

CONTRASTIVE PORTRAYAL OF GLOBAL SOUTH IN THE FICTIONS OF ARUNDHATI ROY AND ARAVIND ADIGA

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Abstract

Proxy wars between countries like Israel, Ukraine, and Syria have splintered the East-West dichotomy that was apparently defined by the Cold War's polar opposites. In the middle of all this talk about the West and its enemies, the Global South is getting very little attention, and its many voices and concerns are going unnoticed. This article contends that the literary works of Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga provide a critical rebuttal to this oversimplified story by giving a voice to marginalised people from the South of the world. For example, similar to actual conflicts, Roy's *The God of Small Things* reveals how neocolonial development schemes in Kerala devastated marginalised people. Simultaneously, Adiga's *The White Tiger* presents a caustic analysis of economic disparity and the neoliberal economic model's impact on India's working class, drawing attention to their fights for advancement in an

unfair system. This dissertation seeks to analyse and explain the influence of the dominant discourse of counter-narrative on the repressed entities of global southern cultures. It goes beyond just displaying marginalised narratives. By comparing and contrasting Dependency theory with Post Development theory and applying it to the writings of these two writers, we can see how the capitalist and autocratic superpowers are exploiting and oppressing the people of the Global South. Due to the small sample size and narrow focus, this study cannot do justice to the rich diversity of the Global South. Their accounts, albeit interesting, do not cover every voice or perspective in this area.

Keywords: - Global South, Subaltern Voices, Dependency Theory, Post-development Theory, Core, Periphery, Modernity, Local Knowledge, Ecology, Westernization, Neoliberalism, Marxism, Neocolonialism.

Introduction

There is a wide range of viewpoints, storylines, and voices represented in literature from the Global South.

originating from areas that have been previously ignored in international discussions. Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East have all contributed writers to

writings that eloquently depict the cultural, political, and social intricacies of their communities. A more complex picture of the Global South's diverse sociocultural fabric may be shown via these literary works, which often question dominant Eurocentric views and clichés.

These diverse and rich voices from the Global South have been obscured by the East-West divide, which has kept Western-centric viewpoints in literature alive and well. "The Global South has not been the origin of most of the world's problems," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during the G20 conference. Their impact on us, however, is greater. This has been shown by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, global warming, acts of terrorism, and the crisis in Ukraine. Our role and voice are also ignored in the quest for answers. (G20 summit, P.M. Modi 2023) An authentic comprehension of Western cultures is obstructed by this prejudice, which aims at a hierarchical worldview. Since it dates back to the Cold War, the term "Global South" is considered to be obsolete. As an example, it unites nations with very varied military might and economic sizes (such as emerging markets and least developed countries). According to Kürzdörfer and Narlikar (2023) A more inclusive and nuanced representation in the global literary scene may be achieved by amplifying and embracing the different tales from the Global South. This will help to redress the imbalance. This strategy promotes a more inclusive conversation that reflects the range of human experiences on a global scale by challenging stereotypes, breaking down barriers, and challenging preconceptions. The ideological fight of the Cold War has brought

the ever-present East-West divide into sharp focus on the world stage. Even in its fragmented 21st-century incarnation, with proxy wars breaking out in Ukraine, Israel, and Syria, this simple difference often obfuscates a crucial perspective: the real realities faced by the Global South. In the midst of pro- and anti-Western rhetoric, the many voices of this vast area are "removed from all lines of social mobility" (Spivak 1998, p. 276), and as a result, their intricacies and struggles are marginalised from the prevailing story. At their core, subaltern studies are about the voiceless and the oppressed. Arundhati Roy argues that "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless,'" referring to those whose opinions are either purposefully disregarded or often ignored by the mainstream media. Only those who choose to remain silent or unheard exist (Roy 2006, p.330). A kind of marginalisation that operates on a micro level has emerged in the neoliberal period and is now the main focus of subaltern studies. With a focus on the experiences of people in the Global South, this nuanced perspective dives into the distinct effects on people and communities. Various nations coping with problems like cultural imperialism, economic inequality, and political oppression make up the Global South, an important subaltern group in the modern world.

In the wake of ongoing geopolitical challenges, subaltern studies provide a lens through which to study these groups' identity construction and challenges to hegemonic narratives. Essentially, subaltern studies get a better knowledge of the Global South by amplifying the voices of the marginalised and by shedding light on micro-marginalization.

South Asian literature from the modern age illustrates the region's ongoing fight for economic equality, social fairness, and human rights. A more diverse and interdependent literary world is the result of voices from these nations added to a worldwide literary conversation that values diversity while questioning the supremacy of Western ideals. In the midst of this terrible chill, two literary giants—Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga—stand out as strong contrasts. Using fiction, they create narratives that shed awareness on the human catastrophes occurring in the Global South, challenging the geopolitical confrontation and the subsequent erasure of their voices. Their works have the potential to provide a platform to the marginalised people of the Global South, whose struggles and aspirations are often ignored.

Theoretical Framework

- Within the framework of a fractured East-West narrative, this research study seeks to examine the literary works of Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga as advocates of the Global South. There are many schools of thought in international political economy when it comes to the

the subject of North-South divides and global inequality (Frany, 2016) Therefore, it will analyse how Dependency and Post-development theories contribute to the discourse around global justice while also reflecting subaltern reality. This examination takes a look at the works of the writers through the lenses of two different ideas.

Dependency theory: Developed "core" countries unfairly trade with and drain resources from emerging "peripheral" states, according to dependency theory, a perspective on global inequality. A key figure in Dependency theory, Theotonio Don Santos, describes dependency as "a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected" (Dos Santos 1970, p. 231). This wealth transfer has its origins in historical colonialism. Because of this phenomena, the periphery remains economically and technologically behind and reliant on the central region. Despite the difficulties of the modern day, dependency theory "can still be a useful tool for explaining global inequalities" (Farthy, 2016), which it does by promoting the idea of the global south. Some think it simplifies things too much and ignores internal concerns in outlying countries. Critiques of neocolonialism, unfair trade, and the exploitation of underdeveloped nations by multinational businesses still find resonance in its main message.

Post-development theory: As an alternative to dependency theory, post-development theory questions the Western-imposed paradigm of "development" that prioritises the centre over the periphery. After emerging from the toxic quagmire that is modernity, science, reason, technology, consumption, the nation-state, globalisation, and development, the majority of society may finally create and govern, according to Stuart Corbridge.

from the ground up in their own lives. It would seem that living simply, being thrifty, and obtaining one's essentials from one's own backyard are the secrets to a happy existence. As stated by Corbridge (1998) on page 142.... It contends that development often worsens inequalities, upends indigenous traditions, and puts profit above people and the environment. Supporters argue for different ways forward, highlighting the importance of varied communities' self-determination, local knowledge, and sustainable practices. While post-development theory has its detractors, it really starts important discussions about other ways of looking at development and how to give underrepresented groups a say in how their futures turn out.

Analytical Study and Discussion

- **Arundhati Roy as a Post-development critique**
- Through the lens of post-development theory, Roy's fictional works, such as *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*, transform into scathing criticisms of Western-imposed development practices. She uses magical realism and subversive storytelling to bring attention to the devastating consequences for oppressed communities, such as the prioritisation

of economic growth above cultural preservation, environmental preservation, and community welfare. The need to acknowledge local knowledge and alternative development pathways is an inherent aspect of post-development theory within the context of the Global South, and Roy's focus on marginalised groups like minority communities in Kerala exemplifies this. As the story progresses, her characters grow into influential personalities who question established wisdom and advocate for local autonomy. Furthermore, the rigid power systems are dismantled by Roy's post-modernist tendencies, which are evident in her broken narrative and non-linear structures.

An illuminating survey of post-development philosophical ideas as they pertain to the Global South is provided by *The God of Small Things*. This book examines the economic and social problems of the Indian state of Kerala in depth, posing questions about the efficacy of conventional Western theories of development. Roy skillfully weaves together

historically significant while drawing attention to the enduring impacts of colonialism on oppressed populations. Consistent with post-development principles, the initiative addresses pressing environmental concerns, challenges cultural homogeneity, and highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge. In order to elaborate on this idea, Roy takes aim at the Western paradigm of development, prompting Ammu to mockingly say, "Ha Ha Ha! Going to Oxford didn't make a person clever." (Page 56, Roy, 1997) Many perspectives and the difficulties of post-development theory are better understood after reading the book. As

Erica Prosser points out, "post-development encourages alternatives to development but is condemned for failing to conceptualise realistic alternatives." This theory often inappropriately prioritises local and cultural knowledge and belief above contemporary and Western thought. On page 36, Prosser states in 2010. "They didn't know then, that soon they would go in. that they would cross the river and be where they weren't supposed to be, with a man they weren't supposed to love." This allusion to Roy's impending doom persists throughout the book.(Roy, 1975, 55) In addition, the post-development criticism finds resonance in Roy's work because it depicts the aftereffects of industrialization and the risks and inequalities that might result from unchecked economic growth. The river Meenachal, according to Roy's description, "was warm,...Grey green... with fish in it." With the sky and trees in it. As a result of the western growth paradigm, the formerly breathtaking beauty of the ecosphere has now diminished, as mentioned on page 123, under the shattered yellow moon. This is how Roy advocates for environment and ecological throughout the book as he progressively condemns industrialization.

Building on her earlier works, Arundhati Roy's *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* continues the conversation on life after development. The novel, according to a review in the *Boston Globe*, "critically challenges Western-centric modernity against the backdrop of India's changing sociopolitical environment and examines post-colonial legacies that continue to influence contemporary society." "Once in a decade, if we're fortunate, a book rises from the depths of existence to pose the question that

seems to be the most pressing issue of our global age." A report from the *Boston Globe*,

in 2017 In contrast to the uniformity often associated with traditional development models, the narrative embraces cultural diversity by bringing together muted marginalised experiences and many perspectives. 'Gulabiya Vechania,' a character we meet in the book, is a victim of a development project. A mega-dam project necessitates his exile from his home, and this lyrical rhyme reflects Gulabiya's trauma: "You've snatched poor folks' daily bread..." And instead have charged for their crap (Roy, 2017 p. 112). In this tale, we also see a figure named comrade Revathy who is fighting for a plot of woodland. Since "Operation Green Hunt is announced by the Government," the government sought to purchase the territory of the "Adivasis" tribe for contemporary development once again. "They can make a steel township and mining" (p.421) as to why Post-development critiques of large-scale projects that can worsen inequality and marginalisation are congruent with Roy's analysis of the effects of political and economic progress on local communities. To further illuminate the complex interplay between regional dynamics and international demands on the South, the book addresses ecological and environmental justice concerns.

- **Aravind Adiga reviving Dependency Theory Perspective:**
- As we shift our focus to dependence theory, we may see how Adiga's works, such as *Amnesty*, *The White Tiger*, *Last Man in Tower*, and *Selection Day*, depict the neocolonial reality of ongoing exploitation of peripheral nations. The vicious dynamics of class struggle and structural exploitation embedded in the

global order are brought to light by Adiga's characters as they fight against economic disparities and relentlessly strive for upward mobility within a corrupt system. His inclination towards Marxist and socialist ideas, expressed in a Dickensian manner, highlights his critique of the capitalism system's inherent inequalities. Stories told by Adiga's characters serve as warnings about the impossibility of achieving personal success and the limits of navigating a system set up to keep people exploited. The White Tiger by Aravind Adiga is a great example of how Dependency Theory may be used. Looking at the book from this perspective shows how Adiga attacks the unfairness and exploitation in the international economic system, which upholds the "structure of dependence" (Dos Santos 1970), especially in the dynamic between wealthy and impoverished nations. "While neither of us speaks English, there are certain matters that are better expressed in that language," Balram tells the Chinese prime minister. This represents a fair understanding of the dominance of the "core" North nations over the "periphery" South (Adiga 2008, P. 3). Three major aspects of dependency theory—unequal exchange, external dependence, and the historical backdrop of the colonial legacy—are depicted in the novel. The uneven flow of resources between the centre and the periphery is shown by Balram's story, which begins in rural poverty and ends in urban slavery. "Go to Old Delhi, behind the Jama Masjid, and look at the way they keep chickens there in the market...stuffed tightly into wire-mesh cages, packed as tightly as worms in a belly...." Balram writes, describing the Rooster Coop as a place where Western

corporations and the local elite enrich themselves through the extraction of cheap labour from Indian workers. a terrible smell emanating from the whole enclosure—They look around and find their brothers' organs spread out. They are aware that they are the target. Nevertheless, they show no signs of revolting. They make no attempt to flee the coop... on page 173 As he and many others are ensnared in a never-ending cycle of exploitation, he watches as Western firms and the local elite benefit from India's resource extraction and cheap labour. Later works by Aravind Adiga, such as Last Man in Tower and Selection Day, expand the scope of the assault beyond only revealing the weaknesses of the Western neoliberal paradigm; they also show the devastating effects of this model on the social fabric of the Global South. Last Man in Tower's protagonist, Master Ji, a middle-class shopkeeper with strong moral principles and a respect for tradition, becomes a tragic symbol of the many victims of crony capitalism. The novel's central message is that "in this society, there is a line: on one side

Here we have the guys who are unable to do anything, and over there are the ones who are capable. Moreover, not even a single one will go above that threshold. Would you want to?" Diga (2011) states on page 174 His plight exemplifies the obvious injustices brought about by this economic paradigm, which is especially true for developing nations fighting for independence in the wake of the Cold War, which mirror the unrest in the Global South. Because "The so-called West comprises states at very different living standards, models of development, military expenditures, and cultures," Selection Day similarly delves into the poisonous

cultural entanglements of the West, showing how apparently neutral artefacts like cricket can be utilised as tools of power. According to Kürzdörfer and Narlikar (2023), The novel's subtle exploration of this Western-dominated sport brings attention to the enduring colonial legacies; as Adiga puts it, "We are the brown boys playing the white man's game" (2016, p. 84), which shapes aspirations and careers in the Global South and encourages a hidden dependence on external validation systems. Through these well crafted stories, Adiga paints a vivid picture of the intricate ways in which Western cultural and economic systems penetrate and influence communities in the Global South, resulting in a legacy of reliance and exploitation. In light of his scathing critiques, we must reevaluate potential avenues for the development and autonomy of the Global South and analyse the real ramifications of each. Since "the Periphery" or the 'South' is defined by socioeconomic and political backwardness, measured against Western values and standards, and this simply cannot be ignored, Danny's refugee experience becomes a vivid microcosm of the Global South's struggle against the neoliberal empire in Adiga's *Amnesty*. As the narrator comments, "Many of us flee chaos to come here," the oppressed southern populace looks to the Core nations with positive aspirations (Frany 2016). The Australian people are law-abiding, cheerful, and meticulous. The key to making adjustments here is grasping the idea of the unbreakable rule. However, Danny's experiences are seen as conflicting and inconsistent throughout the book (Adiga 2020, p. 11).

was perplexing for Danny since he had always seen himself as a suit-wearing guy who had come to Sydney. Wool suits with

woollen cuffs, silver buttons, and a pocket for a silk handkerchief. (page 24) "Only one tailor in Batticaloa could cut a high-class suit like that, and only four people in town could afford something like that" (p. 24), which further highlights the North-South gap. Low wages support both his marginalisation and the capitalist neoliberal economic paradigm that he endures as a depressed cleaner in Australia. The West's reliance on cheap labour and resources from the Global South perpetuates a cycle of exploitation for Danny and many others, as shown in dependency theory's severe assessment. The essence of reliance, however, goes beyond monetary considerations. Perceptions about Danny's native country, Sri Lanka, and its complex realities are shaped by Western media, which is seen as a weapon by "policy-makers and think tankers in the West are rejecting the term (Global South), countries from the Global South are reclaiming it" (Kürzdörfer and Narlikar, 2023). "The easiest thing in the world, becoming invisible to white people, who don't see you anyway;..." Adiga (2020, page 49) This dominance of the world story echoes possible marginalised voices, prompting a reevaluation of power dynamics in the modern period of globalisation. There is more to Danny's story than just being a victim. He shows signs of defiance in his determination and thoughts. He learns the ins and outs of the system, becomes fluent in its language, and even experiences moments of unity with other migrants, particularly from "periphery" nations, as described by Adiga in *The White Tiger*: "the belief that the future of the world lies with yellow and brown man now that our erstwhile master, the white-skinned man, has wasted himself through buggery, phone usage, and drug abuse,..." (Chapters 5-7, Adiga 2008) Taking down these exploitative structures and a legal stamp might be the definition of true amnesty. The key is for people in the Global South to speak out, change the story about how dependent they are, and create conditions for genuine freedom.

Conclusion

Aravind Adiga and Arundhati Roy are two prominent writers who have recently come out to support the South Asia, with their stories taking unique crucial positions. Looking at Arundhati Roy's works from the perspective of post-development theory, it becomes clear that she strongly criticises the development paradigm that was imposed by the West. Roy highlights the plight of oppressed communities and calls for the value of indigenous wisdom and non-Western approaches to progress. The importance of collective self-determination is emphasised in her stories, which question prevailing ideas. Aravind Adiga, on the other hand, shows how the global economic system continues to silence the voices of peripheral states when seen through the lens of Dependency Theory. As cautionary tales, Adiga's protagonists highlight the futility of upward development within a rigged framework and the fundamental disparities of the capitalist system. He broadens the criticism by examining the destructive effects of the Western neoliberal paradigm on the social fabric of the Global South, and with a literary sword he cuts through its shortcomings. The works of both authors enhance our understanding of the hopes and struggles of the Global South. Cultural preservation and ecological fairness are central to Roy's post-development view, whereas Adiga's critique of Dependency Theory incorporates the harsh facts of economic exploitation and class conflict. In light of Prime Minister Modi's statement that "The voice of Global South needs to set its own tone," their collaborative work invites readers to reconsider long-standing patterns of development. It will take all of us working together to break free of the shackles of our dependence system and our precarious situation. (Prime Minister Modi 2023, G20 Summit) and calling for new ways of doing things that put the needs of people in the Global South first and respect their individual sovereignty.

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