicts in gender. The activist nature of Roy and her commitment towards society has paved way into the writing space of hers that is pretty creative where cleverly she uses stylistic devices successfully that are used to employ and to negotiate the issues that are purely socio-political and polarizes this country in contemporary scenario. Thus it becomes challenging to write about India in the context of creative writing.

CONTEXT:

In 1990, Judith Butler made maybe the biggest commitment to the possibility that sexual orientation is a social build detached to yet socially dictated by natural sex and upheld through social convention with the distribution of *Gender Trouble*. This is the supporting idea from which both women's liberation and Queer hypothesis have drawn, two regions which intensely advise this proposal. The thought that the normal traditions ascribed to a given sexual orientation, both as far as the individual and on a more calculated are socially developed and hence are delicate to sociological, geological and chronicled variety is currently typical without, as is socially obvious, being select. Drawing on Butler, it is recognized pointedly between the self-identificatory experience of epitomizing a third sex and the general population development of understandings and portrayals of that sexual orientation.

Seemingly the longest standing sexual orientation differing bunch in South Asia, hijras generally distinguish as a third sex unmistakable from people. Most by far of hijras are conceived biogenetically male, however uncommon instances of bio-hereditarily female individuals who never started to bleed getting to be hijras have been recorded. Most hijras leave their families to live in hijra-selective family units, however some keep up contact with their families after this move, contingent on the level of acknowledgment they independently encounter. With regards to India, which is the center zone for this proposal, these family units are thus sorted out under seven national hijra gharanas or calculated houses, with each hijra family being adjusted to a

gharana and another hijra consequently joining the gharana of their family unit. Each hijra house has its own principles and confinements for its individuals, and fines can be authorized for breaking them, and in addition in extraordinary cases-suspension.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, composed by Booker prize champ Arundhati Roy and first distributed in 2017, does profoundly think about the future potential outcomes for hijra. While exhibiting worries about the effect of different types of non-paired sexual orientation articulation on the one of a kind character of hijras, prompting the likelihood of hijras being supplanted by Trans personalities without the simultaneous third-sex and network based connections, the novel is profoundly thoughtful to the way that this move is a piece of a more extensive arrangement of social space, instead of a remark on the repetition of the classification. The epic's principle hijra character, Anjum, must work inside a plainly rough and personality smothering condition supported by conservative Hindutva belief systems; at last, she as an individual is fruitful in dismissing her decrease to an image of Hinduism and in beginning her own locale of underestimated individuals, yet a question mark regardless hangs over the more extensive class of 'hijra' as a socially-approved gathering. The scope of writings considered here along these lines exhibit the assortment of employments to which the hijra figure is put, originating from a variety of kinds.

While discussing the term 'Hijra' the critical interest moves into spatiality. Foucault described this as heterotopia in alternate spaces. As opposed to the illusory utopian spaces that were also known as the spaces of the subversive. These spaces juxtapose themselves and are capable enough to have a real place that is mostly single, sometimes many and various such places that can make themselves incompatible. The cemetery was described as a significant heterotopic space with a specific function. The functional definition of Heterotopia is through their accessibility rules. The pre-suppositions of heterotopias always open and close in a system which tends to separate itself by making the entire system penetrable. Thus, it can be assumed that the individual has to submit to the rites and purifications or else one cannot freely access the public space in a heterotopic site. The entry for this becomes compulsory as if entering in a jail. Unlike ordinary spaces of culture, the cemetery seems to be a place contrary to it. This becomes a space that connects all the important links of the village, city, society or state as almost all the individuals and families have relatives in the cemetery.

The main character in The Ministry of Utmost Happiness, that is Arundhati Roy's recent novel, is Anjum who is a hijra and she joins this clan when she was a tyke and gets separated from this community home of hijras at the age of forty-six. At this point of time she sets up a new shelter where she has no one with her, in a close-by burial ground. Anjum bit by bit draws in a gathering of untouchables and loners including, yet absolutely not constrained to, different hijras, to shape another, blended network in the memorial park with her at its inside. Anjum's choice to move far from the hijra network and the way that the focal point of the novel is on her new gathering, where the majority of them were not hijras, and who used to take the clan of hijras as an old, scene-setting gadget, where the expressions mostly move far from the depth of past experiences

and thinking that this will structure to open out the involvement of Anjum to the individuals past different hijras. It is not necessarily the case that the hijra network living in the Khwabgah are totally expelled, yet rather that Anjum isn't subject to them for a feeling of, or for an undeniable, network, which she can manufacture both physically in building the cabins for the cemetery's tenants and sincerely outside of the hijra gharana. Anjum can keep up the significant social and different advantages of network living without having likewise to go up against the customary and profound relationship of hijras living respectively in a gathering of isolated, hallowed creatures, nor does she need to keep up this network for the motivations behind badhai work, again ordinarily observed as hijras' conventional, and just, occupation; Anjum does not only do badhai when she lives with the hijras, additionally being a sex specialist, and does not do it at all after her turn. Consequently, both in what it does and does exclude, on an entire content level Hindu folklore is Gendered experiences of spatial identities perceived as having legitimacy for attributing people who all the while distinguish as hijra however is neither a focal nor a fundamental piece of the hijra encounter being spoken to.

CONCLUSION:

With Roy's sublime social subtle elements, the feelings of the 'hijras' are conceded as an intense feeling of their reality, of the multifaceted nature, vitality and assorted variety of contemporary India, in which obscurity and overflowing imperativeness are inseparably interlaced with hijras very own encounters inside that structure. The cartographies of thirdspaces are dynamic spaces where the experiences of living and their representations blend and a vibrant space in society and culture is created. The significant markers that emerge in space are the complications of gender, ostracization of society and marginalization that further matters. The complex and integral part of cultural representations are the gender performances that act as a key component in defining these spaces, and it would definitely be a comprehensive study of social life if these aspects are taken into account. The de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation of the struggle that is consistent thereby assembles and reshapes the moulds of existence of humans in society.

REFERENCES -

- Roy, A. (2018). *The ministry of utmost happiness*. London: Penguin Books.
- Roy, Arundhati. "My Seditious Heart". *caravanmagazine.com*. 23 July 2017
- Butler, Judith, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge. 1990.
- Serena Nanda, *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990), p.15.
- Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, p.18.
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, p.7, p.42.

- Bernard Cohn, 'Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India' in The Bernard Cohn Omnibus (New Delhi: Oxford University Press India, 2004).