

Environmental Injustice: A Queer Ecofeminist Study of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

By

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M. A., NUML, Islamabad, 2014

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

In **English Literature**

To

FACULTY OF Languages



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

March 2019



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES FACULTY OF LANGUAGES

THESIS/DISSERTATION AND DEFENSE APPROVAL FORM

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Thesis/Dissertation Title: *Environmental Injustice: A Queer Ecofeminist Study of The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

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ABSTRACT

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE: A QUEER ECOFEMINIST STUDY OF *THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS*

The research explores and analyses Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* through the lens of Greta Gaard's Queer Ecofeminism. The research deals with the treatment and projection of nature in the Booker's Prize winner novel by Arundhati Roy in the light of the principles of ecocriticism. Roy presents a complete and contemporary picture of India's nature, humanity, politics, religion, development and environmental crisis. At the same time it draws the attention of the reader towards the ongoing development and globalization process where "luxury" is dominating the "necessity". The novel is analyzed through these ideas by looking at the identity quest of the protagonist Anjum and her relation to the nature; sometimes too close and then far away, parallel to the culture; where a transgender cannot live a peaceful life in a noble family. Environmental concerns are traced through the representation of chaos and human/animal representation in the society as presented by Arundhati Roy. Roy's imagery is analyzed so as to find the reason of their existence and to see if it has any connection with the politics, economics, development and industrialization etc. Many events of the novel refer to the environmental crisis faced by this region of the world. The unhealthy nutrition among the human population is highlighted where injected chickens are produced for commercial use. The army occupation of the Indian held Kashmir by its large number of troops exerts a great burden on the natural resources of this beautiful green valley. Due to the busy activities of army, roads are constructed and development can be seen to facilitate these troops in every possible manner. All these social injustices are highlighted and analyzed so as to evaluate their interconnections with each other according to the theoretical ideas of Greta Gaard. Gaard stresses to put an equal emphasis on all the oppressed groups and to focus on the interconnections between all the oppressed groups. She believes that a combination of same authority is responsible for the exploitation of the oppressed groups as she has explained that in her essay. The use of political narratives can usually be seen for oppressing the oppressed. This research therefore is focused to lay an equal emphasis on all the oppressed groups as suggested by Gaard.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is indeed an honor for me to reach this moment when I have completed my research work after a strenuous effort. It has been possible by the grace of Allah Almighty who enabled me to carry out this research. I am thankful to Him for guiding me for the completion of this project.

I am also thankful to honorable Professor Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan who supervised this research under his kind guidance in spite of his busy schedule. He enlightened me with his knowledge which proved to be a great support for me in this work. It is due to his encouragement that I oriented my research project and reached my goal by applying contemporary theoretical ideas based upon the overlapping areas of various fields of knowledge.

The interest of this research developed through the reading of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* which encompasses the burning issues of the Indian subcontinent and its surrounding region. It highlights the need to get ourselves aware of the social injustices around us so that we can ultimately make an attempt to put an end to such practices.

All of my university teachers are a great source of knowledge for me who helped me to take more interest in the contemporary literature and to find its social and political aspects in the light of the theoretical ideas learnt so far. My teachers have always been a source of inspiration for me and it is the result of their encouragement that I have finally completed my research work.

Hasan Abbas Kazmi

March 10, 2019.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to *my dear parents*.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study offers an insight into the treatment of nature and women in the Booker's Prize winner novel by Arundhati Roy, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The study brings together the queer, the feminist and the ecological perspectives to throw light on the disturbing practices of injustices that are socially constructed. Queer theorists and ecofeminists challenge the notion of "natural" supported by ideals of heterosexual normativity. The study explores the impact of these hegemonic practices on women, transgender community and natural reserves depicted in the novel.

According to William Reuckert, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and environment. The "environment" includes everything in the surroundings including the human culture which has changed through time because human culture is connected to the physical world affecting it and affected by it. Thus ecocriticism interrogates the interconnectedness of nature and culture. It also includes the search of current environmental problems as a byproduct of culture and deals with troubling awareness of environmental limits.

Buell introduces the concept of Environmental justice criticism in the practice of ecocriticism theory. He clarifies in an interview that the key factor in producing environmental injustice is poverty rather than race. He thinks of ecocritical discourse as "public consciousness raising-effect" as he has already explained that ecocriticism is a movement to create awareness about nature and its relation with us rather than just a theory. He has also introduced the ideas of Anthro-normativity by talking about the mistreatment to humans, animals, or to the natural world and classism.

The Ministry of Utmost Happiness can be analyzed by looking at the identity crisis of the protagonist "Anjum" and her relation to the nature; sometimes too close and then far away, parallel to the culture; where a transgender cannot live a peaceful life in a noble family. Environmental concerns can be traced through the representation of chaos and human/animal representation in the society as presented by Arundhati Roy. Development in India can be

studied to see how the writer projects it in relation to the nature. It can be in the form of changes in the landscape, destruction and slaughter, war stricken areas, differences of religions and other ideologies as that of Maoists or Naxalites.

Many events of the novel refer to the environmental crisis faced by this region of the world. The unhealthy nutrition among the human population is highlighted where injected chickens are produced for commercial use. The scarcities of water, air pollution, unhygienic food, overpopulation are the similar problems. The army occupation of the Indian held Kashmir by its large number of troops exerts a great burden on the natural resources of this beautiful green valley. Due to the busy activities of army, roads are constructed and development can be seen to facilitate these troops in every possible manner. The electric fencing of the LOC makes the humanity suffer as they lose their cattle and are deprived to see their relatives across the LOC as indicated by the newspapers. According to a Dawn News article, *Fenced in: The Kashmir Barrier that is Endangering Wildlife* published in 2016 is evident of the endangering wildlife in the region. (AFP) The Snow leopard, Ibex, Himalayan Black Bears and many other species are in the habit of migration as the season changes but their migration has been stopped due to the military activity and their survival and reproduction is under a great threat. The Nuclear Tests conducted by India as highlighted by Arundhati Roy in her novel, have also brought the humanity to the limits by changing its culture to a negative inclination. The protagonist of Roy's novel is a transgender and through that character the author highlights many aspects of the society which are the results of some social constructions and social ills.

Arundhati Roy does not appear to be a writer struggling for her fame and business because she does not want to be presented to the people "as some pretty woman who wrote a book," She actually chopped off her hair when the prize was announced for her on writing this novel which presents a history of India in a fictional way. She is also known for her huge donation; which was earned as prize money for her book, for an organization working for the rights of displaced people against the construction of a number of dams in India. She has raised voice for the Kashmiris struggling for their independence against Indian Occupation, tribal people asking for their hereditary lands. Not only this, but she has also criticized the Indian's Nuclear Testing and America's war on terror in Afghanistan. These

are however generally taken as national pride for both India and America. As an activist, Roy has personally visited all these exploited groups in India especially the Kashmiris and the Maoists and faced charges on her acts in the Indian Courts. She is not only aware of the internal problems of India but at the same time she highlights the problems of the Asian countries as a larger paradigm. (Sehgal) The events of her novel reflect her knowledge of the actual politics seen in the region where there are multiple oppressed classes exploited by different forms of oppression. Her writing itself is seen by the critics as a support for the silenced voices.

It took Roy twenty years after her novel *The God of Small Things* to write a new one. Till then many changes are seen in India and Asia. During these two years she publishes her essays and continues to raise voice for the voiceless in many ways. This novel presents all her experiences of these two decades related to the politics, society, culture, nationalism, nature and self. She accomplishes this through the voice of different characters especially the protagonist. Her novel starts with parallel stories of two characters; Anjum and Tilo. Anjum is the protagonist of the novel who is a transgender and searching for self or identity. The tragic events of Anjum's life lead her to take refuge in a graveyard where she later on provides refuge to others as well. Tilo, on the other hand is an architect who embarks upon her journey to Kashmir in search of her friend Musa who is fighting for the freedom of Kashmir.

Roy gives voice to many actual events of the history through a variety of characters like the Indian occupation of Kashmir, Sectarian and religious riots of Gujrat, people fighting for their lands in Central India, the violence experienced by the nature, humans and women. She throws lights on the hardships faced by Anjum and Tilo but at a larger paradigm, she presents the political and social picture of India which is corrupted by false ideologies and social constructions.

The opening chapter of the novel presents the protagonist Anjum who was previously known as Aftab and born to a Muslim family. Later on, Anjum questions her identity when she is not able to put herself neither in men nor in women. The disagreements between her body and her social construction make her to leave her home and find a new place for her survival where she finally sets up a new home known as "Khwabgah". She later on provides

refuge to many other characters in her “Khwabgah”. All these new residents have different ideologies, gender and thinking but the most common similarity is being an outcast of the society which serves as a bond between them.

It is the character of Anjum which introduces many other characters of the novel telling their own diverse stories which are in parallel to that of Anjum. Biplab is presented as a senior official of an intelligence agency, Naga as a journalist, Musa as a freedom fighter of Kashmir and Tilo in search of her love. Thus a confusing but detailed story of Kashmir is projected upon the readers giving multiple insights to it. Roy through her book offers the readers to look at the experiences of different characters and their lives in India. She talks about the outcasts of the society, untouchables, war-affected Kashmiris, Maoists fighting for their land, domestic abuse, suicide and much more. She narrates the story of the marginalized people of India through marginalized characters in her novel. Roy’s political stance, giving voice to the voiceless and making so many enemies in her own country is appreciable. When she receives the Sydney Prize Award, she makes it clear that the oppressed groups in India are not actually “voiceless” but “unheard”. Her novel helps those “unheard” to be heard around the globe.

This book is different from her previous novel in a way that it is full of diverse experiences related to the marginalized groups in India. It gives voice to the Muslims, transgender people, Maoists, missing people, murdered people and those who are struggling for their survival. It envisions some actual events of the history such as hunger strikes, nature protection movements, public punishments of cow slaughter, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, the Sikh genocide, killings of Gujrat Riots and the stories of Kashmiri widows. This is how her novel becomes different when we talk about her previous book.

There is no doubt that the lives of women and protection of environment is interconnected around the world especially in the communities having a low income or in third world countries. This can be explained by different ways of women’s participation in their communities where they are in close contact with the natural surroundings. They can be seen in multiple roles where they are harvesting crops, obtaining food from natural resources and taking care of the livestock. Even in some communities it is the responsibility of women to gather wood and to bring water for the whole family from distant places. They

are also responsible for taking care of the household and cleanliness. Finally, most of them fulfill their financial necessities by doing some businesses using natural resources or through sustainable development such as pottery and dehydrated fruits. Since the relationship of women is closer to the nature and natural resources as seen generally in their lives, they are well aware of maintaining a sustainable contact with the nature which is ultimately good for them as well as the ecology.

The Chipko Movement of India is an important example of highlighting the positive contribution of women towards the ecology and as a social movement. This movement is actually a reaction of the women of Northern India to prevent deforestation by timber mafia. These women take a step for the protection of their natural environment which is of course a source of their survival when threatened by the industrialists and developers. Deforestation is a cause of less trees, soil erosion, bad crops, extinction of flora and fauna and disturbance of the water system which is important for their indigenous ways of living. These reasons pushed these women to call for their rights and start this famous Chipko Movement.

This movement later on takes many other forms of protests so as to create awareness about the importance of ecology in the region. Women are then seen in different parts of India in nonviolent protests and using their cultural and folk literature for their natural cause. With the passage of time men are also involved in this movement along with the women and that is how this movement is expanded to other regions of India. The Chipko movement gives lessons of paramount importance to the Indian people related to sustainable development and makes very close interconnections between the exploitation of women and the exploitation of environment. Probably this is the reason of Vandana Shiva's explanation of ecofeminism, one of the women who took part in the Chipko movement, that feminism and environmentalism are inseparable.

1.1 Situatedness of the Researcher

Nature has always been generous for the humans throughout the history and it promises this generosity to our future generation as well if its exploitation is abolished. It is important for us to preserve some of the natural treasures for our future generation which appear to be reduced with the rise of social injustices based on political, social and cultural constructions in the region which has one of the largest systems of rivers on the planet. Being a Pakistani, I find it my duty to raise awareness regarding the exploitation of nature, women and other oppressed groups of the society and to find any interconnections between the oppressed groups as mentioned in the theoretical ideas Greta Gaard. Moreover the current political situation of the region which involves the exploitation of Kashmiris and the threat of a nuclear war between Pakistan and India is a burning issue and this needs to be researched through the imagery of Arundhati Roy in her novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. There are multiple oppressing groups as there are multiple oppressed groups presented in the novel, it is therefore important to identify the oppressors as well as the oppressed in Roy's novel.

1.2 DELIMITATION

I have limited my research to the textual analysis of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. I intend to examine the text through the lens of Greta Gaard's concept of Queer Ecofeminism.

1.3 THESIS STATEMENT

There are multiple oppressors in the Indian society as well as in the region surrounding it which are involved in the exploitation of multiple oppressed groups by supporting each other's narrative for the accumulation of authority in the region. Women, nature and the transgender people are victims of exploitative patriarchal system in the novel. The oppressive practices and injustices they are subject to are examined through the queer ecofeminist perspective which brings together the queer, the feminist and the ecological critique.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the issues highlighted in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* related to environmental crisis?
2. How is the connection between nature and women explored in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* to shed light on environmental injustice?
3. What is the author's projection of gender inequality/ ambiguity in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* as a social construct?

1.6 RESEARCH PLAN

The research plan of this study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the discussion of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in the light of Greta Gaard's ideas related to queer ecofeminism. It further establishes an argument so as to analyze the novel through the lens of Greta Gaard's theory of queer ecofeminism. It incorporates the evidences of social injustices prevailing in our society due to which the people, women and nature are suffering and highlights the need of awareness among the people to put an end to this exploitation for the good of all.

Queer ecofeminism is a vast lens to analyze the literature as it involves the overlapping ideas of different fields like queer criticism, feminism, ecological, social and cultural aspects. It therefore needs to be studied in a detail and can be reflected in the literature review which is the second chapter of this research plan. Chapter 2 bridges the gaps between different ideas through the information acquired by different secondary sources related to this research. It also provides the ideas of similar researches conducted on *The Ministry of Utmost happiness*.

Chapter 3 is related to the research methodology used for this research and suggests a suitable methodology to be used in this research so that the queer ecofeminist perspective can be traced within the novel in a suitable and convincing manner.

Chapter 4 is the Textual Analysis of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The textual analysis of the novel is conducted so as to find out the relevance of the information provided

by Arundhati Roy with the actual information of this region and to analyze the extent of the indication of social injustices prevailing in the society.

Chapter 5 is the last chapter of this research plan which highlights the findings of the textual analysis and summarizes the results of this research. It tells about the underlying facts provided by the author through the lens of queer ecofeminism.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research lies in the identification of the oppressor groups in India and its surrounding regions. The research highlights the narratives build upon the political and nationalistic ideologies which are then used to exploit the nature, people and animals and to serve the interests of those who are in authority. It is very important to create awareness among the people so that they can identify the oppressor groups and the damage caused by them to our natural reserves, women, animals and people in general. The Kashmiris and the Maoists are two important oppressed communities presented in the novel and can be seen through then lens of queer ecofeminism so that injustices suffered by the two communities can be brought to the people who are unaware of the hidden political agenda of the oppressors' intentions for the accumulation of power. The research deals with the exploited subjects and their interconnections with each other so as to highlight the need for the survival of the oppressed and provision of justice in the society. The significance of this research can also be traced with the current conflict between two nuclear armed countries fighting over Kashmir and the threat of nuclear devastation of the natural existence on this part of the planet.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the important secondary sources which have helped me to develop my argument as well as to connect the imagery of Arundhati Roy with the theoretical perspectives of Greta Gaard explained in her books and essays related to this research. These sources are not only related to the theoretical ideas related to ecofeminism and queer theories but it also covers the factual information related to India and its surroundings especially Kashmir. These are the works of different authors who have witnessed the exploitation of nature, women, transgender people and animals of this region by the oppressors. The political situation can also be examined through the review of different sources present in this chapter.

2.2 Review of Sources

The pastoral ideology has been explained by Cheryll Glotfelty in her book. According to her, Buell approaches the pastoral ideology in a variety of frames and contexts – social, political, gender-based, aesthetic, pragmatic and environmental. (Cheryll Glotfelty) Buell focuses on the emerging threat of ecological holocaust in this age of rapid industrialization. He believes that pastoralism in the literature is important due to the environmental pressures and thus it serves as a literary and cultural force in saving the future of our generations. His book presents a multidimensional approach to the environment and the importance of nature in the history of American Literature. He demonstrates this notion by using Henry Thoreau as a reference point for analyzing the nature. In his book, Buell initiates by introducing pastoral as an idea to turn to a less urbanized, more “natural” state of existence. (Buell)

“Thoreau’ allegiances, when it came to choosing between options, were all against upscale commercialized farming and on the side of what is now called sustainable agriculture”. (Buell 129) It is clear from the explanation by Buell about Thoreau’s understanding of nature that even at that time there is a resistance against the

industrialization of agriculture. Sustainable agriculture is meant to just fulfill the needs of living or survival but not for the sake of earning money. It is relevant with this research proposal as well because the Adivasis depicted in Roy's novel have the same kind of relation to the nature. They favor agriculture for their own needs only and act as protectors of nature by resisting the industrialization of their areas.

Arne Næss's philosophy that all non-human life forms have value in themselves and that the humans have no right to suppress that value, has been praised by many scholars. Such thoughts include deep reverence for the objects of wilderness and appreciation of tribal groups of Native Americans, Taoists and people following Buddhist traditions. Lawrence Buell places deep ecology within the limits of first wave of ecocriticism which was related to the new dimensions of looking at the non-human nature. This was accompanied with a new movement for the sake of nature which was to make the people conscious about their relation with the nature. Deep ecology has remained contentious because of the differences of anthropocentric views. Some people say that nature is not enjoyed by most of the population as they are living in urban areas and there are a very few who get the right to experience nature in a rural setting. (Harris).

Postcolonial criticism is one of the emerging discourses in literature. Lawrence Buell's works are taking the scope of ecocriticism outside the traditional ecocritical approaches which he sees as the second wave of ecocriticism. Buell is of this view that this second wave involves the constructive approaches to look at the rural an urban environment and is related to the problems of race, class, gender and environmental justice. The background of this second wave approach by Buell is based upon the ecocritical readings of postcolonial literatures along with the interest of postcolonial writers in dealing with the emerging environmental issues such as Ramachandra Guha, Vandana Shiva, Arundhati Roy and Ken Saro-Wiwa, among others. (Erin. 60)

For her success in literature writing Roy has declared herself as a "writer-activist" because she is writing for her novel and acting as an activist in her essays against nuclear technology, dam's construction, and industrialization. Globalization as it is seen today is not beneficial for the humanity but harmful to the planet's ecosystem. She believes globalization is disturbing the role of nature in regularizing the resources and livelihood of the people.

The strategies used by her in her writings tell us about the narratives focusing on the global connections to the success of local natural environments by highlighting the relationship between “privileged” and “sacrificed” populations. (Chae 522)

Roy has attempted to bring the nature in her writings to depict nature by providing the imagery related to trees, river, mountains, animals and insects. She has explained how the increase in population has put an extra burden on our natural resources. The developing countries are receiving loans from the World Bank in order to develop according to the international standards but it has resulted in the exploitation of nature and ecology. The developing countries are putting an end to their biodiversity behind the curtain of so called development. She has explained through her novel that it should be stopped and suggested to adopt sustainable development as its resolution. Human beings can exploit the nature in a limited manner where it is just to fulfill their basic needs so that it can be regenerated itself to be enjoyed by their future generations as well. Roy has attempted to promote the importance of nature, the cause of conserving our ecology and saving our future among her audience. (Maral 40)

“Wular Lake is glassy, inscrutable. Slim boats preen on it like fashion models. P tells me that recently, as part of ‘Operation Good Will’, the army took twenty-one children on a picnic in a navy boat. The boat overturned. All twenty-one children drowned. When the parents of the drowned children protested they were shot at. The luckier ones died.” (Roy 280)

Here Arundhati Roy describes an event in her novel the characters are visiting the Bandipura Sector when they hear of a tragic story of the death of twenty one children due to the negligence of Navy soldiers deployed over there. The children could not be saved but the navy soldiers on the same boat safely swam out as claimed by their parents who were soon exposed to shooting upon protest. It is interesting to see that a seemingly fictional event in Roy’s novel is actually a real event even reported in the newspapers by the title “Two die in protest over boat accident”. (Bedi)

Avtar Singh was a Major in Unit 35 of the Rashtriya Rifles and was posted in Srinagar in the 1990s where he was then known as ‘Bulbul’. Journalists from that time thought he was a ‘tyrant’ and ‘a man drunk with power. (Rafiq)

This Avtar Singh who committed suicide after murdering his family, is projected through a character of “Amrik Singh” in Roy’s *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* who shares the same life events as that of the real “Avtar Singh”. The author narrates in her novel about his fame that he is known “for his uncanny ability to spot the snake in the grass, the militant hidden among a crowd of civilians and years later, He killed himself recently – shot his wife, his three young sons and put a bullet through his own head.” (Roy 175)

The events of a piece of literature can be questioned so as to find the reason of their existence and to see if it has any connection with the politics, economics, development and industrialization etc. According to Fromm, environmental conditions of author’s life are also of paramount importance therefore the life experiences of Roy can also be considered as she has travelled with the Maoists in her real life. It can also suggest comparing the characters with her real life events as Roy has claimed in an interview that she can be traced in almost all the characters of her novel. Greg Garrard has classified two aspects of ecocriticism; dirty and green. The symbols of dirt, waste and pollution can be compared to the symbols of pure, clean and green nature in the novel.

Harold Fromm in his essay *Ecocriticism at Twenty five* published in *The Ecocritical Reader* addresses the understanding of the theory on reaching the age of twenty five years since its official birth though it has existed always with different names and under different covers such as pastoral studies etc. Fromm is of the view that man’s sensual nature is concealed at every point by technology in this present time. According to him it is our desire or will, which we sometime regard as necessity. He believes that the confidence of Oedipus can be seen as a perfect model of environmental dilemma. In an interview published by Julia Fiedorczuk, Buell defined ecocriticism in these words; Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary movement committed not to any one methodology but to a particular subject; the subject of how literature and other media express environmental awareness and concern. (Buell 7)

Buell's central point is Thoreau and he focuses on the traditions of American Literary Pastoral. He is of the view that nature has been seen differently in different times and contexts. His works are full of new dimensions to observe nature in a different manner. He believes that cultural and ideological influences are actually the representations of environment and place in a literary text. He sees the non-fictional prose related to nature as an emerging method of establishing a link between human consciousness, imagination and a larger world. He considers the social, cultural and ideological entities responsible for the projection of nature in text. According to Buell, there is a "thick description" in an ecocritical text which is a deep map of a place. This supports that the history of the place in literature cannot be separated from its natural history. He encourages the criticism of texts by relating the land with people through different angles which may be geographical, literary, cultural, biological, anthropological or geological. This kind of ecocriticism explained by Lawrence Buell is resting on the pillars of Transcendentalism as theorists have acknowledged the fact that ecocriticism is a new name for something which already existed in the form of different ideologies in different parts of the world. Buell has centered the focus of his book on Henry David Thoreau who is one of the major transcendentalists of America and a student of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Most of his book talks about the works of Thoreau especially his masterpiece in which he has described his experience of living in the woods for several years. Buell sees ecocriticism as a movement which can be a counter movement or a parallel movement. In this case ecocriticism is a parallel movement to the transcendental movement which is many ways directly influenced by the Indian religions.

In the preface of her book on ecofeminism, Greta Gaard explains the importance of creating interconnections between different fields of inquiry. According to her ecofeminism is the collective study of both the writers and the activists, therefore it needs to be addressed in "lingua franca", a language which can be easily understood by most of the people around us. Not only does she highlight the balance required between academic and activist style of writing, but she also suggests exploring the connections between different fields so as to find their connections with each other. (Gaard vii)

Ecofeminism is a theory that has evolved from various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear,

environmental, and animal liberation movements. Ecofeminism is a theory based on the combined knowledge of multiple fields of critical inquiry and social activism. Ecology, socialism and feminism are the main sources which are the basis of this critical inquiry thus it focuses on the notion that the oppressing authorities of women are also responsible for the oppression based on race, class, gender, species and physical abilities. This theory demands justice for all such kinds of oppression faced by the women along with an equal emphasis for an end to all oppressions experienced by the nature. (Gaard 1) She further explains ecofeminism as a theory which is an “interconnected sense of self” and providing “an inclusive and global analysis of the oppression”. For accomplishing this, she suggests the exchange of views between theorists’ and activists so as to exchange information and to create a political strategy for the related issues. (Gaard 3)

Gaard believes that there are certain binaries used as justifications for the subjugation of women, animals and nature such as valuing “men, reason, humans, culture and the mind” while on the other hand devaluing “women, emotion, animals, nature and the body”. She thinks that the paramount task of an ecofeminist is to uncover all those binaries. This creates different interconnections between the oppressed classes. She justifies this by describing certain women movements seen as the protectors of nature such as in Chipku Movement in India and describing the oppressor of both the subjugated classes as the same. This is the answer of certain things including the idea of environment being addressed as a feminist issue and vice versa. (Gaard 5)

There is no doubt in the fact that dams are actually a colossal burden on the ecosystem of our rivers. These are also responsible for the destabilization of communities at some occasions. People are displaced in the name of development and it affects their lives negatively. Around the globe, many of the Northern hemisphere have stopped building big dams and have switched to the alternative resources based on sustainable development, such as small dams, solar energy and wind mills. The companies previously involved in the cost effective dams construction have shifted their center of attention towards the Southern hemisphere where their now sell their destructive knowledge and services. In written records, these big dams do not appear to be harmful especially for the political and economic elites who are definitely looking after their own interests only. In the marginalized

societies, construction of dams and taming of rivers are considered to be the symbols of development and prosperity but the adverse effects of these supposedly developmental projects are often ignored. Many people are forced to leave their inherited lands, homes and culture due to which they have to adopt new ways for their living. This development is therefore a symbol of colonization and conquest as their resources are taken away from them by those in power and permanently taking away their homelands.

Critics who raise their voice against such injustices are accused of being antipatriotic and agents of foreign interests. Same is the case with Arundhati Roy's essay. The Greater Common Good" where she criticized a dam project in India's Narmada Valley. She has already been appreciated for her works highlighting the injustices projected upon the people of that area in the name of development. She also highlighted the destruction of their natural reserves and resources. Her opponents claim that she does not want the Adivasis and the people of Narmada Valley to come out of the dark box of poverty but she calls these developmental projects as fraudulent and devastating. She thinks that it would take them away from their natural ways of living and their generations would suffer for this exploitation. (S.)

Arundhati Roy promotes the indigenous culture with the concept of sustainable development through which the nature can be preserved. She appears to be more convincing towards her opinion in the light of the knowledge of ecocriticism as ecology is the center of the human lives and globe. It is also important to think about the future generations in order to give them the blessings of nature as we enjoy today. Sustainable development is a new concept and highly appealing to the supporters of ecocriticism as it allows development but to a safer extent by preserving the treasures of nature for our children. She is also supportive for the communities whose resources are intended to be used for the interests of other communities by their deprivation or exploitation in some manner.

In the Indian subcontinent the word "public" has been borrowed by Hindi language which means people. On one hand there is "sarkar", which means government and "public" which are seen two be separate from each other. This difference between the government and the people becomes blurred as we go into the depth of the Indian society. It appears as if the Indian elite class is much closer to the government and cannot be separated from it. It is

because Indian democracy is not there in its true letter and spirit and is influenced by many external forces. The people of America think that they are protected and defended by their government by communists, Al Qaeda, Cuba and many other threats. The people of United States are therefore fearful yet their government is the strongest government around the globe. This fear is actually used to control the American people by their government for their self-interests. The government can therefore embark upon any aggressive adventure against any community or nation of the world by promoting this fear among the public. For the outside world it is difficult to tell whether such adventures related to wars are a decision of American public or the government. It leads to create anti-Americanism in many developing countries which is further promoted by the American government to obtain a license for these aggressive designs around the globe. History has witnessed the use of a threat of a foreign enemy by the politicians for gaining the support of the majority of people. Thus it makes us to ponder if this democracy is really a true democracy or not. We can observe the fact that the logic used by the people supporting the war on terror is similar to the logic used by those favoring terrorism. On both sides, people are paid for sacrificing their lives for a cause and both sides think that they are fighting a just war. It is once said by George Bush Senior that he can never apologize for the actions of US and that he does not care about the real facts. It then reminds us of the Age of Empire. (Roy) Democracy is a voice of the public but it does not seem to exist in the present time. People think that they vote and they can get the government of their own choice but it does not appear to work. The governments take care of their own interests only and not those of public. In India Congress and BJP are two different political parties of two different groups but they have almost the same ideologies. Now if we talk about the elections conducted in the United States, it is evident that the people are in the favor of a military-industrial corporal structure get to the higher authorities. No party in a political system can be the real choice of the public because each party has almost the same class, society, interests and ideologies for the accumulation of power. It is just like selecting one out of two different products belonging to a same brand. At the global level there are many institutions of trade, commerce and development which are involved in practices related to colonialism by remotely regulating the policies of the developing countries.

. Third world countries have fallen prey to deadly financial situations based on legislations, meticulously devised and passed as legislation by organizations such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and other institutions that directly deal with the economic infrastructure of these countries. These policies operate through a system that sanctions the flow of huge sums of speculative capital both into and out of countries of the Third World. These international assets entrench their claws far down into the economies of these countries by threatening them and using capital flight to their advantage. In this way, multinational behemoths have taken control of the natural resources, water, electricity, minerals and the overall infrastructure of these countries. The aforementioned financial institutions batter down these third world countries that already have a complex his history and are interdependent. All this destruction takes place under the name of “reform”. Due to this, the operations of many small industries and enterprises have ceased permanently and millions of farmers and workers have lost their land and jobs. (Roy, People vs. Empire)

This way the free market takes control of the Third World’s economy just to further push these countries to drown in debt that is virtually impossible to repay. The Western countries offer their products in these countries on a subsidized rate, which the local market is not able to compete with, and this throws off the balances of the country’s economy. These countries already have a long and arduous history of colonization and the West is tormenting them now in this manner, which is somehow acceptable to the world. The ongoing rate of the debt that is looming on these Third World countries is that of \$382 billion per annum. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise to anyone that it is by thoughtful design that the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer by the day. As per Forbes magazine, the total wealth of the billionaires of world in 2004 was \$1.9 trillion, which was more than the total GDP of 135 of the most poverty-stricken countries of the world combined. Fortunately, the total amount of billionaires has increased since 2003 and there are 111 more billionaires now.

Modern democracy is widely accepted by all nations. However, the same cannot be said about corporate globalization or even liquid capital for that matter. The capital is therefore dependent on the nation state to quell any riots that may be cooking up in the living quarters

of the servants. This system fortifies that no single nation will be able to take on corporate globalization on its own ever. It is now an understood fact that the government cannot and will not agree on the terms of progressive and radical change, and that only the people can carry it out. There is a need to for public to unite across geographical borders and for that public to reject the very idea of an empire. That public needs to place itself in a position where it can negate the concepts and the institutions established by the government and the empire that also strengthen them.

This Empire is a metaphor for many different instruments employed to subjugate the public in such a way that they become incapable of freeing themselves from the shackles of the Empire. Every country in the world is defenseless against the IMF checkbook and the U.S. cruise missile. Vietnam and Iraq are prime examples of this. However, these are not the only problems that these countries have to face. The public faces local problems such as unemployment, having their resources like water supply cut, eviction from their homes, immense electricity bills, and eradication from their homes. This process echoes history and locals are deeply familiar with it. The Empire promotes impoverishment and unfair treatment that pre-exists in the society and further strengthens it. (Roy, People vs. Empire)

The public did not know that its consistent impoverished state was the doing of the Empire and that it is but a pitiable victim. Recently, the public has started to come to terms with the fact that the Empire needs to be opposed, and if their governments would not do so, they would take on the challenge themselves. The public has now started to deal with problems head on in their own different ways. The struggle of countries such as South Africa, India, Iraq, and Argentina is evident and now residents of the United States and Europe are asking relevant questions.

Massive resistance movements, journalists, activists, filmmakers and artists have joined hands to pull apart the Empire limb to limb. This is a long struggle which started by drawing logical conclusions from the ongoing situations, speculation of cash flow charts which led to the telling of stories through print media and film. These activists have exposed the neoliberal agenda that has cost people their land, their homes, their jobs, their dignity and their liberty. The once impalpable enemy is now exposed. They have emerged victorious. It is the amalgamation of political groups with different perspectives and brought with them

varying strategies. Their driving force was anger that made them resolute in their beliefs. This activism gave birth to the real globalization- that of dissent.

However, at the same time, the Empire is trying to intensify the differences between the rich and the poor. This era of economic colonialism is augmented by military aggression. What has happened in Iraq is a tragic example of this business. The country was invaded and occupied illegally by foreign military forces and was destroyed brutally. This illegal domination with hostile agendas was done in the name of freedom. The purpose of this was to take control of the country's resources and wealth on insistence of adversaries of Iraq. Now a "sovereign government" is running Iraq and the Empire is behind that.

It is incumbent upon the rest of the world to side with the Iraqi Resistance that is battling against the Empire courageously. It would be unfair to demand that the Iraqi resistance should be fighting a non-violent, democratic, feminist, and secular battle in the ongoing situation. Instead, we should join the resistance by demanding that the U.S. forces and their allies evacuate Iraq immediately. In December 1999, the neoliberal faction and the global justice movement had an aggressive confrontation at the WTO conference that took place in Seattle. This acknowledged all the long, isolated and lonely battles that activists were fighting in developing countries and were brought to the global stage. People agreed that their anger was justified and that imperial powers were sucking the marrow of these poverty-stricken nations. These people had a vision for a better world that promised equal opportunities for everyone. This posed a serious threat for the governments of these countries who then resolved to assimilate and devise strategies to repress these mass movements.

There are three main dangers that the resistance movements are enduring: the rocky juncture between mass media and mass movements, the risks of NGO-ization of resistance movements, and the conflict of increasingly repressed states and mass movements. The first one is a rather tricky one. Governments have discovered that there is the need for crisis for them to distract the media owing to the fact that media is a crisis-driven platform that does not dwell on a particular problem for long. Similar to cash turnover in a business, there is a need for crisis turnover in the media. An entire country could turn to ashes and it would not

be relevant to the media after a specific amount of time because by then, it would have found some other breaking news to report. (Roy, People vs. Empire)

Governments have mastered the art of biding their time when there is an ongoing crisis and they just wait until it dies down. However, resistance movements tend to manufacture these crises in a spectator friendly manner so that someone may notice and address it. In recent history, death by starvation has become popular to highlight impoverishment rather than putting malnourished individuals on display.

It is disturbing to report that resistance as a display of sorts has lost its essence of civil disobedience and is now just a symbolic representation of what it once was. It might be true that marches, parades and extravagant demonstrations are engaging and fun but on their own, they cannot curb wars. The only way to end wars is when soldiers would refuse to take up arms and would not fight, when laborers reject the idea of loading weapons on aircrafts and ships, and when individuals refuse to indulge in the economic corridors that are scattered across the continents.

If we are passionate enough to take back our right to civil disobedience, we must be brave enough to shun the crises driven broadcasts and should persist in reporting relevant facts are, be it mundane or ordinary. We need to utilize our imagination, our experience and our art to question the ideas of state to define what normal is: unjust, cruel and unacceptable. These unjust processes and policies written by the state should be divulged, for these are the very policies that make basic utilities and commodities of life such as food, shelter, water and dignity seem like luxury to the downtrodden subjects of the empire. The key takeaway of all this is that wars, in essence, are the final straw of a society that is subsisting on unjust peace.

The media is only a tiny instrument in promoting massive resistance movements. To leave an impact, the real strength lies on the ground. People need to come out and resort to the old-fashioned way of political mobilization and make their demands known.

Another hurdle in the way to the resistance movement is the NGO-ization of the movement. It is true that NGOs that are the nongovernmental organizations do work that is substantial and valuable but it is imperative to look at their work through a political lens.

The NGO-ization is an entire phenomenon that pertains to the capacity of these organizations to depoliticize important practices and discourses of social movements.

It does not hold true for all NGOs but it is a fact that cannot be denied either. In developing countries, most NGOs that are working on a large scale function on funds donated by development and aid agencies that are funded by Western governments, the United Nations, the World Bank and other such institutions as well as renowned corporations. Due to the fact that they operate on funds aided by the aforementioned organizations, they become part of political formations that are based abroad and are in direct control of the neoliberal agenda.

The question that arises here is as to why these NGOs are funded by these agencies. Surely, it cannot be the true missionary passion because in reality, these NGOs only give the effect of filling a void created by a failing state and their role is inconsequential in a material way. NGOs operate by handing out aid in a material way to the people, which helps to diminish political anger. In fact, the aid that is conferred upon the public is something that they have a right to have. In this way, they make the public believe that these NGOs are lending them a helping hand and their psyche is altered in this manner. This turns people into helpless victims and all sorts of political resistance is toned down. A buffer is formed between the “public” and the “sarkar” that is engineered by the NGOs. In broader terms, these NGOs have become the facilitators, the interpreters, the arbitrators of discourse between the subjects and the “Empire”. It would not be incorrect to term them as the missionaries of the contemporary world.

On a much smaller scale, the funds that are made available to NGOs are in the same capacity of speculative capital in alternative politics. However, this is much more insidious as compared to the speculative capital that goes in and out of the third world countries. This role that is very successfully being played by the NGOs begins to dominate the political agenda that in turn helps to change conflict into negotiation which ultimately depoliticizes resistance. (Roy, *People vs. Empire*)

The third danger is perhaps the deadliest of all. It points to the actual conflict that exists between mass resistance movements and that are continuously repressed. Whenever the symbolic civil resistance tries to gain momentum and shows some action, the repression is

unrelenting. Protestors in Seattle, Gothenburg, Miami and Genoa are a prime example of what happens when the public slightly tries to raise their voices.

In the United States of America, the USA Patriot Act has become a prototype for laws concerning antiterrorism laws that different governments pass all over the world. The freedom of the public is suppressed under the hoax of protecting freedom. Once this freedom is surrendered, it takes a revolution to win back freedom and it costs precious lives. Everyone tends to stay silent when it comes to militant groups; they are not supported strategically or morally. Nevertheless, denouncing these groups without calling out the state perpetrated violence would be denying the public of its fundamental human rights along with the right to a judicial and fair hearing. That said, the people who have endured years of conflict are aware that militancy and armed struggle against the state would incite accelerated brutality. Violence on the state's part is more pronounced than the peoples' struggle. Keeping all of that in mind, it is impossible to ask the people to live and bear these great injustices. It is impossible to stay quiet forever.

With all the debates regarding important subjects going on today, not even one is as important as that of strategies concerning resistance. The public cannot only choose this choice of strategy; even the "Empire" has a say in it. These despairing times are hard and it is the government's job to ensure that there remains a way for people to protest in a nonviolent manner. If the government fails to do so, the public does not have an option but to turn to violent resistance to have their voice heard. It would be deceptive on the government's part to condemn terrorism if it appears to be unopened to the idea of enforcing positive changes through nonviolent differences of opinion. In today's world, nonviolent mass resistance movements are ignored and therefore, crushed.

In today's day and age, the corporate media and the film industry invest their time, energies, technology and funds on producing content regarding terrorism and war. Violence is therefore, romanticized. This message leaves a very bad taste in the mouth, as it is extremely dangerous and disturbing. If a public grievance is to be broadcasted, violence serves to be an effective tool.

The invasion of the U.S. army in Iraq is detestable but one cannot lay blame on the soldiers who were mostly drafted from small U.S. towns and destitute urban areas. These soldiers are mere puppets of the U.S. army but just like the Iraqis, who have been subject to terrifying crimes, are victims as well. Both parties have laid their lives for someone else's agenda and victory. High officials, top-notch bankers and CEOs, generals and judges sit on their high thrones and declare that there is no other option, and these poor pawns have to pay the price of their desires.

To this, the grief stricken people from the blood stained streets of Afghanistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Kashmir, Palestine, Colombia, Andhra Pradesh reply that there is no other option than terrorism. They take up arms and are labeled terrorists. Terrorism is not a pretty sight. It is ugly, dehumanizing and vicious for the victims as well as the perpetrators. But the same can be said about formal war. It would not be false to call terrorism the privatization of war. The free marketers of war are terrorists. These people rise up against the state for they refuse to believe that only the state has an upper hand on the legal use of violence.

There is a substitute to terrorism. Simply put, it is justice. It is high time to register that no nuclear weapons, dominance, or government councils could ever buy harmony at the cost of justice. There will come a day when this thirst for leadership, hegemony and prevalence will not conjugate to the intense longing for justice and dignity for everyone. It rests on our shoulders to decide as to what form the battle should take.

2.3 Conclusion

In this review, I have tried to incorporate the ideas of different people which are directly or somewhat related to the area of my research. There are critics who have highlighted their criticism related to feminism and ecocriticism but I have limited my research to the queer ecofeminist ideas of Greta Gaard in her works. I have analyzed and tried to connect the criticism related to ecology and feminism through the application of Gaard's perspective of queer ecofeminism on *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in the textual analysis of research.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

I have applied Greta Gaard's theory of queer ecofeminism on Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. I plan to analyze Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by implementing Greta Gaard's theoretical ideas of queer ecofeminism illustrated in "Towards a Queer Ecofeminism" and *Ecofeminism; Women, Animals and Nature*. My main focus is to highlight different kinds of oppressions, multiple oppressed groups and their oppressors as depicted by Arundhati Roy in her novel.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

This study involves the analysis of Roy's novel through queer ecofeminist perspective of Greta Gaard. In her essay, "Toward a Queer Ecofeminism" (1997), Gaard explores the relationship between queer theory and ecofeminism to demonstrate "that a democratic, ecological society envisioned as the goal of ecofeminism will, of necessity, be a society that values sexual diversity and the erotic." In this ground-breaking essay, she brings the two perspectives together by dismantling the dualisms of "self/other and culture/nature" thereby "queering ecofeminism" in the hope to "explore vertical associations on either side of the dualisms." Queer theory recognizes varying sexual identities and practices including and not limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered. As Gaard insists, queer sexualities are seen as "a moral problem, a physiological problem, or a psychological problem" and are invariably described as "crime against nature." The association of "natural" with "procreative" and its association with "compulsory motherhood" is contested by queer theorists and ecofeminists both. At the same time Gaard stresses to put an equal emphasis on all the oppressed groups and to focus on the interconnections between all the oppressed groups. She believes that a combination of same authority is responsible for the exploitation of those oppressed groups as she has explained that in her essay. The use of political narratives can usually be seen for oppressing the oppressed. It is

necessary for a queer ecofeminist study to ensure that all the oppressed groups of the society are addressed with an equal emphasis so as to justify the rights of all. (Gaard 137). The dichotomies of natural/unnatural and natural/cultural will be foregrounded to highlight prejudices and victimization of the weak in the novel

3.3 Research Methodology

The research is qualitative in nature. I have used the qualitative methods for the conduction of this research as it can explore various areas related to the theoretical framework. Greta Gaard's works related to queer ecofeminism provide a lens to analyze *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. The researchers using this lens identify the oppressed groups as well as the oppressors. They further try to establish connection between all the oppressed groups and their exploitation which helps in revealing the hidden narratives employed by the oppressors for their personal interest which is usually to maintain their authority over the oppressed groups. The most important part of such a research is to give an equal emphasis to all the oppressed groups so that justice can be prevailed and to avoid ignorance to any kind of exploitation in the society.

3.3.1 Textual Analysis

In his book *Research Methods for English Studies*, Gabriel Griffin leaves the technique and choice of method to the researcher to be decided according the kind of research intended by him. (Griffin 3). I have used textual analysis in this research so as to highlight the theoretical ideas of Greta Gaard in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.

3.4 Conclusion

Qualitative method is used in this research to analyze *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* so as to conduct it according to the theoretical framework provided by Greta Gaard in her works. The method used for this research will help us to identify different kinds of oppression on the protagonist, female characters as well as the nature in the upcoming chapter through textual analysis.

CHAPTER 4

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

I have analyzed my primary text in light of the theoretical perspective described by Greta Gaard in her works through textual analysis so as to highlight different forms of oppression. The oppressors behind these social injustices are identified where they are using their authority built upon false narratives to undermine the oppressed in my primary text. Greta Gaard's perspective offers new dimension to the analysis of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* where it can create awareness for the readers to know about the actual political, social and cultural situation of the region which is of paramount geostrategic importance.

Arundhati Roy wrote *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* in 2017 which gives a political, social, and cultural picture of the region. Arundhati Roy is an activist, social worker and a voice for the natural reserves in India. She has clearly explained her perspective in her other works especially essays where she points out that unnecessary development is dangerous for the natural reserves of India as well as for the indigenous people of India who are in close contact with the nature. Throughout the novel she discusses the oppressed and the oppressors and abreast the reader about the false narratives used for this exploitation. She reflects her first hand experiences of Kashmiri and Maoist people who are exposed to sufferings for a very long time.

4.2 Oppressed Groups and their Interconnections

A research through the lens of Queer Ecofeminism is mainly concerned with highlighting the interconnections between different oppressed groups and their oppressors mostly the male dominant authorities who are responsible to enforce social and legal constructions for their self-interests. (Gaard) It is therefore important for a queer ecofeminist research to establish the connections between different oppressed groups and how they are marginalized. Roy is probably well aware of this discourse being an ecofeminist activist because her novel relates the oppressed groups frequently at different occasions in her plot.

Mary was the only Christian among the residents of the Khwabgah. She did not go to the church but she wore a little crucifix around her neck. Gudiya and Bulbul were both Hindus and did occasionally visit temples that would allow them in. The rest were Muslims. (Roy 21)

In the first chapter, she introduces the oppressed people inclined towards different religions but living at a same place which highlights that the queers and women are oppressed regardless of their religious ideologies and are subjugated only on the basis of their gender. It is the social construction which makes them unable to be accepted by the society and at some occasions these social constructions are reinforced by the religion. Greta Gaard has explained in her essay that religion has been seen to be sometimes permitting gender discrimination for the interests of those in power. (Gaard) She talks about the misuse of Christianity for the exploitation of queers and women. It is a fact that most of the people executed in the name of witchcraft and wizardry are women in the Europe's Dark Age. She further asserts that Christianity appears at an age of wars and the people in authority encourage the birth of boys rather than girls in order to utilize their manliness in their bloody adventures. Khwabgah is a place which is the residence of queer people belonging to different faiths including Muslims, Christians and Hindus. They are marginalized by the society but practice and follow their religion to some extent. Later on Zainab is adopted by Anjum who becomes a new resident of Khwabgah after being abandoned by her parents at the steps of a mosque. Zainab is not a transgender but a girl who lives with the other residents of Khwabgah and interestingly she is a vocalist for the animal rights. Now it all comes together. Roy has presented the characters in such a way that the oppressed or subjugated voices have close connections with each other.

The interconnections of different oppressed groups can be there as a single idea applied to all the subjugated classes in a text. In this novel, we can see the oppression on multiple areas within a single idea in the text. At the same time, the requirement of addressing multiple injustices with an equal emphasis is also perfectly fulfilled. When Tilotama writes in her letter about the experimentation of domestic animals, she talks about the hens. Here she highlights the need to excise the mothering instinct in hens so as to test its consequences on its growth. Apparently she talks about the removal of motherly instinct in hens for the

cause of so called development, but the reader is reminded of the other oppressed groups also. These oppressed groups share similar sufferings. One can take the idea and think of Anjum who is the protagonist of the novel. Her motherly instinct has been taken away by the social constructions of her society. The motherly nature of the vegetation and animals is questioned which are the sources of nutrition for the human. Then the immediate next lines of the same paragraph talk about the “Mothers of the Disappeared in Kashmir.”Tilotama appears to be a perfect voice for the rights of the oppressed groups and bears a similarity in her ideas with that of the writer’s.

Zainab’s real passion, it turned out, was animals. She was a terror on the streets of old city. She wanted to free all the half-bald, half-dead white chickens that were pressed into filthy cages and stacked on top of each other outside the butcher shops, to converse with every cat that flashes across her path and to take home every litter of stray puppies she found wallowing in the blood and offal flowing through the open drains. (Roy 16)

One of the most important jobs of an ecofeminist analysis is to explain the exploitation of the animals and the issues of animal liberation as well as the exploitation of nature in the name of unnecessary development. Roy’s novel is full of evidences which present the sufferings of animal life in parallel to the development going through the cities. This side by side exploitation of two oppressed groups is affecting the lives of the people of the city as well. Roy tells about the unhygienic conditions of the city where animals to be consumed as food were kept are a serious threat for the people’s health as well. Apart from this Zainab is presented as a vocal person for the rights of animals and their liberation. The conditions where the chickens are crammed and stacked on top of each other to be slaughtered are definitely inappropriate. The medical researchers are also not in the favor of providing less room even for living animals to serve as laboratory purposes however the animals consumed a diet require healthier atmosphere so as to ensure the health of the people consuming those. The guidelines set for the animals used for laboratory purposes clearly states that animals “should be housed with a goal of maximizing species-specific behaviors and minimizing stress-induced behaviors.” (Council 21) It is therefore unethical to treat the animals as witnessed by Zainab in the novel. Zainab is a character which is not only raising her voice against the brutality of the society towards the animals but is also saving lives of different

homeless animals residing in the developing city of New Delhi. Although she does not have enough resources and living with the other oppressed groups at “Khwabgah” but still she tries to provide home to “stray puppies”. She does not even listen when she is reminded that dogs are “najis” or not clean. (Roy 17) Altogether the nature is portrayed in an interesting manner where the animal life is seen to be suffering in the developing city of Delhi from the “rats” to “stray puppies”.

What she lacked in local flavor and old-world charm she more than made up for with her modern understanding, her knowledge of the law and her involvement with Gender Rights Groups (she had even spoken at two conferences). (Roy 38)

Another queer relation between the oppressed groups is the relation between the two characters of the novel. These characters are of Anjum and Saeeda who belong to the same oppressed group however Saeeda is the reason for Anjum to leave Khwabgah and to find another place to survive. The word Khwabgah to me gives an idea of a place where many people come for the realization of their dreams where they can be what they want to be. Now this place is no more an ideal place for Anjum as gradually Saeeda takes her place. Anjum has no other option except to leave that place and find another one. Greta Gaard in her essay has pointed out how the unnecessary development and modernization affects the nature negatively which can be traced through the characters of Anjum and Saeeda in the form of nature/culture dichotomies (Gaard, *Toward a Queer Ecofeminism*). Culture changes with the passage of time as a result of development and modernization while nature is affected by the changing culture. Anjum never wants to alter her gender and desires as required by the society and continue to carry on with what nature has made her. She even leaves her home and moves to a new home so that she can fulfill her desires to be like the residents of Khwabgah. Even from the beginning of the story, Roy continuously relates Anjum to nature and compares the protagonist to nature by using similes and metaphors. Saeeda on the other hand lacked the qualities of Anjum and representing the modern culture which ultimately dominates the position of Anjum at Khwabgah and ultimately becomes a reason for abandoning that place by Anjum. Saeeda can speak English, has a modern understanding of law and is well-aware of the latest movement related to Gender Rights. Altogether she is an advocate of western ways of living and power hungry for the

controlling the charge of Khwabgah. Zainab is dependent on Anjum and as she sleeps, Anjum narrates her bedtime stories. Anjum acts like she is actual mother of Zainab because she finds her at the stairs of a mosque. Anjum “wanted to be a mother”, “to dress Zainab in a school uniform” and to send her to get school education like a mother wants for her children because “Zainab was Anjum’s only love”. (Roy 30) After some time Zainab begins “to call Anjum ‘Mummy’” (Roy 31) while she has other names for everyone else residing at their place. This motherly relation soon realizes that someone who does not like Anjum has put a “hex” on Zainab because she suffered with malaria, flu and viral fever. This directly involves the new resident Saeeda under suspicion as she can be the only one to be jealous of Anjum’s motherliness. As the plot goes on, a glimpse of glorious past can be seen by the mention of Akbar, Prince Salim, Anarkali and the grandeur of Urdu language in the plays performed at Khwabgah by its residents. Urdu has been mentioned as “dying language” and it is perceived that no one can ever speak Urdu in a manner as previously spoken by “Dilip Kumar” for his excellent diction and delivery. (Roy 39) This diminishing of the culture and glorious traditions is seen as an effect of Saeeda’s presence in the form of an advocate of the modernization and development which brings a new atmosphere where there is “a huge, tangled mess of exposed electrical cables” hanging over the streets like a fire hazard. Then Roy highlights the tragedy of World Trade Center and its effects on the other world especially the developing countries. Roy declares that the “hex” on Zainab is responsible for making the “whole world sick” which she believes has been casted by a “crafty bitch”, which pretends “to be as shocked as everybody else”.

‘This house, this household, has an unbroken history which is as old as this broken city,’ she said. These peeling walls, this leaking roof, this sunny courtyard- all this was once beautiful. (Roy 48)

Another important connection can be traced between the exploitation of “Hijras” and the culture in these lines where the writer of the novel mourns for the old days by narrating the history in a nostalgic manner. Roy has highlighted the rapid changes going on in the city of Delhi and laments for the past when Mughal Rule is seen in the city. She talks about the carpets and handicrafts imported from Iran, the mirror work, walled structures and beautiful mosques of Muslim architecture. It is “broken” now as Roy has indicated the events of Babri

Mosque and the ruins of Muslim architecture. This aspect of modernization and development has been discussed in the Gaard's essay which explains how different groups present in its sphere can be exploited. One of these oppressed groups is the Muslim community of India while the other is the transgender community because once it was enjoying a better life within the Mughal palace. Roy points out the fact that the residents of Khwabgah "are not just any Hijras from any place" but "are the Hijras of Shahjahanabad". The Mughal rulers of that era do not marginalize this community but trusted them for allowing them to live in the palace and to serve their families. They are allowed to move in the palace as they wish to. Those "mighty emperor and their queens" who provide this freedom to the transgender community are no more but their history can be traced through the ruins of the Red Fort.

Arundhati Roy explains the war-torn atmosphere of Kashmir in a manner due to which the oppressed and the oppressor are clearly identified. On one hand she talks about the military occupation and on the other hand she reminds the reader of the scenic beauty of the valley. She uses metaphorical language and talks of martyrdom as if it travels along the "moonlit mountain passes manned by soldiers". The reader gets to know about the natural treasures of Kashmir through Roy's blend of diction in the passage. Kashmir is a valley which has ample water resources in the form of biggest glaciers outside the poles and irrigates land in the regions of India and Pakistan. She intentionally uses expressions "stony paths", "cliffs of ice", "vast glaciers" and "high meadows so as to make the people aware of this oppressed region and the cause of its people. Even the names of the trees and fruits are revealed to the reader to abreast him of the natural treasures of Kashmir which are now perceived as "creeping mist" by the writer. Roy plays with the readers of her novel through the art of storytelling and leaving it for the reader to find about the truths of the injustices mentioned. She frequently relates the diction of natural and rural life with the language of violence. She tells about the professions of the local people and that how they are dependent on nature in the form of farmers, carpenters, weavers and shepherds. Along with the poor class of Kashmir, she also mentions the educated class such as doctors and engineers who still have to survive in a war-torn region and to witness the killings of innocent Kashmiris. She does not hesitate to tell that Kashmir is known for "the most beautiful carpets" and "finest shawls" which have been produced by these industrious people of Kashmir. She questions

the military occupation of the area which has put extra burden on the natural resources as it is only the rights of the inhabitants of the valley who are more close to the nature than those who have “fingers on the smooth barrels of kalashnikovs.”

The novel brings to the people some factual information from the early industrialization period of India by the mention of the Bhopal gas disaster which was caused by the leakage of poisonous gases. This disaster takes death of more than three thousand people and brings abnormalities to a very large number of people residing in that area. It is so far the biggest industrial disaster known to the world. Roy highlights the sufferings of these people caused by the famous Union Carbide Corporation which has its headquarters in Texas, US. The foreign influence and evidences of neo-colonialism can be found through the textual information provided by Roy in her novel. The Indian company has some local investors too who have almost half the shares in it which can be identified as the oppressor elite ruling class of the Indian society.

Roy talks about the “Photographs of deformed babies, misshapen aborted foetuses in bottles of formaldehyde and the thousands who had been killed, maimed and blinded in the gas leak were strung up like macabre bunting on the railings.” (Roy 111) The oppressed of this disaster is the lower working class of the Indian society including women and humanity at a larger paradigm. If it has so disastrous effects on the human life then it is obviously harmful for the animal and plant life of the region as well. In this case, the nature and humanity are both exploited to such an extent that even the generations have to face the consequences. It has been recorded in the news archives that Warren Anderson who is the CEO of the company escapes and lives the rest of his life outside India while escaping from India’s court hearings. Indians who are the shareholder in the company are arrested and fined but released on bail later on. These are the oppressors including the CEO who are involved in the oppression, of people, women and nature.

Roy tells the readers that Karren Warren who is the CEO of the company has his US origins but operating his business in India which is a form of imperialism where exploitation of the natives can be clearly seen. He doesn’t even care about the natives at all and it can be seen when he arrives at the Delhi airport and the journalists surround him for questioning and he just tells them that he doesn’t know anything yet and ends the questioning session by

looking at the camera and saying “Hi Mom!” (Roy 111) This kind of easy attitude doesn’t even suit ethically for a responsible representative of a company accused for such a disaster. This indicates the influence foreign interests on the natural reserves of the India. The India ruling class also supports the narrative of development and industrialization without even thinking of sustainable development so that humanity and nature can be seen from such disastrous effects.

The people of affected region protest at the pavement by doing hunger strikes and staying there for weeks but no one is there to resolve their issues. The helpless people walk hundreds of kilometers from their chemically poisoned native area so as to seek refuge in healthy and natural shelter. The next part of this incident highlight another oppressor involved in the exploitation of these people. Roy accuses the media and journalists for not giving these people proper coverage and supporting the narrative of the Indian ruling class. The oppressors do not want the world to know about the incident and ignore the affected people of the Bhopal disaster. The feminist part of the Bhopal disaster is also highlighted by Roy through the sufferings of the women of the area. Roy explains the exploitation of motherhood by narrating the stories of “Some of the Mothers, like some of the Bhopal gas leak victims” who are suffering by the disastrous effects of the incident (Roy 115)

The character of Gulabiya is a perfect manifestation of Roy’s idea of Development narrative as a disaster for nature. (Roy 113) Gulabyia’s brother works as tour guide at dam-site where his job is to show people the dam and explain its functions and benefits. His mother works as a sweeper at the residence of the engineer supervising the dam facility. She has to steel mangoes from the trees of that residence. Now she is living in a tin hut which is hot in summer and cold in winters. The interesting part over here is that once this part has been Gulabiya’s village where there are crocodiles and fish alongside the fields used by the villagers to cultivate crops. Her mother works in the same house where she herself has lived in the past. The dam construction has taken away their home, life, nature and put them into a situation is which is difficult to survive as compared to the past inherited by their forefathers.

4.3 Exploitation of a Transgender Muslim Protagonist

A queer ecofeminist analysis ensures that an equal emphasis is laid upon all the oppressed groups. Among these oppressed groups the exploitation of queers is one of the major concerns of such analysis. Anjum is the protagonist of the novel who is born as a Muslim by the name of Aftab but later on, the social pressure dominates his life and he is ultimately rejected by his family as well as the society. Throughout the novel, the sufferings of Anjum have been discussed with an equal emphasis on all the other social evils residing in the heterogeneous culture of India and its surroundings. Anjum lives in “the graveyard like a tree”. In the morning she sees “the crows off” and at dusk she welcomes “the bats home.” (Roy 3)

The novel starts with a title questioning the destination of the “old birds” at the time of their departure from this world. Roy introduces the protagonist by using a simile and concludes it by using a metaphor. Both devices are used to compare and contrast the protagonist with a tree. The imagery used over here is related to the nature and its exploitation. Both Anjum and nature are presented as oppressed because Anjum “endured months of casual cruelty like a tree would”. The novel appears to the reader as an ecofeminist discourse right from the beginning. Roy looks aware of the ecofeminist perspective of highlighting the oppression of women along with ecology. In fact, she sees the tree and Anjum as oppressed by the society and further explains that both do not bother to care for the cruelty and insults they are subjected to. Instead she finds relief in “the music of her rustling leaves”.

Aftab is the name given to Anjum by her parents as they were longing for a boy and only her mother knew that he was not actually a boy. Her mother’s love is evident of the fact that she does not want others to know the reality. She accepts her child as a blessing but the society is not willing to approve Aftab’s survival. This continues for many years until Aftab gets his basic Islamic education and music classes from Ustad Hameed Khan. Aftab has his own talents. Although he is better than an average child in learning but “his real gift” is “music”. He enjoys his music classes and amuses the people at the same time. It is encouraging and motivating for him in the beginning but as the times passes it becomes

difficult for him to carry on with his interests. It becomes impossible for Aftab to endure the teasing and stops going to his music classes. (Roy 12)

Aftab is a good musician and he is appreciated by the audience and his teacher but the teasing becomes a hurdle in his direction. The children tease him because of the social construction of not seeing him as normal or in other words rejecting him. This marginalization puts an end to his right of education at school. Now there is no sign for his prosperous life and miseries of a deprived life are waiting ahead. Now is the time when his quest for identity begins.

Aftab's parents try their best to consult doctors and to find a solution as the society does not allow such children to live with their parents, family and relatives and it is considered as a shame to foster a transgender among the people. The doctor explains that it can be resolved physically but the "erotic" part of his personality cannot be altered as Greta Gaard explains in her explanation of Queer Ecofeminism. (Gaard) This erotic is the desire of sexuality and is not influenced by any psychological or cultural force, which is the evidence of queers as biologically inclined towards homosexuality. Aftab's father thinks about the surgery of his son once he has enough money for that but quickly starts his effort of inculcating manliness in his son's personality. Aftab is not at all entertained by the heroic stories of Chengiz Khan other than Khan's love for his wife. He wishes if he is loved by someone in a same manner. It tells us that Aftab's erotic is not changed by culture instead it grows day by day. He is attracted by the appearance of another transgender as "he wanted to be her". (Roy 18)

4.4 People vs. Empire and the Use of Political Narratives

The exploitation of people indicated by Roy in her novel is not just limited to the people of India but also refers to its surrounding including India and Pakistan which can be definitely termed as a humanitarian effort by setting aside the sphere of nationalism. She talks about the popular brand of “Rooh Afza” which was prepared by a “Hakim” using natural herb and fruits. Its name is of Persian origin meaning “Elixir of the Soul” and an effective medicine for the scorching heat of the region. It is adopted by the people readily and becomes a famous summer drink. Now this is an indigenous product produced by a native man, which becomes a successful product of the market for more than forty years. Its branches expand to Pakistan and Bangladesh after their separation. While mentioning this product, Roy talks of Iran, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan because it rules the market of all these countries.

But eventually, the Elixir of Soul that had survived wars and the bloody birth of three new countries was, like the most things in the world, trumped by Coca-Cola. (Roy 13)

The influence of foreign businesses is presented by Roy in the first chapter which highlights the impact of Western capitalism in this region. Moreover, it is also indicated that there are many other products than this one which have suffered a similar fate due to the foreign influence. Roy always tries to indicate the helplessness of the indigenous people against the developments based on Western ideologies propagated for the benefit of the foreign powers.

A commercial airliner has crashed into a tall building. Half of it still protruded out, hanging in mid-air like a precarious, broken toy. In moments, a second plane crashed into a second building and turned into a ball of fire. (Roy 40)

Roy’s novel narrates the world politics in an interesting way by highlighting the effects of the tragedy on the Asian countries. The author continues the story of the tragedy by confirming that it is not a film but it is actually happening in a “city call New York”. She further highlights the migration of the Afghan refugees to India and many other countries as they are leaving their country for their survival. America has declared War on Terror and sending its military to Afghanistan. Roy tries to bring the miseries of these poor people to

the readers and explain that it had a great impact on the politics of India and its surroundings. The airplanes crashed into the building of New York “came as a boom to many in India too” apart from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Muslims of India are now compared to “the Jews of Germany” as “hostility towards the Muslims grew”. The politics of India changes as the aggression of America continues against the Muslims of Afghanistan. Roy has pointed out the exploitation of Muslims not only in Afghanistan but also in India. The Muslims of India are marginalized in the Indian society and the politicians enforce this marginalization by giving statements based on their prejudice. They also use the situation to strengthen their vote bank by saying in a poetic manner that “The Musalman, He doesn’t like the other” and “His faith he wants to spread through Terror”. Further, it has been clearly explained in the speech of one of the Indian politicians that India can also suffer a similar fate that has been suffered by the people of New York. Then the politician goes on to acquire the legislation he wishes to exist by justifying the need of new anti-terrorism laws as a precautionary measure. (Roy 42) She has also indicated the movement for declaring India as a Hindu Republic State and a Hindu extremist authority in India. Religion is used here to exploit the rights of people. Greta Gaard has explained in her novel that history witnesses the exploitation of people by the Christian figures who were the representatives of Christian God. Knight Templars have fought and slain many people for the accumulation of wealth in the name of the institution of Church. An act of witchcraft is passed before the renaissance and thousands of people are executed so that their property can be confiscated and used by the authorities for their own interests. (Gaard)

The reminders of history presented by Greta Gaard in her essay and the fictional picture presented by Roy in her novel makes us to ponder upon the relationship of the events in the light of the Queer-ecofeminism theory. It is therefore very easy to indicate that the oppressors are male and have used religion to enforce the vices of prejudice, classism, and racism in the society just for the sake of their own interests. It has been further explained by Roy in her novel that Anjum does not listen to the news before this political change but now she watches news and reads newspaper in a routine.

The police arrested hundreds of Muslims-all auxiliary Pakistanis from their point of view- from the area around the railway station under the new terrorism law and threw them into the prison. (Roy 44)

Roy replicates the conditions in her novel where religion is used or exploited for the accumulation of political interests or for the gain of authority as indicated by Greta Gard in her essay. The issue of Babri mosque is discussed when the famous Hindu-Muslim riots break out. Many innocent people become the victim of the violent and aggressive clashes. It is the same time when the ministers are “up for re-election” and use this situation by paying tribute to the Hindus killed in the riots and showing ignorance towards the Muslim victims which projects the need of Hindu vote bank for the elections. The government announces that any force used against the government institutions will be dealt with an equal and opposite reaction however the reaction is opposite but not equal because excessive brutality was done to the Muslims. Even the government gives a loose hand to the Hindu miscreants who are “armed with swords”, have “stockpiles of gas cylinders” and “cadastral lists of Muslim homes, businesses and shops”. (Roy 45) This approach of the Indian politicians towards the Indian Muslims is highly prejudiced and a violation of humanitarian ethics. The misuse of authority by the government against the people of a minority community has been expressed by the writer in the novel. The police deny entering the reports of the murder cases by giving technical excuses for an intentional delay. It has been revealed by Roy that the police are “often the parts of mobs” (Roy 45) and the dead bodies of the victims are unidentifiable after the completion of job by the mobs. The subjugation of the Muslim community in India to such an extent is indicated by Arundhati Roy due to which one can get an idea of the local political picture in India which is totally based on the use of Hinduism as a tool of oppression.

The important point to be noted over here is that even the Hindu religious teachings do not allow the “Hijras” to be mistreated because they have a respectable place in the Hindu mythology. Roy explains the situation by Guria’s conversation with Kulsoom Bi that “Hijras” do not leave Sita and Ram when their people are told to go back and wait for their return. All the other followers left them and go back but the “Hijras waited faithfully” for

Ram “at the edge of the forest for the whole fourteen years”. Even this faithfulness by the Hijra community cannot be a reason of their acceptance in the Hindu dominated society.

Roy has given a voice to the transgender people of India by pointing out their oppression by the society and compels the readers to think about the lives of this poor class who are continuously rejected by the society even in the present days of knowledge and awareness. She invokes the readers to ask themselves about the living conditions of this oppressed class, their lifestyle with a meager income and the humiliation faced by them in the society. Roy fulfills the requirement of Greta Gaard’s ecofeminism perspective in her written expression by raising support for the queers like a queer ecofeminist writer or an activist. It cannot be denied that Roy is one of the famous activists of India and has raised voice for many communities including Adivasis, Kashmiris and Muslims in her essays and novels.

The old man’s rustic rhetoric and early aphorisms trended on Twitter and swamped Facebook. TV cameras couldn’t get enough of him. Retired bureaucrats, policemen and army officers joined in. The crowd grew. (Roy 102)

According to the theatrical framework of Greta Gaard’s queer ecofeminism, not only the oppressed but the oppressors are also identified. Roy has presented the picture of these oppressors very clearly. They are a group of politicians, industrialists, bureaucrats and the media who are working together to ensure the expansion and prosperity of their own businesses and it has nothing to do with a common man of India. The old man who delivers the speech is a politician who uses the traditional method of the politicians to justify and cover the injustices done by him. All the other groups support and contribute to his discourse using the electronic media. These oppressors are connected to each other in a way that they help and support each other’s discourses and ideologies which are then used as a tool to exploit the rights of the oppressed groups as shown by Arundhati Roy in her novel.

Arundhati Roy brings the attention of the readers towards corrupt politics where she mentions the protest of the honest people of India demanding for their rights and the end of corruption from the society. The honest people belong to almost all the professions and classes but they are in negligible number as compared to the rest of the corrupt society of India. Roy suddenly shifts her focus from the great politicians to the Muslims of India who

have been presented in the novel as one of the oppressed groups. When the Muslims ask for their rights in India, the politicians give them replies in the form of slogans based on their prejudice, hatred and Hindu nationalist ideologies such as “Doodh maangoey to Kheer dengey! Kashmir mangoey to chiir dengey!” (Roy 103)

Roy suddenly shifts her center of attention to the deprived Muslims of India who have been suffering the exploitation projected by the Hindu authorities for a very long time which even contributes to the separation of the sub-continent. This is connected with the theory applied in this research as Greta Gaard has pointed out in her essay that religion is sometimes used to enforce strict and unavoidable policies leading to the exploitation of the people. (Gaard) Those who are in power just consider their own interests and use the religious discourse for their benefit. The politician described by Roy in the novel appears to have support of the Hindu ideologies against the Muslims asking for their rights. According to Greta Gaard, the rhetoric of religion is paired with other existing ideologies so as to ensure the imperial authority of the oppressors.

In her essay, Gaard examines how the rhetoric of Christianity has been utilized for the sanction of oppression upon many groups like women, indigenous cultures, animals, the natural world and the queers. Even before Christianity, other religions were used to oppress women by practices such as worshipping “male god” Although there are some religions seen in the history supporting matrifocal structure but was later on shifted to patriarchal structure. This shift from the matrifocal to patriarchal structure has allowed or permitted the subjugation of women, nature and other groups. The patriarchal society is largely based on the ideologies of Christianity which have been altered according to the desires of those in power at different times. (Gaard)

“The Kashmir we have irrigated with our blood, that Kashmir is ours.” (Roy 174) Roy has expressed the sufferings of the Muslims of Kashmir at the hands of brutal forces of governmental authority. The Muslims protest but they are tortured and sometimes assassinated as there are many instances where the “security forces fired at the crowds”. (Roy 173) Such tyranny on the basis of religion cannot be allowed and directly comes under the umbrella of Gaard’s theory of Queer-Ecofeminism. The rapes of Kashmiri women, environmental injustice of India and their relation with Anjum have all been connected to

each other at a larger paradigm in Roy's novel. Its analysis further reveals that many of injustices presented in the novel are in some way connected to the actual injustices recorded in the history. Gaard has explained in her theoretical essay that the history has seen Christianity to be involved as tool by the Roman Empire in order to justify the social evils projected upon the people of other nations for the expansion of Empire. Further the Romans are also known for incorporating other beliefs into the Christian rhetoric so as to mold their holy ideologies on the patterns of their own interest. Her idea can be traced in Roy's novel where the Kashmiris and the ecology of Kashmir are exploited for the reasons totally based on politics, religious prejudice and nationalism. Gaard refers to the colonization of America and the reasons provided by the rulers and explorers of that time to the common public. (Gaard) The acts of homosexuality present in the Red Indian society provided the adventurers as an excuse to enter the lands of those native people. There are numerous reasons for colonizing different parts of the world by the colonizers of that time. Their reasons are even strong enough to legalize the accumulation of land, wealth, power and slavery. A similar case can be seen in the novel where Kashmir has not been shown as a part of India and people are still living under the oppression of power hungry class of India. The power group has turned the beautiful valleys of Kashmir into a war zone and Muslims are oppressed through Hindu extremist ideologies with a combined support of the other existing ideologies of the authoritative people in the country.

The ADC who answered the phone told me that the caller had given his name as Major Amrik Singh and had asked for me not just by designation but, unusually, also by name – Biplab Dasgupta, Deputy Station Head, India Bravo (radio code in Kashmir for the Intelligence Bureau). (Roy 174)

While describing an event of Kashmir, Roy's writing style suddenly shifts into a pure military diction. She uses the abbreviation of ADC which refers to Aide-de-comp which is a word borrowed from French language. This term is used for a person who is an assistant to high ranking officials to help them manage their daily affairs. There are many other words as well like "designation", "major", "station" "Bravo", "radio", "code" and "intelligence". This tells us that Roy has firsthand experiences of Kashmir and military presence in the area without which one cannot present a perfect imagery of militarized setup. At other occasions

in the plot, Roy gives a colloquial diction but when it comes to Kashmir, she frequently uses formal military language so as to highlight the domination of military in the area. She highlights the struggle by Kashmiri people for their rights. When these people ask for their rights, they are exposed to brutal punishments and most of the time these are death warrants. She presents the scene of a funeral where thousands of people gather to attend it after the killings of nineteen people including a child whose dead “body” has been “stolen” so as to avoid the registration of a police report. She considers such a scene as very sensitive because this huge gathering of the oppressed people can be a victim of another “massacre” on the hands of “security forces”. Through her novel, she gives voice to the Kashmiris “calling for freedom: Azadi! Azadi! Azadi! On and on and on.”

Arundhati Roy knows the art of telling about the social injustices caused by the military occupation of Kashmir by the Indian government in a journalistic manner. Her characters narrate the contents of a journalist’s file that has listed the stories of injustice suffered by the people of Kashmir within it. She describes an event where the special task force raided for a suspect who turned out to be an innocent Kashmiri native. The STF force shows its training and experience by keeping themselves safe from the possible fire and by sending two civilians in a manhole to assess if the suspect is armed or not. This kind of injustice is a violation of the basic human rights of the Kashmiri people as it questions the reason of the existence of special task force which was at least not there to protect the lives of Kashmiris but for a special unknown purpose. Roy leaves this unknown purpose for the reader of the novel to decide about the sufferings of the people of Kashmir. The civilians who are forced to have a look on the suspect claim that the man was not an “Afghan” but a “Kashmiri” which makes the reader to ponder upon the activities of Indian Army in the beautiful green valley. It definitely appears unethical for a government run department to act like this but this is not enough. The story becomes more interesting when it is revealed that the suspect in the manhole is already died and tied with ropes which proves his innocence otherwise questions the system of law and order for not bringing him to the courts. The witnesses are even forced to give false account of the incident so as to continue with the brutalities against the local people. Now the witnesses feel bad to what they have done to their Kashmir brother in order to save their own lives. This is actually a poor laborer of Bandipora who is

“cornered in a public toilet” by the special task force which claims its purpose to maintain peace for the civilians.

Their officer asked us to sign a paper. If we hadn't they would have killed us. If we hadn't signed they would have killed us. We signed as witnesses to an encounter in which the STF had tracked down and killed a dreaded Afghan terrorist who was cornered in a public toilet in Nawab Bazaar. It was in the news. (Roy 193)

Further it is revealed that the news broadcasts the incident as it is intended by the authorities and people are once more deprived of hearing to the facts. Roy also highlights the exploitation of the journalists who are threatened and forced to tell lies through the media as the authorities want to let the people know.

The unethical activities of Major Amrik Singh are enough evidence in Roy's novel to give a picture of the brutalities and injustices of the Indian army's occupation of the Muslim land. Amrik Singh is known to the public for the allegations of killing famous Kashmiri human rights lawyer Jalib Qadri. It is very interesting in Roy's novel that she has actually presented some of the real events in her novel by camouflaging those in the form of fiction. Amrik Singh is a character in the novel that is known for his cunning activities while violating the rights of Kashmiri people. In this exploitation of the Kashmiri people, Indian government is justifying the military occupation in a humanitarian tone just like the “Americans are currently lecturing the Vietnamese about human rights.” (Roy 194) She explains that it is possible to exploit rights of a community or a nation even by a superpower and then justifying all that exploitation as the Americans usually do wherever they test their weapons of destruction. The rogue elements are there in every government. Amrik Singh was known as “spotter” for his ability to track down the innocent Kashmiris and declaring them as terrorist for his own fame and for the cause of the “upper-caste, upper-class oppressor” (Roy 195) of India. This army officer however denies the allegations of the murder of Jalib Qadri who is a lawyer for the human rights in Kashmir. Amrik Singh claims that he has been posted there in Kashmir and he knows that a Kashmiri human rights worker has been killed during his tenure. He also claims that is not him who is involved in his assassination but the Kashmir Police and Indian Government is putting this blame on him. His claim is there in his testimony when he finds asylum in America. He further reveals that

he can be subjected to brutal torture if he returns to the “Government of India” and therefore seeks asylum in America. Amrik Singh settles in America with his family but a few years later, he committed suicide along with his family including children. This event described by Roy has great similarity with the life events of an actual Indian Army officer Major Avtar Singh. The initial letters of the names are the same however Arundhati Roy has to fictionalize the other letters so as to survive in the Indian society dominated by power hungry upper class.

Two days after former Indian army officer Major Avtar Singh ended his life after killing his wife and two children in their California home, questions continue to surround the man who might be knowing too much. (Shuja-ul-Haq)

These lines are enough evidence to claim that Arundhati Roy is giving voice to the actual incidents occurred in the Indian occupied Kashmir involving the exploitation of the Kashmiri people. This is accomplished by the upper and ruling class of India by the use of federal institutions such as military and police. The politicians seek fame by propagating false narratives in order to fulfill their own desires of power and money. Major Avtar Singh has almost the same life story as compared to the character of Major Amrik Singh. It is same in the case of Kashmiri lawyer Jalil Andrabi and the character of Jalib Qadri presented by the writer. This gives a sense that Arundhati Roy is giving the actual picture of the region to her readers and the incidents mentioned by her have close affinity to reality in the form of fiction just as it can be seen in the novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende.

Another important event of the plot the novel has been declared as April Fool’s Day 2008. The year mentioned refers to an actual event happened in the Bandipora sector of Kashmir. Roy mocks at the deception of the authorities in Kashmir when they say that militants have died in crackdown but the police do not have any information of the incident. This explains that whatever happening in Kashmir is based on lies and deception because the public is unaware of the reality. The media is controlled by the oppressive authorities and the news only promotes the narrative of the oppressive forces. Wular Lake is known for its natural beauty in Kashmir where the army takes twenty one children on a picnic in a navy boat for an operation known as “Operation Good Will”. The boat somehow overturns and the children are drowned in the beautiful lake however the navy soldiers safely swam out to

the bank. Upon hearing the news of this unfortunate incident, the parents of the innocent children protest against the negligence of the army and navy. The parents are shot at for their protest and the “luckier ones died” (Roy 180). The information provided in the novel by Roy actually refers to a true incident which happened in Kashmir and can be found in the news archives of 2006. The Wular Lake is patrolled by the navy soldiers according to the news article and has witnessed the tragic incident of the death of children due to the negligence of soldiers. (Bedi) It has been clearly mentioned in the news article that the incident happens due to the negligence because the boats cannot endure the weight of so many children who are having a joy ride supervised by the navy. This proves that Roy writes for the truth to be exposed so that the people can be aware of their exploitation by the oppressed powers in India.

The Kashmiri-English alphabets in the novel tell the readers a story which is left for him to comprehend. All the alphabetic letters have a number of words presenting the story of burning Kashmir valley due to the brutalities of the Indian ruling upper class. Some of the letters present the imagery of the weapons and military occupation while other on the other hand presents the miseries of the innocent and voiceless Kashmiri people. There is not even a single alphabet in this dictionary which does not provide us with a hint of the Indian oppression subjected to the people of Kashmir. The people of the valley are experiencing brutality and tyranny on and on during the so called search operations and just on the basis of suspicion.

Roy continues to narrate a number of incidents where innocent people are subjected to brutality and torture. Most of them lose their lives after such cruelty. The writer clearly tells the world that the people of Kashmir are massacred without any mercy. Later on, media reports it as it is desirous to be informed to the public by the oppressors.

There are certain instances in the novel which provide an insight to the factual happenings of Occupied Kashmir. “In Kashmir when we wake up and say ‘Good Morning’ what we really mean is ‘Good Mourning’”. (Roy 279) It is evident from the text of the novel that Roy gives a clear and accurate picture of Kashmir where there is no peace even for a single day. To write about such brutal facts, a writer requires courage otherwise it is not possible to bring the miseries of Kashmir to the outside world.

Roy has presented the concept of colonization of Kashmir by India where she has clearly identified the oppressors as “cold soldiers from a warm climate”. They are outsiders and still exercising their powers on the natives of Kashmir. They fill up the prisons with the local people. There are almost no jobs left for the people in Kashmir. People are therefore becoming “poorer” and “hungrier” as the brutalities of the outsiders continue to go on like this. The concept of othering has been clearly presented in the novel. The only job left for the people of Kashmir is to dig the grave of their fellow Kashmiris with “no extra pay for overtime or nightshifts”. (Roy 315)

Dr Azad Bhartiya is a character in the novel which exposes the American influence on the Indian society through his “News & Views”. His original name is Inder Y. Kumar but he himself assigns him the name of Azad Bhartiya. The name represents his personality that he belongs to India but does not accept any kind of imperialism. He claims that Bharat is not independent and is under the influence of American imperialism or neo-colonialism. Neocolonialism is a word coined by Kwame Nkrumah who has served as Ghana’s president and it refers to the indirect control of a nation by external powers through indirect means. He criticizes the American Army officers by calling them “dogs” who can not only sniff bombs and explosives but also have the ability to “eat with knives and forks sitting at a table.” (Roy 127) He questions his own status as an Indian citizen living on the footpath while the “American dogs” are resting in a luxurious hotel in his country. He criticizes the ideology of capitalism which he believes is the ultimate cause of the chaos in India. Americans have influenced the Indian society to such an extent that not only their ways of living are disturbed, they are also under constant “surveillance by the American Government”. Their presence in India is wrongly justified through many reasons such as the frequent visits of the American president. Azad Bhartiya claims that all the good governments of the world are under the threat by the American Government. He reveals that the “Indian TV channels” are being “funded by Americans”. They embark upon different adventures in India which are of course supported by the foreign intelligence agencies. Neo-colonialism in India is exposed by Roy through this character in her novel. He also talks about the Bhopal Union Carbide gas accident which has its links with the foreign involvement. Azad Bhartiya has his sympathies for the victims of the incident but claims that Americans do nothing except for watching the Indians die.

The Gas –Leak Company has a new name now, Dow Chemicals. But these poor people who were destroyed by them, can they buy new lungs, new eyes? They have to manage with their same old organs, which were poisoned so many years ago. But nobody cares. These dogs just sit there in the Meridian Hotel windowsill and watch us die. (Roy 130)

Azad Bhartiya also reveals the ideas of caste discrimination in the Hindu religion which is one of the major causes of the exploitation of the Indian people. He is of the view that the caste system in the Hindu ideology is a political agenda which is used to oppress the common people by the elite class of India. He talks about Christianity, Buddhism and Islam and appreciates that there is no concept of class difference found in the teachings of these religions. He believes only Hinduism is a religion which propagates and supports the class difference in the society. Even when he belongs to the Hindu community, he renounces his faith in the teachings of Hinduism for this unacceptable ideology. He tells the readers that he is under observation by the foreign intelligence agencies for his opposing views to the ideology of capitalism. He thinks that “Capitalism is like poisoned honey” and “people swarm to it like bees”. Throughout his views, he exposes the American influence upon the Indian society which is continuously endangering the autonomy of India.

The day when Azad Bhartiya receives a letter at Jannat guest house, refers to the revelation of another oppressed group in the Central India. The letter is about the girl who has been recently abandoned by her mother and adopted by Anjum so as to fulfill her motherly instinct. This oppressed group is known as Adivasis who have been struggling for their survival in their own land for a very long time. Before discussing further, it is important to understand the term Adivasis. The word Adivasis means the indigenous people of India or the first people of India. (S. Faizi & Priya K. Nai) Roy gives voice to this oppressed group as well by thus fulfilling the tasks of an ecofeminist writer by emphasizing on all the oppressed groups of India. The Adivasis are not known to even Indian people because the Indian government does not want the people to know much about the oppressed groups of India. When Azad Bhartiya reads the letter at Jannat Guest House, he briefly tells about Adivasis because Anjum was not aware of this oppressed group even as a citizen of India. The first information revealed in the letter tells us that it comes from Bastar Forest which means the Adivasis are in close contact with the nature. (Roy 416) It is further

revealed in the letter that Adivasis are fighting for their rights to live in the area that has been inherited by their fore fathers who have lived there for hundreds of years. Their land has been illegally occupied by the mining companies and industries and they have been fighting a guerilla war to get back their lands from the business tycoons but the Indian government is preventing them from getting their rights. If they are the natives of this area and living here for a very long time then no one has the right to take away their land without permission. It is revealed that the letter comes from Miss Jebeen's real mother. The brutality and tyranny faced by this group is obvious from the fact that the mother has been left with no other option except to abandon her child so that someone else can take care of her baby. It is impossible for the real mother to keep her baby alive while living in her own area. The mother of the Adivasi tribe is a Maoist as well which means that she is a supporter of communist ideology.

I am a Telugu woman and sorry I don't know Hindi. My English is not good also. Sorry for that. I am Revathy working as a full-timer with communist party of India (Maoist). When you will receive this letter I will be already killed. (Roy 417)

The letter explains that this letter will be sent by Comrade Suguna when he comes to know that Jebeen's real mother has been dead. The channel through which the letter arrives is kept a secret therefore it takes many days to reach the addressee. It tells us that the oppressed groups cannot even send postal messages to each other without being monitored or scrutinized. The mother tells through the letter that the girl born to her is not actually her daughter but the daughter of River and Forest.

In Telugu it means sunrise. I gave her this name because she was born in Dandakaranya forest during sunrise. When she was born I frankly felt hatred for her and I thought to kill her. I felt really she was not mine. Really if you see her story that I have written here, I am not her mother. River is her mother and Forest is her father". (Roy 418)

This shows that the Adivasis are close to the nature or in the other words protectors of nature while their land is procured by force to be given to those who do not care about the nature and exploiting the natural reserves through their capitalist ideology. Apart from this oppression of nature, she also tells about the women exploitation and gender violence. She

reveals that her mother is brutally tortured by her father before her birth and attempts to suicide while being pregnant. The boatman saves her from drowning but she is rejected from her in-laws for the rest of her life. Even when she is abandoned by her husband and in-laws and leaving with her grandfather, her husband comes occasionally at nights and tortures her. She wishes to become a lawyer in the future so that she can punish her father for his ill doings. This also indicates the situation of lawlessness in the society. All these circumstances lead her to incline towards communism so that she can get some peace of mind by avenging her oppressors.

We became a channel for party's communication all over Telangana. We would travel by bus to meetings carrying booklets and pamphlets. We would sing and dance at protest meetings. I read Marx and Lenin and Mao and become convinced of Maoism. (Roy 420)

The letter also informs the reader about the Operation Green Hunt which is conducted against the Naxalites or the Maoists in five states of India. (Sethi) All the formations of military and air force participate in this operation with a goal to put an end to the communist party of India. It is also important to mention here that Roy has her firsthand experience of the Maoists as she has not only raised voice for them but also has also stayed with them for a number of months.

Operation Green Hunt is announced by the Government. War against People. Thousands of police and paramilitary are in the forest. Killing Adivasis, burning villages. No adivasi can stay in her house or their village. (Roy 421)

Forests are filled up by the forces authorized by the Indian governments against the native people of these states to give up their land for the development and industrialization. People are killed and villages are burnt down. They raid and take with them eatables as well as other goods. Even chicken and goats are not spared which means that the violence has affected the animals as well. Exploiting the people and nature to such an extent cannot be justified at all. Their goal is to cut down the forest and develop it for their capitalist interests. Adivasis cannot allow this due to their respect and dependence on nature. They do not want to give up their land for steel industry and mining industry.

They sleep in the forest outside at night because at night police come, hundred, two hundred, sometimes five hundred police. They take everything, burn everything, steal everything. Chickens, goats, money. They want adivasi people to vacate forest so that they can make a steel township and mining. (Roy 421)

People are subjected to violence through illegal arrests. Women are subjected to extreme kinds of insult. Schools of the area have been turned into police camps. Women are tortured and then raped. “This is the experience of so many women in the forest.” (Roy 423) The letter describing these oppressions has all the sentences mentioned in the past tense except for this one which indicates that such events are still going on in the Adivasi Villages and are not informed through media.

4.5 Environmental Injustice

According to Greta Gaard, the basic structure of ecofeminism is based upon the idea that the oppressions related to race, class, gender, sexuality are enforced by the same authority which projects oppression upon nature. (Gaard 1) This idea has been further discussed in her theory of Queer Ecofeminism by just adding the word queer to the list of injustices mentioned earlier. She has further explained that no attempt can be made successful if not an equal importance is given to the liberation of nature from all kinds of oppression. Gaard is not in the favor of unnecessary development and industrialization which sanctions the downfall of nature and animals and supports sustainable development so as to create a balance and to save some nature for our future generations. It is therefore an important task of this research to highlight the oppressions faced by the nature in this novel. Arundhati Roy in her novel describes the industrialist and developing city of Delhi through such a diction which highlights the oppression of nature by the society which is seen to be involved in enforcing other injustices and evils as well. These injustices are mainly caused by the wrong social constructions propagated by the people in power. The third chapter of the novel starts with the mention of the nature seen in the city of Delhi.

All morning a hot wind had whipped through the city streets, driving sheets of grit, soda-bottle caps and beedi stubs before it, smacking them into car windscreens and cyclist’ eyes. (Roy)

It has been an old tradition of the writers of English language to talk about the blessings of nature and its destructive ability whether it is Shakespeare in King Lear or Coleridge in The Rime of Ancient Mariner. Roy has also used a similar expression of the destructive power of nature as if it is angry towards the industrialist and capitalist society of Delhi. It has always been observed in the English literature that the destruction of nature is followed by its blessings but it is not the case here because “people waited for a thunder-shower that always followed a dust storm, but it never came.” (Roy 95) It points out the abnormal behavior of the nature. Due to this unwanted development and industrialization enforced by the growing capitalism, today we are facing issues like global warming, melting of glaciers, destruction of ozone layer, air pollution and contamination of water. Still we are surviving on this earth but it is important to save the natural resources for our future generations also and still the surviving flower “Amaltas” blooms but whispers abuses to “hot brown sky”. Amaltas is natural green specie of the region. This is a clear evidence of nature being exploited through rapid industrialization which has even changed the color of sky. After using a powerful diction for the representation of nature, Roy suddenly switches to a diction expressing the miseries of nature when she describes Delhi’s appearance on “the concrete pavement, in a crib of litter: silver cigarette foil, a few plastic bags and empty packets of Uncle Chipps”.

A thin white horse tethered to the railing, a small dog with a mange, a concrete-coloured garden lizard, two palm, striped squirrels, who should have been asleep and, from her hidden perch, a she-spider with a swollen egg sac watched over her. (Roy 96)

Roy has beautifully pointed out the abnormalities of the nature as an emerging environmental crisis due to the rapid development in this capitalist world. It is a fact that environment or nature includes all the species present around us whether they are insects or reptiles and contribute to the nature cycle in some way. The word “railing” represents the urbanization and the absence of nature which has turned the horse “thin” and is related to the decline of animal health. In a society where humans are deprived of their basic rights as shown by Roy at several occasions, there can be of course no place for a healthy animal life. This is important because it has close connections with the human life as they are in contact with at least domestic animals and definitely one of the causes of decline in human health as

well. The famous theorist for animal rights claims that animals are undoubtedly “moral entities” that possess “inalienable rights, just as humans do” in *The Case for Animal Rights*. Their rights cannot be denied and a proper treatment must be provided to them to remain in an ethical sphere. Greta Gaard has also declared that an ecofeminist analysis requires an equal emphasis on all the groups under oppression and this brings in animal also. Roy has indicated the animals exposed to oppression in our developing societies. This parallel growth of the decline in animal rights and increase in development is interconnected with each other because this is causing abnormalities in the nature by not only creating geographical problems but biological problems also. This exploitation of environment refers to the issues of global warming, health of animals and humans, biological abnormalities in species and the pollution of our natural resources. Mange is a skin disease in animals especially in dogs which has been highlighted in the text. Lizards are reptiles which change their colours gradually according to the environment thus “concrete-coloured garden lizard” refers to the rapid urbanization and the use of concrete instead of the traditional methods of architecture. It has left its effects on even the lizards as expressed by Roy in the book. India is a home of a variety of species which are to some extent different from those of the rest of the world and therefore bear a different biological name. Three palm-striped squirrels are one of those famous species of India who have three parallel black stripes on their brownish fur starting from their head to tail. They are in close contact with the humans of urban areas and are even accustomed to accept food from the humans easily for they have a sacred importance in Hinduism. Having two and not three stripes on their body is definitely an abnormality found in them for being exposed to the urban areas. Even the egg sac of the spider is affected by this development and urbanization by the humans. The role of insects in the pollination process of the green species cannot be denied and thus the reduction of greenery is also affected due to it. Roy expresses all these abnormalities simultaneously in the same paragraph while giving an introduction to Delhi. This brings us the insight of the author about the present environmental crisis faced by us now-a-days. She describes India as a place where animals have undergone changes in the natural environment leading to their permanent abnormalities. She further goes on and compares Delhi to an animal who tries to sleep but unable to do so. The head of the animal looks like “Medusa skull” because of the appearance of flyover as snakes. The skin of the Delhi is wrinkled where each wrinkle is the

representation of a street in this developing city. She further connects this disease of unnecessary development to the politics as claims the slogans for fame of India as triggers of this political discourse.

The writer mocks at the so called development where the people are deprived of the natural food resources and force to adopt the modern food resources. Skyscrapers and big factories for producing metal are constructed at the places where the people have always seen green trees. Water from the river is processed and sold in the form of bottles. Big dams are constructed to light up the cities so as to decorate them like “Christmas trees”. This development is praised and appreciated by the people of urban areas because they appear to be under the spell of this magical political discourse of modern and advanced India. Roy then turns to the exploitation of those villagers who are forced to leave their native areas as their land has to be utilized for a better purpose from now onwards. The better purpose for their land can nothing else than the construction of dams and industrialization. India has the biggest steel production in the world which motivates the enchanted people of India to carry on with this magical development without even thinking of the people being displaced and the natural wildlife disturbed in the region. Roy fulfills the standards of an ecofeminist writer by addressing and connecting all the oppressed groups together. She then highlights the legal part of this oppression when the villagers approach the cities to live a new life after giving away their original one. These people are not allowed to enter the cities because of the legislation which bans the survival of the poor people who cannot afford these cities. It is evident from the eviction order of the judge that the poor class of the society is exploited by first snatching away their land and then being subjected to the brutal legislation. For the implementation of this legislative measure, the authorities deploy Special Forces in addition to the area police which make it difficult for “surplus people” to roam around freely.

On Independence Day they sold toy machine guns and tiny national flags mounted on stands that said Mera Bharat Mahan, My India is Great. The passengers looked out of their car windows and saw only the new apartment they planned to buy, the Jacuzzi they had just installed and the ink that was still wet on the sweetheart deal they had just closed. They were calm from their meditation classes and glowing from yoga practice. (Roy 100)

The writer has explained the promotion of political discourse among the people which is used so as to legalize the weapon of development for the accumulation of power. Behind the curtains of development, thousands of people are displaced and thrown out of the cities. This exploitation is then the reason of the exploitation of nature and environmental crisis in order to fulfill the desires of the rich political class. Roy has already pointed out the exploitation of poor people where dam construction becomes a cause of their miseries. This is the use of nationalism for the “meditation classes” of the people of India where they are enchanted with the spell of development and greatness. The miseries of the victims has described by the author in the “city’s industrial outskirts, in the miles of bright swamp tightly compacted with refuse and colorful plastic bags” where they are “re-settled”. She further elaborates the environment of the subjugated people by mentioning their “air” as “chemical” and their “water” as “poisonous”. This is a unique blend of the presentation of oppressed people and oppressed nature in Roy’s writing. Both oppressed groups are still together and supporting each other.

The surplus children slept, dreaming of yellow `dozers.. Above the smog and the mechanical hum of the city, the night was vast and beautiful. The sky was a forest of stars. Jet aircrafts darted about like slow, whinning comets. Some hovered, stacked ten deep over the smog-obscured Indira Ghandhi International Airport waiting to land. (Roy 101)

There is enough evidence in the novel to present the miseries of the exploited people who have sacrificed their living and happiness for the sake of development and for those who are living a far better life than them. These people live in marshes full of the city garbage where their children can only have scary dreams of yellow bulldozers which have ruined their life. Even at night the stars are not visible due to the thick smog as a result of industrialization and only a jet can be seen instead of a comet. This tells that Roy is indicating the dominance of development over nature. She laments the unnecessary development which is becoming a cause of the environmental crisis and uses the word “surplus children” to refer to the future generations so that they can enjoy the fruits of nature as well.

India is experiencing a great shift in its society due to the increasing tendency of modernization and industrialization in its cities. This has brought immense change on the

natural environment of the city as well. When Tilo explains her experience of the city while travelling around in the city bus, she witnesses the harms or oppression done to the nature because of the narrative of development. She sees the city waste piled up to a very long distance. Colorful plastic bags can be seen everywhere. The sky does not appear natural as it is not blue in color anymore. Its color has turned dark and kites can be seen everywhere. There are no mountains in the city of Delhi but Roy has used a typical natural diction for even mentioning the exploitation of nature in the city. The waste of the city has taken the form of mountain while the garbage trucks are moving around it. On her way along the river, Tilo does not see any wooden boat except for a boat made up of used plastic bottles and gallons. The flow of the river appears to be disturbed by the addition of viscous waste which changes its color to black.

Tilo also narrates that even the vegetation is also suffering for the cause of industrialization and development. The vegetables like cucumber and melons cannot be found in their pure form but in fact grown in an environment influenced by factory waste water containing poisonous chemicals. The writer highlights the injustices done to the species of nature especially those which are to be utilized by the humans. Definitely, it is impossible to ensure healthy nutrition of the people if such eatables consumed by the people are not pure. It can further lead to health problems in the society and abnormalities in the young generation which can be deprived by the pure fruits of nature in the future.

Zoo is the only place in a city where one can have a look on the wild animals of nature. These animals are not even provided with suitable and healthy conditions of living. Tilo narrates the living conditions of these animals which are affected by the unnecessary and disastrous development to a large extent. The gibbon at zoo has embraced the tree as if there is nothing else to share its miseries. The tree and gibbon are surrounded by litter and garbage thrown at them by the people just for their amusement. Even the cement trashcans around the cages which are placed over there for the litter are shaped as animals. The hippo is surviving in the water which has been polluted by plastic bottles and cigarettes thrown by the people.

Tilotama is a character, who in her letter mocks about the experimentation of animals for the development of science and technology. She believes that this is the cause of the

abnormalities in the domestic animals. Narratives such as feeding the people in poor countries are used to justify the use of growth genes on trout. The growth genes of different species are implanted in the other species including humans for the purpose of experimentation. To disturb the balance of nature is reducing its chance to be enjoyed by the future generations later on. The vegetation and the domestic animals are exploited by justifying it as “the path of genuine modernity.” (Roy 299)

Nature has always been presented by many writers as mighty and powerful. Shakespeare’s *King Lear* is a common example in English literature where the wrath of nature is undefeated and powerful. Roy informs the readers of such a revenge of nature in the natural and beautiful valley of Kashmir due to the flooding of River Jhelum. “When the Jhelum rose and breached its banks, the city disappeared. Whole housing colonies went underwater. Army camps, torture centers, hospitals, courthouses, police stations—all went down.” (Roy 264) The colonies of Srinagar are completely flooded due to the excessive water in the river. The army camps, torture cells, hospitals, court houses, police stations, which have been used as tools of the oppressive forces, have also been affected. Roy gives a picture of nature’s revenge upon the oppressors. At this time the people struggle themselves to get to the higher grounds so as to get a shelter. Even such disastrous incident is used by the Indian army to a fake show of their efforts for the troubled people of Kashmir. The Indian media also supports this narrative to show the world that Indian government is not exploiting the Kashmiris but helping them in this situation of river flooding. It is further revealed that even in such disastrous situation the Indian army is busy in its routine activities and by using the floods to their advantage so that no one comes to know about their secret operations going on in the valley. Politicians and media people are supporting each other’s narratives as Greta Gaard has explained in her essay. At the same time, the writer tells the reader about the carton of apples recovered from the floods according to Musa. Another carton contains a “hunting knife and nine mobile phones”. The third carton contains a “pistol” and a “few loose bullets”. Tilo narrates that the cartons of Kashmiri apples are exchanged with the cartons of ammunition.

Roy has indicated the natural geography and culture of the region not only limited to the Indian occupied Kashmir but also about the outskirts of the region which is also influenced by its military occupation. It is true that the northern parts of India and Pakistan have some similar culture with a very few differences and it extends to Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan. Roy has talked about this in her novel. She emphasizes on the natural connection between this regions especially related to the migratory wildlife of the area. She highly criticizes the adventures of Indian Army in Kashmir and brings the consequences of this to the readers. She exposes the luxurious life enjoyed by the elite class of the army in this beautiful nature where they have established their luxurious picnic spots. It is strange to read this in Roy's novel that Kashmiris who own this nature are deprived from this and their share of nature is enjoyed by the upper Indian class. The narrator in the novel narrates the life of a former army chief who escapes from the bloodshed in the cities of Kashmir and moves to a remote natural location in Kashmir along with his family to spend some time over there. During narrating the incident, she drags the reader's attention towards the wildlife of this region, especially rainbow trout, black bear, snow leopard, hangul (deer), Himalayan griffon vultures. (Roy 167) She talks about the experience of the army chief in tasting the rainbow trout and to spot these native endangered species. The army chief gets the privilege of witnessing the beauty of Himalayan forests, where Chinar trees change their colors and the meadow turn to coppery gold as the autumn arrives. Along with the senior army official, this privilege is also enjoyed by the ministers of India who of course support the same narrative as of Indian army towards Kashmir. The writer highlights the rights of these animals to live in this beautiful region and clearly claims that no one who is fighting over Kashmir in this region has the right more than this wildlife which is known around the world for its nativity in Kashmir. The animals mentioned by Roy are not the only biodiversity present in this area but they are important because they are endangered due to trend of modernization, military occupation and electric fencing of the Line of Control. These animals are migratory animals and change their habitat in different season not only for their survival but also for mating. Roy clearly identifies the presence of this wildlife in Kashmir, India, Pakistan, China and the surroundings areas.

She indicates the military presence in the high mountain passes which serve as a passage between different valleys not only for the army but people also. These high passes are the home of snow leopards which usually survive in the mountains above snowline except for the winter when they have to descend the mountains. Their survival and mating is under threat due to the excessive military forces present in the region and has put a stop to their reproduction as indicated by the wildlife organization in different reports and surveys recently conducted. All the other countries like Russia, Canada, Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan are working for the survival of these animals and to save them from extinction but India does not take any steps for the wildlife of Kashmir. Instead their large army has put an extra burden on the natural resources and has reduced the habitat of animals to a lesser area as compared to the past. This not only affects their migration but does not even provide them nutrition to survive. The electric fencing has put another threat for their survival of these beautiful animals. It has been reported by many journalists in India as well as international level. (AFP). It is successful to serve its purpose but it has become a tragedy for the migratory animals, which if saved from the human oppression become a victim of extreme weather, limited habitat and shortage of prey. The situation is disturbing because this has reduced the migration animals without which it is impossible to survive for them. This can lead to their extinction in the future.

Roy is well aware of the crimes and corruption conducted by the military in Kashmir and has highlighted this in the novel. This corruption not only involves the inhumane activities of the army in the populated place but also covers their oppression on the natural resources. The Gujjar Shepherds have been living in the area for hundreds of years and migrate as the season changes. They know the mountains very well and therefore used by the military for different purposes. The Indian army uses their mules, horses and men to supply their ammunition to the highlands where they have established their military posts. It provides the military to safely take their ammunition to the military establishments in the mountains without being easily noticed. This does not end here because the army occupation is also behind the deforestation of the area. Kashmiri carpenter are “press-ganged into service” for the cutting of trees and making furniture for the military in Kashmir.

Whole forests were disappearing. Sawmills had been set up inside army camps. Kashmiri labour and Kashmiri carpenters had been press-ganged into the service. The tucks in the army convoy that brought supplies up to Kashmir from Jammu everyday returned loaded with carved walnut-wood furniture. (Roy 170)

Walnut-wood is expensive and famous for its long-life but unfortunately this natural treasure is taken away from Kashmir by the so called protectors of the valley. This makes the writer to call the Indian army if not the “best-equipped” then at least “well-furnished”. As long the Indian army is in control of the valley no one can question it for the exploitation of the natural resource of beautiful Kashmir. The deforestation is one of the major causes of the environmental changes the world is suffering from. For this purpose, many countries are promoting the cause of environmental crisis and making people aware about the significance of trees and plants. (SUHAIL) The article claims that almost 40-50 percent of the forest reduction is seen in the past few years and therefore needs to be addressed so as to promote the awareness of this.

4.5 Conclusion

In the above section, I have analyzed *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* by indicating exploitation subjected to multiple oppressed groups and highlighted the efforts of an activist writer Arundhati Roy in revealing the actual social injustice based upon political and social constructions.

The people of India and Kashmir are suffering different kinds of injustices based upon racism, classicism, and corruption of politics. Along with these oppressed groups, biodiversity and nature presented in the novel is also discussed in the light of the theoretical ideas of Greta Gaard which are concluded in the next chapter. It is evident through this research that multiple authoritative oppressors are involved in the exploitation of those who do not even enjoy the basic rights for their survival and are totally dependent on the decisions of the oppressors.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I have concluded all my discussion related to this research work in this chapter. The concept of queer ecofeminism is interesting and fruitful for the analysis of Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* as it expresses the similar ideas explained by Greta Gaard in her book. Being a woman, she is not a feminist writer but she encompasses the ideas related to ecocriticism and highlights different kinds of social injustices present in the Indian Society. She not only talks about the Indian society but also brings the surrounding including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asian countries, China and Bangladesh. By doing this she proves that ecocriticism is not restricted by any man made boundaries and extends itself to a larger paradigm.

In my textual analysis, I have first of all talked about the interconnection between different oppressed groups as it is the most important task while conducting a queer ecofeminist study. The oppressor highlighted by Greta Gaard in her essay is the male dominant ruling class of the society which legalizes different ways to exploit multiple classes so as to ensure the fulfillment of their self-interests. Arundhati Roy gives a similar picture in her novel where the Indian ruling class enjoys the authority in the society. Many laws are formulated so as to continue their activities of exploitation of the society through the use of political and social narratives. History has witnessed such exploitation as Gaard talks about the institution of the Templar Knights which is established in the name of a sacred religion but it is later on found guilty of many unholy practices such as spitting on the cross. Those who are the culprits have used the name of religion for the legalization of their unjust practices. The protagonist of the novel is a transgender Muslim. Roy highlights her exploitation and many others like him through the use of Hindu ideology. He also tells the readers that Mughal rule has witnessed a respectable place for this class where they can be traced working in the palace and trusted enough. The protagonist is a transgender who is surrounded by the class exposed to other injustices. On one hand the reader thinks about the exploitation on the basis of sexuality and on the other hand the issue of motherhood comes to the mind. The writer connects motherhood with queers, women, and even with animals.

She talks about the removal of motherly instinct in hens and its effects on the nutrition of the people. All this is done through the exaggeration of the narrative of development. Roy advocates development in a limited manner but not an extent where our people are exploited and nature is put at stake.

Similarly Zainab is a female character under the oppression of the social constructions but still raising her voice for animal liberation. Development in contrast to animal rights is discussed where again the narrative of development is used to exploit the rights of animals. Another connection can be traced in the character of Anjum who is abandoned by her family, society and forced to live in a graveyard. The graveyard is the manifestation of nature as it gives room to all the dead people and is covered with trees and plantation where birds fly and gives a better natural view as compared to the other parts of the city. This discussion then moves to the exploitation of Anjum who is born in a Muslim family and discovers her identity as a transgender. The sufferings of the protagonist become intolerable for her and therefore she finds peace in a graveyard which is an embodiment of nature.

This discussion goes on to the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. The Muslim Kashmiris are suffering due to the false Hindu nationalist narrative built by those in power. The military occupation of Kashmir cannot be justified as it depriving the Muslims of Kashmir to live their lives according to their wish. Moreover it is putting an extra burden on the beautiful natural reserves of Kashmir due to army occupation and its affects like pollution and deforestation. It has been explained by Roy that the Indian army is involved in the illegal trade of wood in this valley which is one of the reasons of deforestation in the region. The war-torn atmosphere of Kashmir is highlighted by Arundhati Roy in a perfect manner by becoming the voice of the women, people, animals and nature of the valley. Apart from the evidence of deforestation one can also trace the reduction in the survival and reproduction of the endangered species due to the electric fencing of the borders and putting the migration process of these animals to a stop.

Greta Gaard has highlighted the use of political narrative in the exploitation. Roy has highlighted those oppressors and oppressed. She even talks about the imperialism and the involvement of the foreign intelligence agencies in supporting the narrative of the Indian ruling class. She starts by depicting how Rooh Afza replaces Coca-cola in the region as the

development takes place. The industrialization involves the foreign investment and the investment by the elite class of India which is obviously the ruling class of the country as well. The evidence can be traced through the event of Bhopal gas incident. The company is financed by half Indian investors and half Americans investors. The Muslims are also suffering oppression under this ruling class which indicates the use of Hindu ideological narrative behind this. The media and journalism is not playing a positive role as it can be seen through the textual analysis and promotes the narratives of those in authority. Kashmiris and Maoists are helpless and trying to protect the nature of their lands. They are not willing to hand over their natural reserves to the authoritarians at any cost. For this they are facing exploitation and forcible occupation of their lands for the cause of development and industrialization.

Roy is even aware of the surroundings of India when she talks about the Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Central Asian countries and Bangladesh. The suffering of Afghan refugees is also not left unaddressed. She highlights the American involvement in the activities which are ultimately affecting the culture and society of this region. Roy advocates sustainable development which is beneficial both for the humans and nature and ensures the provision of natural reserves to our generation. She highlights the abnormalities found in the animals and humans due to devastating effects of unnecessary development and industrialization. She talks about the burning issues of environmentalism such as global warming, melting of glaciers, pollution of air and water and deforestation.

In short she has brought and addressed all the injustices together with an equal emphasis so as to create awareness among the public of this region. She wraps the sufferings of queers, women, people, animals and nature in a single text. Moreover she relates their sufferings with the corrupt politics of India and suggests creating awareness for the protection of the oppressed groups because they all are interdependent on each other.

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