

Visage Of Feminist Discourse In Arundhati Roy's Work: A Comparative Study Of Her "World's Social Forum Speeches" And "The God Of Small Things"

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the purpose and genuine intention of Arundhati Roy in her work *The God of Small Things* and her "World Social Forum Speeches." It also does a comparative analysis of the depiction of feminism in both works. Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach that investigates the connections between language and the socio-political aspects in which it is used. It explores issues like gender, politics, ethnicity, economy, and religion that are interlinked with the use of language in social settings. The present study does the critical discourse analysis of *The God of Small Things* and Roy's 'World Social Forum Speeches.' The results of this study are based on the CDA model of Van Dijk. Van Dijk's CDA primarily studies how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in socio-

political contexts. The findings of this study reveal that Van Dijk's model is equally suitable to understand the writer's concept of feminism in her written and oral texts. The results of this research paper show how Arundhati Roy has come up with a different concept of feminism as she vehemently criticizes those modern actresses who do not want to use the tag of feminist for themselves but at the same time pretend to fight for their liberty and rights. The study also highlights the key similarities and differences between Roy's and other feminists' approaches to the concept. Toni Morrison has advocated for the rights of black women as in her society; women were treated as inferior not because of their gender but also for their race.

On the other hand, Arundhati Roy indicates a double exploitation of women in Indian society, where they are marginalized racially and also on the basis of gender. Virginia Woolf advocated for the intellectual power of women. She says if we give women a separate room, she can provide us with brilliant artistic work. Likewise, Arundhati Roy is also fighting for women considered incapable of decision-making and wielding power. In addition, the results of this paper show how Arundhati Roy is advocating for women's rights through her writings and speeches by using different narrative techniques (being first person in her speeches and third person in her writings). In her speeches, she advocates for women's rights in the first person, and in her writings, she, as a third-person observer, comments on the plight of Indian women.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Feminism, Van Dijk Model, The God of Small Things.

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this paper is to analyze gender inequality and its depiction in spoken and written text in a social context. The primary aim of this study is to examine Arundhati Roy's work *The God of Small Things* and her social forum speeches to understand the hidden

meanings and intentions in context. Besides, this study also examines the different theories of feminism according to other feminists and justifies their concepts by contrasting their perspectives. Different feminists have talked about women's rights in their style, but the agenda of all these feminists was the same: to fight for women's freedom. The objective of Critical Discourse Analysis is to understand the hidden meanings correctly. It is different from other approaches, methods that focus only on language use. It mainly focuses on the social aspects and how people achieve specific effects, such as building trust, creating doubt, stirring up emotions, managing stress, etc. Critical Discourse Analysis is a methodology used to understand how people perceive or interpret the message in their social context. Discourse Analysis focuses on the more significant contents of language or communication instead of focusing on smaller chunks. CDA analyzes the text of any level, whether smaller or bigger.

Literature Review

The English word "discourse" first emerged from the Latin word "discursus," which implies conversation or dialogue. But modern science gives speech comprehensive definitions. Discourse is presented here in the context of linguistics, mainly applied linguistics, because it touches on a wide range of facets of human existence. Two groups of linguists are designating the discourse. While one group prefers the term "Texts," another prefers the term "Speech." Fairclough (1992) divided discourse into two broad categories, emphasizing large units like paragraphs, utterances, entire texts, or genres—discourse using the word as a countable noun offering an example. According to Cook (1990), "discourse" can refer to novels, brief talks, or groans. The distinctions between message, text, and discourse were made clear by Hodge and Kress in 1988. Communication, which has a social content, purpose, source, and objective, is the most diminutive semiotic form. Text and discourse are the two bigger units. "CDA is utilized to evaluate critical discourses, including

politics, race, gender, social class, and hegemony," according to Van Dijk.

Van Dijk perceives a text of various layers and structures, each supporting the others. He separates it into three levels. Macro structure comes first. By examining the topic or theme presented in a story, one can observe a piece's overall or broad meaning. The superstructure comes next. This discourse structure pertains to the text's textual organization or how the text's components are put together to form the novel. The microstructure is the third. It is the meaning of a speech that may be understood from a word, sentence, statement, clause, paraphrase, or other short portion of a text. Discourse frameworks are a useful lens through which to examine the use of rhetoric and persuasion in communication. Message: According to van Dijk, all texts may be examined using those components. Despite its diversity, it is made up of several components that work together as a whole to assist one another. Text, social cognition, and social context are the three dimensions that van Dijk attributes to discourse. Dijk creates a comprehensive analysis by combining the three discourse dimensions. The text's use of textual organization and discourse techniques to support a particular theme is what is being evaluated. Rahimi further asserted that CDA promotes the notion that improving critical thinking benefits a society where justice and equality are actualized. Power is shared equally among all population members. In the face of inequality and unequal power distribution, this mental capacity inspires readers and listeners to act by enabling them to identify the prejudiced and judgemental language. The view that the mental models we hold determine or trigger our attentiveness (Ikramullah et al., 2023). Learning gets affected by attitudes (Ramzan et al., 2023). Mindful leaders fosters growth and quality of life and language changes course of emotions (Javaid et al., 2023).

The God of the Small Things portrays the plight of Indian women, including their great suffering, concerns, and anxieties, as well as their submission, persecution, and

undeserved humiliation in a culture dominated by men; it illustrates how challenging it is for women to develop a sense of "identity" in a society that is entirely hostile and envious. The typical Indian woman's social structure is convoluted and filled with ifs and buts. Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, Rahel, and Margaret Kochamma are a few examples of strong female characters who demonstrate it. Through the narrative, four generations are followed.

Regarding the ladies of the first generation, the novel's author says nothing. The mother of Pappachi is Aleyooty Ammachi. She continued to exist beside her spouse Rev. Ipe's painting in an oil portrait. Ipe grinned, but Aleyooty Ammachi appeared more uncertain. Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are second generation. Reverend E. John Ipe, the priest of the Mar Thomas Church, is the father of Baby Kochamma. Only two of his seven children lived to adulthood. Benan John Ipe, her brother, and Baby are the other survivors. Navomy Ipe is her real name, but everyone calls her Baby. When she was eighteen, she fell in love with Father Mulligan, a young, attractive Irish monk.

The young lady and the intrepid Jesuit were quacking with a zeal that was not Christian. With special authorization from the Vatican, she underwent a conversion to Roman Catholicism and joined a convent in Madras. She thought it would provide her with opportunities to see Father Mulligan. The marriage was unsuccessful. She was sent to study abroad, and when she returned after two years, she had earned a diploma in ornamental gardening. She does, however, recall Father Mulligan. She takes care of herself and starts each new writing in her diary with the words "I love you, I love you."

She also tries to stay in touch with him, and he reciprocates. He began reading Hindu scriptures to evaluate them critically, but the investigation finally led him to become a Christian. He converts to Vaishnavism and enrolls in an ashram north of Rishikesh. Every Diwali,

he writes to her, and each New Year, she sends him a card. Baby safeguards those stuff. She does not lose her status as a widow when Father Mulligan passes away. Instead, she gives greater attention to makeup, expresses a keen interest in lotteries, enjoys watching color television, and ultimately gives up gardening. She also behaves like a teenager, even at the age of 83. She gave up gardening after fifty years and fell in love with dish antennae.

She is snooty in every way and is well-versed in literary terms. Theoretically, she was adamant that a divorced daughter had no place. It was absurd to have a love marriage's divorced daughter. She could not bear having a divorced daughter from a love marriage between two communities. She, therefore, never put up with Ammu and the twins staying at her residence. Baby goes to extreme measures to become a Christian to meet the man of her dreams since she dislikes Ammu for the same reasons. She condones her brother's illicit relationships with unknown women but disapproves of Ammu for flouting the family's moral standards. This demonstrates how Roy does not promote her female characters as perfect. She is not taken advantage of by the male or destroyed by social mores.

Arundhati Roy's criticism of feminists'

When Parineeti Chopra was chosen as the campaign's brand ambassador last year, she expressed her desire to be a positive role model for females while avoiding the label of a feminist. In an interview, Priyanka Chopra stated, "The word feminist has been criticized; there is no respect for it anymore." Indian author Arundhati Roy, 50, recently spoke with HuffPost about her displeasure with these concepts. She said, "I get so irritated when I hear 'cool' young women claim 'I am not a feminist. Without addressing any specific 'cool' young females, Roy stated, "Many individuals have fought long and tremendous struggles to create the liberties we have. How do we cede such territories? How can we think that some natural event has granted us these freedoms? No!

They have all been wrested, Roy continued. Roy questioned, "I mean, do they realize what wars were fought? We have all of the freedoms we do now because of feminism. Many women have fought and paid a tremendous price for where we are now. We didn't get it just because we were born smart or talented. Who fought to ensure that women had the basic right to vote? the suffragettes. No country has ever achieved freedom without engaging in a lengthy conflict.

Go back under your veil, sit in the kitchen, and listen to orders if you're not a feminist. You do not want to do that, do you? Gratitude to the feminists She believes that all of that independence is hanging by a thread, however. "It is beautiful to see women in India become more independent, but this ominous conservative undercurrent also runs parallel to this change. Do you recall the Afghan women? They were doctors and surgeons when we were kids, yet they also partied and dressed stylishly. And this? We must be aware of the risks. Roy said in the blink of an eye, we could go back hundreds of years.

Language plays a crucial role in every sphere of life. We can judge people and understand their ideologies and intentions behind their communication. The current study aims to analyze Arundhati Roy's speeches and her written work. This research paper uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in this regard. The results are declared while using the CDA model of Van Dijk.

Objective of Research

1. This study investigates the relationship between Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis and a new discourse. The novel's language is where the researcher begins the investigation in this paper to expose and reveal the hidden ideologies and power structures that underlie the words and phrases in *The God of Small Things*.

2. To shed light on the gender preconceptions that are embedded in those social encounters, the researcher will concentrate on the social conventions that are used

to produce distinct English expressions. The text's macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure will be primarily discussed.

3. This study illustrates theoretically the importance of using a linguistic approach to analyze speech, especially female speech, in *The God of Small Things*. Discourse analysis is a branch of research that focuses on how real-world language is used by individuals to communicate. According to Stubbs (1983), discourse analysis is a branch of study that examines and analyses language typically used in oral and written communication, for example, by examining how language is used in daily interactions and, in some instances, referring to the Van Dijk technique.

Research Questions

This research study has been conducted in the light of the following questions:

1. How differently is Feminism depicted in *The God of Small Things* and the writings of other feminist writers?
2. Which aspects of Feminism have been discussed by Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* and some of her speeches?
3. How is feminist discourse developed in the novel *The God of Small Things* and other speeches of Arundhati Roy?

Research Methodology

Research methodology describes the way/method that a researcher uses to conduct this research. Its objective is to examine the methodology utilized by the Critical Discourse Analysis of the language used by women in Roy's *The God of Small Things*. This chapter includes a detailed explanation of the research design, data gathering strategy, data collection technology, study objective, and study significance. It also addresses the restrictions of the current research investigation.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* female language has been examined using critical discourse analysis and the Van Dijk model. According to Van Dijk (2004), a subfield of discourse analysis research called critical discourse analysis focuses on how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are expressed, reproduced, and resisted through text and speech in social and political contexts. With such a rebellious study, critical discourse analyzers aim to detect, depict, and eventually confront societal inequities (Van Dijk, 1998). Griffin (2005) claims that discourses "have meanings, force, and effects in a social situation." While CDA primarily focuses on "discourse," which cannot be understood without context. The text of the work above is rendered using the author's voice and the dialogue of her invented characters. The focus is on how Arundhati Roy represents women's language in *The God of Small Things*.

According to Van Dijk, there are three stages of analysis. Language-related, social-related, and cognitive ideas are all incorporated into Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. He utilizes cognition as the middle layer in a three-tier paradigm that considers discourse and society. According to Van Dijk's (1983) socio-cognitive approach, speech is a form of social practice consistent with Fairclough's critical viewpoint. Discursive practice needs to be emphasized. As the mechanism connecting texts to society, he places more emphasis on social cognition. He contends that CDA must consider the various social cognitions that social collectivities share (groups, organizations, and institutions). To be more specific, he defines social cognition as "socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups, and interactions, as well as mental processes including interpretation, thinking and debate, inferencing, and learning. The three levels of discourse analysis are further divided by Van Dijk (2004) into macro, super, and micro levels.

In the first stage of the Van Dijk model, the researcher has tried to analyze the text of Arundhati Roy's written

and spoken text and find out how she uses different techniques to convey her message. In the spoken text, she conveys her message in the first person; in the written text, she shares her message in the third person. Through her characters, she conveys her message to readers. The social analysis stage of the Van Dijk Model is related to the use of power, and we can see in the findings of this paper how women are treated as inferior beings. They have no authority or power. As in *The God of Small Things*, Mammachi was a very hard-working and resolute woman who ran a pickle business to feed her family. Instead of all these efforts, she was beaten by her husband, Pappachi, every night with a brass vase. The patriarchal caste system was one of the main reasons for the mistreatment of women in *The God of Small Things*.

Findings

1. The research findings reveal women's position in larger societies where they are treated inferiorly.
2. It also reveals through CDA how individual's behavior towards gender is reflected in their discourses.
3. It can also be part of the findings on how Arundhati Roy distinguishes Feminism in her written text and speeches.
4. They also say that power and identity are essential for people to keep their status safe and high-ranked in Indian society.
5. The data also highlights the main factors that make women inferior in society.
6. The study also depicts how a feminist can advocate for women's freedom.

Discussion

The outcomes of this research were to find out the difference between various feminists' perspectives and to justify Van Dijk's DCA model for this research article. So, here we are with outcomes; The patriarchal, male-dominated society depicted in *The God of Small Things* is

rife with prejudice and discrimination on the grounds of caste, class, and gender. It illustrates the gap between the wealthy and the poor, the high and the low, the mighty and the weak, and the touchable and the untouchable.

The novel effectively cuts through clothes of nationality, caste, and religion to reveal humanity's bare bones. Ammu's life is depicted by Arundhati Roy from childhood to youth until she dies. She was deprived of a decent education because she was a girl. Her father was so frustrated that he was unsatisfied with beating up his wife and children, tearing the curtains, kicking the furniture, and breaking the table lamp. To him, marriage was not a pious relationship but a point of domination of a man over a woman.

Injustice makes bitter and expressive writing discourse modify response set (Javaid & Mahmood, 2023). Ethnicity and culture affects motivation (Ramzan et al., 2023). Resilient people helps cure themselves (Riaz et al., 2021) and social support improves quality of life (Adeeb et al., 2017) and social adjustment (Maqbool et al., 2021). Cognition affect the discourse and perception of reader (Ramzan et al., 2023). With a strong belief in how social structures affect interpersonal relationships and people's individual behavior, Arundhati Roy exposes caste prejudice, gender discrimination, colorism, and racial prejudice. The outdated customs sparked rebellious ideas, and Roy has raised a voice of opposition through her characters. It clearly shows how these socially oppressed people are treated unfairly because of their gender. Through the character of Ammu, sexist treatment of women for their fundamental needs and passions is unacceptable.

Black men's insensitivity to black women caused them enormous suffering in the black community, especially for poor black women. They had adopted the ideals of the country's dominant white male culture—the socialization of the black guys to male superiority. The sexism of black men deeply impacted black male-female

interactions. They were forced to perform physical labor in rivalry with them. Therefore, their relations turned out to be more comradeship than male dominance/female subjugation. "They were forced to undertake physical work in competition with them. (Morrison, 1988, p. 19) Black women are both a ship and a safe haven.

Race is also a major cause of discrimination for both males and females. However, in this background, women have to face double discrimination ___in terms of gender as well as race. Many feminists have pointed out that race, in combination with gender, further aggravates discrimination. The current study's findings are comparable to those (Dèsirè, 2016). According to that study, Black Feminism is crucial to establishing and maintaining Black families in the United States. It highlights the fact that racism is a significant factor in the oppression of women of color and that black women specifically experience a variety of racist and sexist forms of oppression. The same problems were faced by women in her society, as can be shown if we study Toni Morrison's writing. Based on both their gender and race, women were viewed as inferior human beings.

Feminist word is a tag used by those females who fight for women's liberation and their rights. The current study results resemble those (Kaur & Nagaich, 2019) According to that study, a Feminist is a person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. The goal of feminists is to end all forms of male dominance. The purpose of feminist research is to promote gender equality on a global scale (Kaur & Nagaich, 2019). Regarding the definition of a feminist, Arundhati Roy concurs. She has criticized Parineeti Chopra for not wanting to identify as a feminist.

Race or gender are the major causes of male superiority over females, but other than these, intellectual superiority is another reason that is responsible for the feminist movement. The current study's findings are reported in (Said, 1977; Kümbet, 2012). The study found that certain order dualities, such as male/female,

white/black, culture/nature, west/east, human/nature, white/black, conscious/unconscious, logic/emotion, strong/weak, and spirit/body, occur in our society, with the former dominating the latter. For instance, the West is superior and more cultured; consciousness is superior to the unconscious. Nevertheless, the East is inferior; white people hold more power than black people, and reason is preferred to feeling. In some societies, man is superior to woman, and culture is superior to nature (Said, 1977; Kümbet, 2012).

Roy, Morrison, and Woolf all have the same opinion about feminism. If we glance at Morrison's work, she is fighting against discrimination based on black and white. Roy is confronting discrimination caused by strong and weak, as males are regarded as more powerful than females. Woolf opinion is linked to conscious and unconscious as she fought for the intellectual superiority of women. Males were seen as being more intelligent than females, just like in Woolf's society. Woolf demonstrates how women might stop the war by obtaining intellectual independence. According to her, "A woman must have money and a room of her money" (Woolf, 1929, p. 4). According to Woolf, no one can achieve true happiness without intellectual independence.

Every individual should be free as it is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. But in many regions, freedom is only associated with man. "What's yours is mine, and mine is also yours" (Roy, 1997). Even though Ammu and Chacko are brothers, they did not receive the same care when they were young, which is an example of "double standards." Being a man, Chacko had a right to the family's possessions. A self-described Marxist, Chacko dislikes Ammu and treats the woman who works with him as unimportant. According to Roy (1997), "He would call attractive factory employees to his room and, under the guise of lecturing them on labor rights and trade union law, flirt with them outrageously." This demonstrates that because Chacko is a man, he has

no issue bothering women sexually at work. He doesn't see women as people, only objects.

The findings of the current investigation are also presented in (Omvedt, 1990; Learner, 1994). According to that study, Roy is raising a voice for women's liberation so that she may express her opinions while still being a member of a patriarchal society. This supports a larger struggle for women's freedom to make their own decisions regarding their bodies, financial independence, freedom to choose their lives and sexual orientation, and liberation from all forms of oppression (Omvedt, 1990; Learner, 1994). According to Roy, everyone, male or female, has the fundamental right to freedom of speech. Omvedt also supports women's right to financial independence and freedom of speech.

Material items are necessary for intellectual freedom. Intellectual independence is essential to poetry. Women have been impoverished, not just for the past 200 years, but since the dawn of existence...So far, women have had no chance to write poetry. This is why I've stressed the need of having money and personal space so often (1929, Wolf, p. 11)

If we talk about Arundhati Roy's concept of feminism, she is trying to prove that women are considered inferior beings in society because they don't enjoy the same liberty as men do. Women have no right to be involved in family matters particularly related to power identity. They are considered toys in the hands of some Brat known as Husband. So, by analyzing all these three views of different feminists, researchers have tried to draw a distinct line between the perspectives of these views. So, that is the significant difference between Arundhati Roy's concept of feminism and other feminists.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Arundhati Roy vehemently advocates for women's rights through her written text and speeches. However, she has employed different methods to convey her message in written and spoken

discourses. The study's findings reveal the differences in feminist approaches of the writers. However, all the writers seem to have a consensus that women are treated as inferior in a patriarchal society. Unequal power distribution and dual exploitation (in the form of gender and ethnicity) of women make them less worthy. In addition, it has been shown that at different ages, different feminists raised their voices for women's freedom and rights. Each one raised her voice regarding financial independence, intellectual independence, and dual exploitation of women. All the feminists have shown through their writings that suppression of women's rights is unacceptable. They (including Roy) contend that women must be courageous to fight for their rights and live according to their own choices.

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