Chapter-4

A detailed study of the language & style used in Arundhati Roy’s Essays.
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I

Arundhati Roy’s essays are a severe critique of Western imperial systems and influences, and the policies of the government of India. Describing and criticizing the behaviour of westernization entering into India, she suggests another meaning beyond western influence in the essays. Through the use of irony and satire in her essays, the author represents multilayered post-colonial perspectives as she does through satire, irony and characterization in her sole novel, *The God of Small Things*. In her criticism of the colonial, imperial and capitalist forces, she “has been in the business of keeping count of the small things, burdensome things whose loss goes undocumented in public records” since her prize winning novel in 1997.
Arundhati Roy's essays are very personal, reflective and thought-provoking and radically incisive. Many new innovative techniques such as coining of new words and ungrammatical structures are abundantly found in almost her essays. In the presentation of the theme of her essays, she introduces new topics such as 'neo-liberalism,' 'economic terrorism,' 'state terrorism' and 'privatization.' Her descriptions are very vivid. Her words are fierce and forceful. Her way of writing is very different from others. She does not follow many conventional grammatical rules of writing.

As Arundhati Roy's intellectual political commitment grows more intensely, it seems the medium of essay as a mode of expression suits her temperament better. She seems to feel that it is time to speak directly to the listeners or the readers. Her consistent writing in the form of essays suggests that she is now determined to set herself some political task in writing 'straightforward nonfiction piece' to use her own words. Many critics have expressed different opinions over her generic shift. More hostile critics of the writer look at her as irresponsible, ill-informed analyst, an interloper, and dilettante. But for many readers, her essays are amazingly incisive. Murari Prasad, a critic of Roy also critically looks at her shift. He remarks:

She moved on from fiction's contrived corridors to an open, well-lighted non-fictional floor. However, even in the course of such generic transition she has continued to “juggle with the forbidden” and put her mouth where her money is.²

When she was asked why she did not write fiction anymore, her answer may be quoted: “Because, I have the strong feeling that we are living in a time in which
writers have to take a position. I feel under a tremendous pressure just now to respond to things like the war in Iraq.”

Most of the essays were first delivered as lectures and published in several news magazines in India and abroad. The most remarkable feature of Arundhati Roy’s essays is perhaps her devotion to “ordinariness.” In place of poetic prose used in her novel, Roy inserts statistical data and many factual accounts in these essays with which she can translate some distant and far-fetched events into a personal and comprehensible experience to her audience and readers. She plays the role of a good teacher in bringing some distant incidents easily and vividly comprehensible to the readers using the colloquial, ordinary prose, the corporal press of bodies against one’s skin, the repetition, and most importantly the translation of a distant people into the known parents, lovers, colleagues, or siblings. In her essay, “Peace and the new Corporate Theology,” she says: “That’s one hundred halls full of people like this one. That’s one hundred halls full of friends, parents, siblings, colleagues, lovers like you.”

This prose is found a departure from her “lush green” prose of her novel. Moreover, Bishnupriya Ghosh very aptly comments on her language in the following lines:

... Roy’s non-fictional essays are more often than not oratorical, deploying denotative language to create visual scenes rather than abstruse cultural allusion, starting simply but evocatively and building slowly toward a dramatic climax.
However, as in the novel, in her essays also, Arundhati Roy uses one-word and two-word sentences, incomplete and subject-less sentences, faulty spelling, capitalization, syntactical deviation, repetitions, and nonce words. Her use of one-word and two-word sentences sprinkle on many of the pages of her essays too. She does so for the purpose of laying emphasis on the word and its meaning. Examples of incomplete and ungrammatical sentences are “My death”,6 “Actually, no,”7 “No.” “Never mind,” “Just askin,”8 and “Details. Details.”9 In addition to emphasizing the meaning in some cases, these ungrammatical structures and the repetitions are meant for satirical purposes in other cases. The objective of the writer is to drive home the effect of satire beginning from her framing of the title of her essays to the choice of words and their syntactical structure.

II

“The End of Imagination” is a revolutionary essay which shows the author’s strong revolt against nuclearization in India and abroad. It is a mild satire on the arrogance and dominance of politics and above all, the drawbacks of nuclear arms and ammunition which are gaining ground all over the globe.

Overall, the essay is the author’s subjective response to India’s five nuclear tests at Pokhran in May 1998. The initial part of the essay reads like a science fiction
but is an alarmingly true warning by the author of the horrors and consequences of nuclear war. The images evoked are stark and the language terse and precise which conveys the horror of the situation. The image of the situation is very vividly given in the following description:

Our cities and forests, our fields and villages will burn for days. Rivers will turn into poison. The air will become fire. The wind will spread the flames. When everything there is to burn has burned and the fires die, smoke will rise and shut out the sun. The earth will be enveloped in darkness. There will be no day. Only interminable night.¹⁰

In this prose, the essayist employs deliberately surreal imagery which is a characteristic feature of post-colonial writing. Arundhati Roy boldly shows that those who supported the nuclear tests as a nationalist cause are obsolete. She stresses that nuclear war is not just another kind of war about the usual things, “nations and territories, gods and histories;” she instead vehemently argues that nuclear war means “The end of our children and our children’s children. Of everything we love.”¹¹ Such expressions are also found in her novel, The God of Small Things, in Chapter-2 entitled “Pappachi’s Moth”:

Pappachi’s Moth was held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. Its pernicious ghost—grey, furry and with unusually dense dorsal tufts—haunted every house that he ever lived in. It tormented him and his children and his children’s children.¹²
Her personal reaction to the nuclear tests is one of horror and trepidation. She reacts with tense language as, “To me, it signifies dreadful things. The end of imagination. The end of freedom actually, because, after all, that’s what freedom is. Choice.” Her mounted criticism against nuclearization having been taken into consideration, Arundhati Roy may be called an archangel of peace. A “born feminist,” a rebel, and a pacifist, she protests against any form of repression and any form of power.

Her condemnation of the BJP government’s attempt to exploit these tests as an election strategy is not just political opportunism but based on a deep rooted conviction. She expresses it in a sharp tone: “The nuclear bomb is the most anti-democratic, anti-national, anti-human, outright evil thing that man has ever made.”

Roy has viewed the nuclear tests and the rise of totalitarian tendencies in a wider perspective. She has not just attacked the BJP-led government but exposed the hypocrisies of the Congress Party as regards nuclear tests, religious fundamentalism and favouring authoritarian tendencies. In fact, she lumps the BJP and the Congress together, considers them on the same side of the political spectrum, favouring the ruling classes and suppressing the illiterate masses. She is frank and forthright in her condemnation of both the BJP and the Congress which she levels as champions of the ruling elite. She says in a satirical tone:

"While Mrs. Gandhi played hidden games with politicians and their parties, she reserved a shrill convent school rhetoric, replete with tired platitudes, to address the general public. The BJP, on
the other hand has chosen to light its fires directly on the streets and in the homes and hearts of people. It is prepared to do by day what the Congress would do only by night.\textsuperscript{16}

Such kind of expression is seen in \textit{The God of Small Things}, how the untouchable Paravan Velutha is loved by Ammu and her twin children Rahel and Estha in chapter 10 entitled “The Rivers in the Boat” and in Chapter 2 entitled “Papachi’s Moth” as in the lines, “To use by night the boat that her children used by day” \textsuperscript{17} and “To love by night the man her children loved by day.”\textsuperscript{18}

According to Roy’s political perspective, India’s nuclear bomb is just a diversion. She links it to the oppression by the ruling classes. She expresses her pity in an almost epigrammatic conclusion about this issue in a sharp tone as follows: “India’s nuclear bomb is the final act of betrayal by a ruling class that has failed its people.”\textsuperscript{19} Roy cannot be accused of being opportunistic, mercenary or catering to western interests. In “The End of Imagination,” she is bitterly critical of the US imperialism in an impassioned language and parodies the USA.

\textbf{But let us pause to give credit where it’s due. Whom must we thank for all this? The Men who made it happen. The master of the universe, Ladies and gentleman, the United States of America! Come on up here folks, stand up and take a bow. Thank you for doing this to the world. Thank you for making a difference. Thank you for showing us the way. Thank you for altering the very meaning of life.}\textsuperscript{20}
It is the cause of the deprived humanity that Arundhati Roy is trying to champion. She is highlighting their plight because she is a committed artist and believes in responsibility to society. She firmly believes that the vast sum spent on the nuclear research could have been diverted towards amelioration of the masses. This is the crux of her struggles against the Indian establishment.

Roy has taken the role of a socially conscious novelist very seriously. She is aware of the pitfalls and the gushing admiration which greeted her winning the Booker Prize which can change the animosity because of her anti-establishment stance as regards the nuclear tests. She poetically says:

'These are not just nuclear tests, they are nationalism tests,' we were repeatedly told. This has been hammered home' over and again. The bomb is India, India is the bomb. Not just India, Hindu India. Therefore, be warned, any criticism of it is not just anti-national, but anti-Hindu.  21

This is an impassioned and candid outburst by the author which is intended to shock and jolt people out of their complacency and to make them feel conscious and responsible in opposing future nuclear tests. This is Arundhati’s passionate testament against a nuclear India.

The apparent rhetoric of the title of the essay and the exaggerations of the text seem to be part of Roy’s deliberate and conscious strategy to bring home the intensity and seriousness of the problem. But these are amply compensated by the lucidity of prose interspersed with smoothly gliding phrases throughout. Nothing is obtrusive and
disturbingly aggressive about the style too. On the other hand, the essay is quite extensive in scope and touches upon wide ranging areas of human existence. Moreover, in the words of Novy Kapadia:

"Written with typical wit, lively imagination and verbal abandon, the article gives a subtle warning of the dangers of the emergence of a more integrated Big Business—Government power structure, backed up by remolded militarism, new technocratic ideologies and more advanced arts of ruling and fooling the subtle subversion of several strands of friendly fascism."

The style of expression in the essay is entirely new and original. It is not a mere play of words and sentimental outpouring as some people think. She writes with poetic beauty and unified sensibility. The image and phrases are apt and fresh and their impact is mind-blowing and thought-provoking. Though she is more careful in the handling of the words and dictions, images and symbols, she breaks the rule of grammar to coin some new terminology and to use broken sentences, bizarre phrases, and unconventional rhythms as she did in her novel. The very title of the essay suggests the irony which predicts the total holocaust of a nuclear war and total loss of human creativity. Every word, every phrase and every image that she chooses are very expertly done as to suit what they mean as clearly as possible. Throughout the essay, her satirical outrage towards the politics of India pierces through by exposing several evils in the oratorical style. She speaks as an orator in this essay.

"The Greater Common Good" is also another revolutionary essay. It deals with the author's rational and progressive attitude to the dam projects of the governments,
her sympathetic talks with the sufferers of the Narmada Valley Project, her harsh and rugged satire on the faulty decision and adverse attitude of the political parties and above all, her nostalgia for the natural scenes and sights of nature.

It is to be noted that in America there is a public debate over the possible dismantling of dams built fifty years ago. Today it has been proved that dams have done more harm than good. But, in India, dams have been continually built. There is sufficient evidence to show that good watershed management is a much more effective and economical way of storing water. In conjunction with water and harvesting and drip irrigation, it conserves water and leads to much higher agricultural productivity with less danger of salinisation, one of the results of large dams and extensive irrigation systems. The other important thing which always goes beyond our notice is that by watershed development, as suggested by the Narmada Bachao Andolan, rather than increasing the heights of the dam, the tribal people could be gainfully employed where they live. At this, Arundhati Roy observes in using forceful repetitive utterances:

The fact that they do more harm than good is no longer just conjecture. Big Dams are obsolete. They're uncool. They're undemocratic. They're a Government's way of accumulating authority (deciding who will get how much water and who will grow what where). They're a guaranteed way of taking a farmer's wisdom away from him. They're a brazen means of taking water, land and irrigation away from the poor and gifting it to the rich.23

This essay is replete with mild irony. As Arundhati Roy observes a difference between a city and a village, she seems to throw a mild irony on those who say that
India lives in the villages. But she denies it and says that India dies in her villages. She observes ironically:

India lives in her villages, we’re told in every other sanctimonious public speech. That’s bullshit. It’s just another fig leaf from the Government’s bulging wardrobe. India doesn’t live in her villages. India dies in her villages. India gets kicked around in her villages. India lives in her cities. India’s villages live only to serve her cities. Her villages are her citizens’ vassals and for that reason must be controlled and kept alive, but only just.²⁴

The other problems associated with the dam projects are the heavy loan India has taken from the World Bank for the development and given to the sufferers of the said project. The more irony is that India is in a situation where it pays back more money to the bank in interest and repayments of principal than it receives from it. We are forced to create new debts in order to be able to repay our old ones. There is a similar image in her novel, The God of Small Things, when Estha walked along the banks of the river twenty three years after he had re-returned to Ayemenem as:

Some days he walked along the banks of the river that smelled of shit, and pesticides bought with World Bank loans. Most of the fish had died. The ones that survived suffered from fin-rot and had broken out in boils.²⁵
The other drawback which Roy points out is the earthquake caused by the reservoir of the dam. In a highly metaphorical language, the essayist clearly visualizes the aftermath of such an earthquake caused by dam-constructions. The fight against building dam is compared by the author to waging a war—a war to be fought not only for quite a few tribes but saving the natural environment also. So, she says:

The war for the Narmada valley is not just some exotic tribal war, or a remote rural war or even an exclusively Indian war. It’s a war for the rivers and the mountains and the forests of the world. All sorts of warriors from all over the world, anyone who wishes to enlist, will be honored and welcomed. Every kind of soldier will be needed. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, judges, journalists, students, sportsmen, painters, actors, singers, lovers .... The borders are open, folks! Come on in.26

The last imperative sentence signifies the author’s desire for commitment and for coming closer to the people or readers.

As pointed out by Arundhati Roy, the state governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are very harsh in their dealings with the displaced people. On paper, the government of Gujarat has a lot of things for the welfare of the displaced people. But, in fact, the government of Gujarat hasn’t even managed to rehabilitate people from its own nineteen villages slated for submergence. The people of these villages are scattered to separate rehabilitation sites. In practice, it is seen that the people of the resettlement sites have to face so many obstacles and hurdles. The picture of the
resettlement sites was well painted by Arundhati Roy in a very vivid and suggestive language:

In several resettlement sites, people have been dumped in rows of corrugated tin sheds that are furnaces in summer and fridges in winter. Some of them are located in dry river beds that during the monsoon turn into fast-flowing drifts. I've been to some of these 'sites'. I've seen film footage of others: shivering children, perched like birds on the edges of charpais, while swirling waters enter their tin homes. Frightened, fevered eyes watch pots and pans carried through the doorway by the current, floating out into the flooded fields, thin father swimming after them to retrieve what they can.27

The scene she describes is hauntingly realistic. It is very painful sight that she describes in a spontaneous flow of words using images as “that are furnaces in summer and fridges in winter” and “shivering children, perched like birds on the edges of charpais.” She uses alliterations in this description giving a poetic effect. For example, the sound effects in these grouping of words such as, ‘fast-flowing,’ ‘Frightened fevered,’ ‘flooded fields,’ and ‘pots and pans’ picturize the scenes as well as suggest the agony of the people.

The poor people of these resettlement sites have to starve to death for want of food. They have to walk several kilometers to the nearest town to offer themselves as wage labourers. It is an irony. In those forests they gathered everything they needed—food, fuel, fodder etc. In their old houses, though they had no money, they were insured. If the rains failed, they had the forests where they could get all the things of
their day to day life. Moreover, in the villages they felt a sense of affinity, congeniality and above all, stability. But here in the town, they are suffering from a sense of claustrophobia and nostalgia. This essay may be termed as an elegy on the pathetic and miserable condition of the villagers of the big dam area. Arundhati Roy weeps on the absolute neglect of the poor and the deserted.

The essay also shows the tyranny and injustice, insult and abuse inflicted upon the Dalits by the wealthy people of the country. The dalits of this area were badly beaten when they objected to their land ceiling. The police forcibly occupied their land. Many were rendered landless and forced to become wage labourers. This is the living case that Roy uses in her fiction. Velutha, the untouchable Paravan in the novel is one such character. Arundhati Roy champions the cause of the untouchables with a sense of unflinching commitment like Mahatma Gandhi. She feels this cause very deeply and brings out the naked truth using a powerful language and style to make the powerful people ashamed of their own action. The matrix of her language and rhetorical style in this essay is also to expose the evil deeds of the powerful class who represents the repressive state apparatuses and terrorism and the helpless condition of the powerlessness. Her language constructs a binary opposite between the powerful and the powerless when she gives a picture of the helpless people who are force to sign papers and to surrender their land with a sum of money and the scene of the arrival of P.M. Nehru surrounded by policemen to formally launch the construction of Sardar Sarovar dam. In mathematical language, she uses the metaphor of equating big dams with Nuclear Bombs in the essay. She does not leave any branch of knowledge to
select the source of her metaphorical expression. Using the knowledge of ecology, she drives home the idea given by the lines as used in the following: "They scramble the intelligence that connects eggs to hens, milk to cows, food to forests, water to rivers, air to life and the earth to human existence."  

A fine example of a good work of art, the essay is full of thoughts and feelings which are not vague, dry and monotonous. Some of the words and phrases, images and symbols of this essay are highly suggestive. Sometimes the author uses such fine words and dictions that the sound of the sentence suggests the sense. We get some sentences intermittently in the course of the expression in the essay which very well express the author’s great anger and emotion. The sentences are independent in nature and they separate two paragraphs. Some are given here:

i. I stood on a hill and laughed out loud.  

ii. Did I hear someone say something about the world’s biggest democracy?  

iii. There’s a hole in the flag and it’s bleeding.  

Saturated with similes and metaphors, the essay is composed in a rhetorical style. A salient feature of the similes used in the essay is the correspondence between the major and the minor terms. Some are given:

i. I could see little children with littler goats scuttling across the landscape like motorized peanuts.  

ii. I went because writers are drawn to stories the way vultures are drawn to a kill.
The essay is blending of both ‘poetic truth’ and ‘poetic beauty.’ Though the tone of anger and contempt of the author against the repressive regimes of the State pervades throughout the essay, her satire is not abusive. What matters most in the essay is the new and original style—a style that lulls us away from the world of dream and fantasy to a world of drab reality; a style that turns and twists language to conform to the feelings; a style that has sometimes ungrammatical construction, bizarre phrases and idiosyncratic capitalization. The author’s sympathetic attitude to the Dalits and the deserted, the poor and the defenseless and her elegiac criticism of ecological imbalances will last from generation to generation so far as man exists.

The third essay is “Power Politics.” It is about the politicians with power. In this essay, Arundhati Roy expresses her dislike for American policy as she describes Rumpelstiltskin or America as having a bank account heart that the lives of poor people are sacrificed to support the corporate interests of companies like Enron. While expressing her opposition to the projects, it becomes quite clear that she is passionate about her country and what happens to it in the future. Using apt metaphors, repetition and incomplete sentences, the author satirizes American policy in the following description:

Rumpelstiltskin is a notion (gnotion), a piece of deviant, insidious, white logic that will eventually self-annihilate. But for now he's more than okay. He's cock of the walk. King of All That Really Counts (Cash). He's decimated the competition, killed all the other kings, the other kinds of Kings. He's persuaded us that he's all we have left. Our only salvation.35
Most of Arundhati Roy’s essays are dominated by satire and irony. The essay, “The ladies have feelings, so . . .” is about women writers especially about the writer herself. It is about the place of a woman writer. She briefly points out the problem faced by a writer. She wonders why she is called a ‘writer-activist’ for writing non-fiction and political essays. In this controversy, she clarifies her point in a well-stated argument: “. . . non-fiction, but since when did writers forgo the right to write non-fiction?”

Arundhati Roy said that she wrote contentious things and she felt lonely when sitting at a desk to write but when the work is done she did not feel lonely at all, as she says in conversation with N.Ram:

Well, every writer—good, bad, successful or not—who’s sitting at a desk looking at a blank piece of paper, is lonely. It’s probably the loneliest work in the world. But once the work is done, it’s different. I’m not lonely at all—I’m the opposite of lonely.

In expressing her feelings and thought, Arundhati Roy is very free and independent in this essay also. Like in other essays, she asks sharp questions. She uses ungrammatical method such as using capital letters as in the following lines:

Now where does all this lead us?
Is it just harmless nonsense, best ignored?
How does all this ardent wooing affect our art?
What kind of lenses does it put in our spectacles?
How far does it remove us from the world around us?"

. . . . . . . . . . . . But do we have Really Free Speech?. . . Or is everybody looking for Things That Sell to say?"
She uses irony predominantly as found in the following:

But is it mandatory for a writer to be ambiguous about everything? Isn’t it true that there have been fearful episodes in human history when prudence and discretion would have just been euphemisms for pusillanimity? When caution was actually cowardice? When sophistication was disguised decadence? When circumspection was really a kind of espousal.  

She believes that the writers, the poets, the artists, the singers and the film makers can find ways of bringing connections into the realm of common understanding. She expresses her ideas in free flow using repetition of words as in:

Who can translate cash-flow charts and scintillating boardroom speeches into real stories about real people with real lives. Stories about what it’s like to lose your home, your land, your job, your dignity, your past, and your future to an invisible force.

She concludes her essay ironically saying that “the only thing worth globalizing is dissent. It’s India’s best export.”

Arundhati Roy expresses her feelings pathetically on the incident of the attack on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 in her title essay, “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” quoting the emotional news: “People who we don’t know, massacred people who we do.” In this essay, Arundhati Roy employs independent sentences separating two paragraphs:
i. But war is looming large. Whatever remains to be said, must be said quickly.43

ii. But who is Osama bin Laden?44

She mocks saying that Osama bin Laden is “the American President’s dark doppelganger.”45 Further, she mocks that both the American administration and Osama bin Laden are almost the same having “engaged in unequivocal political crimes.”46

In another essay, “War is peace,” which is about the U.S air raid and bombing on Afghanistan on 7th October 2001, Arundhati Roy says that the “bombing of Afghanistan is not revenge for New York and Washington. It is another act of terror against the people of the world.”47 She mocks the U.S President George Bush and the U.K Prime Minister, when she heard them announcing that they were a peaceful nation and people. Arundhati Roy reacts against it with irony using words of binary opposition: “Love is hate, north is south, peace is war.” 48

She agrees with the view that war is not the best way in order to track and book the terrorists. She employs one of her favourite techniques of expression—asking self-answered questions:

... is war the best way to track them down? Will burning the haystack find you the needle? Or will it escalate the anger and make the world a living hell for all of us?49

She concludes the essay with the questions:
—have we forfeited our right to dream? Will we ever be able to re-imagine beauty? Will it be possible ever again to watch the slow, amazed blink of a new-born gecko in the sun, or whisper back to the marmot who has just whispered in your ear—without thinking of the World Trade Center and Afghanistan?  

This style of using questions is an effective way of giving a speech. The language of the essay bears this mark of spoken language making it colloquial.

Arundhati Roy expresses her shock and laments upon the death followed after the burning incident of Sabarmati Express in Godhra on 28th February 2002, in her essay, “Democracy: Who’s She When She Is at Home?” She writes: “Each of those who died that hideous death was someone’s brother, someone’s mother, someone’s child. Of course they were.” In this essay also, she expresses her ideas with using repetition of words as usual as in her other essays.

She mocks and satirizes the political leaders of India saying that “While Gujarat burned, our Prime Minister was on MTV promoting his new poems.” She caricatures the multifaceted leaders calling them having “a lizard’s tail which drops off when it’s in trouble and grows back again.” In a democratic country like India, such levels of rage and hatred are very unfortunate. Her language is intensely ironical. She writes:

Every political party has tilled the marrow of our secular parliamentary democracy, mining it for electoral advantage. Like termites excavating a mound, they’ve made tunnels and underground passages, undermining the meaning of ‘secular’, until it has just become an empty shell that’s about to implode.
In this essay also, Arundhati Roy employs independent sentences which separate two paragraphs as the following:

i. Precisely which Hindu scripture preaches this?  

ii. Which particular verse in the Koran required that they be roasted alive?  

iii. Notice has been given: this is just the beginning.

In her sarcastic remark against the declaration of War Against Terror under the American Policy in the Middle East after 11 September incident, she has pointed out the need for rationally rather than adopting war, another form of terrorism as a method of suppressing terrorism. It is an irony of situation that she employs in her argument in the essay, "War Talk."

III

“Ahimsa,” an essay about the indefinite hunger strike of four activists is also a powerful piece of protest in incisive language and satirical form. Using logical arguments, she calls the “Narmada Bachao Andolan” as “Ahimsa Bachao Andolan.” This piece, like her other essays bears the typical Arundhati Roy style expressing her emotions, arguments and factual reports in a rhetorical and oratorical style. Using many forms of figures of speech, a colloquial Indian English and poetic mode of expression, the essay is also a piece to be written only by Arundhati Roy. Nothing has changed in her spirited tone of protest which bears the call for urgency about a total change in her appeal effected by the essay. Repetition is deliberately used to emphasize what she wants to say. For example, to expose the wrong doing of the Government, she repeatedly uses the word ‘contempt.’ This repetition not only exposes the wrong doing but also ironically suggests the insensible act of the Government. She says:

Over the years our government has shown nothing but contempt for the people of the Narmada valley. Contempt for their argument. Contempt for their movement. 58

This technique of expression is widely practiced by writers; and Arundhati Roy uses it in the most effective way because she can enter into the deepest level of meaning signified by such uses. She tries not to miss the finest strand of meaning of the words she uses. This shows that words are not competent enough to express all what a very sensitive and creative mind wishes to say. Any word in its significations
indicates perpetual movements showing its difference from other words as well as potential slippages of meaning.

The creativity in Arundhati Roy struggles with this condition of human language. And this is one of the reasons why some critics misinterpret the writer for overdoing with words. C.D Narasimhaiah criticizes her for being too exaggerated in the use of words.

Repetition of words is one of Arundhati Roy’s styles in her novel as well as in the essays too. She says, “Repetition I love, and used because it made me feel safe. Repeated words and phrases have a rocking feeling, like a lullaby.” In her view, it is increasingly difficult for the voices of non-violence to be heard. She says:

*Any government’s condemnation of terrorism is credible only if it shows itself to be responsive to persistent, reasonable, closely argued, non-violent dissent. And yet, what’s happening is just the opposite.*

Arundhati Roy fears that the people will be forced to abandon modes of non-violent resistance and commit violence in order to grab headlines in today’s ‘free media.’ If such things come to pass, then it would be a veritable deathblow to the theory of ahimsa that Mahatma Gandhi propounded and executed to great effect during the struggle for independence against British rule. She ends this essay with irony and sarcasm as, “Go to Bhopal. Just ask for Tin Shed.”
Arundhati Roy uses verbless, broken sentences and nonce words consistently in her essays also. It is also a revolutionary step in her choice to break the conventional rules of English grammar and also to depict the insufficiency of the prevailing language in representing the contemporary experiences. Besides, this practice has a scope of leaving the meaning open to its multiplicity and plurality.

In the essay, “Come September,” Arundhati Roy expresses her ideas against narrow nationalism which is the cause of genocides in the twentieth century. The brutality of such kind of nationalist politics is clearly suggested in the imagery of the dead: “Flags are bits of coloured cloth that governments use first to shrink-wrap people’s minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead.” This is typical Arundhati Roy satirical imagery. The meaning compressed in the newly coined compound words, “shrink-wrap,” a nonce-word, is highly evocative suggesting manipulative mechanism of the government which blinds and befools people resorting them to violence and murder. Roy deliberately coins nonce-words often. It will be wrong to conclude that she has a poor knowledge of English language and vocabulary. It is because Arundhati Roy is in the venture of a struggle to find the proper form of expression which suits her complicated web of dissenting thoughts which do not fit into any founded structure of thoughts. It is a sign of her rebellion.

She is rebellious against the violence and mass murder committed by the powerful countries in the name of freedom. The essay is a fine piece of criticism against innumerable crimes committed by the U.S. government against humanity.
Further, in another essay, “Loneliness of Noam Chomsky,” Arundhati Roy’s concern with the misuse of ‘freedom’ by democratically elected regimes in the ‘free world’ is revealed. A remarkable use of repetition for satirical purpose is a dominant feature of the writer’s language and style as depicted in the “Loneliness of Noam Chomsky,” “Confronting Empire,” “Peace is War” and the title essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” as in the following:

i. Neoliberal capitalism isn’t just about the accumulation of capital (for some). It’s also about the accumulation of power (for some), the accumulation of freedom (for some).  

ii. Chomsky shows us how phrases like ‘free speech’, the ‘free market’, and the ‘free world’ have little, if anything, to do with freedom. 

iii. The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling—their ideas, their version of history, thin wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability. 

iv. ‘If you’re not pro-Bush, you’re pro-Saddam Hussein.’ If you’re not good, you’re evil. 

v. Was it really Saddam Huss. ein, Was it his double? Or was it Osama with a shave? Was it pre-recorded? Was it a speech? Was it black magic?

It may be observed that Arundhati Roy’s non-fictions are a continuity of her debut novel, The God of Small Things as a “litany of injustices.” The injustices are the consequences of the excesses of global processes of privatization, economic and technological development and militarization. Through a rhetorical play of language
and style she chronicles the unrecorded and also brings home the sound of pain and agony of the ordinary persons to the elites.

The following is the concluding chapter of the thesis.
Notes:


3 Requoted from Rudy Ramirez’s “Authorizing Activism,” <http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~dmb/papers/others/RamirezOnRoy.doc>


7 Ibid., p.32.

8 Ibid., p.132.

9 Ibid., p.97.

10 Ibid., p.6.

11 Ibid., p.4.


14 Adams Tim, "What’s exciting is that writing has become a weapon," The Observer, Sunday 12 July 2009 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/jul/12/Arundhati-roy-booker-prize-politics>.


16 Ibid., p.32.


20 Ibid., p.11.

21 Ibid., p.21.


24 Ibid., p.70-71.


Ibid., p. 104.

28 Ibid., p. 110.

29 Ibid., p. 137.

30 Ibid., p. 47.

31 Ibid., p. 62.

32 Ibid., p. 72.

33 Ibid., p. 47.

34 Ibid., p. 54.


36 Ibid., p. 196.


39 Ibid., p. 197.

40 Ibid., p. 214.

41 Ibid., p. 215.

42 Ibid., p. 219.

43 Ibid., p. 224.

44 Ibid., p. 236.

45 Ibid.,

46 Ibid., p. 237.

48 Ibid., p.249.
49 Ibid., p.254.
50 Ibid., p.261.
51 Ibid., p.265.
52 Ibid., p.269.
53 Ibid., p.274.
54 Ibid., p.288.
55 Ibid., p.265.
56 Ibid., p.265-266.
57 Ibid., p.270.
61 Ibid., p.15.
62 Ibid., p.48.
63 Ibid., p.53.
64 Ibid., p.86.
65 Ibid., p. 109.
66 Ibid., p.119.

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