CHAPTER 4

Multiple Voices in Arundhati Roy’s Nonfiction

4.1. Nonfiction

The first popular essay written by her after the publication of her maiden novel is rightly titled “The End of Imagination”. The title is highly suggestive in the sense that she has put a pause to her writing fiction after *The God of Small Things*. Her end to experimental writing is highlighted by the fact that what followed “The End of Imagination” are a series of essays targeted at those in authority. The essays attracted worldwide attention as the voice of a conscientious Indian writer speaking out with clarity and force against hegemony of all sorts.

Essentially both her fiction and non-fiction deal with the oppression of the powerless by the Powerful, be it the mistreatment of the untouchables; oppression of divorcees; abuse of neglected children; America’s double standards in its policies; problems affecting the poor due to neo-imperialism through corporate globalization; the travails of the dispossessed due to the construction of Big dams; and dire consequences of amassing nuclear weapons. It is obvious that the author’s ire is directed at the “Big things “and her mission is to awaken her readers to these atrocities and induce in them a non-violent resistance to Power. Her attempt is to decentralize this kind of a hegemonic practice by voicing her protest against such a culture. She states in the essay “War is Peace”:

The issue is ….About how to accommodate diversity, how to contain the impulse towards hegemony- every kind of hegemony economic, military,
linguistic, religious and cultural. Any ecologist will tell you how dangerous and fragile a monoculture is. A hegemonic world is like having a government without a healthy opposition. It becomes a kind of dictatorship...It’s like putting a plastic bag over the world, and preventing it from breathing. Eventually, it will be torn open. (220)

Even though there is the voice of the author looming large in her works of nonfiction, Roy does not fail to incorporate various other voices that help the readers to have a dialogic understanding of truth. She uses certain stylistic techniques that bring about a decentralization of meaning which stands as a metaphor for her agenda. Her dialogism is a key to the decentralization of absolute, authoritarian discourses. She begins her essay “The Greater Common Good”: “I stood on a hill and laughed out loud” (43). This laughter is directed at all sorts of authority that imposes hegemony. The power intrinsic in laughter is described by Bakhtin:

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. (DI 23)

This is precisely what she does in her essays. Roy foregrounds those skeletons in the cupboards of the power hungry. She tears opens the masks of those who plunder others in the name of civilization and progress. In the essay “Confronting Empire” Roy states with respect to corporate globalization: “We have made it drop its mask. We have
forced it into the open. It now stands before us on the world’s stage in all its brutish, iniquitous nakedness” (31). This seems to be Roy’s agenda in her essays and is unveiled in multiple voices.

When Bakhtin talked about polyphony and dialogism, it was the novelistic discourse that he had in mind. Bakhtin remarks with regard to the novel that it “permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra artistic, everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and other). In principle, any genre could be included in the construction of the novel” (DI 320-21). The language of any text should be inherently dialogic, that is, it should be characterized by the constant play of different discourses, without necessarily an assumption of authorial control by any of them. Roy’s select essays are multi-voiced in the sense that she explores in them alternative perspectives by using multiple genres written from different points of view to augment her point. Genres like dialogues, reports, satire, and parody are incorporated into the traditional essay.

Therefore, there is scope to look at Roy’s nonfiction from the dialogic viewpoint. The essays selected for analysis allow for the inclusion of multiple genres and stylization processes to save them from monologism. Her nonfiction, in fact, can be categorized under what is called creative nonfiction because of her apt and clever use of language and its effectiveness in driving home her point. The aesthetic value of her nonfiction fits into what Walter Pater calls “the literature of fact”. What sets this creative writer apart is that her polemic prose is substantiated by facts, statistics and data of alarming magnitude that she had carefully researched before writing each article. She notes in her essay “The Greater Common Good”: “Numbers used to make my eyes glaze
over. Not anymore. Not since I began to follow in the direction in which they point” (59).

Bruce Allen says that Roy’s nonfiction “is firmly grounded in solid research and is presented through a creative writer who brings the full power of the craft of fiction to all her writing. Thus her writing needs to be judged in the full context of its combined artistic and social contributions” (158).

Barbara Lounsberry remarks about creative nonfiction: “Verifiable subject matter and exhaustive research guarantee the nonfiction side of literary nonfiction; the narrative form and structure disclose the writer’s artistry; and finally, its polished language reveals that the goal all along has been literature” (Wikipedia). Roy’s brilliant prose is definitely facts filled in fine language. This is the precise reason why critics have acclaimed it. It is no wonder that Noam Chomsky is generous in his praise that stands out in the cover page of An Ordinary Person’s Guide to the Empire (OPGE): “Roy’s perfect pitch and sharp scalpel are, once again a wonder and a joy to behold. No less remarkable is the range of material subjected to her sure and easy touch, and the surprising information she reveals at every turn.”

There are also those who categorize Roy as a writer-activist on the basis of the matter in her fiction and nonfiction. Roy, on the other hand, sarcastically questions the dichotomy attached to her and likens this twenty-first century vernacular to a sofa-bed. The author is surprised at why the novelist in her is called a writer where as the one who wrote the essays is referred to as an activist. She contemplates in the essay “The Ladies Have Feelings So…”: “True, The God of Small Things is a work of fiction, but it’s no less political than any of my essays. True, the essays are works of non-fiction, but since when did writers forgo the right to write non-fiction” (175).
But the common thread that connects her fiction and nonfiction is the voice of dissent. Articulating the marginal appears to be the chief concern of this socially conscious writer. In the case of Roy’s corpus, the discourse of marginality must be considered in conjunction with the representation of resistance. Roy feels that there is an intricate web of morality, rigour and responsibility that art, that writing itself, imposes on a writer. Again, in the same essay Roy says “At its best, it’s an exquisite bond between the artist and the medium” (175). Being a writer, her medium of protest is the written language. She feels it her onerous responsibility to highlight the injustices inherent in the world social order and also the atrocities inflicted on the natural environment. She strongly believes that any sort of Power is to be resisted. Language if used creatively and effectively can evoke the senses of the readers to a great extent.

Bakhtin also emphasized certain uses of language that maximized the dialogic nature of words. The creative use of language by certain authors enables multiplicity of voices and meanings. Arundhati Roy’s nonfiction has been rarely valued for its literariness and has been usually considered single-voiced, the voice of the author lashing out her ire at the exploitation of the powerless by the powerful. Her nonfiction appears to be monologic outwardly. According to Bakhtin:

Monologism denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding on an equal footing, another and equal I (thou). For a monologic outlook (in its extreme or pure form) the other remains entirely and only an object of consciousness, and cannot constitute another consciousness. No response capable of altering everything in the world of my consciousness is expected of this other. The
monologue is accomplished and deaf to the other's response; it does not await it and does not grant it any decisive force. Monologue makes do without the other; that is why to some extent it objectivises all reality. Monologue pretends to be the last word. (*PDP* 318)

Many of Roy’s essays when read in the light of the above quote prove to be the outcome of a dialogic process and are not monologic because the essays are marked by many stylistic features that encourage dialogism. Moreover, the facts she uses to substantiate her points are exercises in dialogism. George Orwell in 1946 rightly stated in his essay “Politics and the English Language” that “In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a “party line.” Orthodoxy, of whatever color, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style.” This statement holds true for Roy’s essays as well. It is definitely her style and language that make her essays so vibrant and dialogic in nature. Roy's politics remains clear-voiced and fearless, large in scope, consistent in its concern for the exploited, scathing in its criticism of the state and its institutions.

Her use of the English language as a subversive means of protest has already been evident while viewing her through the lens of the latest literary theories of feminism and post-colonial criticism. Her nonfiction on the other hand is power-packed and is more a direct attack on the ‘Big things’. In fact her nonfiction is an extension of her fiction and engages in a dialogue with each other regarding issues of marginality and subversiveness. The ironic tone, parody, satire, rich metaphors and the great array of rhetorical techniques make it appropriate to the circumstances and encourage dialogism through heteroglossia
of various discourses. In Roy’s works every phrase is carefully crafted because the sense of the audience is evident for a dialogic progression. Most of her essays include rhetorical questions which are aimed directly at the readers to initiate a dialogue.

In fact verbal interchange is the fundamental reality of any language. In the history of human species, language is born not within the isolated individual, but in interaction, between two or more human beings. The recent development in Pragmatics makes this obvious, but highly influential theories of language have obscured this truth. This is precisely what the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin also tries to communicate. His dialogic model conforms to the idea that no text exists in isolation. The dialogic work carries on a continual dialogue with other works of literature, different genres, other authors and even the readers. The essays that have been selected for eliciting multiple voices are those with greater scope for a dialogic study.


In the essay, “Baby Bush Go Home” we perceive a kind of polyphony that Roy achieves through stylistic devices. Arundhati Roy very successfully highlights the position of ‘the most powerful man in the world’ by belittling him. The author comprehends that the stature of the American President’s is huge, blown out of proportion. She amplifies this persona, utilizing the adverb ‘imperiously’ (103) and simultaneously condenses this larger than life picture by inversion as seen in the title “Baby Bush Go Home.” The alliteration in the phrase ‘Baby Bush’ draws attentions at once, and highlights the same. Further, the term ‘Baby Bush’ is indeed deceptive at first sight. The seemingly innocent title is fraught with tensions and serves as a double-voiced discourse. The prefixing of ‘Baby’ to the name ‘Bush’ baffles one, as ‘Baby’ comes
across as a term of endearment. Subsequently, we stumble upon the phrase ‘go home’ following it. Therefore the person in question, first of all, does not belong. Secondly, he is not even attributed the respect accorded to a guest as he is ordered to ‘go home’. In his essay, “Discourse in the Novel”, Bakhtin, states that “intra-language dialogue (dramatic, rhetorical, cognitive or merely casual) has hardly been studied linguistically or stylistically up to the present” (DI 273). The above essay combines dramatic, rhetorical, casual, cognitive and figurative language in dialogue evoking multiple subversive voices.

The title, in particular is in an imperative form, commanding the ‘President’ just as a toddler is commanded to do what an imposing adult demands without giving a reason. And this voice while demeaning ‘The Bush’ in question also provides a mirror image to his policy. It reflects his method of execution without stating any logic, whether it pertains to the gratuitous occupation of Iraq or the unwarranted intrusion into Afghanistan. The array of voices here first magnifies the persona, inverts his position and thus voices his own strategies. Therefore the essay also brings into discourse, the subversive style. He may pose to be the most powerful person in the world; and in spite of this, his utter vulnerability is underlined in contradictory voices. He is portrayed in the essay as powerless in the face of a handful of parliamentarians who threaten to “heckle him” and “the predominantly Muslim population of Old Delhi” (103) that prove to be a security nightmare for him. The place that is finally decided upon is the Purana Qila, the Old Fort. Roy quips: “Ironic, isn’t it, that the only safe public space for a man who has recently been so enthusiastic about India's modernity should be a crumbling medieval fort?” (“BBGH” 103)
The irony of the turn of events is affirmed in the rhetorical question above; that in itself poses a double-voiced discourse, for the answer is implied in the question itself. The person who had been the enthusiastic mouthpiece of India’s modernity is placed on an inconspicuous Old Fort. Bush is placed inadvertently on an Old Fort what to him is anti-modern, but to the Indians a pervading symbol of antiquity and inherent tradition. Recent archaeological evidence proves that the legendary city of Indraprastha in the great epic of *The Mahabharata*, flourished earlier here.

The American President voices modernity, sidelining antiquity; because, as the irony implies America has no history to boast of since it does not possess a real past. Needless to say, a country that has no antiquity goes for modernity not as preference, but because it has no other alternative. We wonder whether Roy refers to the same lack of tradition when she asserts in her essay “The End of Imagination”: These are people whose histories are spongy with the blood of others” (24). Roy combines the image into a paradox as the epitome of modernity is juxtaposed here against the Old Fort. Bush has to stand on the concrete example of the distant past in spite of all his principles. The President can only stand here: he cannot adopt a stand.

Bakhtin underlines the inadequacy of traditional stylistics that locked every stylistic phenomenon into the monologic context of “self-sufficient and hermetic utterance, imprisoning it, as it were in the dungeon of a single context; it is not able to exchange messages with the other utterances; it is not able to realize its own stylistic implications in relationship with them; it is obliged to exhaust itself in its own single hermetic context” (*DI* 274). Bakhtin proposes the dialogized style that entails the polemical, the parodic, the ironic, that he claims are bracketed in to the rhetorical style
and not into the poetic style. The beauty of the style is determined in its interaction with other styles and not by combining them into monologic brackets. The selected essay engages these three styles the polemical, the parodic, the ironic that Bakhtin –called “externally most marked manifestations” in the dialogized mode.

Roy utilizes irony in the next paragraph to point to the incongruity of the situation. The greatest irony is that the President will be delivering his inscrutable reason in the Old Fort that houses the Delhi Zoo. In other words, his ‘reason’ will be perceived by creatures of ‘instinct’. Furthermore, the essayist asserts that the place has more caged animals, the people who go under the label of ‘eminent persons’. They too will only ‘hear’ the address and not listen to it, simply because they don’t need to. They are caged in the bars of complacency far removed from the suffering multitudes.

In the earlier paragraph, Roy echoed the diversity of positions by superimposing a symbol of modernity against a concrete emblem of tradition. Next, she echoes how Bush visits Gandhi’s memorial to pay homage to him. Here, again she poses a perfect dialectical pair violence/non-violence as Bush is the thunderous insignia of neo-imperialism, and he pays tribute to a person who preached non-violence throughout his life. Just as Bakhtin states in Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics: “One could put it this way: the artistic will of polyphony is a will to combine many wills, a will to the event” (22). Likewise, Roy employs figurative means such as paradoxes and irony to bring across her point effectively. By highlighting contradictory angles she thus emphasizes her point: “But when George Bush places flowers on that famous slab of highly polished stone, millions of Indians will wince. It will be as though he has poured a pint of blood on the memory of Gandhi” (Roy “BBGH” 104).
At the end of the essay it emerges that the duality of voices is also echoed in the nature of the tone of the essay. At the beginning, the tone is playful and affectionate even though it is a command: “Baby Bush go home”. But, at the end the tone is outright grim and defiant: “It is not in our power to stop Bush’s visit. It is in our power to protest it, and we will. …George W Bush, incumbent president of the United States of America, world nightmare incarnate, is just not welcome” (“BBGH” 104).

The hybrid utterance, as postulated by Bakhtin, is a passage or section that employs a single speaker but entails one or more kinds of speech. The coincidence of the two different speeches brings with it a contradiction and conflict in the belief system as a whole, but is intended to prove a certain point. Likewise, Roy utilizes the playful tone and the serious one, as in the hybrid utterance, to foreground a common idea that unites all considerations. This is the kind of unity that Bakhtin encourages, the one that engages dialogism. By the incorporation of dual tones Roy is able to achieve this kind of heteroglossia that ridicules and at the same time questions authority.

Bakhtin exemplifies such tonal heteroglossia by relating to the English comic novel, principally the works of Charles Dickens. He substantiates his theory with examples from the same. He illustrates how Dickens parodies both the ‘common tongue’ and the language of Parliament or high-class banquets, and utilizes ‘concealed languages’ in order to evoke humour; likewise Roy uses multi-voicedness - the solemn and the lighthearted to drive home a common message. Bakhtin quotes example from Dickens’ *Little Dorrit*, to show how he turns from the authorial narrative casual voice into a formalized, grand epic tone as he relates the vocation of a commonplace bureaucrat; his
objective being to parody the narcissism and haughtiness of the bureaucrat’s stature (*DI* 302-303).

Concealed speech is used here, in the sense that demarcations are not made as the speaker shifts from one tone to the other. This is the hallmark of a hybrid utterance. In this instance, the clash is between the factual narrative and the ‘caricaturish’ epic tone. The role of the hybrid utterance is to challenge the authoritarian voice of the author as well. Likewise, Roy’s stylistic inclination in this regard echoes her own stance in this essay to challenge the dogmatic standpoint of the Big Brother, America.

**4.3. Animal Farm II: Dialogization of Genres**

As the title suggests, we find that “Animal Farm II- In Which George Bush Says What He Really Means” (“AF”) is an adaptation. At the outset the reader is made to believe that write up is an adaptation of George Orwell’s novel *Animal Farm*. Arundhati Roy claims: “In this age of copyright, intellectual property, piracy and plagiarism, I want to acknowledge that this play is entirely derivative” (“AF” 113). When the reader comes to believe that the writer is probably displaying her acknowledgement to the great writer George Orwell, one is jolted by the voice of ridicule which continues: “…The ideas have all come from the public speeches and actions of the famous poet, pacifist, flower child, free thinker and social activist George W. Bush. Much of the play is based on the text of his recent speech in the Asia Society in Washington DC” (“AF” 113).

A literary adaptation is the employment of a literary source to another genre or medium. Literary adaptation also entails adapting the same literary work in different genres or medium, for different purposes. This is akin to parody, another strategy Roy makes use of to elicit polyphony. The title by itself implies the continuity of two genres.
From the label “Animal Farm II” we infer that the work is a sequel to George Orwell’s acclaimed novel and the reference to Bush’s speech given at the end of the write-up and the subtitle – “In Which George Bush Says What He Really Means” declares the source to be of the genre – speech. But the current discourse in question is neither a novel, nor a speech but rather a drama which has traces of the essay “Baby Bush Go Home”. The play is thus a product of the dialogues between the works mentioned. Moreover this ‘play’ is be studied in the context of the multiple genres of drama that is incorporated in the seemingly simple dramatic monologue to prove that meaning is evolved in the contact zones of all the different genres and the inherent irony that a dramatic monologue can easily handle between what is said and what it implies, as in the case of Browning’s “My Last Duchess.” “Animal Farm-II” can be said to be a perfect dramatic monologue as it subscribes to the conventional definition of the dramatic monologue sans poetry. A dramatic monologue normally has the following features:

- A speaker, who is not the author himself, utters the monologue: The person who is the speaker in the monologue is The President of America- George Bush, far removed from the author, Arundhati Roy.

- As opposed to the soliloquy, it requires a listener or listeners and the listeners are predominantly silent throughout, though their presence is acknowledged: The presence of listeners is usually mentioned in the drama in the settings. In this drama their presence can be inferred from the ‘hooting’ of the animals. The presence is also confirmed by the speaker’s constantly addressing them, and referring to them. George Bush is standing in a bulletproof cage and addressing a gathering of rich industrialists, MPS and a few film stars. “There are heavily armed US security guards with muscles and sunglasses on top of
The main character, expresses his emotions, feelings and motives: Ironically, the President of the United States speaks out his motives and intentions with alarming audacity: “I’m looking forward to bombing Eye-ran. We have some new weapons that we want to test. I hope Innia will send some soldiers to help us, there are so many of you, it wont matter much if you lose a few” (“AF” 113) and again he says, “Dick says that the key word is control” (“AF” 112). It is also to be noted how “Eye-ran” (Iran) and “Innia” (India) are written to suit the President’s English which is establishing control in the corporate world.

The main principle controlling the author’s mode of creating the monologue should be the delineation of the character of the speaker in question. During the course of the speech, George Bush does reveal his real character. The speech of the President divulges his character in a very obvious manner. Each utterance is a pointer to his personality trait. For instance:

Egoism: “Hello all you lucky people! Thank you for taking your time off your busy schedules to come and listen to the President of the United Sates” (“AF” 107).

Arrogance: “I’m here today to talk about two great democracies in Asia both of whom I have decided to invite into my harem” (“AF” 108).

Indifference: “Frankly, I don’t care what shape it is, as long as I can play with it all day long” (AF 108).
Impulsiveness: “I could destroy the whole world in a minute if I’m in a bad mood” (“AF” 108).
Audacity: “But let’s not quibble, what’s a little genocide between friends” (“AF” 108).
Hypocrisy: “I’m on your side for now” (“AF” 108).
Over-confidence: “With God on our side we killed them all” (“AF” 108).
Condescension: “Your prime minister is a good man—he went to Oxford, didn’t he?” (“AF” 109).
Inhumanity: “Your farmers don’t deserve subsidies because they’re not good people. You should put them on Prozac” (“AF” 110).
Underlying insecurity: “We have surveillance cameras and wireless devices and software we have put into your computers, so that we can watch you all the time” (“AF” 111).
Intrusiveness and lack of respect for others’ privacy: “We know where you go, what you buy, who you sleep with” (“AF” 111).
Callousness: “But you needn’t worry, I’m not here to bomb you or scare you—because you Indians are starving anyway. Ha!Ha!” (“AF” 111).
Egocentricity: “My Mom and Naani told me that the only person who has the right to kill people, bomb countries and use chemical and new cooler weapons is the President of the United States” (“AF” 111).
Cowardice: “I love hunting animals, especially when they are in cages and can’t bite me … I also love fighting wars against countries after they have been starved and forced to disarm” (AF 111).
It is born out of a critical moment: George Bush speaks at a decisive moment in history. Besides, the author herself ascertains the same when she asserts in the Introduction to the anthology *Listening to Grasshoppers*:

“All the essays were written at urgent, public interventions at critical moments in India - … during US President George Bush’s visit to India; …. Often they were not just responses to events, they were responses to responses.”

The situation is specific: The situation is when George Bush is on a state visit to India, March 2006.

Going by the above definitions the play possesses all the attributes of a dramatic monologue. But the monopoly enjoyed by this genre is decentralized by the presence of other dramatic genres marking the text. This can be taken as a metaphor for the subversive strategy adopted by the author to destabilize Bush’s hegemonic practices, his monopoly.

As seen, the play is set against a point in history, and can also be classified as a History play. A History Play represents events drawn wholly or partly from recorded history. ” The writer acknowledges that “The ideas have all come from the public speeches and actions of the famous poet, pacifist, flower child, freethinker and social activist George W. Bush. Much of the play is based on the text of his recent speech in the Asia Society in Washington DC” (“AF” 113). Therefore, it marks a decisive moment in history, and can indeed be classified as a History Play.

The drama already has its audience defined in the drama in the form of animals in cages and security guards over them, besides the privileged few. Therefore, at a reading it comes across as difficult to be presented on stage. So it can be termed a ‘Closet
Drama’. “A closet drama is a play that is not intended to be performed onstage, but read by a solitary reader or, sometimes, out loud in a small group” (“Closet Drama”). Any drama in written form that does not depend to any significant degree upon inventiveness for its effect can be taken as literature to be read, and not performed. Closet dramas are seldom associated with stage effects and ingenious machinery. “They feature little action but indulge in considerable philosophical rhetoric. They are seldom produced for the stage, although occasionally they are” (“Closet Drama”). The play “Animal Farm II” comes across as having little scope for action as it plays for effect wholly on verbal histrionics and the rhetoric presented is purely based on Bush’s pseudo philosophies.

However, the author herself states that the drama was presented before the arrival of Bush at the Jawaharlal Nehru University. Roy states: “In March 2006, George Bush came on a state visit to India and was greeted by massive public protests. In the days before his visit, “Animal Farm II” was written in place of a lecture, and performed at a late night, open-air student meeting at New Delhi’s Jawaharlal Nehru University on 28 February 2006” (“AF” 106). The enactment of the same and the fact that a drama with limited possibilities for performance was ingeniously performed classifies it under the regular drama, as well, a form of Performing Arts.

Again, the idea of an audience within the drama, renders it into a ‘metadrama’; a metadrama being “a drama within a drama, or a drama about a drama”. The metadrama is characterized by a “moment of self-consciousness by which a play draws attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical pretence” (Baldwick 203). The presence of an audience before the real audience brings in this self-realization. These techniques are used as alienation effects for the purpose of intellectual stimulation, rather than emotional
draining. Therefore, the work borrows characteristics of the Epic Theatre or the Brechtian Theatre as well, with its underlying motive pertaining to social reform.

The monologue also stands out as a satire in its own right. It reflects the author’s refracted voice. It is a scathing attack on Neo-imperialism and the great American Policy and the reckless ambitiousness of the American President as expressed in Roy’s essay “Baby Bush Go Home”. A satire is a literary work in which human vice or folly, or any event/phenomenon is attacked through irony, derision, or wit. Here the President of the United States is portrayed as a caricature, in the sense that he unabashedly voices his innermost ‘ulterior’ motives. This is akin to the Menippean satire about which Bakhtin discusses in detail in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. It “is one of the main carriers and channels of the carnival sense of the world in literature” (*PDP* 113). Bush’s super stature is caricaturized in an atmosphere of carnival. The American policies are harshly revealed by Roy through the President himself, for whom the whole endeavour is like a game of chess-each move is carefully thought out and cleverly executed. The way the callousness of the whole venture is underlined in the shameless candour of language is to be taken special note of. The arrogance reverberates as he recalls the countries he has included in his harem. The insensitivity is apparent when he blatantly declares that Afghanistan is already included in his harem. He refers to how Christopher Columbus set out to discover India and prove that the world is round; and subsequently refers to his friend Tom Friedman who claimed that the earth is flat. But Bush is nonchalant in his attitude: “I don’t really care what shape it is, as long as it belongs to me and I can play with it all day long” (“AF” 108). This also reflects his insensitive attitude to the sustainability of the earth in general.
Bush makes it obvious that facts do not concern him and deter him; and he can play with them as he pleases. The playfulness with which he refers to the missiles, the satanic tactlessness with which he asserts that he can destroy the whole world in a minute if he wishes so, his stereotyping of the Indians around him are an indictment of his strategies and beliefs. He also retorts, without even batting an eyelid, that Laura is doing a photo-op with orphans at Mother Teresa’s home. A photo op “is an occasion that lends itself to (or is deliberately arranged for) taking photographs that provide favourable publicity for those who are photographed” (“Photo op”). In addition to his policies his character is satirized. This is characteristic of Menippean satire which attacks mental attitudes instead of specific individuals. Typical mental attitudes attacked and ridiculed by Menippean satires are “pedants, bigots, cranks, parvenus, virtuosi, enthusiasts, rapacious and incompetent professional men of all kinds,” which are treated as diseases of the intellect (“Menippean”). Bush’s caricature falls into all the above mentioned definitions as already discussed. Furthermore, he claims: “My favourite deodorant is called Freedom, it has a lovely lemony smell” (“AF” 109). Freedom with its fresh smell, in this comparison, is ironically, acidic too. A deodorant is a spray that is used to mask the underlying stench; just as Bush attempts to stifle the underlying murky affairs that are the side-effects of his approaches, in the guise of freedom.

There are also traces of the diabolic as in the plays of Tom Stoppard and that of Harold Pinter. The drama turns diabolic at certain moments. Though humour is prevalent, it is indubitably dark humour. The drama is definitely coherent in plot and structure, but partakes characteristics of the Absurd Drama in the diabolical, gruesome strain. In this
regard, it can be compared with Harold Pinter’s plays where the car skids off the track at frequent intervals with regards to humour:

In the United States we don’t keep bombs in our cupboards. Only skeletons. Our favourite skellies have pet names. They’re called Peace, Democracy and the Free Market. Their real names are Cruise Missile, Daisy Cutter and Bunker Buster. We like Cluster Bomb too. We call her Claire. She’s really pretty and kids like to play with her and then she explodes in their faces and maims or kills them. That’s a real hoot. But don’t tell my mom I said that. She’ll make me wash my tongue with soap. (‘AF’ 109)

Then again, “I like the companies who make Aids drugs that no one can afford. I love that kind of dark edgy humour” (‘AF’ 112).

The above statements border on tragedy and comedy, a kind of menacing, grotesque humour and thus exhibit metatheatrical qualities. The normalization of such gruesome incidents, and their immediate domestication point to bale, ham-fisted characters in a pointless world, that are caught up with existential dilemma. The drama echoes an absurd existence with an audience consisting of animals. There is the President himself, who sometimes humorously and sometimes in the macabre vein, hoots like an animal. The existential strain is further echoed in statements like: “He might shoot me with his illegal gun, and I don’t know what I’ll do when I’m dead” (‘AF’ 113). He does not even trust his own ally Dick Cheney.
Apart from this, the act can also be classified as a Stand-up performance. Stand-up performances are characterized by short acts, where the comedian delivers a fast-paced series of humorous narrations, opinions, and one-liners that constitute what is typically called a monologue, routine or act. Certain stand-up comedians use props, music or magic tricks to render their performance effective. Here humour, wit and irony are utilized, though it is dark humour and pungent irony that stand out.

Again, with reference to performing arts and entertainment, it also can be slotted as ‘a one-person show’. Alternatively, it is also called as a one-man show or a ‘solo show.’ The genre alludes to a presentation enacted by a solitary performer on stage. The performance is also an act of public speaking. ‘Public speaking’ is the practice of speaking to an assembly of people in a “structured, deliberate manner intended to inform, influence, or entertain the listeners.” Roy approves that the write-up is a speech when she states that it is based on the public speech of Bush at Asia Society in Washington D.C.

An effective orator enables his readers to change their minds, and support his contention. Nevertheless, here the speaker succeeds in provoking the audience against himself by the way his speech is phrased. Therefore, though it is an act of public-speaking, it cannot be classified as the ‘rhetoric’ proposed by Aristotle who prescribed three fundamentals to the same. Rhetoric is the art of utilizing language to communicate effectively and persuasively. It involves three basic elements to adhere to audience appeal: logos, pathos, and ethos, as well as the five canons of rhetoric: invention or discovery, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. The prescribed speech does abide by the five canons of rhetoric: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. However, it does lack two of the two basic elements -pathos and ethos. Pathos refers to
the emotional appeal to the audience that the prescribed speech does not possess. The only emotions evoked are that of disgust from the main audience. ‘Ethos’ denotes the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, a nation or an ideology. Rather the emotions evoked by the speech are anti-Bush. The stance of the then reigning President does not imply that the general public of the USA endorses the policies of the American President. However, if one goes by Reynolds’s claim, then “ethos can be faked or ‘manipulated’,” because individuals would be formed by the values of their culture and not the other way around (Reynolds 336). Rhetoric is one of the three major ancient arts of discourse. And it was an inevitable part of Western education, a prerequisite to public speakers and writers to inspire spectators to action with the force and credibility of arguments. It can be said that Roy deliberately deprives Bush’s rhetoric of the two most needed qualities. This said, the deliberate choice and arrangement of the speech by Roy involves representation of the speech from a particular perspective and hence a critical voice.

The multiplicity is also echoed in the mixing of styles. In an attempt to mix certain styles, Bakhtin made contemporary theory aware of how much popular culture in early modern Europe involved flourishing traditions of the carnivalesque that mocked those in authority and parodied official ideas of society, history, destiny, fate, as unalterable. The rhetorical style is employed here, coupled with the ironical. There is the use of the subversive style, where the author makes Bush speak the Truth by his inversion; where his stance is individual, truth is universal. There is also the subversion of neo-imperialism by a post-colonial confrontation through language - the President’s speech is written in Standard English spelling and not American spelling in many places.
The carnivalesque style is also projected as one of the voices as in her fiction. People who in life are separated by impenetrable hierarchical barriers enter into “free and familiar contact” on the carnival square. Here humans and animals are found on the same standing as they make up the audience. Besides, there is communication in their hooting. “There is a motivation during carnival time to create a form of human social configuration that lies beyond existing social forms” (Bakhtin, *PDP* 180). This is also obvious in the inclusion of various countries in America’s harem. Bakhtin’s carnival theory is not reducible to terms such as anarchic, nor irresponsible, it is, in fact, a diverse tactic, one that may be implemented and sustained wherever there is a dominant regime. Here the United States of America functions as the dominant regime. The various genres and styles function as multiple voices that decentralize the domination of a single genre and this in turn stand to destabilize Bush’s monologic policies.

4.4. “The Ladies Have Feelings, So… Shall We Leave it to the Experts” (“LHF”): A Double-voiced Discourse

The essay entitled “The ladies have feelings, so…” comes across at the surface level, as a write-up on writing, the great Indian polarity, post-colonialism, corporatization and globalization. One fails to relate the title with the contents but an in-depth study will reveal that the above-said aspects function as effective metaphors for the feminist stance. There is no contradiction between the subject and title, rather, there are contra-distinctions of the different areas that the woman has problems in dealing with.

Utilizing ideological voices here, Roy manages to address several issues that are in dialogue with each other. Ideological centralization and unification is enabled, as all these different aspects though mutually exclusive serve to emblematize the universal
phenomenon- Gender discrimination. Each concept functions as a point of dialogized heteroglossia, signifying different things at once. “Each concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal are brought to bear” (Bakhtin, DI 272). The centrifugal aspect is in how these metaphors differ from each other, the centripetal tendency in how they echo the same issue. Julie Mullaney states how “Roy’s critical work, chimerical as it is, anticipates, illustrates and comments upon the gendered effects globalization and sites of resistance (local, regional, international) which call upon global forms of solidarity and action” (127).

First the writer refers to the great Indian polarity, how the Indian clime serves to portray the different extremes. “We greaten like the maturing head of a hammer-headed shark with eyes looking in diametrically opposite directions” (“LHF” 187). Like on one hand, when European countries are thinking about revising immigration laws in order to import Indian IT professionals, it also hails a Naga Sadhu at the Kumbh Mela who towed the District Collector’s car with his penis while the officer sat in it solemnly with his wife and children. Roy foregrounds the polarity through this real yet satirical example.

She projects the edges of the Indian Precipice by listing the following: “caste massacres and nuclear tests, mosque breaking and fashion shows, church burning and expanding cell phone networks, bonded labour and the digital revolution, female infanticide and the Nasdaq crash, husbands who continue to burn their wives for dowry, and our delectable stockpile of Miss Worlds” (“LHF” 187-88). The author states that she is not passing value judgments by classifying modernity as good and tradition as bad or vice versa, but she is simply worried about the schizophrenic character of the whole disparity.
The polarity also serves to illustrate the representation of the woman in general-in reality or in the media-either she is placed on a pedestal or allocated a very lowly position. She can never be perceived as a human being with faults of her own. To put it in other words, she is never allowed to be a human being. Either she is made out to be a Goddess or is deplorably subjugated. A temperate, balanced treatment is never meted out to her. As Virginia Woolf states in her essay “A Room of one’s Own”: Imaginatively she is of the highest importance, practically insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover is all but absent from history’ (Woolf 56).

Roy sums up this polarity as she refers to the people of India rounded up and loaded into two convoys of trucks, a huge big one and a tiny little one that have set off determinedly in two opposite directions (“LHF” 188). While the tiny one is targeted towards a glittering destination ‘somewhere ‘on top of the world, the other just melts and disappears as is the predicament of the larger population of woman whose individuality melts before it blooms, whose voices are silenced before they are heard.

Significantly, it goes without saying that the ‘truck’ is a patriarchal symbol, and the driver of the truck is Man himself who decides where to head to (with the future of the women in question). The “stockpile of Miss Worlds” comes across as a travesty on the predicament of women in India. Roy points to the third division-the ones who are suspended between both of these trucks, “being neatly dismembered” as the trucks move apart. That the split is not ‘bodily’, it refers to the split in their selves emotionally and intellectually as some are forced to relegate their principles, sensibilities and sanity. This intellectual/emotional incoherence is a major offshoot of this great polarity.
Roy goes on to assert that India is a microcosm of the world. Therefore, the phenomenon of gender discrimination and exploitation can be taken as a universal one. The difference in India is “in the scale, the magnitude and the sheer proximity of the disparity.” Or to put it more plainly, in India one’s “face is slammed right up against it” (Roy “LHF” 189). It is this, ‘in the face’ aspect of it, that though we are not able to see eye-to eye with it, we have still accepted it with a sense of resignation. It is because, though the system is flawed, it is indeed ours.

Secondly, Arundhati Roy refers to the etiquette of writing. The act of writing, in this instance, emblematizes the assertion of the female self. Roy asks whether writing can be applied to the female-assertion: “Do they have a definable role? Can it be fixed, described, characterized in any definite way? Should it be?” (“LHF” 190) and further: “All writers shall be politically conscious and sexually moral, or, All writers should believe in God, globalization and the joys of family life….” Roy is against this kind of prescriptive practice and the attempt to curb writers is a direct indication of the subjugation of women. Writing is freedom of expression and this freedom paves the way for greater opportunities for women. Cixous foresees women will through their writing foresee the unforeseeable.

Regarding writers, the essayist asserts, the first rule is that –“There Are No Rules.” The statement is contradictory in itself. It echoes that there should be no preconceived notions and boundaries to restrict feminity. For instance, women-writers have always come in for criticism when they assert themselves without any inhibitions, with special regard to ones in the confessional-mode like Sylvia Plath, Kamala Das, and Anne Sexton. It is doubtful whether it is their clinical thoughts or notions of sexuality that
have been conveniently suppressed and critiqued in a mode of being politically correct. Patriarchy demands that the ‘Angel in the house’ of which Virginia Woolf so famously speaks of be kept alive so that a woman writer does not deal openly and freely with regard to social issues and human relationships.

According to Roy, a great writer tries to steer clear of the tenets pertaining to responsibility or morality that the society wants to enforce upon her. Nevertheless, one should not misuse this freedom, and should render it purposeful. There is a relationship between the writer and the medium, which functions as a metaphor for the relationship between a Woman and her Man when Roy affirms: “At its best, it’s an exquisite bond between the artist and the medium. At it’s acceptable end, a sort of sensible cooperation. At its worst it’s a relationship of disrespect and exploitation” (“LHF” 191).

There is also the defining line that functions as a constraint, not to be crossed like the ‘Lakshman rekha’ that Sita was not supposed to traverse. This ‘line’ has its own complexities, contradictions and demands. Today, the writer is entitled to freedom of speech, as women are empowered with legitimate rights. We have already seen that the novelistic discourse for Bakhtin, like écriture féminine for Cixous attempts to subvert the monologic world of patriarchy through various forms of transgression.

Now, with the commercial success of certain Indian writers, they are been given significance. Creative-writing schools have been placed on par with medical, engineering and management courses. Likewise, though the female child was considered a liability earlier, of late she has been considered an asset following certain commercial successes like the emerging new crop of Miss Worlds. Roy finds it revolting that her ‘book’ was asked by a boutique owner to be displayed as a piece of embellishment. Correspondingly,
the commodification of Women has taken place, with women being seen as commodities/eye-candies necessary for commercial successes, vote-bank politics, etc.

Further, the act of writing is deemed a commercial success only if it consists of ‘sellable’ and ‘saleable’ material. To this, Roy quips:” Could writers end up playing the role of palace entertainers?” (“LHF” 195). Likewise, a Woman, though she is now a viable tool in the hands of commercial success, is compelled to constrain herself to the demands of ‘sellability’. For instance, an actress who wants to maintain her individuality and modesty is forced to reveal, so that by ‘uncovering’, the ‘packaging’ of the whole project will be a visual treat. This “neoteric seduction” that Roy calls could imprison our being more than violence and repression can.

Roy opines that when she was awarded with the Man Booker Prize, she was labelled a successful ‘writer’. Three political essays and one development debate away, she was rechristened a ‘writer-activist’. She claims to be saddled with this “double-barrelled appellation” (“LHF” 196). In other words, as long as one writes fiction, she is termed a writer; if she turns to nonfiction or expresses her standpoint on an issue, she is renamed a ‘writer-activist.’ Just as a woman who remains within the limits of imagination and subjugation is termed a Woman, and one who airs her voice or protests for her rights is termed a ‘Feminist.’ When a writer strongly airs her views and does everything in her power ‘to fragrantly solicit support for that position’ it is adjudged to be closer to the “territory occupied by political party ideologues-a breed of people that the world has (quite rightly) to mistrust” (Roy “LHF” 197). Likewise, a hardcore feminist is held in apprehension, than regard. Roy ascertains that one does not get involved in certain issues by being a writer/activist. One gets gripped by certain injustices for the sheer reason that
she is a human being. One by default is born a human being; labels are thrust upon by others. The same applies to the woman’s stance that she is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.

Arundhati Roy subsequently switches on to the topic of globalization. She refers to how years after independence, India continues to experience colonialism under the garb of neo-imperialism and corporate globalization. She states that what concerns Indians at the moment is disproving the Western World’s notion of India rather than improving the internal state of affairs. Life is so deeply entangled with the daily routine, that, she feels one fails to observe it objectively. According to her it lacks the drama, the large format, epic magnificence of war. Now it is as simple as being remote controlled or digitally operated. The Third World is imprisoned in market strategies, and yet the First World cannot do without the Third World for cheap raw materials, discounted labour and the sophisticated outsourcing. Neo-colonialism spreads in the network in the guise of Global Village, ironically when the third World countries are referred to as “the Other” in the same breath.

Women, similarly have been reduced to the label of “The Other”. They have become tools in a male-dominated consumerist society that thrives on profit and gain. They are colonized, marginalized and have a secondary place with reference to men. They are forced to confine themselves to and abide by the male dominated system, language and structure. They do not even possess a past, for History is His Story and not Her story. And like the First World, man cannot do without this Third World, as he requires her ‘labour’ for procreation. Women are therefore colonized in the maze of patriarchal power politics. What operates in the guise of the global village here is
sophisticated and manipulated exploitation. For instance, in workplaces woman’s rights are handed over to them with chivalry by men when the patriarchal society is responsible for discrimination in the first place. As Henry Kissinger states “Nobody will ever win the Battle of the Sexes. There's just too much fraternizing with the enemy.” Therefore, the social discourses enjoin in a dialogue and function as subtexts to represent the underlying main text. To quote Bakhtin: “Concrete socio-ideological language consciousness, as it becomes creative- that is, as it becomes active as literature-discovers itself already surrounded by heteroglossia and not at all a single, unitary language, inviolable and indisputable” (DI 295).

The corresponding analysis of the essay can be compared to a statement made by the critic Bishnupriya Ghosh regarding Roy’s nonfiction. Ghosh asserts that Arundhati Roy projects the bodies of the poor and downtrodden, yet the body of the author lies over the text as an over-exposed film-“a body which she valiantly strives to render invisible, to use as a screen on which she projects the bodies of the poor, yet a body from which there is only rare escape. How does a writer with such body trouble, we might ask, force us to finally confront a multiplicity of others?” (Ghosh 127) Rather, as analyzed in this essay, the multiple issues point to the female body as an emblem, feminism itself.

4.5. “The Most Cowardly War in History” (“MCWH”) - Dialogical Self

The dialogical self is a psychological concept that explains the mind's ability to visualize the different positions of participants in an internal dialogue, in close connection with external dialogue. “The dialogical self” is the central concept in the Dialogical Self Theory (DST), as created and developed by the Dutch psychologist Hubert Hermans since the 1990s. This is akin to Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism that he propounded and
explained in works like *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. A concrete representation of 
the dialogical self can be found in the polyphonic novel. Each character voices forth his 
own opinion, and comes across as a fully-fledged character; and not as a mirror to the 
monologic word of the author. Bakhtin asserts: “In the consciousness of the critics, the 
direct and fully weighted signifying power of the characters’ words destroys the 
monologic plane of the novel and calls forth an unmediated response - as if the character 
were not an object of authorial discourse, but rather a fully valid, autonomous carrier of 
his own individual word” (*PDP* 5). There is no characterization in the present essay in the 
sense it is considered in a novel. However, this thought can be extended to the essay, 
because there may be the presence of one or more consciousnesses. In the essay “The 
Most Cowardly War in History”, each argument is contradictory to the other, reflecting 
the plurality of consciousness, and each voice is genuinely valid in its own right. Each 
statement of the author, in spite of the contradictory tenor of the author, is bounded 
together by the truthfulness of the same. Bakhtin underlines the same idea in *Problems of 
Dostoevsky's Poetics*, when he states: “What unfolds in his works is not a multitude of 
characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial 
consciousness; rather a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its 
own world, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event” (*PDP* 6).

“The Most Cowardly War in History” is the opening Statement of Arundhati Roy 
on behalf of the jury of conscience of the world tribunal of Iraq. The tribunal that 
primarily endorses anti-war policies, states that it accumulates evidence against the 
invaders responsible for perpetrating war. The statement is in a dialogic form where each 
statement contradicts the earlier especially when the whole thing is stated by the essayist
to be “a single point of view”. The dialogical-self manifests itself in spite of the author. The dialogical self is said to be a miniature metaphor for the Society, where different participants present their points of view. The concept is therefore also termed alternatively ‘society of mind.” The unity of the society is emblematized by the ‘single point of view’ that the essayist professes it to be.

Each discourse is dealt with, one by one to reveal how the very next one challenges the earlier one. Here, the irony occurs not by any figure of speech but by virtue of simple reason and logic. The presence of multiple voices is ascertained by inherent contradictions in the statements present. Though, Roy puts forward the omnipotent verdict regardless of other factors, ancillary contradictions of the same spring up. The opening statement itself is wrought with tensions: “Opening Statement of Arundhati Roy on behalf of the jury of conscience of the world tribunal of Iraq” (Title).

- In a way the title itself is ironical as Roy presupposes that she is talking on behalf of the Jury of Conscience. ‘Conscience’ is a subjective concept and a personal phenomenon, and may vary from person to person, as opposed to the single dogmatic standpoint that she underlines.

This is the culminating session of the World Tribunal on Iraq. It is of particular significance that it is being held here in Turkey, where the United States used Turkish air bases to launch numerous bombing missions to degrade Iraq’s defenses before the March 2003 invasion; and has sought and continues to seek political support from the Turkish government, which it regards as an ally. All this was done in the face of enormous popular opposition by the Turkish people. As a spokesperson
for the jury of conscience, it would make me uneasy if I did not mention that the government of India is also, like the government of Turkey, positioning itself as an ally of the United States in its economic policies and the so-called War on Terror. (“MCWH” Para 1)

-It is ironical that it is being held in Turkey, for the reason that Turkey stood as an ally to the U.S., in spite of the people’s resistance to the same. The US continues to garner support from the Turkish government. In such a situation, the word that Arundhati Roy should have used should have been ‘ironical’, and not ‘significant’ that the tribunal is being held in Turkey. It is, in fact, far from being ‘significant. Roy may refute herself here, by utilizing the word in question, as an element of satire.

“The testimonies at the previous sessions of the World Tribunal on Iraq in Brussels and New York, have demonstrated that even those of us who have tried to follow the war in Iraq closely are not aware of a fraction of the horrors that have been unleashed in Iraq” (“MCWH” Para 2).

-Here Roy states how the allies and others themselves do not have a clear picture of the atrocities committed on the people of Iraq. Therefore, from the above statement one infers that the allies are not to be blamed whether they support/resist because they do not possess a true picture of the same in the first place. Besides, the essayist herself confesses that she does not possess the true picture of the horrors let loose in Iraq, to furnish a verdict.

The Jury of Conscience at this tribunal is not here to deliver a simple verdict of guilty or not guilty against the United States and its allies. We are here to examine a vast spectrum of evidence about the motivations and
consequences of the US invasion and occupation, evidence that has been deliberately marginalized or suppressed. Every aspect of the war will be examined - its legality, the role of international institutions and major corporations in the occupation, the role of the media, the impact of weapons such as depleted uranium munitions, napalm, and cluster bombs, the use of and legitimization of torture, the ecological impacts of the war, the responsibility of Arab governments, the impact of Iraq’s occupation on Palestine, and the history of US and British military interventions in Iraq.

(“MCWH” Para 3)

-The author affirms that the purpose of the tribunal is not to deliver a verdict of guilty/not guilty against the United States and its allies. The aim is to investigate a vast spectrum of evidence regarding the intentions of the US occupation of Iraq, and aftermath of the same. The main objective of the Tribunal is therefore to foreground evidence that has been deliberately marginalized or held back. To collect evidence, is- to put in other words prove someone guilty/not guilty. So Roy cancels out her argument yet again. Roy’s investigation of the ‘legality’, legitimation of torture’ etc., points to the act of affirming one being guilty/not guilty. The phrase ‘ecological impacts’ proves the war disastrous and hazardous, and therefore guilty over again. And attempts of the author to make an examination of the ‘responsibility of Arab governments’, ‘the impact of Iraq's occupation on Palestine’, and the ‘history of US and British military interventions in Iraq’ is an obvious endeavour to distinguish between the guilty/victim.
“This tribunal is an attempt to correct the record. To document the history of the war not from the point of view of the victors but of the temporarily - and I repeat the word temporarily - vanquished” (“MCWH” Para 4).

-Records can never be set straight unless someone is proved guilty. The earlier clause also maintains that the tribunal maintains a single point of view. Here, she determines that the point of view is not of the victors, but of the temporarily - vanquished. Roy inverts herself by maintaining that the ‘temporarily-vanquished’ hold a single point of view. When she says ‘temporarily vanquished’ she anticipates their hitting back at the US. She forgets that these also entail ‘the ecological impacts of the war’ and this was one of her own allegations voiced in the earlier statement.

“Before the testimonies begin, I would like to briefly address as straightforwardly as I can a few questions that have been raised about this tribunal. The first is that this tribunal is a Kangaroo Court. That it represents only one point of view. That it is a prosecution without a defense. That the verdict is a foregone conclusion” (“MCWH” Para 5)

-If Roy affirms that the tribunal has a foregone conclusion, it is not answerable in the first place, and she need not be answerable to anybody. Secondly, there need not be a prosecution if there is no defence. And Roy asserts that the verdict verges only on one point of view; when it says that it pertains to the common people of Iraq, it pertains to multiple point of views, especially from the supporters of Saddam Hussain, (whom Roy does not give clean chit either in the subsequent paragraph). A kangaroo court is normally employed for the purpose of providing a conviction, either by going through the motions of manipulated procedure or by allowing no defense at all. And the meaning of
prosecution is: “The institution and conduct of legal proceedings against a defendant for criminal behaviour.” And at another juncture the author asserts: “Let me say categorically that this tribunal is the defense”. Thus she counters her own statement. Next she states:

Now this view seems to suggest a touching concern that in this harsh world, the views of the US government and the so-called Coalition of the Willing headed by President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair have somehow gone unrepresented. That the World Tribunal on Iraq isn't aware of the arguments in support of the war and is unwilling to consider the point of view of the invaders. If in the era of the multinational corporate media and embedded journalism anybody can seriously hold this view, then we truly do live in the Age of Irony, in an age when satire has become meaningless because real life is more satirical than satire can ever be. .” (“MCWH” Para 6)

-The writer goes on to say that the tribunal upholds a view and verdict that does not even call for or listen to the views of the so-called Coalition of the Willing headed by President George Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair “.They have been unrepresented”. Inherent in the statement is the fact that the Tribunal has been represented. The author claims that if they uphold such a stand in the age of multinational corporate media and embedded journalism, then they actually live in a period coloured with irony .Therefore the verdict of the tribunal is a satire; a satire on satire(reality that is more satirical to the author). Therefore, the whole avowal transforms into a meta-satire at once, a satire about
satire. To put it in Aristotle’s words, it is something twice removed from reality. In the next paragraph she states:

Let me say categorically that this tribunal is the defense. It is an act of resistance in itself. It is a defense mounted against one of the most cowardly wars ever fought in history, a war in which international institutions were used to force a country to disarm and then stood by while it was attacked with a greater array of weapons than has ever been used in the history of war. (“MCWH” Para 7)

Second, this tribunal is not in any way a defense of Saddam Hussein. His crimes against Iraqis, Kurds, Iranians, Kuwaitis, and others cannot be dismissed in the process of bringing to light Iraq's more recent and still unfolding tragedy. However, we must not forget that when Saddam Hussein was committing his worst crimes, the US government was supporting him politically and materially. When he was gassing Kurdish people, the US government financed him, armed him, and stood by silently. (“MCWH” Para 8)

-The essayist reiterates that the tribunal is an act of resistance in itself. And in the very next sentence states that it is defense mounted against one of the most pusillanimous wars in history. So finally she agrees that it a defense against the neo-imperialist policy that in itself is a verdict in terms of practice. Nobody could practically stop these spineless perpetrators of war that forced Iraq to first disarm and attacked them mercilessly. The author then goes on to say that the Tribunal is in not a defense of Sadam Hussain. Inherent in the statement again is the fact that it is a defense of someone. The
‘other dialogical self’ voice in her condemns Saddam’s act of violence also, against the Iraqis, Kurds, Iranians, Kuwaitis, and others. She also condemns the US who supported him during his exploits, and politically and financially provided for him. She further highlights:

Saddam Hussein is being tried as a war criminal even as we speak. But what about those who helped to install him in power, who armed him, who supported him - and who are now setting up a tribunal to try him and absolve themselves completely? And what about other accomplices of the United States in the region that have suppressed Kurdish peoples and other people’s rights, including the government of Turkey? (“MCWH” Para 9)

There are remarkable people gathered here who in the face of this relentless and brutal aggression and propaganda have doggedly worked to compile a comprehensive spectrum of evidence and information that should serve as a weapon in the hands of those who wish to participate in the resistance against the occupation of Iraq. It should become a weapon in the hands of soldiers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, and elsewhere who do not wish to fight, who do not wish to lay down their lives - or to take the lives of others - for a pack of lies. It should become a weapon in the hands of journalists, writers, poets, singers, teachers, plumbers, taxi drivers, car mechanics, painters, lawyers - anybody who wishes to participate in the resistance. (“MCWH” Para 10)

-There is the mention of collection of evidence which is again a pointer to proving one guilty/innocent. The phrase “a pack of lies” also pertains to the guilt of the
people in question. There is also the call for participating in the act of resistance. An act of resistance is an act of/against defense, again contradicting Roy’s view that there is no defense. Bakhtin states in the *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*:

> The interaction of several unmerged consciousnesses was replaced by an interrelationship of ideas, thoughts, and attitudes gravitating toward a single consciousness.

Both dialectics and antinomy are in fact present in Dostoevsky's world. The thinking of his characters is indeed sometimes dialectic or antinomic (9).

Here each statement of Roy is an abstraction of these concrete characters echoing ‘antinomic thoughts’. Unmerged characters are united in the unity of event in the polyphonic novel. Here the Tribunal functions as the event unifying all these ideas together. Roy further states:

> The evidence collated in this tribunal should, for instance, be used by the International Criminal Court (whose jurisdiction the United States does not recognize) to try as war criminals George Bush, Tony Blair, John Howard, Silvio Berlusconi, and all those government officials, army generals, and CEOs who participated in this war and now profit from it. The assault on Iraq is an assault on all of us: on our dignity, our intelligence, our humanity, and our future. (“MCWH” Para 11)

- “The assault on Iraq is an assault on all of us.” The pronoun ‘us’ lends a subjective tenor to the verdict. It is also not clear who Roy refers to by the word ’us’. It even leads one to believe that she includes the supporters of the U.S. Note that in the
prescribed essay, Roy initially listed ‘India’ also as one of the allies of the US. This leaves one wondering who the essayist refers to by the pronoun ‘us’. Furthermore, in “The End of Imagination”, Roy stated: “If protesting against having a nuclear bomb implanted in my brain is anti-Hindu and anti-national, then I secede. I hereby declare myself as an independent, mobile republic,” expressing her remonstration against India's Pokhran II nuclear tests conducted in May 1998 (30).

She sums up saying:

We recognize that the judgment of the World Tribunal on Iraq is not binding in international law. However, our ambitions far surpass that. The World Tribunal on Iraq places its faith in the consciences of millions of people across the world who does not wish to stand by and watch while the people of Iraq are being slaughtered, subjugated, and humiliated. ("MCWH" Para 12)

-The fact that the World Tribunal of Iraq places its faith in the consciences of millions of people across the world, counters the earlier point of it not being answerable to anyone. The World Tribunal on Iraq, the unifying structure, echoes its internal unusual freedom (as in the polyphonic novel) in the form of conflicting statements and its utter independence from the ‘external environment’ in the form of the International Abiding Law. In such an instance, the Tribunal functions as the dominant, or the ‘leading value’ in the ‘hierarchical system of values’.” The dominant may be defined as “the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure” (Jakobson 82).
Just as Bakhtin asserts that everything in the novel is structured to make dialogic opposition inescapable (*PDP* 18) likewise every statement in this essay forces us to think on different lines, on contradictory angles. “Both before and after 1917, Russia was a place of lively intellectual excitement, in which different currents of thought emerged and contested each other. Indeed, it is out of the contestation of several such currents that the distinctive emphases of Bakhtin and his circle emerge” asserts Simon Dentith (10). Likewise Roy’s conflicting statements are symbolic of the intellectual currents that arose in opposition to the invasion of Iraq. The clash in statements emblematizes the clash in values and underlines internal conflict.


This section shall deal with the dialogics of semantics. It will be examined that how a particular word, phrase or sentence voices different meanings at once; or echoes the opposite of its traditional meaning by entering into a dialogue with the context. Arundhati Roy employs these verbal calisthenics to project multiple points of view. Semantics is a significant aspect of dialogism. Bakhtin asserts: “Dialogue is studied merely as a compositional form in the structuring of speech, but the internal dialogism of the word (which occurs in a monologic utterance as well as in a rejoinder), the dialogism that penetrates its entire structure, all its semantic and expressive layers is almost ignored” (*DI* 279).

The language she uses in her nonfiction is conceived to be different from her innovative language in *The God of Small Things* in the sense that it is a direct and blatant attack on the centres of power and perpetrators of injustice. It is more direct and factual because there is the ‘end of imagination.’ Arundhati Roy poignantly remarks regarding her fiction
“my world has died and I mourn its passing” (“TEI” 19). She probably believes that her creativity is stifled by the pressing issues before her. Her nonfiction is in fact a testimony to her reaction against the nuclear world which she feels is against art, music and literature of any kind. She rhetorically questions in her essay “War is Peace”: “...have we forfeited our right to dream? Will we ever be able to re-imagine beauty?” (232). Even though the author may feel that her imagination is dead, her powerful language in her nonfiction proves otherwise – it is equally creative and compelling as her fiction. Moreover, she counters her own claim when she states in her essay “Peace is War,” that “We have to use our skills and imagination and our art, to re-create the rhythms of the endless crisis of normality, and in doing so, expose the policies and processes that make ordinary things-food, water, shelter, and dignity-such a distant dream for ordinary people” (AOPGE 16). As Roy contradicts herself, we also find that the titles of the above mentioned essays are inverted.

The first well-known essay written by her after the publication of The God of Small Things is rightly titled “The End of Imagination” with respect to the fact that Roy is perturbed by the injustices around her. The title is highly suggestive in the sense that she has put a pause to her writing fiction. Her end to experimental writing is outwardly obvious because what followed “The End of Imagination” was a series of essays targeted at those in authority. But one finds the title is contradictory in itself, for, it requires great deal of imagination to imagine the ‘end of imagination’. Moreover, most of the things that the essayist conceives in the essay indeed require considerable imagination. Her visualization of the possibility a nuclear war, when the enemies will not be China or America; the foe would be Mother Earth herself and her elements. When the life-giving
elements—the sky, the land, and the wind would eventually turn against humanity; and how the cities and forests will burn for days on end, rivers will be filled with poison and wind will fuel the fires. She further goes on to envisage how after everything burns, the fires will die and smoke will shut out the whole scene. As the earth gets enveloped in darkness, there will be only nights and no days. When nuclear winter sets in, the water in the hydrosphere will turn into toxic ice. Groundwater will get contaminated through radioactive fallout that will seep through the earth and pollute groundwater. As most of the living beings would perish, rats and cockroaches would multiply and dominate, competing with human beings for subsistence. The worst ones affected would be the ones still alive, holding on to the cancerous carcasses of their children-burned, bald and ill. All these thoughts, envisaging and anticipating a catastrophic future as a result of nuclear warfare, entail profound insight and imagination on the part of the writer.

She also envisages a point when people will be more concerned about piling bombs than about feeding their own bellies. Roy visualizes a stage when nuclear technology may soon find its way to the market, and it may be easily accessible to anybody - businessmen, terrorists, and even the occasional rich writer, like herself. She states:

“our planet will bristle with beautiful missiles and that there will be a new world order where there will be the dictatorship of the pro-nuke elite. She imagines that sadism will be the dominant emotion as people will find joy in threatening each other. She compares it to bungee-jumping where one cannot rely on the bungee cord, or to playing Russian roulette all day long. She goes on to say that an additional perk of the whole catastrophic
situation will be “the thrill of Not Knowing What to Believe” (“TEI” 10-11).

She further fears that people will reach a time when “it is not dying that we must fear but living” (ibid 11). She also pictures a time when the nuclear technology will enter our very system and nuclear bombs will control our thinking and our behaviour. It is only a person endowed with a great power of imagination and a highly sensitive mind who can foresee a situation of utter chaos and insensitivity if nuclear bombs are allowed to rule the world. Far from the ‘end of imagination’, she lingers on thoughts about her own ephemeral fame and how it would rule over her life, written in poetic prose nothing short of the imaginative. She quips: “Club me to death with its good manners and hygiene” (“TEI 14). She sees in her mind’s eye, herself growing old and irresponsible, eating mangoes in the moonlight. She also pictures herself ‘experimenting’, writing some worst-sellers just to see what it would be like.

Furthermore, in “The End of Imagination”, the essayist wishes that Nuclear Wars were just like the traditional kind of wars that were about the usual things-nations and territories, Gods and histories. Roy hopes: “…If only nuclear war was the kind of war in which countries battle countries and men battle men. But it isn’t” (TEI” 5). Therefore the definition of Nuclear War goes against the conventional definition of war. In a nuclear war the enemies will be the air we breathe and the water we drink. Thus there will be no victors like the traditional war but only losers. She also alludes to the frivolousness of war, when war occurs between governments that keep changing over short periods of time as opposed to the grandeur and romance attached to traditional wars that lasted for longer periods. Moreover, the phrase ‘end of imagination’ acquires newer meaning in the
context of nuclear war. It is when people lose the power of imagination, ‘thinking’ in this context, to realize the aftereffects of such wars, that countries engage in nuclear proliferation. So when Roy says she mourns the death of her world it also means that she mourns the death of a saner world and also the obliteration of democracy which is being nudged away by fascism.

Moreover she subverts the conceptual meaning of the word ‘Life’ itself in a nuclear age, when she states “from now on it is not dying we must fear, but living” (“TEI” 10). Roy connotes more than she denotes when she makes statements like: The only dream worth having, I told her, is to dream that you will live while you’re alive and die only when you’re dead” (ibid. 15-16). This is also an instance of what Bakhtin means when he states the word lives on the boundary between its own context and another, alien context.

It is also worthy to note her play on the word “successful” with regard to individuals as opposed to countries. Roy talks of the numerous warriors more important than herself who may have not won recognition for the noble causes they have undertaken. They are, she says less ‘successful’ in the vulgar traditional meaning that the word has been associated with. Their success lies in the fact that they go on with their mission knowing very well that they will fail. They are, but not ‘less fulfilled’, in anyway. Thus the essayist challenges the denotations that the word ‘successful’ poses. “A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way” (Bakhtin DI 279).

In addition, Arundhati Roy questions the usage of words like ‘eunuchs’ to connote ‘cowardly’, and ‘woman’ to connote less manly (read as brave) (“TEI” 17). For instance, the declaration made by a noted right wing senior politician on the nuclear tests
is emphasized by her to foreground the same: “We have proved that we are not Eunuchs anymore” (ibid. 16). To this Roy retorts: “Whoever said we were True, a good number of us are women, but that, as far as we know, isn’t the same thing” (ibid). She exemplifies how words have come to connote more than denote; and these meanings though they enter into the dialogics of connotation and denotation are reduced to stereotypes in the process. “Eunuch” meant to denote “a man who has been castrated and is incapable of reproduction” (Wikipedia) has been reduced to an ineffective man, and calling him a ‘woman’ is deemed equally offensive.

Roy sarcastically points out certain statements made by the then ministers that leave one wondering whether they are referring to the nuclear tests or the Viagra that had been vying with the former for the first place in the headlines of newspapers around the same time. The then Defence Minister had declared in response to Pakistan’s nuclear tests: “We have superior strength and potency” (“TEI” 16). Here words with sexual associations are being equated with power, an offshoot of patriarchal notions. Again, in the context of competing with Pakistan in amassing nuclear weapons, the Indian politicians are said to have compared the nuclear tests to litmus tests of patriotism: “these are not nuclear tests, they are nationalism tests” (ibid.). Such statements are made in order to win the support of the common man. Meanings have been manipulated by the powerful and the power hungry. Here Roy argues how the art of semantics in such contexts indulges in dialogue to adopt and adapt to suit justifications. Bakhtin proposes that all languages represent a distinct point of view on the world, characterized by its own meaning and values. In this view, language is “shot through with intentions and accents,” and thus there are no neutral words. Even the most unremarkable statement possesses a
taste, whether of a profession, a party, a generation, a place or a time. To Bakhtin, words do not exist until they are spoken, and that moment they are printed with the signature of the speaker (DI 293-95).

Again, Roy elaborates on how rationalizations are reduced to logic that defy traditional semantics: Logic that has to be “hammered home” to sink in. Roy states: “The bomb is India, India is the bomb. Not just India, Hindu India” (“TEI” 17). The argument is that therefore any criticism of it is not only “anti-national, but anti-Hindu.” So, she says logically, it can be inferred that the bomb in Pakistan is ‘Islamic’ (ibid 18). Another question Roy ponders upon is “Is India Indian?” (ibid 28). She travels in history where she traces India’s birth as a modern nation state as defined by the precise geographical boundaries drawn by a British Act of parliament in 1899. India was forged on the anvil of the British Empire for the unsentimental reasons of commerce and administration. So, Arundhati Roy, states how Mother India started struggling against her own creators as soon as she was born. With such a reading, she wonders whether India is really Indian. On a humorous note, she concludes that: we are as a whole, ancient people endeavouring to live in a recent nation and Bakhtin states: “The living utterance, having taken meaning at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue” (DI 276).

Paradoxical meanings are contained in the titles like “The Greater Common Good” where the common good stands for the Good, keeping in consideration an impartial angle. Nevertheless the prefixing of “Greater” cancels out the earlier meaning,
attributing it with a ‘partial’ shade. She makes such statements with reference to the
construction of dams that are ‘proclaimed’ to be constructed for the so-called welfare of the human race, but gruesomely and callously results in displacement of considerable population in realizing its end.

The title ‘War is Peace” is outright contradictory, yet meaningful. The statement is an oxymoron by itself. Roy echoes a similar idea in “The End of Imagination” where she states: “Nuclear weapons are about peace, not war” (7). The logical fallacy in the statement also seems to defy the neo-imperialist policy of attributing everything to reason, or reducing everything into abstract entities or logical alternatives, a famous instance being the statement put forward by the American President George Bush himself: “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists,” divorcing all other possible options (TALI 246). This is only residual of the Enlightenment Movement which is described in Postcolonial Enlightenment as “Irremediably Eurocentric….In its quest for the universal, Enlightenment occludes cultural difference and refuses moral and social relativity…. The doctrine of progress, in turn, legitimates imperial conquest under the guise of the civilizing mission, while the celebration of reason disqualifies other belief systems as irrational or superstitious.”

Another thought-provoking title is “The Algebra of Infinite Justice”. Firstly ‘Justice’ is something subjective, and not always logical. Again ‘Infinite Justice’ can be meted out only by God, and is a phrase with religious bearings. And religion cannot be equated with reason or logic. The title is indeed ironical. “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” as a title, is an attempt to reduce ‘Infinite Justice’ to logic or statistics. It imitates, satirically the neo-colonialist policy in its attempt to defy humanity and God; and in a
way it commits blasphemy in endeavoring to become another God. Roy takes the title from the initial name given by the U.S. government for the War in Afghanistan, together with a number of smaller military actions, under the umbrella of the global “War on Terror” (Wikipedia). This was later called “Operation Enduring Freedom” (OEF). Whether it is ‘enduring freedom’ or ‘infinite justice,’ the irony according to Roy lies in the fact that it is meant only for a section of the humanity. She feels that America needs to acknowledge “that it shares the planet with other nations, with other human beings who, even if they are not on TV, have loves and griefs and stories and songs and sorrows and, for heaven’s sake, rights” (TAIJ 239). America’s pretext of peace in these regions is only a ruse to impose the American way, as Roy recalls what Donald Rumsfeld, America’s then Secretary of Defense states regarding their victory. He feels “that if he could convince the world that Americans must be allowed to continue with their way of life, he would consider it a victory” (239). Here again the word ‘terrorism’ has different connotations. One man’s terrorism is another man’s freedom fight and Roy stresses on the fact that violence can never be curbed with more violence.

This idea is reiterated in the essay “War is Peace” where she probes into the deep-seated ambivalence towards violence. She claims how the world has not yet found an acceptable definition for terrorism. What is often one country’s terrorist is often another country’s freedom-fighter. In that sense all freedom-fighters who used violence to achieve their political ends should be termed ‘terrorists’. Roy states that when the U.S. funded, armed and sheltered plenty of rebels and insurgents in the world, they were not labelled as promoters of terrorism. She goes on to say that President Reagan even praised the Mujahedeen, who were trained by the CIA and Pakistan’s ISI. Ironically, they were
viewed as terrorists by the government in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. This is a case of ‘multi-accentuality’ where linguistic signs carry more than one meaning according to the contexts in which they are used. Chris Baldwick says that “the meaning of freedom is constantly contested, while recent examples would include terrorist among many others (216).

This idea of words losing the original meanings accorded to them is further highlighted in Roy’s essay *Public Power in the Age of Empire*. She states:

> When language has been butchered and bled of meaning, how do we understand “public power”? When freedom means occupation, when democracy means neoliberal capitalism, when reform means repression, when words like “empowerment” and “peacekeeping” make your blood run cold—why, then, “public power” could mean whatever you want it to mean. A biceps building machine, or a Community Power Shower. (5)

The fact that Roy sees language as instrument of state repression also holds no water because her own subversive style works against this phenomenon by eliciting a dialogue between the two and thus, emphasizing the dynamic nature of language. The dialogics of semantics can be taken to be positive as far as the progression and dynamism of language is concerned. But in the essay above Roy points out how even meaning is manipulated to suit the selfish needs of the powerful. The very concept of democracy loses meaning in the hands of a few power hungry rulers. A person’s semantic intent can be gauged only by placing him or her in the respective cultural, social and political context. Actual meaning is seen to evolve in the dialogization process of words and contexts.
4.7. “The Briefing”- Multiple Registers

“The Briefing” by Arundhati Roy is said to be her only work of fiction after *The God of Small Things*. But the content of this short story reveals that it is more factual than fictional. Like Mammachi’s unclassifiable ‘jelly-jam,’ the selected short story borders on nonfiction and fiction as it reiterates and reinforces her musings on corporate globalization and the subsequent effects on the environment as elaborately dealt with in her essays. Fact and fantasy blend to an unclassifiable proportion. Thus, for reasons of convenience and coherence the study of “The Briefing” as a multi-voiced narrative is included under the nonfiction section of the thesis.

The short story which at the outset appears to be a monologue, in fact has a number of voices embedded in it and is revealed in the form of different registers and tones. These voices are nothing but a stylization of skaz. It is actually a powerful allegory on “climate change, war on terror and corporate raj.” A thunderous voice without a face seems to address a group of people on a mission: “My greetings. I’m sorry I’m not here with you today but perhaps it’s just as well. In times such as these, it’s best not to reveal ourselves completely, not even to each other” (“Briefing” 203). It is reminiscent of “the famous and oft-published two-minute warning” in Peter Porter’s *Your Attention Please*. The faceless warning in this poem stands not as a forewarning for those people in the poem; rather it is a pointer to humanity in general.

A militant commander of unidentified origin and gender - nameless and faceless briefs a group of people whom he/she addresses as ‘comrades’. The voice at times takes on the register of a tourist guide ensuring that the audience has visited and noted all the artifacts, ironically that include, pillbox batteries, the ovens, ammunition depots with
cavity floors, workers’ mass grave and the gigantic fort. “And now, in Europe’s time of peace and plenty,” these are being used “to showcase the transcendent purpose, or, if you wish, the sublime purposelessness, of civilization’s highest aspiration: Art” (“Briefing” 205).

The speaker informs the group of the fort that has never been attacked. It is enlightened that it was built by the Hapsburgs in 1833 and that the Nazis used it for hiding the gold they looted during World War II here. This fort the largest of its kind built in the high mountains was designed to withstand all kinds of military assault. The fort is symbolic of man’s innovation not only meant to challenge Man but God Himself. It was used as a military base for more than a hundred years, including by the Nazis. For 165 years it has remained closed to the public, surrounded by enigma. The apparent monologue of the speaker suddenly and unexpectedly enters into a dialogue with the listeners when the enormity of the size of the fort is analyzed. To the query “How big is it, this fort that may or may not be beautiful?,” the inaudible answer is repeated by the speaker, “Gigantic. You say?” (“Briefing” 204).

The irony lies in the fact that the fort which was once a symbol of violence and terror is now reduced to an artifact for art lovers, a mere symbol of aesthetic elegance. This relic, all the same was not modelled on the principles of aestheticism as the commander states: “Fear must have shaped it; dread must be embedded in its very grain. Is that what this fort really is? A fragile testament to trepidation, to apprehension, to an imagination under siege?” (“Briefing” 204). In tune with Bakhtin theory of unfinalizability, the cyclic nature of values is suggested – what once stood for violence has now become a symbol of aestheticism.
The fort in fact is emblematic of the corporate world which Arundhati Roy refers to as “Empire” in many of her works of nonfiction like Public Power in the Age of Empire (PPAE), and “Confronting Empire” (“CE”). ‘Empire’ for her is the corporate world - the U.S. Government (and its European satellites), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and multinational corporations and their other subsidiary heads like nationalism, religious bigotry, fascism and terrorism, all of which march arm in arm with the project of corporate globalization (“CE” 29). This world is built by the elite for the elite just as the indomitable fort was. Likewise the fort has left no chinks for even sunlight to enter as the corporate leaves no scope for the poor, the farmers, and the dispossessed to enter into the domain of the ‘Empire’. As for Roy beauty lies in the little acts of dissent, the little chinks of light that will one day usher in a brighter world where there will be democracy in its true sense. Roy wishes to unleash the imagination that is under siege by her powerful multi-voiced writings. The fact that the fort is closed to sunlight also underlines the lack of transparency in the policies of the corporate World and the Big Brother. The fort acts as a double-voiced discourse.

Even the very concept of beauty is decided by the elite as the speaker thinks aloud “Who has the right to decide? Who are the world’s real curators, or should we say the real world’s curators? What is the real world?” (“Briefing” 204). The very inclusion of these questions reveals that this seeming monologue is meant to be a dialogue eliciting responses not only from the audience but from the readers as well. It sets one thinking on the lines of Roy and impels one to search for answers.
Roy finds beauty in the most unexpected places. She finds beauty in the small things. But the Big things conjure up the concept of beauty and impose their standards on the majority. This line of strategy makes up the backbone of the capitalistic corporate world. Whether it is ideas or products, it is they who set the standards for others to follow. They are the curators. It is the capitalistic mentality of the corporate world that makes them hoard everything that ensures their superiority. The anonymous speaker quotes its chief chronicler—“to store everything that ought to be defended at all costs” (“Briefing” 204). The chief chronicler’s voice echoes the voice of “power that fears powerlessness.” This short story enters into a dialogue with not only Roy’s nonfiction but also her novel as well. As already noted earlier the powerful at all stages fear the so called powerless because the hidden strength of the powerless lies in their number. In her essay “Confronting the Empire”, she states: “Remember this. We be many and they be few. They need us more than we need them” (32). This leads us to believe that Roy makes use of multiple genres to drive home her ideological stance. The dialogization of the short story with other genres like the novel, the speech and the essay emphasises the need for mobilizing support against hegemony. The commander who is not physically present is conspicuous by his lone but thunderous voice but the physically present crowd becomes insignificant by their voicelessness in spite of their number. In a way the voice of the militant commander is the refracted voice of the author trying to sensitize them on the power inherent in them.

The powerful will always build walls around them either in bricks and stones or by way of certain policies or rules that restrict and fix the weaker sections to their fated positions so that transgression is restricted. This is a strategy employed by the developed
countries on the developing ones, by the patriarchal society on women, by the upper caste on the lower, etc.

It is the guidebook that acts as an answer to the question on what is hidden inside the fort. “Weapons. Gold. Civilization itself”, all symbols of power, are locked up within the safety vaults of the fort. It is the possession of power, wealth and education that categorizes one as civilized and anyone devoid of these are marginalized as uncivilized. In “Confronting Empire” Roy says “Meanwhile, the countries of the North harden their borders and stockpile weapons of mass destruction. After all they have to make sure that it’s only money, goods, patents and services that are globalized. Not the free movement of people. Not a respect for human rights” (30-31). The Empire symbolized by the fort ensures that what need to remain inside the fort is kept inside and what need to be expelled is thrown out. The selfish motives of the corporate world are clearly voiced in this context. Just as with growing industrialization and automation, human concerns are callously relegated.

The talk on corporate raj leads the speaker to highlight the cut throat competition implicit in the capitalistic world and its ecological side effects. The speaker shifts his/her focus from the indomitable fort to the “snow wars” in the Alps. The shift though abrupt is not without connection. The ecological consequences of capitalism are highlighted next by the speaker. After a round of rhetorical questions the tone again shifts to that of a Militant commander, “Those of you who are from here-you must know about the Snow Wars. Those of you who aren’t, listen carefully. It is vital that you understand the texture and fabric of the place you have chosen for your mission” (“Briefing” 205).
The Militant’s register gives way again to that of an environmentalist who is on a mission to educate his students on the consequences of global warming:

Since the winters have grown warmer here, there are fewer ‘snowmaking’ days and as a result there’s not enough snow to cover the ski slopes. Most ski slopes can no longer be classified as ‘snow-reliable.’ At a recent press conference-perhaps you've read the reports-Werner Voltron, President of the Association of Ski Instructors, said, “The future, I think is black. Completely black. (“Briefing” 205)

The till now mute audience is shown to acknowledge the reference to future being “black”, a toppling of racial supremacy with “discernible murmurs of Bravo! Viva! Wah, Wah! Yeah Brother!” (205). The speaker is quick enough to correct the misunderstanding by explaining that blackness in this context refers to the ominous, catastrophic and bleak future.

The natural world is seen purely in terms of business. The capitalist world thrives on the disasters caused by Global warming. The loss borne by the sea-side resorts due increasing temperature is considered a gain by those into the snow making business. This clearly made evident in the words of Mr. Holzhausen who feels that the changing climate offers great opportunity for the Alps. People who went to Mediterranean on vacations would visit the cooler Alps in ten years time. Therefore he feels it is their “duty to guarantee snow of the highest quality. Mountain White guarantees dense, evenly spread snow which skiers will find is far superior to natural snow” (“Briefing” 206). It is not only Mr. Holzhausen but the speaker’s register too shifts to that of a salesman:
Mountain White snow, comrades, like most artificial snows, is made from a protein located in the membrane of a bacterium called *Pseudomonas syringae*. What sets it apart from other snows is that in order to prevent the spread of disease and other pathogenic hazards, Mountain White guarantees that the water it uses to generate snow for skiing is of the highest quality, sourced directly from drinking water networks. (“Briefing” 206)

The restlessness displayed by the listeners prompts the speaker to assume the commander’s stature once again and instructs the audience to stand composed: “But calm your anger. It will only blur your vision and blunt your purpose” (206). The statement is also ironical because it is the speaker who seems to forget his role and purpose and assumes different roles leading to a heteroglossia of many social voices realized by the use of various registers related to different occupations. The speaker urges the audience to develop an objective view of the whole situation: to be intellectually stimulated than emotionally drained.

The militant voice is soon replaced by that of a scientist explaining the process of artificial snow making. The phantom narrator of indeterminate provenance goes on to explain how nucleated, treated water is shot out of high-pressure power-intensive snow cannons at high speed to generate artificial snow. The snow when ready is stacked in mounds called whales which are later groomed, tilled and fluffed before the snow is evenly spread on slopes that have been shaved of imperfections and natural rock formations. The soil is covered with a thick layer of fertilizer to keep the soil cool and insulate it from the warmth generated by Hot Snow (“Briefing” 207).
The register of the salesman returns with the introduction of another brand of artificial snow “Scent n’ Sparkle” which promises whiter, brighter snow with a fragrance and comes in three aromas—Vanilla, Pine and Evergreen. It also promises to satisfy tourists’ nostalgic yearning for old-fashioned holidays says the narrator. Responses in the form of murmurs are again evoked when it is mentioned that “Scented snow anticipates the effects that the global migration of trees and forests will have on the tourism industry” (“Briefing” 207). Polyphony is enabled here by way of intertextuality. Migration of trees is immediately connected to the movement of Burnam Woods in Macbeth. The voice of the witch is reiterated here to emphasize the hazard implicit in the situation: “‘Macbeth shall never vanquished be, until Great Burnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill shall come against him?’” (“Briefing” 208). Neither did Macbeth take heed of the witch’s warning nor do people who are blinded by capitalism, as one of them echoes the sentiments of Macbeth “That will never be. Who can impress the forest, bid the tree unfix his earthbound root?” (“Briefing” 208). The quotation from Macbeth evokes an ominous atmosphere, though the contexts of the past and the present are different the effect is the same, a warning of the foreboding future. This can be taken to be an instance of what Bakhtin calls ‘stylization’ because here the authorial intent co-exists with that of the witch’s and move in the same direction of a shared warning related to a future catastrophe. Thus it also serves as another pointer to ecological imbalances that may take place in the future, with special reference to deforestation. The dislocation of the trees at another level indicates the possibility of earthquakes and tsunamis due to deforestation that result in the victory of Nature over Science, in spite of all the professed leaps by man. This is again what is meant when Bakhtin states “The word lives, as it
were, on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context” (DI 284). The corporate world puffed up in its own ambition is destined to meet its doom as Macbeth had to.

Here Macbeth stands for the indifferent humanity for whom disaster is imminent with increasing global warming and the adverse effects of the globalizing process. Macbeth like the corporate world also stands for unchecked ambition. The final devastation is hinted by the migration of trees that will be followed by the dislocation of birds and insects, wasps, bees, butterflies, bats and other pollinators. As a consequence the speaker authenticates his/her claim by saying that Alaskan caribou plagued by mosquitoes are moving to higher altitudes where they don't have enough food to eat. Mosquitoes carrying malaria are sweeping through the Lower Alps.

The author subverts the very idea of capitalism and power epitomized by the fort by the idea of its being subjected to attack by mosquitoes, Nature’s minute destroyers: “I wonder how this fort that was built to withstand heavy artillery fire will mount a defense against an army of mosquitoes” (“Briefing” 208). The subversive power inherent in the small things in nature runs through her novel as well.

The saviour attitude of the “empire” which is dealt in detail in Roy’s essays is also accentuated in this short-story. Scent n’ Sparkle holds shares in a company that “makes” and “defuses” landmines; they possess retail outlets for battery-operated, prosthetic limbs that can substitute the limbs of those lost in land mine blasts; they provide asylum to victims of war-torn Afghanistan by funding the NGOs and corporate orphanages; the company is also said to have put in a tender for the dredging and cleaning of lakes and rivers in Austria and Italy that form the toxicity brought in by the
residue of fertilizers and artificial snowmelt. This echoes the sentiments of the corporate world that capitalizes on the devastation created by them in the first place. Sometimes war situations are created for the saleability of their weapons and later relief measures are offered as in the case of the corporate orphanages mentioned earlier.

The reference to Afghanistan recalls her earlier comment in her famous speech “Come September” where Roy is highly eloquent when she says: “the war against terror was officially flagged off in the ruins of Afghanistan, in country after country freedoms are being curtailed in the name of protecting freedom, civil liberties are being suspended in the name of protecting democracy.” This intertextuality emphasizes the agenda behind the war against terror that works to plunder the underdeveloped and developing nations in the name of civilizing mission, something akin to the theme of Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, a novella oft-mentioned in The God of Small Things. The spearheading of neo-imperialistic tendencies is clearly elicited in the dialogue ensued as a result of this intertextuality.

The capitalist mentality of the “Empire” does not end with material products. There is also the reification of emotions. The Bush government, according to Roy capitalizes on the emotions of the American people as well: “To fuel yet another war - this time against Iraq - by manipulating people's grief, by packaging it for TV specials sponsored by corporations selling detergent or running shoes, is to cheapen and devalue grief, to drain it of meaning. We are seeing a pillaging of even the most private human feelings for political purpose” says Roy in her essay “Anti-Americanism Hollowed be Thy Name.”
It is the lack of respect for human emotions and basic human rights that promotes dominator culture whether it is patriarchy, capitalism or imperialism. The danger inherent in the unchecked growth of neo-imperialism and the undemocratic globalization process is succinctly elucidated by the author. Jane Stewart, a critic opines that “In a telling echo of an apocalyptic scene in The God of Small Things, depicting ‘rats racing across the ruined landscape with dollar signs in their eyes’, ‘The Briefing’ warns that change must come or we shall all have to learn ‘to live like rats in the ruins of other peoples’ greed” (209).

Towards the end of the short-story the speaker resumes the tone of the Militant commander. This highlights the dominance of the authoritarian role yet again. Though it assumes different roles it does return to square one, the intended aim that is the basis of all other proposed aims.: “Comrades, the stone lion in the mountains has begun to weaken. The Fort that has never been attacked has laid siege to itself. It is time for us to make our move. Time to replace the noisy, undirected spray of machinegun fire with the cold precision of an assassin's bullet” (“Briefing” 209). These words echo Roy’s own sentiments voiced in her famous work War Talk, “Fortunately, power has a shelf life. When the time comes, maybe this mighty empire will, like others before it, overreach itself and implode from within. It looks as though structural cracks have already appeared. As the war against terror casts its net wider and wider, America's corporate heart is haemorrhaging” (TAIJ 298).

Roy seems to articulate the need for appropriating of the marginalizing power of the dominant centre. Murari Prasad articulates that in Arundhati Roy’s writings the discourse of marginality is conflated with the representation of resistance. Roy’s
representation of the subaltern sections in both her fiction and nonfiction through these multiple voices reflect her governing ideology (157-158).