"I think fiction for me has always been a way of trying to make sense of the world as I know it."

ARUNDHATI ROY, the author of 'The God of Small Things' (for which she won the booker prize in 2002) and 'An Ordinary Person's Guide To Empire' is one of my most favourite Indian authors. She is also well known as an activist and stood up to protest different instances of injustice that has happened to people in her country and the world.

Roy claims she never rewrites or revises. She has been described as: charming, humorous, strong-willed, independent, energetic, creative, with a great sense of fun, 1.55m of doe-eyed delicateness, a down-to-earth 'girl next door', a towering intellect with a poetic fluency with words delivered in a soft modulated voice, a dog-lover. She is 46 years old and describes her two favourite pastimes as 'writing and running'.

# Arundhati Roy

Mahdin Mahboob



**Suzanna Arundhati Roy** was born on November 24, 1961 in Meghalaya, India to a Keralite Syrian Christian mother, the women's rights activist Mary Roy, and a Bengali Hindu father, a tea planter by profession. She spent her childhood in Ayamenem in Kerala and studied architecture at the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.

Roy began writing her first novel, The God of Small Things in 1992, completing it in 1996. The book is semi-autobiographical and a major part captures her childhood experiences in Ayemenem. The book received the 1997 Man Booker Prize for Fiction, was listed as one of the New York Times Notable Books of the Year for 1997. The book reached fourth position in the New York Times Bestsellers list for Independent Fiction. She received half a million pounds as an advance, and rights to the book were sold in 21 countries.

The God of Small Things is the only novel written by Roy. She has since devoted herself solely to nonfiction and politics, publishing two more collections of essays, as well as working for social causes. She is a figurehead of the anti-globalization/alter-globalization movement and a vehement critic of neo-imperialism and of the global policies of the United States. She also criticizes India's nuclear weapons policies and the approach to industrialization and rapid development as currently being practiced in India, including the Narmada Dam project and the power company Enron's activities in India.

Roy has campaigned along with activist Medha Patkar against the Narmada dam project, saying that the dam will displace half a million people, with little or no compensation, and will not provide the projected irrigation, drinking water and other benefits. Roy donated her Booker prize money (worth $ 1 million) as well as royalties from her books on the project to the Narmada Bachao Andolan.

In 2002, Roy was convicted of contempt of court by the Indian Supreme Court for accusing the court of attempting to silence protests against the Narmada Dam Project. In its judgement, the Supreme Court of India noted "we feel that the ends of justice would be met if she is sentenced to symbolic one day's imprisonment besides paying a fine of Rs. 2000." Roy served the prison sentence and paid the fine. Environmental historian Ramachandra Guha has been critical of Roy's Narmada dam activism as well.

Roy counters that her writing is intentional in its passionate, hysterical tone - "I am hysterical. I'm screaming from the bloody rooftops. And he and his smug little club are going 'Shhhh... you'll wake the neighbours!' I want to wake the neighbours, that's my whole point. I want everybody to open their eyes".

Roy has strongly criticised the U.S. led invasion of Afghanistan in reaction to the September 11 attacks, decrying its undermining of international law and institutions, disputing U.S. claims of being a peaceful and freedom-loving nation. She notes its previous support for the Taliban movement as well as the interests of arms and oil industries in formulating foreign policy. She doubts the stated goals of restoring democracy in Afghanistan and argues that the U.S. humanitarian efforts there are a cynical public relations exercise. While condemning the 9/11 attacks, she writes that its response has legitimised violence as a political instrument and aided governments around the world in suppressing freedom, civil rights.

In response to India's testing of nuclear weapons in Pokhran, Rajasthan, Roy wrote The End of Imagination (1998), a critique of the Indian government's nuclear policies. It was published in her collection The Cost of Living (1999), in which she also crusaded against India's massive hydroelectric dam projects in the central and western states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

Sources : Wikipedia,Lineone.net ,Salon.com