

Arundhati Roy As A Critic Of Neo-Imperialism

Bilquees Dar

Research Scholar, Iqbal institute of Culture and Philosophy, University of Kashmir, J&K, India
E-Mail: showkat80ahmad@gmail.com

Abstract: Roy is India's leading commentator on such evils as Militaristic Imperialist capitalism. Since winning the Booker Prize, most of her writings have concentrated on the issues of social justice, she has also been a sharp critic of India's nuclear policies. In May 2004, she was awarded the Sydney Peace Prize for her work on Non Violence and Social campaigns and in November 2011, she was the recipient of the *Norman Mailer* prize for distinguished writing. Her many books include, *The Algebra of infinite justice* (2002), *War talk* (2003), *Listening to Grass Hoppers*; *Field Notes on Democracy* (2009) and most recently, *Walking with the Comrades* (2011). The list of her criticisms include India's nuclear weapon policies and the approach to industrialization and rapid development as being practiced in the nation in the recent times in her essay, *The Cost of living*, she also crusades against India's massive hydroelectric exploitation without redress. After the events of Sept 11, 2002, Roy emerged as a fierce critic of government and US policies.

[Bilquees Dar. **Arundhati Roy As A Critic Of Neo-Imperialism**. *Rep Opinion* 2013;5(5):45-47]. (ISSN: 1553-9873). <http://www.sciencepub.net/report>. 6

Key words: Arundhati Roy, Critic, Neo-Imperialism

1.1 Introduction

Neo imperialism refers to the dominance of some nations over others by means of unequal conditions of economic exchange or in other words we can say that neo- imperialism exists when one nation is dependent upon other, because the weaker nation is unable to survive economically in the modern world without the aid of the stronger nations. Neo-imperialism unlike imperialism is not founded upon the direct imposition of political power by one society upon another, instead Neo imperialism uses the power of money in the modern world as a way for richer countries to keep poorer countries from stepping outside of the roles that richer countries have defined for them. The most obvious and straight forward example of Neo- imperialism today is the relationship between industrialized societies and third world. Third world nations are largely dependent upon the industrialized world for money with which to purchase food, shelter and other essentials. The countries indulging in Neo- imperialism don't see it as imperialism. They see it as beneficial foreign policy regarding the welfare of all the people of the world, through the auspices of their military and industrial establishment. Using the threat of capital flight as a lever, international capital insinuates itself deeper and deeper into these economies. Giant transnational corporations take control of their essential infrastructure and natural resource, their minerals, their water, their electricity. Neo- imperialism takes many forms, including the penetration of foreign monopoly capital into the sovereign states and the granting of aid in the form of credits and subsidies and in return force them to sign unequal agreements. The

imperialist powers often set some countries against others or interfere in the internal affairs of developing countries, organizing reactionary coups, inciting national and tribal strife. In addition military pressure and outright military interventions are used in dealing with the countries that have broken away from imperialism, while Neo- imperialism is not directly imperialism in the sense, that it is in outright control of the subject country, but has traits of imperialism. In short we can say that neo- imperialism is a term used to describe certain economic operations at the international level which have alleged similarities to the traditional imperialism of 16th to 19th centuries. The contention is that these governments have aimed to control other nations through indirect means that is in lieu of direct military-political control, Neo-imperialist powers employ economic financial and trade policies to dominate less powerful countries. Neo-imperialism is the worst form of imperialism. For those, who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress.

1.1.1 Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy is an Indian novelist, political activist and a world citizen, who won the Booker prize in 1997 for her novel, '*The God of small things*.' She is the only Indian woman ever to achieve this honor. Roy gives credit for this to her eventful childhood, due to the unsuccessful marriage of her parents which had an influence on her writings both thematically and structurally. Roy's mother, a prominent social activist, educated her daughter informally. This freedom from intellectual constraint

allowed Roy to write, as she puts it, according to John Simmons on his *'Arundhati Roy Web from within, the ability to follow her inner voice, rather than having a set of restrictive rules ingrained in her,* which has been an integral parts of her accomplishments as an adult writer. She comments that, *when I write, I never write a sentence because for me, my thoughts and my writings are one thing. It's like breathing, I don't re-breathe a breath everything I have my intellect, my experience, my feelings have been used. If someone dosen't like it, it is like saying they don't like my gallbladder.* The acclaim that Roy garnered made her an instant celebrity, but the traditional trappings of her literary fame were accompanied by a certain amount of notoriety due to the book's controversial treatment of delicate subject matter. Charges of anti-Communism were leveled against Roy because of her portrayal of the communist characters. The chief minister of Kerala claimed that this, and not the book's literary merit, was the reason for its popularity in the West. In addition Roy faced charges of obscenity and demands that the final chapters of the book be removed because of its sexual content. Roy attributed these hostile reactions not to eroticism but to the book's explicit treatment of the role of untouchables in Indian. The abhorrence was thus as much political as it was moral and proves that fifty years after Gandhi coined the term Harijan , the Hindu caste system is still an important issue. Arundhati Roy is an unusual Indian woman. Instead of acting as the graceful upholder of traditional Values , Roy is India's leading commentator on such evils as Militaristic Imperialist capitalism. Since winning the booker Prize., most of her writings have concentrated on the issues of social justice, she has also been a sharp critic of India's nuclear policies. In May 2004, she was awarded the Sydney peace for her work on Non Violence and Social campaigns and in November 2011, she was the recipient of the *Norman Mailer* prize for distinguished writing. Her many books include, *The Algebra of infinite justice* (2002), *War talk* (2003), *Listening to Grass Hoppers; Field Notes on Democracy* (2009) and most recently, *Walking with the Comrades* (2011). The list of her criticism include India's nuclear weapon policies and the approach to industrialization and rapid development as being practiced in the nation in the recent times in her essay, *The Cost of living*, she also Crusades against India's massive hydroelectric exploitation without redress. After the events of Sept 11, 2002, Roy emerged as a fierce Critic of government and US policies. In 2005 she took part in the World Tribunal. The War Tribunal was not formed by elected individuals but by Intellectuals and Human right campaigners.

1.2 Arundhati Roy as a Critic of Neo- Imperialism Periscism

Arundathi Roy is a prominent voice in the anti- Globalization and a vehement critic of neo-imperialism. She considers U.S as engaging in neo-imperialism because it is dominating the world markets and financial bodies such as the World Trade Bank and IMF. She is also an impassioned critic of military occupation and violent models of economic development. Her latest publication 'Broken Republic is an unflinching attack on the Indian government's policy to allow "wholesale corporate takeover of people's land and resources", Arundathi Roy wrote a few years ago that the "New Imperialism is already upon us there isn't a country on God's earth that is not caught in the crosshair's of the American cruise missile and the IMF checkbook and says that it's a remodeled, stream lined version of what we once knew. For the first time in History ,a single empire with arsenal of weapons that could obliterate the world in an afternoon has complete unipolar, economic and military Hegemony. It uses different weapons to break open different markets. In May 2003 she delivered a speech entitled *Instant Mix imperial Democracy* at the Riverside church in New York city. In it she described the United States as a global empire that reserves the right to bomb any of its subjects at any time, deriving its legitimacy directly from God. The Voilence of *Globalization* and *development*, two seemingly innocuous terms is something that *Arundhati Roy* is committed to expose. She has been for the past two decades, been an astute critic of the rampant forces of neo-imperialism and global polices of the United States. She further says that poor countries that are geo-politically of strategic value to Empire or have a *Market* of any size or infrastructure that can be privatized or natural resources of value-oil, gold, diamonds, cobalt, coal, oil diamonds, gold must do as they are told or become military target. Those with greatest reserves of natural wealth are most at risk. Unless they surrender their resources willingly to the corporate Machine, civil unrest will be formented or war will be waged. Like old imperialism the new imperialism too relies for its success on a network of Agents, corrupt local elites, which serve empire. Unlike in the old days the new imperialist dosen't need to trudge around the tropics risking malaria or diahorrea or early death. New imperialism can be conducted on e-mail. Though, She is outspoken critic of neo-imperialism and of the approach to industrialization and rapid development practiced in India, She presents her arguments effectively with the use of sarcasm, irony and rhetorical questions complimented by a well-supported and organized progression of ideas. In March 2012, Arundhati's lengthy article *Capitalism; A*

Ghost Story appeared in India's *Outlook Magazine*. It contained a wide ranging critique of US foreign policy capitalism, Neo-Imperialism and Globalization .Roy explains the concept of New Rascism, which is the cornerstone of New Imperialism wonderfully using the allegory of the *Pardoned Turkey* during Thanksgiving .A few carefully bred turkeys- the local elites of various countries- wealthy immigrants, investment bankers-some singers, some writers are given absolution...The remaining millions lose their jobs, are evicted from their homes. Another instrument of New Imperialism is new genocide, which is facilitated by economic sanctions-the most notable case being Iraq where more than half a million children have died during the last decade of sanctions. In short throughout her writings Arundhati Roy has been seen criticizing new imperialism, which according to her is nothing less than old imperialism of the 19th century.

1.3 References

1. Abraham Taisha. An Interview with Arundhati Roy Ariel Vol. 29, no 1, 1998.
2. Sodhi. Meena, The God of Small Things,Memory and Art. In 'the fictional

- world of Arundhat Roy. Ed. R.S Pathak, New Delhi: Creative Books, 2001.
3. Roy, Arundhati War Talk, Cambridge. South End press, 2003.
4. Pathak. R.S. Ed *'The Fictional world of Arundhati Roy'*; Creative Books, New Delhi, 2001.
5. Ahmad. Ayaz. *Reading Arundhati Roy politically*. "Front line vol. 14, no 15, July 1997.
6. *Listening to Grasshoopers; Field Notes on Democracy*. New Delhi: Penguim Hamisk Hamilton, 2009.
7. Arundhati Roy: *A small hero*. BBC news online, 6 March, 2002.
8. Arundhati Roy. "Brutality Smeared in peanut Butter,Why America must stop the war now, Guardian Unlimited 10/23/01.
9. Randeep Ramesh (Friday, March 10, 2007) An Activist returns to the Novel, Sydney morning Herald. Retrieved on 2007 - 03 - 13.
10. The Algebra of Arundhati Injudiciousness by Farzana Versey.
11. Arundati Roy denounces Indian democracy by Atul Cowshesh.

5/25/2013