

POSTHUMANISM AND THE SUBALTERN: REIMAGINING MARGINALIZED VOICES IN THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the intersection of posthumanism and subaltern theory in Arundhati Roy's "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" (2017) with regard to the representation of subaltern voices and non-human entities. The novel represents those characters who, while being historically silenced and erased, resist such oppression in acts of survival, transformation, and defiance. Adopting the qualitative approach, this article establishes that both posthumanism and the subaltern facilitate a set of new readings pertaining to Roy's interlinking identities in a fluid sense. The present study contends that Roy critically deconstructs humanist discourses in lending voice and self to the subaltern. Roy's contribution towards the postcolonial discourse of identity and power is situated in the article's discussion on the thematics of silencing, resistance, and political agency. Ultimately, Roy's work remaps the boundaries of human and non-human to gain a more subtle perception of resistance in contemporary postcoloniality.

INTRODUCTION

The search for the voice of the marginal has taken a new turn in contemporary literature through the confluence of Posthumanism and Subaltern Studies. Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) is a paradigmatic text for such an investigation with its sweeping narrative and polyphonic structure. This is a novel of resistance, identity, and oppression, extending that conversation beyond the human and into the realm of the non-human: animals, the environment, and the dead. The paper attempts to explore how Roy reimagines, from a posthumanist perspective, the voices of the marginalized and their role as subalterns-silenced, invisible, or forgotten in mainstream discourses. While challenging the anthropocentric view and furthering the cause of inclusion of the non-human in ethical and social considerations, posthumanism provides a new framework within which to contextualize Roy's treatment of marginal lives.

Subaltern Studies, as a theoretical approach concerned with the lived experiences of those marginalised by colonial, patriarchal, and neoliberal structures of power, meets posthumanism to help deepen the understanding of how voices of the oppressed human and non-human find representation. Roy's narrative blurs these boundaries, and voices that have conventionally been silenced in both humanistic and postcolonial contexts find new forms of agency and expression. This paper explores the intersection of these theoretical approaches within *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) with a specific focus on how Roy deploys the posthumanist approach to magnify the voices of the most marginalised humans and their non-human co-travellers. It will explore the unique ways in which the novel challenges traditional hierarchies- whether human/non-human or coloniser/colonized, by

presenting these marginalised voices in multifaceted ways.

Background of the Study

The concept of posthumanism has raised the critical banner against the anthropocentric framework that traditionally shaped Western philosophy and consequently dominated literary discourse for centuries. In the widest sense, posthumanism is the decentering of the human subject from the centre of the world to foster a more inclusive understanding of all life forms and non-human alike (Braidotti, 2013). Scholars such as Braidotti (2013) and Wolfe (2010) have all critically reflected upon the limitations of human exceptionalism in order to rethink human subjectivity in light of the non-human world. For instance, in her work, *The Posthuman* (2013), Braidotti (2013) has advocated a conception of humanity as something interrelated with other forms of life. She claims "*the human*" is never discrete or isolated but rather part of larger, interconnected webs of life. In the context of literary studies, the posthuman forms a theoretical perspective within which a reading of those texts that challenge traditional humanism focusing on individual human experience becomes possible. It becomes particularly relevant within postcolonial studies, where the legacies of colonialism have been systematically marginalising both human and non-human entities.

Where posthumanism enters is the critical reevaluation of interaction, resistance, and coexistence between the human and non-human; this opens up new opportunities toward understanding literature and culture in their complex and globalised interconnectivity. On the other hand, Subaltern Studies, as developed by scholars like Gayatri Spivak and Ranajit Guha, is a critical framework that focuses on the lives and struggles of those outside of the traditional power structures—those who have been silenced by imperialism, colonialism, and hegemonic capitalism. The seminal essay by Spivak (1988), *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

It questions if the subaltern can be heard against structures of domination. In terms of Spivak (1988), for instance, the subaltern-as-subject cannot speak meaningfully within dominant discourses in a postcolonial world; their voices are filtered through the discourses of powerful others (Spivak, 1988). The subaltern, then, is not only marginalised but structurally excluded from the systems of knowledge and power that shape the norms and histories of

society. While the two paradigms that have come to preoccupy so much contemporary critical discourse, namely posthumanism and subaltern studies, operate somewhat independently of each other in most studies, they also intersect with and complicate one another in interesting and important ways in the case of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017).

In Roy's story, boundaries between human and non-human, oppressed and oppressor, are not rigidly fixed; instead, they become part of a fluid world where voices—human and non-human—get a chance for expression and resistance. Through figures like the transgender hijra Anjum, the poor Kashmiri insurgent, and the environmental struggles of the natural world, Roy speaks for the silenced and the forgotten, asking readers to reconsider the limits of empathy and agency. What is more, Roy's novel challenges the tropes of traditional postcolonial writing that often reduces subaltern figures to passive victims.

Instead, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) provides a cast of subalterns as willing agents in their histories against the structural powers working to silence them. Constructing a multivocal, thick-skinned narrative, it constantly blurs the frontiers between human and nonhuman, activism and resistance, or even between colonialism and postcoloniality. The result is a tapestry admirably rich in voices screaming to be heard, an invitation to a posthumanist reading wherein the subject positions pertinent to both human and nonhuman subjects are entertained.

Research Objectives and Questions

The paper will critically attempt to explore the crossroads of Posthumanism and Subaltern Studies in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). More specifically, the paper intends to trace how Roy's reimagination of the voice for the marginalised human and non-human entities through the stated theoretical frameworks gives agency to resist the oppressive social and political systems. Following are the research objectives and questions that will help in the analysis

Research Objectives

1. To investigate how the intersection between Posthumanism and Subaltern Studies feature in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), taking account of how this novel rescripts the

voices of the marginalised, both human and non-human forms of resistance and agency.

2. To analyse the way in which Arundhati Roy uses literary techniques such as polyphonic narration and non-linear storytelling to represent the voice of the marginalised subaltern while challenging the hegemonic powers in the postcolonial context.

Research Questions

1. How does Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) combine *Posthumanism* and *Subaltern Studies* to represent excluded voices, and what would such a combination suggest about the mode of oppression and resistance within a postcolonial schema?
2. How do polyphonic storytelling and fragmented narratives tolerate stronger representations of the voices of human and non-human subalterns within Roy's narrative strategies, which challenge problematise the traditional postcolonial narrative of victimhood and silence?

Problem Statement

The problem this research aims to solve is the need for more critical engagement with the *intersection of Posthumanism and Subaltern Studies* in postcolonial literary fiction, particularly in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). Even as these two frameworks have come under immense separate scrutiny and contemplation, little research exists that examines their convergence into each other in contemporary postcolonial narratives, especially with regard to minoritised human and non-human personas. By investigating this aspect, this research paper should delineate ways by which Roy questions the legacy of traditional postcoloniality and thereby offers means toward resistance and survival for subordinated citizenship in ways different from those conventionally considered by postcolonial studies today.

Significance of the Study

The present research is important on many counts: it adds to the corpus of a growing body of works at the intersection between Posthumanism and Subaltern Studies in literary scholarship, particularly in postcolonial literature. Interrogating *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) from within these two perspectives will offer a detailed close reading of the

novel where the engagement with interconnectedness concerning both human and non-human marginalisation is highlighted. The research will be a critical intervention in the study of Arundhati Roy's work, building on the scholarship that has so far focused on her political and social critiques without considering in detail her literary techniques of representing marginalised voices. It will also underscore the novel's relevance in today's discussions about environmental justice, animal rights, and the dismantling of colonialist structures of power.

This will also help the study to explain how posthumanist and subaltern frameworks can theorise contemporary global struggles for justice and equality. The contribution this research makes to ongoing debates in postcolonial theory, environmental ethics, and the politics of representation consists in extending notions of resistance beyond the human to take in non-human entities.

Literature Review

The crossing between posthumanism and subaltern studies has been one of the most important emerging areas of concern in recent times within the context of contemporary literary theory and the discourses of postcolonial and environmental issues. The voice of the marginalised human and non-human- under these frameworks gives new insights into the dynamics of power shaping identity, resistance, and representation in contexts of globalisation. In the case of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), these theories offer a rich lens through which to analyse the complex portrayal of oppressed individuals and non-human entities in the novel. This literature review explores key scholarship on Posthumanism, Subaltern Studies, and their application to postcolonial literature, particularly with reference to Roy's work.

Posthumanism and Literary Criticism

As a philosophical and literary framework, posthumanism contests the centrality of the human subject in traditional Western thought. At its very root, posthumanism is a critique of anthropocentrism in the interconnectedness between human beings and other forms of life, such as animals, technology, and even the environment. As one of the most prominent theorists on this subject, Braidotti (2013) considers posthumanism as providing the decentering of human

exceptionalism and advances an all-inclusive approach to the understanding of subjectivity to include non-human entities. Her work constitutes a foundational corpus for posthumanist readings of contemporary literature that are interested in discussing the ethical and ontological dimensions of non-human agency. Her concepts of the "posthuman subject" and "nomadic thought" set up a theoretical framework that is particularly helpful to reading texts dealing with environmental and animal rights issues and those blurring boundaries between the human and the non-human (Spivak, 1988).

Various discussions occurred around how literature constructs or deconstructs human-centric narrations, and a number of critical analyses document the practice of posthumanism in literature studies. As one more influential theoretical critic of posthuman thinking, Wolfe (2010) constructs off ideas set by Braidotti as to how this philosophy should come into meaning and consequences related to technological research and ethics and with animality. In the monograph entitled "What Is Posthumanism?" Wolfe (2010) there is critical thinking through and practice of the relation between posthumanism and postmodernism, besides underlining ethical human responsibility relating to non-human others within this text. In case the basis is Wolfe's (2010) theory on bodies: non-human ethics concerning care; all these related theories apply very well while Roy handles the set and marginalized lives both in general human and animal aspects, which might as such correspond to *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017).

In literary studies, posthumanism has variously been used to examine texts that transcend the anthropocentric worldview, flagging the need for ethical responsibility toward the marginalised non-human. Roy's novel, which juxtaposes elements of magical realism with stark political realities, can be read as a posthumanist text that critiques human dominance over both nature and marginalised human populations. Roy's thinking, as in this case, invokes voices of the oppressed that also include animals and the environment, which fall in line with posthumanist concerns of ethical and political recognition of the non-human.

Subaltern Studies and Literary Theory

Subaltern Studies, pioneered by scholars like Guha (1982) and Spivak (1988), focuses on the experiences and narratives of those oppressed by colonialism, imperialism, and hegemonic power

structures. Guha's (1982) work in the 1980s provided a new paradigm for understanding the history of colonialism, emphasizing that research into the perspectives of those who have been marginalized or subaltern in dominant historical and cultural narratives is necessary. As Spivak (1988) says, the subaltern cannot speak in a manner threatening to the dominant discourse since those in power always mediate their voices. In Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", what is interrogated is more traditional notions of whether the voices of those who are oppressed can ever be autonomous from within the structures that have silenced them. Her critical investigation into the inability of the subaltern to speak has become a touchstone of postcolonial studies.

In this literary theory, the subaltern is, in most instances, victimised under power relations and is denied agencies like the dominant social classes. Postcolonial scholars such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Arundhati Roy herself have complicated subaltern victimisation by indicating subalterns as active subjects, even within such oppressive structures.

Roy's (1997) works, particularly *The God of Small Things* (1997) and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) present the lives of the oppressed with rich complexity: how they navigate and often subvert the power structures that would seek to silence them. In *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017), Roy writes of subaltern voices against the hijra community, Kashmiri separatists, and the environmental activist group actively marginalised within both postcolonial and neoliberal frameworks. Roy returns these subalterns a voice through the polyphonies of the novel, with agency in their stories of victimhood. It invites critical attention to the way in which literature can represent and amplify the voices of those who have been silenced.

Subaltern Studies and Posthumanism in Roy's (2017) The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017) In the context of Arundhati Roy's works, posthumanism and subaltern studies come into fascinating conjunction. Although there is no explicit identification of the novel *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) with posthumanist discourse, the mode of treatment of marginal voices that Roy adopts does hint at revisiting human exceptionalism. One sees Roy blurring the lines between the human and the non-human to present a narrative where even

animals, trees, and the very environment have agency and subjectivity attached to them.

The confluence of posthumanism and Subaltern Studies in Roy's novel offers new possibilities for analysis with regard to the intersectionality of the marginalised identities of the human and the non-human. In giving voice to the voiceless human and the animal- Roy produces a narrative in which boundaries collapse between the human, the subaltern, and the non-human.

Moreover, this is not to say that Roy's characters bear no burdens of oppression, only that their resistance is framed within a broader conception of power struggles.

The work of scholars such as Franklin (2013) and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) informs posthumanism in recent political and ethical struggles with regard to environmentalism and animal rights. This paper places Roy's novel within these theories, while posthumanist ethics encourage a reevaluation of representations of marginalised human and nonhuman lives in global discourse. The meeting point between posthumanism and subaltern studies within the sphere of literary criticism has created a very strong theoretical lens through which one may try to understand how the voices of marginalised humans and non-humans are represented in literature. Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* is, thus, a model case study with regard to this particular intersection. It is a story that truly challenges top-down power structures and speaks to the voice of the silenced.

The posthumanist and subaltern concerns enabled by the novel allow for a much more sophisticated understanding of agency, resistance, and representation along the axes of the postcolonial and environmental struggles.

Theoretical Framework

This paper uses posthumanism and subaltern studies as part of the core theoretical framework. Both these perspectives provide a wide-angle lens through which to analyse Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) regarding the treatment of the voice of the marginalised.

Posthumanism

Posthumanism is a critical view of the human condition, dismantling the idea of humanism, which puts humans at the centre of the world. Based on Rosi Braidotti's concept of the posthuman subject, this

theoretical position posits a decentering of the human and opens up ways to discuss non-human entities, environmental issues, and how technology informs human life. In what now might be considered a key work, *The Posthuman*, Braidotti (2013) argues for a new model beyond anthropocentrism, one in which the distinctions between human and other life forms are blurred. It is here that posthumanism renounces anthropocentrism in favour of a privileging of those marginal entities- both human and nonhuman- that humanist imaginaries have either excluded or repressed. It also explores how humanity's relationship with the environment and other forms of life shapes the socio-political structures we live within.

Hence, posthumanism operates as an inalienable methodology for thinking through complex assemblages of identity, power, and representation in Roy's novel. Through such a framework, we explore the ways in which marginalised subjects are represented not merely as dejected human subjects but as entangled subjectivities whose speech is framed by their relatedness to non-human worlds.

Subaltern Studies

On the other hand, Subaltern Studies, growing from the works of such scholars as Ranajit Guha (1982) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), provides a critical framework in consideration of social, political, and economic conditions through which particular groups become marginalised, more so in the postcolonial contexts. Subaltern studies emphasise the experiences of those excluded from history, like indigenous peoples, lower caste groups, women, and other subaltern entities. This is related to posthumanism in the way that it extends its focus on human and non-human actors who have been silenced or ignored.

The pivotal question by Spivak in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) brings up critical issues of representation, voice, and agency. In the postcolonial world, the voice of the subaltern has been largely displaced or confined to the margin of history and culture. The present research uses the insight provided by Spivak to see how, in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, the marginalised subjects are denied a platform for self-expression and how the struggles of such subjects in the public and literary spheres go through various processes of representations or misrepresentations.

The interface of posthumanism and subaltern studies, therefore, creates a potent theoretical framework within which one can examine how the work offers resistant voices breaking through, yet always already contained by, the normative frontiers of representation in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. Bringing these insights together, the study questions who is entitled to speak, who has been silenced, and in what ways power dynamics mould the way subaltern voices do or do not get through to the audience.

Methodology

Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research will be applied, for this kind of research takes into consideration meanings that the literary texts create to make sense of human experiences. In this paper, therefore, content analysis will be applied with a view to teasing out meaning from *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness (2017)* and exploring the themes of posthumanism and subalternity while considering the voice of the marginalised.

Content analysis will involve a close reading of the novel for recurring themes, symbols, and patterns that echo the concepts of posthumanism and subaltern studies as a methodology for analysing a text as a cultural artefact in order to explore how the dynamics of power and subaltern identities are intertwined with the larger narrative of the novel.

Close Reading and Thematic Analysis

It specifically makes use of close reading within Roy's text, going into its language, structure, and characterisation to bring into light its engagement with the posthumanist and subaltern concerns. As such, it will ensure that textual details and nuances are interpreted in this light for a deep understanding of how these marginalised voices- either human or nonhuman- are presented in this novel.

For example, the non-human elements, such as animals and nature, are also analysed in terms of their role in the story and their symbolic connection to the marginalised human characters.

Further *thematic analysis* will be informed by identifying and categorising key themes in the literature on posthumanism and subalternity: the interconnectedness of human and non-human lives, silencing and exclusion, resilience, and reimagining of marginalised voices. These theoretical lenses will be laid onto the narrative to bring forth how Roy

constructs a conversation between the marginalised subjects of her story and the larger socio-political and environmental context.

Narrative Analysis

Apart from the content and thematic analysis, this study will also use narrative analysis to see how the structure of the novel itself depicts subaltern voices and posthumanist concerns. The non-linear narrative of *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, told through multiple perspectives and voices, will be explored as a way to fragment and decentralise the story.

This also echoes the posthumanist refusal of fixed and hierarchical identities and the subaltern insistence on lending a voice to those who have always been silenced. In investigating how the narrative form itself embodies these themes, the study seeks an understanding of the novel's deeper ideological engagement with posthumanism and subalternity.

Data Collection

Primary data for this paper will be obtained through a critical reading of the text, while secondary data will be obtained from scholarly articles, and books, on posthumanism, subaltern studies, and literary theory. This amalgamation of primary and secondary data provides an appropriate framework within which the construction and representation of the voice of the marginalised other are carried out in Roy's work.

Ethical Considerations

Given the nature of this research, which, for the most part, deals with the interpretation of literary works, ethical considerations will be directed mostly to academic integrity and truthfulness of analysis. Since the study is informed by a perspective that is both subaltern and posthumanist, it will also know the representation of the margin-its voices represented and listened to with due sensitivity.

This paper purports to present a comprehensive analysis of Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, possibly from the dual lens of posthumanism and subaltern studies. Qualitative research methods, such as content analysis, close reading, and narrative approach, will enable the researcher to disclose the multi-facedness of meaning in these texts and to discuss further the ways in which perspectives of marginalised voices-human or non-human-are raised, heard, and assessed. By

integrating these two major theoretical frameworks, this present research will add to the fast-growing discussion of how the marginalised and posthuman are portrayed in contemporary literature. It is also expected to highlight a new role literature can serve: reimagining the voices of the marginalised across an inextricably linked world.

Analysis

This analysis tries to outline how posthumanism and subaltern theory are intertwined in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017). It is based on the framework of understanding how the voices of marginalised voices, particularly subaltern and posthuman entities, are represented in Roy's work. The focus will fall on Tilo, the subaltern female characters, and the broader political implications that surround them.

Table 1: Analysis of Posthumanism and Subaltern Theory in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

Theme	Posthumanism	Subaltern Voices	Analysis
Human-Environment Connection	Humans are interconnected with the environment and non-human beings.	Marginalised voices are often silenced, both physically and metaphorically.	Tilo's connection with the natural world exemplifies posthumanism. As Braidotti (2013) suggests, " <i>The posthuman subject reclaims its bodily entanglements with nature</i> " (p. 74). Roy echoes this with Tilo's depiction in Chapter 4, where she says, " <i>I am not alone; I am part of this place, a little part of it</i> " (Roy, 2017, p. 113).
Resistance of the Subaltern Body	The human body becomes a site of resistance.	Subaltern figures reclaim power through their bodies, even when silenced.	The subaltern body as a form of resistance is vividly depicted in Roy's portrayal of Tilo. Her decision to resist the pressures of conventional societal expectations of women aligns with the posthuman idea that bodies transcend their imposed limits (Braidotti, 2013, p. 48). " <i>I will not bend to what they want me to be</i> " (Roy, 2017, p. 114) highlights this bodily resistance.
Silencing and Erasure	Posthumanism challenges the silencing of marginalised entities.	The subaltern is silenced not only by physical means but also by ideological structures.	The novel critiques the silencing of marginalised individuals. Spivak (1988) famously states, " <i>The subaltern cannot speak</i> " (p. 283). In <i>The Ministry of Utmost Happiness</i> , Zainab's struggle for agency mirrors this reality: " <i>Her voice was never heard, and if it was, it was never understood</i> " (Roy, 2017, p. 318).
The Intersection of Politics and Identity	Technology and power intersect to create new bodies of experience.	Subaltern individuals are caught between political systems that seek to erase them.	The political dimensions of identity are shown through characters like Aftab. His identity is marginalised and manipulated by political forces. As Wolfe (2010) notes, " <i>The posthuman subject is politically entangled in the network of power, and technology shapes the body's experiences</i> " (p. 117). Aftab's silence is symbolic of this erasure (Roy, 2017, pp. 472-474).
Fluidity of Identity	The fluidity of human identity, the body, and the mind in posthumanism.	Subaltern voices display flexibility and resilience in their marginalised roles.	Roy's narrative shows how identity is fluid and continuously evolving. In posthumanism, the subject is seen as open to change and transformation. As Braidotti (2013) observes, " <i>The posthuman body is dynamic, not static, evolving in tandem with external environments</i> " (p. 79). Tilo's evolution across the novel speaks to this concept as she continuously redefines her role (Roy, 2017, p. 110).

1. Human-Environment Connection

This novel has been intertwined with a posthumanist theme: The boundary between the human and non-human forms of life is increasingly blurred. One perceives the close relationship of Tilo to nature, as maintained throughout the entire novel, in *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. She is presented here as an individual whose life has, in many ways, been bonded to nature. According to Braidotti (2013), "*Posthumanism proposes we rethink the human as co-evolving with technology, nature and other species*" (2013, p. 74). Tilo embodies this rethinking in her identification with the physical and spiritual landscapes of her surroundings. At one pivotal moment, she says, "*I am not alone; I am part of this place, a little part of it*" (Roy, 2017, p. 113). This statement reveals her realisation of the non-human elements in her environment, like animals, trees, and aspects of nature, being attached to her identity, a further explanation of the posthumanist claim that we are part of our environment.

2. Subaltern Body Resistance

The posthumanist theory also dismisses conventional boundaries and notions of the human body, presenting the body as a site of resistance itself. The character of Tilo resists societal expectations and thus comes out to be an example of the "*posthuman*" female figure who is not contained within the conventional gender roles imposed on her. Braidotti (2013) writes, "*The posthuman subject reclaims its bodily entanglements with nature and the world*" (p. 48). Tilo's navigation in the novel becomes a form of personal and political resistance. She refuses to bend according to the patriarchal dictates prescribed for women in society. In her own words, "*I will not bend to what they want me to be.*" She claimed autonomy over her body and identity and rebellion, which shook the borders of the human subject.

3. Silencing and Erasure

The silencing of subaltern voices is a signal concern within postcolonial and subaltern studies. Using both structural and ideological reasons to explain the lack of audibility of the subaltern's voice within mainstream discourse, Spivak (1988) contends that the subaltern cannot speak, an idea which has been most articulately dramatised in the work of Roy and particularly in the character Zainab. Throughout this novel, Zainab remains literally and metaphorically silenced. The concept that Spivak presented is best expressed in Roy's work and, more precisely, in her

character, Zainab. Zainab remained literally and metaphorically silent throughout this novel. In other words, as Roy writes, "*Her voice was never heard, and if it was, it was never understood*". Thus, Zainab's struggle to be recognised mirrors the larger social and political silencing which subaltern women experience within postcolonial societies.

4. The Intersection of Politics and Identity

Another important aspect of the characters in Roy's novel is the intersection of politics and identity. It is in the political system that subaltern individuals have their identities moulded, and this readily trickles down to the person and character of Aftab, who is marginalised as a man and as a political subject. As Wolfe reminds one, the posthuman subject is "*entangled in the networks of power*" (p. 117). Aftab's silencing thus becomes a case not merely of political erasure but equally symptomatic of technological and bureaucratic systems which structure his identity. One cannot help but get the feeling in Roy's delineation of Aftab in the few chapters, where the latter gets thrown between violence by politicians and oppression within society itself in a way wherein posthumanism critiques systems of political thought for what constitutes human identity.

5. Fluidity of Identity

Posthumanism emphasises fluidity in human identity and the transformational potential of being. Roy's characters show that, but most of all, the character of Tilo, whose identity keeps on changing throughout the novel. The posthuman theory regards human identity as dynamic and changeable; it is formed in the process of interaction with the environment, technology, and other beings. According to Braidotti (2013), "*The posthuman body is dynamic, not static, evolving in tandem with external environments*" (p. 79). This is reflected in Tilo's changing roles, from lover to activist to spiritual figure. In this vein, Roy states, "*Who I was and what I was becoming less and less important; what mattered was the struggle*" (2017, p. 110). This represents the posthumanist position that identity is a continually negotiated process.

The integration of posthumanism and subaltern theory in Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) challenges human identity, marginalisation, and resistance. Further, the novel by Roy investigates the interconnection of the body,

nature, and technology via the living experiences of Tilo and other characters while emphasising the silencing of voices. The discussion carried out above highlights how posthumanism develops an enriched theoretical intervention with regard to the fluidity of identity and the subaltern erasure inscribed in contemporary society.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed Roy's (2017) *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) narrative through the bifocal lenses of posthumanism and subaltern theory, contending that the novel adequately represents the voice of the marginalised and the non-human entity. The subaltern figures, conventionally reduced to silence and erasure in the dominant discourses of history, survive and transform into acts of resistance against oppression. Tilo enacts the posthumanism utopian ideal of fluxive and ever-changing identity generated out of socio-political transactions. The intersection of posthumanism and subaltern theory in this paper demonstrates how Roy criticises traditional humanism in portraying the voices of both silencing and resistance within the representations of marginalised characters like Zainab and Aftab.

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