Chapter Two

Atrocities in War

Issues related to war and their end results have been recorded by writers of the past and the present. It is through their attempts that incidents of importance find a place in history and literature. They help to have an actual glimpse of war and its impact on mankind. What is the meaning of war and why it is given a lot of space in history are, in fact, thought-provoking questions. History brings to light the ideas related to glorification of war and the struggles of heroic past. The web article of Jacob Malewitz, “Why Does Mankind Make War” proves that, when “... civilization first sprang up there has been war. Even before that, there are many records of violence.”

In this fast growing modern world, our ancient civilizations can be studied only from the depths of historical evidence left by our ancestral parents. These past civilizations belong to the tradition when kings swayed power in this world. Their thirst for power has led to accumulation of land, destruction, brutality through bloodshed and cruel means of killing innocent people. Elements like violence, anger and power struggle exist in the blood of all creatures, especially human beings.

According to the theorist Lorenz in the web article “War,” “Animals are naturally aggressive, and in humans this aggression manifests itself as warfare. However, while war has a natural cause, the development of technology has accelerated human destructiveness to a level that is irrational and damaging to the species.” This psychological aspect of war proves how such aggressive nature is an extended behaviour of animals and gives importance to the activities like territoriality
and competition. The detailed analysis shows how man also has the same aggressiveness and fierceness found in the mental make-up of animals and it is due to this tendency that man fights to attain power over other countries.

In the power struggle, war involves two parties, one weak and the other strong or both equally strong in their attitude and response. War occurs when nations lack the required fundamental equality among the groups and when one group wishing to destroy the other. That is why people consider war as an integral part of human culture. For nearly thousands of years, war has been used as a means of attaining certain goals like control over other countries through the use of force and power. The world is filled with predators, and the weak ones are always doomed to destruction. The end result of war is measured out in loss and the number of people killed or wounded. The cost of war is never measured in terms of individual human suffering and thus it is the duty of writers to take up the issue and speak about suffering and pain.

Arthasastra of Sanskrit literature is the first to explore war and its consequences through a king named Ashoka. Emperor Ashoka of Magadha is considered to be one of the best and able rulers who ruled India. He was extremely talented in the art of warfare and read a number of Holy Scriptures. Within eight years, he made a mark as a brave and courageous king in history defeating his enemies. The battlefield where he fought a great war to annex the territory of Kalinga and the land appeared as a pool of blood. Though Ashoka was victorious in Kalinga war, he suffered pangs of guilt, shame and disgust at the sight of the battlefield. The historical incident in the web article “Ashoka the Great,” talks of how Ashoka saw, “. . . young children crying over the dead bodies of their dead parents, women crying over the dead bodies of their dead husbands, mothers crying over the loss of their
kids.” This pathetic sight transformed Ashoka into a Buddhist monk and he began to expose the horrors and nightmares of war.

English literature also gives a lot of importance to the loss of innocent lives. The literary artists condemn conspiracies of politicians regarding war. Wilfred Owen is one such notable writer who gives a deadly picture of a battlefield and raises his voice against war. He himself was a soldier who took part in the First World War on 21 October 1915. Writers like Owen want to present the true facts and harsh realities of war. Like Owen, another strong and bold contemporary writer is Arundhati Roy, who showcases her notions of war through her essays. She writes in order to bring to light the plight of voiceless victims. Unminding the sharp criticism against her, she launches a protest against the ill-treatment of human beings. In the eyes of Roy, the citizens of this world are blindfolded and led to the scaffold and the results turn out to be lethal.

Roy’s essays go deep into the horrors of war and bring out the depths of true motives hidden behind it. The issues of Roy dealt within this chapter are the twin tower blasts, the war in Afghanistan, another alternative war in Iraq to gain control over oil reserves, Palestine-Israel war, Kargil war in Kashmir, racially motivated war in Sri Lanka, and the war of Maoists or the terrorists according to the government. She boldly undertakes a real, genuine survey on this subject and reveals the hidden facts to the world. As per the view of Roy, reality is always different from imagination. Roy, in her essay “Come September,” reveals like this, “Fiction and Non-fiction are only different techniques of storytelling. For reasons I do not fully understand, fiction dances out of me. Non-fiction is wrenched out by the aching, broken world I wake up to every morning” (13).
Roy listens sympathetically to the cries and sorrowful tales of her brothers and sisters who are victims of violence. She wonders how cruel this world is. Both the educated and the uneducated depend upon the media to know the happenings across the globe. When a loved one dies, the affected members demand investigation of the mysterious death. The media holds the important role of presenting incidents without any distortion. In “Peace is War,” Roy tells how mass media, “. . . is - an elaborate boardroom bulletin that reports and analyses the concerns of powerful people” (93).

As lies prevail even in the media, it is necessary that someone should talk about the reality of things. The helpless people search for a saviour who would champion their cause. So Roy takes it as a challenge and comes forward to speak about the hidden facts in media. Roy begins her protest by pouring her emotions against the deadly war carried out by America. She gives formal information that the war in Afghanistan is a response to the September 2011 attacks on their World Trade Centre and Pentagon. Roy explains how both these centers are considered to be the symbols of “America’s economic and military dominance” (221) in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice.” These centers were destroyed by the actions of so called terrorists and the group responsible for these attacks is not ‘glory boys’ in the words of Roy. Roy feels that there is no inner motive or aim behind their attacks. So, she strictly condemns the American government’s policies laced with falsehood and revenge.

According to Roy, America is at war against people it does not know. There are no proper evidences or reasons to link the dead hijackers to the terrorist groups. Roy points out that on 20 September 2011, the FBI expressed its doubts about the identities of the hijackers, but President George W. Bush was not ready to compromise with the FBI. Bush said, “We know exactly who the terrorists were and
which governments were supporting them” (220), and the result is America’s war on Afghanistan as it is manifested in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice.”

Roy exposes how America termed this war against terrorism as “Operation Infinite Justice” (224) in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice.” After strong objections from the Muslim side, she feels that the infinite justice gets a new name, “Operation Enduring Freedom” (224). In the same essay, Roy says, “Witness the infinite justice at the new century. Civilians starving to death, while there are waiting to be killed” (227) and she raises many questions like “Infinite justice/Endearing Freedom for whom? Is this America’s war against terror in America or against terror in general? What exactly is being avenged here?” (224). Roy is not able to solve the mystery beneath these questions. She is rather confused and protests against these atrocities. Leaving these questions to the readers, Roy goes on to say that Osama Bin Laden is held responsible by Bush for the September 11 attacks. Peter Meyer substantiates Roy’s opinion in the web article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral Unjust A Psychopath’s War” and projects how, within hours after the attacks on World Trade Centre and Pentagon, Bush “. . . was blaming Osama Bin Laden and his alleged Al-Qaeda network, and declaring a so-called war on terrorism.” Even though Bush lacks evidence, he terrorizes people and shows what he is capable of. The Taliban government is accused of sheltering Bin Laden and hence, Bush wants to wage a war against them. Afghanistan has once again been used as a battlefield by larger external powers.

An important reason for using Afghanistan as a battlefield is its geographic position. Afghanistan exists between the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. The country consists of different ethnic groups and it has been a witness to many multiple internal struggles. There has been a complete devastation in the country for
nearly three decades. In spite of this, the endurance and strength of its people has been amazing and the government has always directed its people towards a perfect reconstruction. The first recorded war in Afghanistan began with the Saur Revolution which overthrew the existing government and brought about a socialist Agenda. This Agenda was responsible for atheism, land reforms and equality of the sexes. After this change there came the Pashtun tribesmen in Afghanistan, who called themselves as Mujahedeens. The net article “Afghanistan: Conflict Profile” speaks of how the Mujahedeens received support from the U.S. government. It also reveals how the U.S. government “. . . began to provide training and arms to the Mujahedeen resistance groups. Along with, extra support from other countries such as, Saudi Arabia (who had their own Agenda) and the UK.”

These allied countries extended financial and military support from 10 to 40 billion. The next war which followed Saur Revolution is the Soviet war in Afghanistan. It took place from December 1979 to February 1987. According to the details provided in the net article “Afghanistan: Conflict Profile,” the effect of the Soviet invasion was terrible and it left nearly “. . . an estimated two million people dead and 1.5 million people disabled, in part due to the massive city carpet – bombing campaigns and the large areas of land mines that still exist today.” This war crushed the strength of the Mujahedeens and many Afghans fled to Pakistan and Iran.

In the 1990s, there sprang up another militia group called the Taliban. It was led by the leader Mohammad Omar. He turned the existing, weak government into an Islamic state. This government turned itself into a terror regime and dealt the civilians in a brutal way. Taliban is responsible for bringing about the Sharia laws against women. According to this law, women should wear the burqa and were not allowed to go out of their home. Severe punishments like torture and death were
given to women. Aryn Baker, in her web article “Afghan Women and the Return of the Taliban,” presents an example that describes the impact and severity of the Sharia law. Aisha, an Afghan woman ran away from her husband’s house as she was unable to bear the torture of her in-laws. On tracing her back, the husband sliced off her ears and nose. Touching her damaged face, Aisha asks, “How can we reconcile with them?” This is the kind of hatred among women, against the Taliban regime. Roy, in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” proves how for the Taliban “. . . first victims were its own people, particularly women. It closed down girls’ schools, dismissed women from government jobs and enforced Sharia laws under which women deemed to be ‘immoral’ are stoned to death and widows guilty of being adulterous are buried alive” (229).

The Taliban government became a threat to the life of innocent Afghan women. The anguish, pain and poor health of Afghan women are evident on the streets of Kabul. Many women who once earned their living by working as teachers or nurses have left everything and are now begging on the streets. According to the facts in the web article, “Third World Traveler: Afghanistan: Taliban’s War on Women,” adults and children caught on the streets for revealing their face, wrist or ankle have been beaten up in front of everyone by police who go about searching for “dress code violators.”

The Taliban government has also restricted the education of Afghan children to the teachings in the Koran. A web article entitled “Third World Traveler: Afghanistan: Taliban’s War on Women,” points out how the citizens of Kabul are dragged to a sports stadium under compulsion to watch “. . . beheadings, hangings, or amputations of alleged criminals.” Thus civilians are scared to exist in such a place. Roy, in her writings, tries to say that America has intelligently capitalized on the
Taliban government’s negatives which enabled them to bomb the entire place and slaughter the people of Afghanistan. The interim government in 2001 was formed by Hamid Karzai. He became the president and directed his forces during the attacks in Afghanistan by the U.S. and the U.K. allied forces. The past incidents prompt Roy to picture the extent of destruction that happened to Afghanistan. In her opinion, the entire country has been reduced to rubbles. She portrays the real historical facts based on the Soviet invasion, and because of that war, today Afghanistan stands without any “...conventional co-ordinates or sign posts to plot on a map – no military bases, no industrial complexes, no water treatment plants. Farms have been turned into mass graves. The countryside is littered with land mines – ten million is the most recent estimate” (226) as it is expressed in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice.”

America’s CIA worked with Pakistan’s ISI to wipe out the terrorists in Afghanistan which was in such a devastated state. Roy is not able to believe that CIA has been funding the ISI to gather many soldiers from forty Muslim countries for America’s proxy war. In order to obey them, Pakistan is forced to train up the Afghan soldiers on its backyard in order to produce fattened sheep ready for slaughter. Included in this, is the fact that soldiers from Pakistan and Afghanistan have won many wars for America in the past. However, the request of the U.S. government is “...to garrot the pet it has hand – reared in its backyard for so many years” (230-31) as it is stated in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice.” Roy finds out how “...Afghanistan is poised to be the graveyard for the unlikely soldiers who fought and won this war for America” (229-30). Afghanistan, once an ally of America has turned into an enemy, because of the injustice done to them. Roy highlights the treacherous motive of America in using Afghan soldiers for its own gain.
Apart from this, Roy also manifests how America has got the help of Mujahedeens in Afghanistan to plant opium as revolutionary tax. Afghanistan has also accepted it and cultivated poppy that yields major financial assistance. Tim Albone in his web article “Remote Post: Ruined Poppy Farmers join Ranks with the Taliban” substantiates Roy’s opinion thus, “Afghanistan provides nine out of every ten grams of heroin sold on the streets of Britain.” This shows that the U.K. has been the main dealer in poppy production. The support from the U.S. and the U.K. has grown day by day to encourage poppy farmers. Farmers have taken huge risks to farm poppy as its market price has been 20 times more than that of wheat. Roy, in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” lays bare these figures in the words as follows: “Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland had become the biggest producer of heroin in the world, and the single biggest source on American streets. The annual profits said to be between $100 and $200 billion were ploughed back into training and arming militants” (228). This shows the kind of destruction done to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the past by the CIA in America.

Roy also reveals how Pakistan, the next victim of America is facing lots of troubles in the present scenario. The country, according to Roy in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” has seen its “. . . sectarian violence, globalization’s structural adjustment programs and drug lords . . . tearing the country to pieces” (230) and added to these problems, opium is “. . . sown like dragon’s teeth across the country” (230). The entire country is affected to a great extent by America’s drug labour. America’s support for Pakistan has become a threat to Pakistan. All these small, but important details present a picture of America and the cruelty it has meted out to innocent people.
On the whole, America’s war on Afghanistan is just to show its power on another country that seems fragile and weak. Roy, in her essay “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” quotes Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Defence Secretary and says 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” (233-34). This sums up the view point of America and the reasons for its war. Roy senses that no one must dare to attack America in future, or else this would be the result. She finds that war is fought just to show one’s own power and control over other countries. The loss of precious lives and the bleak future of the country do not have any impact in the minds of such aggressors. Pure revenge attitude overpowers them and the result is that the peace of the whole world is collapsed.

In the aftermath of the war, Afghanistan is struggling to rebuild the country once again. Taliban has refused to go in for negotiation and the occupying forces are unable to stop their attacks. Actually, July 2011 has been given as a date for the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan. The September 11, 2001 attacks have affected the people a lot and now their only wish is to destroy the terrorists. Even Bush has made a public announcement on it after the attacks but, Roy’s view on terrorism is different from that of Bush. In Roy’s words in “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” “Terrorism is the symptom, not the disease. Terrorism has no country. It’s trans-national, as global an enterprise as Coke or Pepsi or Nike. At the first sign of trouble, terrorist can pull up stakes and move their ‘factories’ from country to country in search of a better deal just like the multinationals” (233).

The war against Afghanistan by the U.S. and the U.K. has let loose violence all over the nation and brought about massive destruction. Terrorism proves to be the root cause for this problem. The reason for why the U.S. puts the blame immediately
on Bin Laden is because, he is a terrorist wanted by millions across the globe. When the attacks took place on 11 September 2001, Bush suspected terrorists as being the backbone of destruction in America. If there had been no Al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks, the immediate suspicion would not have fallen on Afghanistan. Whenever heavy loss of lives occur in America, people demand justice. Bush is aware of this and so he tries to pacify people’s minds by attacking Afghanistan, but this war proves deadly and destructive. The war on Afghanistan took place as retaliation to the attacks on 11 September 2001. Roy presents a number of facts and figures related to this. In addition to this, there are other issues like the existence of Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups, to be considered in relation to the war. Considering all these issues, it is true that war is always not a solution to many a problem.

Mutual toleration is a golden rule which has to be practised by all human beings. It is important to trust opponents in spite of all the cruelties done by them. From the beginning, human life is a long list of compromises and it is essential to bring it into practice. Compromise occurs in day to day life and it is a goal to be realized and utilized in the process of non-violence. Anand in his article “Conflict Resolution: The Gandhian Approach” points out how “Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world disappear if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint.” A cruel battlefield is always the result of revenge motive and the aspiration for a super power status. There is no real gain in this war. It has been going on for 11 ½ years without success. The only happening of importance is the death of civilians in Afghanistan. To put an end to all this, the American government must provide some peaceful solutions through which it can stop mass graves in Afghanistan. Peaceful talks are possible only when communication is possible and ideologies are favourable to the opposite side.
Roy, in her essay “A War too Far,” points out how “The U.S, which Bush has called “the most peaceful nation on earth,” has been at war with one country or another every year for the last 50 years.” All these wars lack proper reasons. The initial aim of America is capturing Osama Bin Laden, but now the goal posts have moved towards Iraq. Roy narrates how a deadly war has recently been fought by America all over the world in response to the disaster on 11 September 2001. Roy, in her web essay “A War too Far,” tries to mention the fact that each and every person who has lost a loved one in the September 11 attacks knows well that “No war, no act of revenge, will blunt the edges of their pain or bring their loved ones back. War cannot avenge those who have died. War is only a brutal desecration of their memory.” So the question arises as to why America wants to take revenge on other countries. This revenge is just to terrorize the entire world so that future generations will be afraid to raise their heads against their so-called super power status. Roy is of the opinion that the war against Afghanistan and Iraq is actually a warning served out to the whole world to exhibit their superiority in carrying out a mass destruction.

Roy finds most of America’s reactions to be unjust and unpardonable. She describes in her web essay “A War too Far,” how, for the U.S. government, “Saddam Hussein is a war-criminal, a cruel military despot who has committed genocide against his own people. That’s a fairly accurate description of the man. In 1988, he razed hundreds of villages in northern Iraq and killed thousands of Kurds.” This view of the U.S. government about Saddam Hussein led the American and the British troops to fight against Iraq. But till then, there was no report connecting Iraq to the 11 September 2001 attacks. In September 2002, the U.S. government and the U.K. media were trying to convince the people that it was actually Iraq who planned these attacks. The words of an American soldier or the private AJ in the troop provide
enough reason for the motive of this battle. Roy sums up his words in the essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” thus, “I wanna take revenge for 9/11” (116). AJ and his fellow soldiers are made to believe that the 11 September 2001 attacks are somehow linked to Iraq but Roy feels that it is not right to criticize any country without proper evidence.

The survey of New York Times/CBS news shocks Roy as “42% of American public now believes that Saddam Hussein is directly responsible for the 11 September attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon” (116) as it is exposed in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.” Noam Chomsky on Peter Meyer’s web article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral Unjust a Psychopath’s War,” also gives more or less the same figure as to how, “. . . about 50 percent of the population now believes that Iraq was responsible for the attack on the World Trade Centre. This has happened since Sep 2002.” The American soldiers fighting in Iraq were not aware of the truth that American and the British Governments supported Saddam at the political and financial levels.

Then Bush gave a declaration that Iraq would be liberated from the hands of Saddam. Roy however feels that Bush’s words seem to suggest this, “Iraqi peoples’ bodies are killed, their souls will be liberated” (117) as she expresses in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.” Perhaps, that is why he chose a name for this as Operation Iraqi Freedom. There is another question in Roy’s mind as to, what these terms do really suggest. In fact, the U.S. government undertook this war in order to bring Iraq to its knees begging for mercy. So this attack could never be branded as an Operation Iraqi Freedom. To fulfil this task, Iraq had been deprived of all the support from outside, making it easier for the allies’ coalition to attack them. It is more like “Operation lets Run a Race, but first let me break your knees” (118) in the words of
Roy in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.” In spite of being weak and deprived of all external supports, Iraq is able to face the tough challenge put up by the allies and has shown excessive courage and will power in attacking the U.S. and the U.K.

When the war began, the first target of the U.S. and the U.K. was Baghdad. Here thousands of bombs shattered the area and many innocent civilians lost their lives. In the same essay, Roy presents her views in an interview with the U.S. army spokesman who spoke thus, “. . . the Iraqis were blowing themselves up! ‘They’re using very old stocks. Their missiles go up and come down’” (119). The civilian casualties presented in the Arab T.V station, Al-Jazeera have been denounced as ‘emotive.’ In addition to this, Roy also pictures the cruelty done to prisoners in the Guantanamo Bay. The U.S. officials did not deny their ill-treatment in this place. Roy wonders about their attitude like this, “They deny that they’re ‘prisoners of war’! They call them ‘unlawful combatants;’ implying that their ill-treatment is legitimate!” (120).

The next target of the U.S. then was the siege of Basra. Here, people were dying of hunger and thirst. After days of cruel torture, the allies brought food and water and poisoned them openly in the city. Roy shouts at this heartless killing and presents a picture of desperate people struggling for food. She is really angry at the sight of photos appearing in newspapers with a message, “The messiahs are at hand, distributing fish and loaves” (123) as it is manifested in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.” This shows that America is a country of falsehood and cruelty. The way they treat the powerless, innocent victims is evident on the streets of Basra. In the same essay, past figures show how, during the reign of Saddam, “200,000 Iraqis estimated to have been killed in the first Gulf war. Hundreds of thousands dead because of the economic sanctions. (At least that lot has been saved from Saddam
Hussein). More being killed every day” (125). Thus Iraq is a country which is in grave danger of losing all its remaining survivors. In spite of this, the U.N. is a silent spectator to what is going on in Iraq. Roy finds out a thing that the United Nations will not play any part in determining the administration of post-war Iraq.

Even before the attacks on Iraq, Saddam received a lot of protests from the Human Rights Organization. Nearly 9622 prisoners were executed during his reign. Women accused in prostitution were beheaded without any judicial process. He gave permission to his guards to rape the women prisoners. According to the reports in the net source, “Reasons for War,” the methods used to torture prisoners in Iraq include “... electric drills to mutilate hands, pulling out finger nails, knife cuts, sexual attacks and official rape.” Saddam’s rule in Iraq was filled with severe punishments for all the offences committed by his people. But, it could be said that Saddam had been carrying out these worst atrocities with the help of the U.S. and the U.K. governments. In the web essay “A War too Far,” Roy mentions how the extermination of Saddam by Bush is like a “... pet that has outlived its owner’s affection.” The reason given by Bush for carrying out the attacks on Iraq was Saddam’s alleged production of weapons of mass destruction. In Iraq, the attempt to create weapons of mass destruction was first carried out by Saddam Hussein. It was Saddam who tried to get the support of France to purchase a plutonium production reactor. This effort was undertaken by them to develop the nuclear weapons programme. Though France refused to offer help in the beginning, Iraq built the Osiraq 40 megawatt light-water nuclear reactor with their help later. However, this reactor did not help them to produce nuclear weapons.

On 7 January 1981, to the shock of the people the Osiraq got destroyed. Following this destruction, Iraq used chemical weapons in war. The web article
“Reasons for War” exposes how, during the Iranian war, nearly “. . . twenty thousand Iranians were killed by mustard gas, and the nerve agents tabun and sarin.” With these attacks, they violated the 1925 Geneva Convention which banned the use of chemical weapons. Though Iraq failed in their efforts to create a nuclear reactor and to build nuclear weapons of mass destruction, Saddam was happy to possess chemical and biological weapons.

According to Meyer in his net article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral a Psychopath’s War,” Bush planned the war in Iraq on the basis of the nuclear weapons threat and its result was to “. . . disarm Iraq and thereby remove an imminent threat to the entire world.” Roy’s conversation with Anthony Arnove in The Shape of the Beast, reveals how Bush treated this war as nothing but, “. . . ‘defensive’ and that it would be ‘suicidal’ not to attack Iraq. That’s like an elephant taking a long run-up to smash an ant to death – and then saying that it was ‘defensive’ and that to let the ant remain alive would have been suicidal” (162).

As per Roy’s views, Iraq is not a great country that has the capacity to create weapons of mass destruction. And the most striking aspect presented by Roy in her net essay “A War too Far” is that:

. . . US has the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons in the world. It’s the only country in the world to have actually used them on civilian populations. If the US is justified in launching a pre-emptive attack on Iraq, why any nuclear power is justified in carrying out a pre-emptive attack on any other. India could attack Pakistan, or the other way around.

In order to check whether there are weapons of mass destruction, the United Nation’s inspectors underwent search in Iraq for several months. By November 2002, the U.N. weapon inspector Scott Ritter told the U.N. Security Council that there was
no trace of any weapon of mass destruction. This proves how the words spoken by Bush for carrying out a war on Iraq lacks truth. The main reason for Bush’s invasion of Iraq was to gain control over their oil reserves and to show that the U.S. was a superpower.

The United Nations was the first to bring about the oil for food programme in Iraq in 1995. As a result of this programme, Iraq oil was sold out in the world market in exchange of food, medicine and other important needs. This was established by the U.N. as they heard reports that Iraqi civilians had been affected by the withdrawal of the economic sanctions by the U.S. and the U.K. When the first Gulf War reached its end, Saddam began to get lots of profit due to this programme. The web article “Reasons for War” pictures how he began to “. . . pocket billions of dollars” through illicit deals. The programme was the main reason for the U.S. attacks on Iraq to gain control over the oil reserves. The Oil for Food Programme according to Roy in the essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” means “Iraqi money (from the sale of Iraqi Oil) should be used to feed Iraqi people who are starving because of U.S led war” (126). However, the re-construction of Iraq is used to raise the economic status of America and Iraqi Oil has been sold out to multinational companies.

There were also other reasons for war in Iraq. At first, in the Middle East, Saddam served as a threat to Israel. So Israel which had been an ally of America also wanted to wipe out Iraq. It demanded the support of America to do this and Meyer in the net article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral a Psychopath’s War” discusses the thing i.e. how “. . . the United States is to serve as Israel proxy to advance Israeli interests.” Secondly, multinational companies turn deadly as they survive by manufacturing weapons for countries. For such companies, the death of soldiers or destruction to property is not of any concern to them. They need only extra profit by
contracts to reconstruct Iraq. The Bush administration has been in support of these companies. Meyer in the web source “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral a Psychopath’s War” reveals how Bush has given contract worth “. . . billions of dollars to large American companies, principally Bechtel and Halliburton.” It is clear that the war is not only about terror and oil supply in Iraq but also “A superpower’s self-destructive impulse towards supremacy, global hegemony” (128) as written by Roy in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.”

Amidst all these reasons the final motive of the U.S. was to overthrow Saddam’s government and to have their own rule that could bring the entire world under their threatening hands. In September 2003, Bush spoke before the people confessing that there was no evidence linking Saddam to the 9/11 attacks. Peter Meyer states in the web article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral a Psychopath’s War” that it was found later that “Bush administration officials exaggerated the threats from Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction and failed to uncover any link between President Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.”

This is a war of terror that goes too far without any meaning. Roy in the web essay “A War too Far” quotes Donald Rumsfeld who points out Bush’s message like this, “. . . his mission in the war against terror was to persuade the world that Americans must be allowed to continue their way of life. When the maddened king stamps his foot, slaves tremble in their quarters.” This implies that in such a war field, the rest of the world has nothing to convey but to be a mere spectator to the brutalities.

David North in Meyer’s net article “The Iraq War: Illegal Immoral a Psychopath’s War,” points out how “The United States government asserts the right to bomb, invade and destroy whatever country it chooses. It refuses to respect as a
matter of international law the sovereignty of any other country and research the right to get rid of any regime, in any part of the world. . . .” His words are like a summation given to the plans and goals of Bush. These lines reveal his aim of gaining a super power status by colonizing all the other countries in the world. Roy, in her conversation with Anthony Arnove, expresses her feelings that in such a situation, attacks on Iraq will be considered as only a “. . . bloody battle, this battle for the establishment and perpetuation of hegemony. The world is not a static place. It’s wild and unpredictable. The American empire isn’t going to have all that easy a ride. The people of the world will not be lining the streets raining roses on the emperor” (163).

In the present scenario, America is in a great threat of losing its economic power due to its aggressive actions. This is the real end to the war against Iraq. Bush is like a ‘suicidal pilot,’ who has been handling a machine, far more dangerous than the man himself. The U.S. is going to suffer because of its demonstration of super power status. In her conversation with Anthony Arnove, Roy explains how “America has been stripped of its mask. Its secret history of brutal interventions and unforgivable manipulations is street talk. The dots have been joined and the shape of the beast has emerged” (163). Greed for power and empire paves way for its own destruction and war against Iraq is an example to this.

The war in Iraq then had no truth embedded in it. Bush however linked Saddam with the September 11 attacks and weapons of mass destruction. In Iraq, Saddam had been enjoying a luxurious life out of the money got from the oil reserves. America’s eyes fell on the Iraqi oil reserves to improve their financial and economic status. Bush knew that even after the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, people would demand justice for the loss of their loved ones. So, his next target was Iraq and it gave an opportunity to extend his war on terrorism. Actually the main
motive was to destroy Saddam and gain control over the oil reserves. In spite of the U.N. report that Iraq lacked weapons of mass destruction, Bush carried out this attack to terrorize people. This manifests America’s secret desire that the country wants to show what it is capable of, and to other countries.

The animal ancestry of man proves how human beings are partly human and partly beastly. Darwin gives a representation through his slow process of evolution from the brute to man. Man is a rational animal, who is dominated by certain qualities of the beast or barbaric nature. This is because of the thing that human beings are still in the process of evolutionary development from their criminal ancestors. Selfishness and violence are the qualities of a beast and not of the human beings. Satyanarayana in his web article “Gandhi’s Vision and Technique of Conflict Resolution” proves thus:

When compared to human species, the violent impulse is dominant and pervasive in creatures than in men. Thus, on the one hand man has his animal nature and, on the other, he has his power of reason and judgment which no other animal possesses. In the course of evolution, man has made continuous progress in the cultivation of nonviolent tendencies in him and the violent aspect of him has been gradually suppressed.

By applying reason and judgement, human beings have made astonishing progress. It is essential to tame the beastly part of human nature to increase the tendency of nonviolence and elevate it to a higher plane. Civilization has undergone changes only through the control of animal passions in mankind. If the beastly tendencies are eradicated from the human mind, they can live a life of peace and harmony. This is
possible only when the cruel attitude is wiped off from the countries like the U.S. and the U.K.

Roy believes that she is not a mere story teller. Her essays picture terror and bloodshed in the real world. In “Come September,” Roy talks about the attitude of the Bush government. She, in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” mentions like this, “Nationalism of one kind or another was the cause of most of the genocides of the twentieth century. Flags are fits of coloured cloth that governments use first to shrink - wrap people’s minds and then as ceremonial shrouds to bury the dead” (15). The attempt of Bush to satisfy the minds of people has become a success. Hundreds of people affected due to September 11, 2001 attacks are ready to fight and avenge the blood of the dead. The final victims in this cause of nationalism are the brave and courageous youth.

According to Bush, America should be given proper respect. Those who talk against America are immediately branded as an anti-American. To this, Roy gives an apt meaning with her own words in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” that “If you’re not a Bushie, you’re a Taliban. If you don’t love us, you hate us. If you’re not Good, you’re Evil. If you’re not with us, you’re with the terrorists” (18). Before waging a war against Afghanistan, the whole point of war was mentioned as an attempt to liberate Afghan women from their burqas and Taliban government. Roy rightly expresses how the people in Afghanistan were made to believe that Americans are on a ‘feminist mission.’

At this point, Roy puts forth a question in the same essay that whether “. . . Delhi, Islamabad and Dhaka be destroyed?” (19). The reason for this question is that India has been targeting Christians and Muslims, especially women. Pakistan and Bangladesh are also following worst ways of dealing with women. Roy’s dilemma
revolves around this situation. She wonders whether America will raise its head against these nations as it does against Afghanistan. Roy finds it really strange that Bush has projected himself as a saviour amidst their people. Private feelings like grief and fear are utilised for political purpose by the American government.

Next, Roy gives an example to the cruel attitude of America and Britain with reference to an incident in Chile. In Chile, 29 years ago, General Pinochat overthrew its democratically elected government on 11 September 1973. The regime of peace was followed by a regime of terror because of selfish motives and revengeful attitude and the newly formed regime was persecuting its civilians. In “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” Roy manifests the suffering of people during this period as follows:

... thousands of people were killed. Many more simply ‘disappeared.’ Firing squads conducted public executions. Concentration camps and torture chambers were opened across the country. The dead were buried in mind shafts and unmarked graves. For more than sixteen years the people of Chile lived in dread of the midnight knock, of routine disappearances, of sudden arrest and torture. (22)

This is a set example to the lives of innocent civilians around the world. People have learned to live with grief and fear as their constant companions. The result of the U.S. and the U.K. intervention can be found in the long list of countries demolished by war, which includes not only Afghanistan and Iraq but also Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Brazil, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, El Salvador, Mexico, Colombia, Somalia, Vietnam, Korea, Indonesia, Laos and Cambodia. In “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” Roy posts questions like this, “For how many Septembers for decades together have
millions of Asian people been bombed, burned, and slaughtered? . . . For how many
Septembers have the thousands who had the misfortune of surviving those strikes
endured the living hell that was visited on them . . .?” (24).

The U.S. and the U.K. were capable of making bloodshed beyond the
knowledge of a normal human mind. The destruction brought about by the U.S. and
the U.K. in history cannot be measured by scientists or historians. While talking about
the cruelty of the U. S. and the U.K., Roy tries to point out how Winston Churchill
sowed the seed of war in the minds of people in Israel. Churchill led Britain to victory
during the Second World War. He was the Prime Minister of Britain from 1940 to
1945. Here, in the essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” Roy quotes a
statement made by Churchill about the Palestinians in 1937 thus:

. . . the dog in a manger has the final right to the manager, even though
he may have lain there for a very long time. . . . I do not admit, for
instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of
America, or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong
has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher
grade race, a more worldly-wise race, to put it that way, has come in
and taken their place. (26)

The above words of Churchill set the platform for Israel’s dominant attitude
towards Palestine. As a result of his remark, a kind of enmity developed between
Israelites and Palestinians. The successors in Israel began to use harsh words against
the citizens of Palestine. Roy finds them referred to as, “two-legged beasts,” and
“. . . grasshoppers who could be crushed” (27) in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to
Empire.” She finds this strange as it is not spoken by the ordinary people but by the
heads of the State. More than 76 percent of Palestine was captured and on 14 May
1948, Israel became an independent nation. Israel was declared as a great nation with the support of the U.S. Even after this, the war continues and Roy states that “. . . almost every day more Palestinian families are forced off their lands and driven into refugee camps” (28) in the same essay. They are living even now as second class citizens in their own land.

Palestine which was once a strong secular country in the Middle East has now become weak and un-democratic losing itself to Hamas, a group that fights in the name of Islam. The Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006. This is a staunch Islamic group which claims Israel as a part that belongs to Palestine. Due to this reaction from the Hamas, the U.S. and many European countries have been forced to cut off all the funds to Palestinian authorities. The Hamas group is not ready to accept the previous peace pacts and it demands war against Israel. Israel too has refused to negotiate further with Hamas as it is not ready to enter into any sort of peace pact.

Roy, in the essay “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” presents the manifesto of Hamas as, “We will be its soldiers and the firewood of its fire, which will burn the enemies” (31). The Hamas group is becoming more destructive in its attempt to wipe out its enemies. The war had been going on from 11 September 1922 to 11 September 2002. Roy feels that eighty years is a long time in history for waging war. There seems to be no end to those problems and any attempt to effect a peaceful settlement is of no use.

Roy finds the place Palestine “illegally occupied” (28) by Israel as it is expressed in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire.” People are living in a place where bloodshed has no end. Continuous wars and uprisings are going on for decades. Many ceasefires have been brought about but in spite of them, deadly
attacks in Palestine still continue. There are 24 hour curfews where people are humiliated and brutalized on a daily basis. The citizens of Palestine have lost all their hope of survival. It is devastating to know that “. . . young Palestinian who cannot contain their anger turn themselves into human bombs and haunt Israel’s streets and public places, blowing themselves, killing ordinary people, injecting terror into daily life, and eventually hardening both society’s suspicion and mutual hatred of each other” (29).

Such attacks are carried out in order to strike a kind of terror in the hearts and minds of the Israeli citizens. According to the reports in the web article, “History of the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict,” the Israeli operation began with an intense bombardment of the Gaza strip. It targeted Hamas spaces, police training Camps, police headquarters and officers. Civilian infrastructure, including mosques, houses, medical facilities and schools were also attacked.

In this operation, nearly 1,300 Palestinians lost their lives. The majority of those dead belong to the Hamas Militant Group. Reports from the Palestinian centre for Human Rights quoted in the net source “History of the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict” prove that 926 of the 1,417 dead has been civilians and non-combatants. In “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” Roy manifests that when Israel undertakes an attack on Palestine, it is American missiles that smash through Palestinian homes. The U.S. government is responsible for blocking every step in the effort to bring about peace in Israel.

Israel has received several billion dollars from the U.S. for continuing this war against Palestine. The U.S. government also supplies necessary economic and military assistance. Roy pours out her feeling against these atrocities and wonders in the same essay as follows:
Is it really impossible for Jewish people who suffered so cruelly themselves – more cruelly perhaps than any other people in history, to understand the vulnerability and the yearning of those whom they displaced? Does extreme suffering always kindle cruelty? What hope does this leave the human race with? (30)

In spite of the serious consequences of war experienced by Palestine and Israel, these nations have seen a great increase of about 2.5 percent a year in the world income in the last 10 years. Still, the number of poor people has only increased by one hundred million. In this world, the poor are getting poorer and the rich are becoming richer. Roy finds change in everything as it has been set for a mid-season sale. In “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” she rightly points out how in this modern world:

Everything’s discounted – oceans, rivers, oil, gene pools, fig wasps, flowers, childhoods, aluminum factories, phone companies, wisdom, wilderness, civil rights, ecosystems, air . . . . It’s packed, sealed, tagged, valued, and available off the rack (no returns). As for justice – I’m told its on offer too. You can get the best that money can buy. (42-43)

All the decisions taken are being made in secret. This world is getting closer to its end and another world is near at hand. In the same essay, Roy beautifully expresses like this, “on a quiet day, if I listen very carefully, I can hear her breathing” (44).

The world is coming near to a close due to eighty years of war in Israel and Palestine. This war began as a result of the fatal words of Churchill, the then Prime Minister of Britain. Churchill’s words forced the Palestinians to live as second class citizens in their own land. It has also resulted in making young Palestinians turning themselves into human bombs. The future stands abrupt and blank like a vacuum that
can never be filled. The continuous war between Israel and Palestine results in the loss of innocent civilians. The U.S. government is funding the never ending war.

In Roy’s essay “Peace is War,” she cleverly portrays the injustice meted out to humanity in the name of peace. During the Kargil war, Pakistan was blamed for the mass killings. However, whether the people of Kashmir have a peaceful life after this war is a question yet to be answered. After the storm, comes calm, is a popular saying. To prove this aspect, Roy expresses how there is peace in Kashmir behind the mask worn by the selfish Indian press and other wealthy persons in the government. Roy poses a question also in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” as follows: “Would anybody who depends on the Indian mass media for information know that 80,000 people have been killed in Kashmir since 1989, most of them Muslims, most of them by Indian security forces?” (91). This question exposes the pathetic condition of the people of Kashmir.

Roy’s dilemma is about the real meaning of peace in Kashmir. What is going on deep inside the Indian government is unknown. Innocent people are slaughtered every day in the name of peace. These kinds of killings may be renamed as ‘disappearances.’ It is because of the fact that missing and disappearance are two words in English, which seem to suggest anything easily forgotten in this world. Even people in Kashmir are ready to forget these incidents, when they are not turned into a big commotion by the Indian press persons. If business houses need a cash turnover, the media need a crisis turnover. Roy, in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” exclaims how, after a short period of time, “Whole countries become old news. They cease to exist. And the darkness becomes deeper than it was before the light was shone on them” (95). Roy proves this with an incident of withdrawal that took place in Afghanistan.
As long as there was war in Afghanistan, it got a place in the minds of people all over the world. The media focused on every one present in that small country. However, the happenings after the withdrawal of America and the British troops have become an old history, long forgotten. What has happened after the war is of no use to the press persons who are swarming about for honey. Once the honey has been collected, it remains fresh for some time, and later loses its flavour. No more are the people in Afghanistan alive for others.

In the 21st century, crisis reportage has become an independent discipline. It is nearly equal to science that is, finding out new things. Huge amount of money and technology are utilized to create a good crisis report of the happenings around the world. Innocent victims trapped in hot burning bombs and big-structured buildings that come crashing down are out of importance in the modern world. It is just a spectacular sight to view and forget. Collection of pictures and incidents has become more important than caring for such poor lives. The worth of a human being or the loss of human life is not realized by the people of this world.

There are resistant movements by political parties who are in search of image-making and spectacular incidents. They create such uproar in cities and towns, as has never been witnessed before. Roy feels that it is the responsibility of the State governments to take action against the people who are ready to break the law. Unfortunately, the police and the leaders remain silent spectators to the loss of valuable lives. Here, in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” Roy provides an instance of how the police and the government react to the violence as follows:

. . . the police never opened fire on the campaigning mob that demolished the Babri Masjid, or those who participated in the mass murder of Sikhs led by the Congress party in Delhi in 1984, or the Shiv
Sena led massacre of Muslims in Bombay in 1993, or the Bajrang Dal led genocide against Muslims in Gujarat in 2002. Neither the police nor the courts, nor the government has taken serious action against anybody who participated in this violence. (97)

The law and order maintenance in this world has become weak and corrupt inside. Police personnel, who are supposed to guard the lives of people, are not ready to act in critical situations. Crisis has become a ‘blood sport’ in the words of Roy. Many examples of repression or suppression of true feelings for the loss of lives go on and on. On the other side, when victims refuse to be victims, they are branded as terrorists by the society. They are either killed or arrested by the government under POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act).

Roy reveals that space for Non-Violent Civil Disobedience is crumbling day by day. When non-violence is of no use for civilians, they become extremists and militants. Roy further projects the necessity of people to resist the actions of the government in order to reclaim the space for Civil Disobedience. While doing this, people sometimes tend to go in the wrong direction. It is the result of tyrannical crisis reportage. The result is how people wish to cut loose themselves and Roy narrates the same in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire” as follows: “. . . for most people in the world, peace is war – a daily battle against hunger, thirst, and the violation of their dignity. Wars are often the end result of a flawed peace, a putative peace” (106).

The only way to have good democracy in the world is to go through a process of constant questioning, resistance, permanent provocation and continuous public conversation between citizens and state. A perfect patrol on the borders of our liberty is the best way to guard against snatching away of our freedoms. The conversation of Roy with Anthony Arnove mocks at the real meaning of freedom as follows:
“Freedom means mass murder now. In the US, it means fried potatoes (freedom fries). Liberation means invasion and occupation. When you hear the words ‘humanitarian aid,’ it’s advisable to look around for induced starvation” (162).

If freedom is given up by the civil society, it cannot be brought back without a severe struggle. To protect it, Roy gives a hint in “An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire,” as follows: “It is important to remember that our freedoms, such as they are, were never given to us by any government they have been wrested by us. . . . If we do not guard them constantly, they will be taken away from us. If we do not demand more and more, we will be left with less and less” (108).

On the whole, the injustice that takes place daily in the name of peace goes unreported and brings human beings near to a pathetic future that people cannot bear thinking about. Amidst all the killings and mass murders, the big Titanic continues sailing on towards the dark sea. People with cheaper tickets are about to be washed away. In the banquet halls, the music plays on. In the same essay, Roy makes a comment that the rich are comforted by the knowledge that the lifeboats on the deck are reserved for club-class passengers and this is probably right because privileged persons are always privileged and only the poor have to raise their voice against the silent killers of the world.

Through this essay, Roy tries to prove how peace that is based on the suppression of civilian’s voice will not last long. It occurs only through a willingness to listen to their problems. Retaliation of attacks will hurt both the destroyer and the destroyed. Ikeda in the web article “The Courage of Non-Violence” points out if “Someone sets fire to your home and you retaliate by setting fire to theirs, soon the whole town will be in flames! Burning down the attacker’s house would not bring yours back.” Intelligence is necessary to solve these problems. Otherwise the flames
of hatred and anger will keep on raging. Fire can be extinguished only by water, and hatred can be put out by love and compassion.

The essay, “This is not a War on Terror. It is a Racist War on all Tamils” is based on the recent Sri Lankan war that had been going on for several months. Roy, in her web essay “This is not a War on Terror. It is a Racist War on all Tamils,” talks of James Ross, a legal and policy director of the Human Rights Watch who mentions the problem in Sri Lanka and points out how the “Sri Lankan forces are shelling hospitals and so-called safe zones and slaughtering the civilians there.” The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eezham that is, LTTE violated the laws of war and killed the innocent civilians who tried to escape into the territory held by the government. The civilians including children were held under their control. Due to continuous attacks by the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE, the number of casualties went up to 2,000.

The actions of the Sri Lankan government turned as lethal weapons to its civilians. The government ordered unlawful attacks on the Tamil population trapped in the war zone. The Human Rights Watch made a request to both the parties and asked them to stop the ongoing war. This request must have had at least some humanitarian concern for those affected in the war. The civilians should have been permitted to leave the war zone and enter into the government protected areas.

The Tamils in Colombo are considered to be a major security threat and Roy, in the web essay “This is not a War on Terror. It is a Racist War on all Tamils,” reveals how the entire Tamil populations are termed as ‘potential terrorists.’ Roy argues that in order to hide the racially motivated war tag, the Sri Lankan government has given the impression to the rest of the world that they fight to exterminate terrorism. In the same essay, she talks about the war of wiping out the LTTE, where several thousand people have already been killed, thousands more are critically
wounded, and the few eye witness reports that have come out are description of a nightmare from hell. In the words of Roy, this is actually ‘a brazen, openly racist war.’

The racist prejudice inflicted upon them has marginalized the position of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Attacks on the Tamils have brought about a number of dissenting novels from several journalists in Tamil Nadu. The war, according to Roy in her web essay, “This is not a War on Terror. It is a Racist War on all Tamils,” has “... fuelled passions that have led to more than ten people immolating themselves.” This is the extent of anger and anguish at the sight of a cruel battlefield with dead bodies scattered all over.

Wickrematunge’s words in the net article “Sri Lanka’s Civil War: Not Over Yet” prove how war has returned to the beautiful Indian Ocean Island and it never really went away. In spite of the ceasefire agreement, there had been a long-running civil war that was unstoppable by the government. Media persons who gathered news about the problems in Sri Lanka had been branded as traitors. The people affected in those inevitable battles were innocent civilians, exposed to shelling outside. The tigers were able to make only a slow progress as it was a tough and painful task for them. The Sri Lankan government however was already ready to wipe out the trace of LTTE from the earth.

The war in Sri Lanka was a problem created by its own government. Racial marginalization forced the LTTE to raise their voice for a separate place to live in. It was because of this demand, the Tamils were named as terrorists and killed in numbers across the country. The gruesome pictures screened on the television were enough for Human Rights Organization to condemn their actions. The poor people in Sri Lanka were seen running for their lives in and around the government protected
zone with the barbaric government shooting them to death. Roy finds it nothing but an era of savage rule, which gives no importance to a living soul.

The Maoists in India are also marked by the Indian government as terrorists and a picture of their life is presented by Roy in the book, *Walking with the Comrades*. Roy’s conversation with David Barsamian presents how:

Terrorism has become the excuse for states to do just what they please in the name of protecting citizens... Hundreds of people are being held in prisons under the anti-terrorism law in India. Many of them are poor people, Dalits and Adivasis who are protesting against ‘development projects’ that deprive them of their lands and livelihoods. (72)

Maoism is a term that originated from the teachings of the Chinese political leader Mao Zedong. It depends upon the Marxist Communist Theory for its ideals. The net article “What is the Difference between a Naxalite, a Maoist and a Terrorist?” exposes how after 1960s the Communist Party of China under Mao Zedong “… was taken over by Deng Xiaoping, who implemented Deng Xiaoping Theory and Chinese economic reforms in 1978.” Maoist Parties and groups are found all over the world. This group has gained a place in Peru, India and Nepal. Recently, the Maoist Party won the elections of 2008 in Nepal. In India, Maoists’ history dates back to the freedom struggle movement.

At that time, Maoists took the appearance of a band of outlaws in and around West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha border. They used to live in the jungles and made military style guerrilla attacks on the British sponsored East India Company. They were called as the Cowboys, who more or less looked like the Robin Hood of the fables. They took money from the rich and gave it to the poor or they fought for the
welfare of villagers. Their groups were filled with idealists though they had a very literate cross section within them. These Maoists made many idealistic speeches to please the literate sections of the freedom movement. Even now in many villages in India, Maoists are still looked upon as the saviours of poor people.

The noble nature of the Maoist group lost shape after the freedom struggle. They receded into jungles and the laws and regulations of the government were not beneficial to them. Maoists began to create a world for themselves and wished to develop the police force like other states. Recently, the tribal populations in the jungles have been deprived of all possible supports from the government. In the beginning of a free India away from the shackles of British control, the police and soldiers were chosen only from the rural populations.

As India matured into a country, development began to take shape. And the police force after the freedom struggle became more and more corrupt. They turned into small dictators, taking law into their hands. This attitude of the police personnel made them utilize law to oppress the poor tribal population. In order to stop these police attacks on tribals, the Maoists joined with other Naxal groups and started fighting for the rights of people. Their combined efforts brought great havoc to the police force. This triggered the police to become more and more violent, and so the Maoists turned authoritarian in their approach. Today, the Maoists are projected as a national problem or internal threat to India. The web article of Saraf, “Maoists in India” exposes thus:

. . . there are people who contradict this by saying that there is never smoke without fire, meaning there must have been circumstances which led them to such activities. Just looking at the history of Maoism, the term ‘Peoples war’ was a strategic line developed by Mao
Zedong during the phase of guerilla warfare of the Communist party of China. Maoism’s political orientation emphasizes the... revolutionary struggle of the vast majority of people, against the exploiting classes and their state structures.

The ideal of Maoism allows them to fight against the people who are oppressing the poor and the downtrodden classes. They follow the guerrilla war tactics of surrounding the cities from the countryside and attacking them in order to bring about a political transformation in the country. The Communist Party of India is a well-known Maoist Political Party that tries to overthrow the present government of India. The only goal of Maoists, according to Saraf in “Maoists in India,” is to fight for “The rights of the tribes in the forest belt around Central India. That region contains deposits of minerals which are of interest to mining companies like Tata and Essar.” The Maoists raise funds for warfare by abducting well-known personalities. The Maoists’ demand is based on freedom from the corrupt Indian society.

Roy tries to find the truth regarding the war of the Maoists against the government. She undertakes a journey into the Dandakaranya forests to know more about these tribal people. The tribal people find it hard to live without arms as their community is always in danger. The place Dantewara in Chhattisgarh is the epicentre of war. Here the police roam about in plain clothes and the rebels are always found in uniforms.

In the area controlled by Maoists across the Indravati River, the villages are empty and the forest is filled with people. Young children are not in schools but are found running wild in the forests. Many concrete school buildings in the lovely forest villages are either blown up or captured by policemen. This war that has been going...
on for months is created by the Indian government. It is turning deadly as time goes on. The name given for this war is Operation Green Hunt.

In the jungles of Central India, there is a serious problem going on with devastating consequences. Roy points out how on one side, there is the military force armed with money, power and media, but on the other hand, the ordinary villagers have organized the Maoist guerrilla fighting force with the help of traditional weapons. The Maoists and the paramilitary force are old enemies who fought several times before. In the previous wars, Maoists have been defeated and wiped off from their forests.

Previously, whenever the Military force celebrated its victory over the Maoists, they re-appeared as a more organized fighting group than before. Today, the deadly war, according to Roy in the essay “Walking with the Comrades,” continues in the, “. . . mineral rich forests of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal – homeland to millions of India’s tribal people, dreamland to the corporate world” (4). The war is fought between the Government of India and the Maoists who are not ready to allow the government officials to treat them as animals. It is because of the rebellious action by the Maoists, the country has labelled them as ferocious people and has marginalized them on every basis.

The colonial policy issued during independence announced the state as the owner of tribal homelands. For the tribal people, it was a tragic day in their history. On the same night, many tribal populations were displaced out of their lands. They were denied rights to hold the forest areas. The government supplied them right to vote but denied the right to lead a life of dignity and respect. Roy manifests the pathetic condition of these people in this way that, in order to build dams or to bring about irrigation projects and mines, the poor people have been displaced, and the
government has been proud in revealing that they are the fruits of ‘modern development.’ Of the ten million people displaced by them, the majority are tribal people. The former Home Minister P. Chidambaram has expressed his opinion that he has not been in favour of allowing tribal people to exist in museums as barbaric, savage race. On the contrary, his ideas are based on the development of several mining companies than improving the livelihood of tribal people. So the depth of his anxiety over mining companies must be analysed before coming to a decision.

In the past five years, the governments of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal have signed MOUS with corporate houses. They have also provided several billion dollars in secret to the government. Roy is in a shock that such a large amount has been provided for “. . . steel plants, sponge-iron factories, power plants, aluminium refineries, dams and mines” (9) as she reveals in “Walking with the Comrades.” It is necessary to displace innocent tribals, if they have to develop the dream project. Where displacement takes place, there comes war. The war is to retrieve back their lost homelands. In the same essay, Roy asks some questions in her mind like this:

When a country that calls itself a democracy openly declares war within its borders, what does that war look like? Does the resistance stand a chance? Should it? Who are the Maoists? Are they violent nihilists foisting an out-dated ideology on tribal people, goading them into a hopeless insurrection? What lessons have they learned from their past experience? Is armed struggle intrinsically undemocratic?

(9-10)

Time has to answer all these questions of true concern. Roy is surprised to read an article posted in the internet which reveals that 30 police officers have been
trained in Israel to demolish the Maoist organization. Weapons like laser range finders, thermal imaging, equipment and unnamed drones were supplied by Israel to put down the uprisings in forest areas. Roy questions whether they are really good weapons to use against those poor, tribal people. The areas she visited from Raipur to Dantewara, are considered to be ‘Maoist-infested.’ Maoists are like diseases that must be cured. The words like ‘infested’ and ‘diseased’ reveal the authorities’ heartless attitude towards normal civilians.

When Roy went to Raipur, she met one of the members from the Raipur network named Comrade Raju. He was an advocate in Raipur for nearly eighteen years. He and his wife became members of this network. Roy mentions how, at the end of 2007, a key person from the Raipur network was arrested. He was dragged around Raipur in a police vehicle and was compelled to point out his fellow comrades. Following this incident, the police arrested Comrade Malti and several others on 22 January 2008. The charge against Malti was that she mailed CDs with video evidence of Salwa Judum atrocities to the members of the parliament. She was rarely brought for hearing as the police were aware of its threat to them. The new Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act (CSPSA) was responsible for holding her without bail for several years. Recently the government itself has deployed several battalions of the Chhattisgarh police to protect members of parliament from their own mail.

In Raipur, Roy also found a board that was an advertisement for a Vedanta cancer hospital. The mining corporations of government enter into these places in the name of cancer hospitals and universities. This is a daylight robbery by the government that gets a profit of billions of dollars. Roy believes that the illegal way of producing money is enough to buy elections, governments, judges, newspapers, TV
channels, NGOs and aid agencies. If the government is interested in building a cancer hospital in such places, the only reason will be the presence of a bauxite mountain. As per her views, in the forest of Dandakaranya, there are three million tonnes of Bauxite deposits. This is a reason why companies like Vedanta have an eye on it.

Then Roy talks about a Maoist women group in Raipur named KAMS. Thousands of women joined in this group in order to erase the different forms of discrimination against women. This is like a way out for women from the suffocation of their own society. When arrested, a lot of women encountered rape and sexual mutilation. Young women who had undergone brutal savagery from other groups express their willingness to join the People’s Liberation Guerilla Army in order to carry out severe attacks on criminals.

Now the PLGA has nearly forty five perfect women in its group. Roy happened to meet them in the forest, and was astonished by their physical force and power. Maoists themselves have accepted that their war is:

. . . not about revenge, it’s about survival and saving future lives . . . of course there are problems, we’ve made terrible mistakes, we have even killed the wrong people in our ambushes, thinking they were policemen, but it is not the way it’s portrayed in the media. . . . How can we accept them? Or approve this form of rude justice? (87) as Roy states in her Walking with the Comrades. From Raipur, Roy’s journey is towards a place Kanker. Kanker is a place famous for its jungle warfare training school. It is run by Brigadier B.K. Ponwar. Roy portrays how the motto of this training school is to ‘fight a guerilla like a guerilla.’ Here men are taught all kinds of techniques to face a tough fight. The PLGA has been specially trained by jungle warfare training school in Kanker. They carry rifles like INSAS, SLR and AK 47s. In
that group, Roy finds comrade Kamala, who is 17-years-old and wears a homemade pistol on her hip. At such an early age, she has become an “Internal Security Challenge” (33) as Roy mentions in the same essay.

During her journey, Roy spent some time with the Maoists. At first she met a boy by name Mangtu. He led her into the Dandakaranya forest. She found the place beautiful and admirable. They crossed a river bank and she came across another boy there. Roy travelled further deep into the forest. The boundaries of states like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra run deep into the forest. The group named Maoists or Maoist gangs never pay attention to the State boundaries. Their maps are different, and as creatures of the forest they follow their own paths. They do not travel through the man-made roads and railway lines. Roy is of the opinion that people considered to be non-Adi, are always found on the edges of the forest near the roads and market places.

During this travel, Roy comes to know that there are no teachers in schools. They receive their salaries sitting at home. At this juncture, her memory goes back to the iron ore mines in Keonjhar, Odisha. This place was once a dense forest. But now, Roy finds it as follows in Walking with the Comrades:

... the land is like a raw, red wound. Red dust fills your nostrils and lungs. The water is red, the air is red, the people are red, their lungs and hair are red. All day and all night trucks rumble through their villages, bumper to bumper, thousands and thousands of trucks, taking ore to Paradip port from where it will go to China. (27)

As Roy’s journey to the Dandakaranya forest continues, she listens to the story of Nilesh, who is a member of the people’s Liberation Guerilla Army. Nilesh comes from Bijapur and he fights for the safety of his fellow tribal men, but his brother has
recently turned into a Special Police Officer (SPO). It is because of this turn around, Nilesh has to face a lot of problems in his family and outside. Recently his father has refused to go with his brother and this has brought about a bloody fight in the family. Roy tries to find out the reason for his brother’s change of mind. For this question, Nilesh gives an answer that “he got an opportunity to run wild and hurt people and burn houses. He went crazy, did terrible things. Now he is stuck. He can never come back to the village. He will not be forgiven. He knows that” (42) as expressed by Roy in “Walking with the Comrades.” Though there are special police officers like the brother of Nilesh, the worst problem for Adivasis comes from the Forest Department. The people of the Forest Department arrive in the village and try to prevent people from collecting firewood, ploughing their fields and grazing the cattle.

The only wish of the Forest Department is to destroy the soil and fields of cultivation. In order to attain this, they have used the means of elephant and babool seeds by which a major destruction has been brought in the village. Many people are beaten up, humiliated and especially many women are raped in this village. The Forest Department breaks laws and engages in all illegal activities. Efforts by Adivasis have forced the People’s Liberation Guerilla Army to take action against the Forest Department. Due to the massive contributions of PLGA, the people are able to regain their lost lands, dignity and respect. As retaliation to this action, the Forest Department has started burning a number of villages and more than sixty villages have been asked to move out and their infrastructure has been demolished.

On the request of the villagers to the PLGA, the remaining villages have been occupied by them and thus the PLGA has prevented the Forest Department from entering into the village. Here, many forest officials have been captured and beaten up by the villagers. Finally, the Forest Department has left the place. Roy points out how
three hundred thousand acres of forest land have been redistributed to the villagers by the PLGA. The past incidents are just a distant memory to the young generation. The stories of heroism have been passed on from generation to generation. They consider this now as freedom attained from the Forest Department. Even now, they can sense the blood and toil laid down for the freedom struggle by their ancestors.

The departure of the Forest Department was then followed by the arrival of the Police Department. It set about another series of bloodshed. Many fake encounters were carried out by the police. In spite of this, the villagers re-captivated the land. Many problems arose to them as pointed out by Roy in “Walking with the Comrades” like “. . . irrigation, agricultural productivity and the problem of an expanding population arbitrarily clearing forest land” (45). Thus one after another, the problems have been increasing without proper solution.

In addition to this, Roy also reveals how the Bharatiya Janata Party government signed two MOUS and planned to construct the Steel Plants. Secret discussions were held behind the backs of the tribal people. In the same period, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh pictured the Maoists as a serious threat to India. This proves the cruelty meted out to tribals by the Indian government. After that, the Bharatiya Janata Party Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Raman Singh issued a declaration which read how the villagers who did not move into camps would be considered as Maoists. It means that the tribals must sacrifice their lands to the government and move into some protection provided by them. And if the villages were not surrendered by the tribals to the government of India, it would be completely burnt to ashes. He also gave instructions to shoot the journalists who took efforts to record the real happenings of the village. The first village to be destroyed on 18 June 2005 was Ambeli. Roy, in “Walking with the Comrades,” pictures how “Between
June and December 2005, it burned, killed, raped and looted its way through hundreds of villages of south Dantewara” (53). Many people lost their lives in that brutal attack. Nearly sixty thousand people heeded the words of government and moved into camps. This happened solely out of terror. The government also gave an offer to the villagers that the people who agreed to serve as special police officers would be given a salary of fifteen hundred rupees. Young people like Nilesh’s brother accepted that offer and sold themselves to the government. They can be branded as the first victims of this horrible war.

Thousands of people from these villages ran away to Andhra Pradesh and Odisha for shelter. They are now working as contract labourers picking chillies. Another ten thousand people fled into the forest and they still remain there without shelter or land. In addition to this, Roy in “Walking with the Comrades” narrates that:

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\ldots a\,\text{swarm of police stations and camps appeared.} \quad \text{The idea was to provide carpet security for a ‘creeping reoccupation’ of Maoist-control territory.} \quad \text{The assumption was that the Maoists would not dare to attack such a large concentration of security forces.} \quad \text{The Maoist for their part, realized that if they did not break that carpet security, it would amount to abandoning people whose trust they had earned, and with whom they had lived and worked for twenty-five years. They struck back in a series of attacks on the heart of the security grid. (54-55)}
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The first attack took place on 26 January 2006 between the PLGA and Gangalaur police camp. In this attack, seven people lost their lives. The second attack on 17 July 2006 took the lives of twenty people and 150 got injured. The thrilling victory of the PLGA against the police officials came on 15 March 2007. This attack
actually took place in Rani Bodilikanya Ashram, a girls’ hostel, where the girls were held as hostages by 80 Chhattisgarh police. The PLGA annexed the place and attacked the police officials. The cruel attack resulted in the death of nearly 55 police men and the girls were rescued from the building.

The Superintendent of Police of Dantewara gave a power point presentation to Roy with horrifying photographs of the burned, disemboweled bodies of the police men amidst the ruins of the blown up school building. Roy laments in “Walking with the Comrades” as follows: “They were so macabre, it was impossible not to look away. He looked pleased at my reaction” (55-56). Following the attack on Rani Bodilikanya, there was a great uproar in the country.

The Human Rights Organization condemned the Maoists for their violence and attack on schools. However among the Maoists, this attack became a history and something to celebrate. They created songs and poems based on their victory. This success brought about many young people into the PLGA group. The PLGA’s battalion strength increased. This increase was a threat to the State government of Chhattisgarh and the Congress party, which was in power at the centre but they were not ready to accept the failure.

The State government of Chhattisgarh and the Congress party faced a lot of pressure from the centre and decided to work out a new plan. Part of the new plan was the famous Operation Green Hunt. They sent groups, who were specially trained for facing tough challenges. It includes “Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), The Central Industrial security Force (CISF), grey hounds, Scorpions, Cobras” (57-58) as Roy quotes in “Walking with the Comrades.”
The deadly battle is now once again going on inside the forests of Dantewara and it is destroying thousands of lives.

Meanwhile, the public hearing for the Tata’s steel plant was held on 12 October 2009 in Lohandiguda. The government hired fifty tribals by offering money and brought them to that place. In that meeting, the district collector congratulated the people for the support. The news that appeared in the local newspapers was far from true. Even after strong objections from the villagers, the land acquisition project was a success to the government. This is one of the reasons why the Maoists are trying to bring about a change in Indian state.

The policemen and soldiers, who have received bravery medals, cash awards and promotions are those who have indulged in killing the innocent people. The government, according to Roy in the article “Walking with the Comrades,” mentions them as ‘Brave hearts.’ Even the Supreme Court is not able to render justice for the people. A simple example is the death sentence given to Mohammad Afzal without evidence. In the same article, Roy presents Maoists as “... a sea of people, the most wild, beautiful people, dressed in the most wild, beautiful ways... Many have eye make-up and white, powdered faces. There’s lot of militia, girls in saris of breathtaking colors with rifles slung carelessly over their shoulders...” (88).

Deep into the forest, the Maoists presented a tribal dance for Roy, which revealed their feelings and thoughts. The accompanying song was deeply moving because of the scar left behind by the war. It seemed to explain how their happiness had been snatched off by the government. As a reply to this, one of the villagers in the group sang back giving a kind of hope to the people. He consoled them by saying:

My beautiful daughter, don’t cry today. Everyone who is born must die. These trees around us will fall, flowers will bloom and fade, one
day this world will grow old but who are we dying for? One day our
looters will learn, one day truth will prevail, but our people will never
forget you, not for thousands of years. (92)

Roy herself finds out how, even a short span of happiness is taken very
seriously by Maoists in Dantewara. Usually, the people feast and dance under the very
eyes of the police. They never think that death and destruction is waiting for them.
They spend their time happily right in the midst of the Operation Green Hunt. Roy
presents the story of a young woman who lost her husband in a fake encounter the
next day. The man was arrested in Nasik and sent to Warangal to be killed. The
woman’s feelings were painful in the words of Roy in “Walking with the Comrades”
as follows: “They must have tortured him badly” (100). The torture finally led to his
death in a fake encounter. Such happenings are common in this long term war.

When India became a sovereign nation, it started developing as a ferocious
one, annexing territories and waging war. All the basic political problems have
military interventions. Roy, in the essay “Walking with the Comrades,” makes a list
of all the territories affected by the Indian government. This list includes “Kashmir,
Hyderabad, Goa, Nagaland, Manipur, Telungana, Assam, Punjab, the Naxalite
appraising in West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and now across the tribal areas of
Central India” (101). Behind the mask of democracy, hundreds of people have been
tortured and killed. The poor people like tribals, question the activities of the
government rather than accepting bread crumbs thrown at them.

Then Roy happened to find a doctor in this Maoist group in her trip. In
“Walking with the Comrades,” she explains how:

. . . there’s malaria, osteoporosis, tapeworm, severe ear and tooth
infections and primary amenorrhea - which is when malnutrition
during puberty causes a woman’s menstrual cycle to disappear or never appear in the first place. There are no clinics in this forest apart from one or two in Gadchiroli. No doctors. No medicines. (106)

The only one doctor available in Maoist uniform was Comrade Doctor. If the police managed to find him, they would immediately put him to death. Maoists were in need of help to survive amongst all the odds. They required people like doctors, teachers and farmers. They were actually not in support of war, but if war took place they would definitely fight back. The Maoists learnt the meaning of words like search, advance, retreat, firing and action. They needed a place to protect them during the harvest of crops. Even if they needed to go to a market, it was a tough task. The market had been filled with mukhbirs or informers, who got a regular payment from the police of about 1500 per month. The place was actually named as Mukhbir Mohallah or informers’ colony. There were nearly four thousand Mukhbirs in that colony.

Men and women really suffered a lot during war time. Men avoided going to the market place and women were the ones forced to buy things from the market. The women who bought a little extra would be accused of supporting the Naxals. People were not allowed to purchase medicines even for their normal use. Ration stores and public distribution systems had been located near the police station. This prevented most of the people from buying necessary items like sugar, rice and kerosene.

Roy spent the night time along with the Maoists on the outskirts of the forest area. They listened to the BBC channel in the radio. The news broadcast was about the Maoist attacks on motor cycles. About 60 Maoists were responsible for the attack, which left 14 policemen dead. In the camp, Roy listened to the murmur of happiness at this news. Then the interview with Maoists’ leader Kishanji was heard. To a
question “When will you stop this violence and come for talks?” in the words of Roy in “Walking with the Comrades” (120), he replied that it would take place only if they called off this Operation Green Hunt. Maoists were also blamed for using land mines to destroy others. Back in the camp, Roy presented how she got a clarification from a member of the group that “They always say landmines. We don’t use landmines. We use IEDs” (121) as Roy indicates in the same essay.

The next morning Roy made a request that she wanted to view an ambush video to know more about their real time attacks. They played one for her and Roy, in “Walking with the Comrades,” narrates how it begins:

. . . with shots of Dandakaranya, rivers, waterfalls, the close up of a bare branch of a tree, a brain fever bird calling. Then suddenly a comrade is wiring up an IED, concealing it with dry leaves. A cavalcade of motorcycles is blown up. There are mutilated bodies and burning bikes . . . . Three policemen, looking shell shocked have been tied up. (122)

As she manifests in “Walking with the Comrades,” Roy’s inner mind was then confused with the questions like “Who’s filming it? Who’s directing operation? Who’s reassuring the captured cops that they will be released if they surrender?” (122). Nearby one of the group members assured her that the cops had been released later. Then, Roy got a picture from one of the Maoists about a gruesome incident of the beheading of a policeman by name Francis Induvar. This is an example of how discipline attacks can turn into criminalized violence or ugly wars.

Due to severe injustice, the forests of Indian state have been turning into a place of massive unrest. According to Roy, the government is trying to ‘render the CPI (Maoist) headless,’ in order to end violence, but Roy’s views are different from
the government’s attitude. She feels that violence will only intensify if the
government proceeds in this manner.

During her last night of stay, she climbed a steep hill along with the Maoists.
As Roy was about to leave that place, her idea of that forest had undergone a huge
change. In “Walking with the Comrades,” Roy tells the people how she has a soft
heart towards the Maoists, even though the Home Minister is offering threats to
anyone who “. . . erroneously offer intellectual and material support to the Maoists”
(128). Roy found a safe road beneath the forest and set out on her journey back
home. Memories of the tribal people keep coming back to her. In the article
“Walking with the Comrades,” Roy expresses her feelings in these words:

When I looked back, they were still there. Waving. A little knot.
People who live with their dreams, while the rest of the world lives
with its nightmares. Every night I think of this journey. That night sky,
those forest paths. I see Comrade Kamala’s heels in her scuffed
chappals, lit by the light of my torch. I know she must be on the move.

Marching, not just for herself, but to keep hope alive for us all. (130)

The Maoists, in Roy’s words, are tribal people, trained to fight for displaced
villagers. The days she spent with them inside the forest seem to be memorable and
unforgettable incidents. In that forest, Roy has met a lot of people and through their
activities she has understood that their fight has been for a good cause. Such words
cannot be spoken aloud amidst the Indian government. Roy wants to project the
beastly, money-minded persons in respectable positions who are the backbone to this
violence. Many mining companies and steel plants have sprung up in the place of the
beautiful natural environment. Roy’s travel to Dandakaranya forests has given her a
refreshing feeling to take up the subject of Maoists and present a lot of facts about
them to the people outside. Roy seems to conclude that the ideals of humanism which the country boasts of stand defeated and destroyed.

The essays of Roy based on war portray the atrocities carried out by rich society across the globe. At first, Roy goes on to present the extent of cruelty meted out to Pakistan and Afghanistan through poppy trade and about America’s revenge on other countries to show the superpower status of itself, which is the main target for war in Iraq. The speech of Churchill provided a way for the Israel-Palestine war. This never ending war has resulted in bloodshed and murder of innocent people. Roy’s main target is to present the hidden facts of trouble caused to the victims of war. The executioners in Kashmir are the police and free press seems to be a boardroom that reports the news of rich people. Thinking of the Sri Lankan war, the powerful politicians of the nation are least bothered about the lives of civilians in that place. The result is immolation, attacks and fight for survival. Roy’s journey with the Maoists provides the necessary details for a clear portrayal of their sufferings in the forests of Dantewara. The struggles of these people are to retrieve their lost homelands from the hands of multi-national companies. In order to prevent them from fighting back, the use of force has been adopted by the Indian government. Roy as a social activist tries to expose these barbaric, gruesome activities which are hidden from the eyes of people. She is a strong person who stands firm in support of murdered, unrecognized lost ones of this world. Her non-violent protest is for peace and not for war.

War in mankind is the result of revenge, economic gain and racial tags in countries. Without proper steps, this nightmare cannot be stopped. Today’s learning must include peaceful thoughts and love for neighbouring countries. If there is proper
education like this, people especially the youngsters will not tend to think about war. This may help to cherish some humanistic values in their hearts.

The horrors of war, bloodshed and innumerable deaths are unbearable to Roy. That is why she speaks out in a powerful voice to make the world aware of the grim realities that are laced with falsehood. The fear in the hearts of people and the extent of destructions done to the nations around them are beautifully pictured by Roy. Her essays are filled with anger because of the unjust wars being waged just to establish one’s superior notions. The atrocities of hypocrites in the name of war are laid bare by Roy through these essays. On the whole, Roy’s wish is to nurture humanistic values and create a world devoid of revenge and selfish attitudes.

The next chapter “Death of Democracy” presents a genuine picture of the Constitution of India that can no longer be relied on. According to Roy, the words like by the people, of the people and for the people have lost their meaning. Her aim is to stress upon the importance of justice in a nation that boasts of democracy for its citizens. The reasons behind this is traced out to be religious clashes, corruption, loss of unity, communal violence, surrendered militants being hanged, rape and genocide left unnoticed and lack of peace in Kashmir.