Discourse of Resistance in Arundhati Roy’s The Ministry of Utmost Happiness

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Abstract

Discourses of Resistance articulate the voices of the unfortunate and hapless. Resistance is the only manner through which they express their defiance at the existing order of system. Often resistance can be organised and political but it can also take the shape of unorganised or passive form termed as “everyday forms of resistance” as coined by James Scott. Those who resist are often people who belong to the margins of the society and resistance is the only mode through which they attain their strength and power. This paper tries to underscore the resistance articulated by the major characters in the novel The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy and also look at how these characters emerge triumphant in spite of the several odds they had to face in their lives.
AMY GOODMAN: Arundhati Roy, reading from her new novel, The Ministry of Utmost Happiness. So, introduce us to some of your characters and where and how they lived. Introduce us to the trans community that has—you’ve both created and you’ve been living with for so many years now.
ARUNDHATI ROY: Well, first, I do want to say that, you know, Anjum, who was Aftab, or the book in general, is—you know, she's not a signifier. You know, it's not a solidarity of memorandi or academic discourse, but a solidarity which is human, which is based on unorthodox kinds of love—not even sexual love or anything, it's just based on humanness. And yeah, so. NERMEEN SHAIKH: So, what you say, you say that the characters are kind of—who don't fit into the grid. Arundhati Roy on language, identity and politics - and how she set out to write a story 'like the streets of a great city'. The 20 years part is a complete coincidence. I've been working on The Ministry of Utmost Happiness for 10 years. When I finished it, I sent it to my publishers. The timing is astonishing – most of all to me! I couldn't have written it any slower or any faster than I did. I wasn't in a hurry – it just took its time, and I was alright with that. What has writing The Ministry of Utmost Happiness meant to you? I feel 50 kilos lighter, because everything that was inside me for 10 years is now next to me, not inside me. But at the same time, it's not a very happy moment to be publishing a book in