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# Unraveling the Algebra of Infinite Justice: A Thought-Provoking Exploration

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## ABSTRACT

*The “Algebra of Infinite Justice” orchestrates a captivating composition of ideas, blending sociological concepts with real-world relevance. Through a poetic and daring exploration of social issues, Roy unfurls a vibrant tapestry of globalization, imperialism, democracy, human rights, and communalism. Like a maestro, she conducts an enthralling symphony, weaving together the threads of social movements—anti-globalization, women’s empowerment, environmental activism, and more—forming a powerful chorus of change. With a masterful touch, Roy explores the intricate harmonies of race, gender, and class, illuminating the diverse hues that shape our societal fabric. Through her critique of power structures, she challenges the status quo, urging us to imagine a world where justice reigns supreme. This abstract invites readers to immerse themselves in Roy’s captivating composition—a literary opus that offers intellectual enlightenment and an invigorating call to reshape the symphony of our shared humanity.*

**Keywords:** Arundhati Roy, Infinite Justice, Sociology, Society and politics, Government, Democracy, People, Rule.

## I. INTRODUCTION

“The Algebra of Infinite Justice” is a seminal book by Arundhati Roy, an Indian author and activist. The book is a collection of essays that critiques various political and social issues, from globalization to human rights abuses. Roy combines personal anecdotes with incisive analysis and practical solutions for creating a more just world. Her activism outside of writing has often put her at odds with those in power, but she remains a powerful voice for social justice and political change. Roy's work has inspired countless activists and thinkers around the world.

## II. EXPLANATION FOR CHOOSING THE BOOK

The book algebra of infinite justice analyses social issues that gives a practical aspect to the sociological concepts we learn in the course. It explains current social movements and how they bring social change in the world. It criticizes power structures and shows post-modern thoughts of diversity.

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- **Analysis of Social Issues:** The book explores various social issues such as globalization, imperialism, democracy, human rights, and communalism.
- **Understanding Social Movements:** The book also talks about different social movements such as the anti-globalization movement, the women's movement, and the environmental movement. It also talks about Narmada Bachao Andolan and other small social movements.
- **Intersectionality:** The book touches on issues of race, gender, and class
- **Critique of Power Structures:** The author is known for her critiques of power structures, particularly those in India.
- **Writing Style:** The book is also known for its unique writing style, which blends memoir, journalism, and political analysis.

### **III. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ARGUMENT**

Arundhati Roy critiques neoliberal globalization for increasing inequality, prioritizing corporate interests over human rights, and the role of international organizations like the WTO in perpetuating this trend. She advocates for resistance against imperialism and defends democracy while critiquing its erosion. Roy promotes environmentalism and feminist ideals, advocating for gender equality and the protection of the environment.

#### **(A) Background information**

##### **a. Contextual Information About The Author And Their Work**

Arundhati Roy is an Indian author, activist, and essayist known for her novel “The God of Small Things,” which won the Booker Prize in 1997. She studied architecture in New Delhi and worked as a screenwriter and freelance journalist. Following the success of her novel, Roy became increasingly involved in activism and political commentary. In her collection of essays, “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” published in 2001, she explores a range of social and political issues such as neoliberal globalization, imperialism, democracy, human rights, communalism, environmentalism, and feminism. Despite controversy and legal trouble, Roy continues to be a prominent voice in Indian and global politics and literature, receiving numerous awards and honours.

##### **b. Discussion Of The Historical And Social Context**

“The Algebra of Infinite Justice” by Arundhati Roy has several historical and sociological aspects that provide a deeper understanding of the social and political issues she explores in the

book. Roy's analysis in "The Algebra of Infinite Justice" offers a nuanced sociological perspective on various contemporary global issues. Her examination of colonialism and imperialism sheds light on how the history of Western powers has influenced the political and economic systems of many countries, including India. The book critiques the neoliberal model of development and explores the impact of globalization on society and politics. Roy's advocacy for democracy, human rights, environmentalism, and feminism reflects a sociological understanding of structural forces that shape society and politics. Her unique writing style blends memoir, journalism, and political analysis, offering a valuable contribution to the field of sociological inquiry.

### **c. Significance Of The Topic And Its Relation To The Field Of Sociology**

"The Algebra of Infinite Justice" by Arundhati Roy is significant to sociology as it critically analyses various social and political issues, including neoliberal globalization, imperialism, environmental degradation, gender inequality, communalism, and human rights violations. The book emphasizes the interconnectedness and historical contexts of these issues and highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of social issues that considers intersectional factors such as gender, race, class, and nationality. Overall, the book contributes to the broader sociological discussion on power structures, social inequalities, and the role of politics in shaping society.

## **IV. ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK**

### **(A) Detailed summary of the book's content**

#### Chapter 1: The Greater Common Good

This chapter focuses on the Sardar Sarovar Dam<sup>2</sup> project in India and the displacement of thousands of people caused by it. Roy argues that the project prioritizes economic growth over human rights and that the Indian government has used force and coercion to silence dissent.

#### Chapter 2: Power Politics

This chapter explores the history of American<sup>3</sup> intervention in Iraq<sup>4</sup> and the impact of US

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<sup>2</sup> L. S. Aravinda, *Globalisation and Narmada People's Struggle*, 35 ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 4002 (2000), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4409948> (last visited Jun 9, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Hinnebusch, R., 2007. American invasion of Iraq: causes and consequences. *Perceptions*. The US invasion of Iraq aimed to assert global dominance, secure energy interests, and establish a strategic foothold in the Middle East, driven by a grand strategy of maintaining hegemony, strategic positioning in the region, and the interests of President Bush's ruling coalition.

<sup>4</sup> Smidt, C.E., 2005. Religion and American attitudes toward Islam and an invasion of Iraq. *Sociology of religion*, 66(3), pp.243-261. This paper examines the religious underpinnings of American responses to the removal of Saddam Hussein, the invasion of Iraq, and perceptions of Islam as a violent religion post-9/11. National survey data collected prior to the invasion highlights the influence of religion on opinions. Religious factors often

military presence in the region. Roy critiques the notion of “humanitarian intervention” and argues that US policies in the region are motivated by economic and strategic interests.

### Chapter 3: War is Peace

In this chapter, Roy critiques the “war on terror” and argues that it has been used as a justification for the erosion of civil liberties and the expansion of state power. She also explores the role of the media in shaping public perception of the war on terror.

### Chapter 4: Instant-Mix Imperial Democracy (Buy One, Get One Free)

This chapter examines the impact of neoliberalism and globalization on India and argues that these forces have led to increased inequality and exploitation. Roy critiques the Indian government’s embrace of neoliberal policies and argues that it has prioritized economic growth over the needs of its citizens.

### Chapter 5: The Ladies Have Feelings, So Let Us Give Them a State

This chapter explores the history of the Kashmir conflict and its impact on women in the region. Roy critiques the use of nationalism as a tool for political gain and argues that women's voices have been marginalized in the conflict.

### Chapter 6: Democracy: Who's She When She's at Home?

This chapter critiques the Indian government's treatment of its citizens and argues that democracy and human rights are under threat in the country. Roy examines the ways in which the government has used force and coercion to silence dissent and suppress civil liberties.

### Chapter 7: The End of Imagination

This chapter explores the impact of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing on India and the world. Roy critiques the Indian government's decision to conduct nuclear tests and argues that it has led to an escalation of the arms race and a threat to global peace.

### Chapter 8: Come September

In this concluding chapter, Roy reflects on the events of September 11, 2001, and the impact of the “war on terror”<sup>5</sup> on the world. She argues that the events of September 11 were a tragedy, but that the US response to them has been unjust and has led to further violence and instability.

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surpassed political and socio-demographic variables in explaining differences on these issues.

<sup>5</sup> L. S. Aravinda, *Globalisation and Narmada People’s Struggle*, 35 *ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY* 4002 (2000), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4409948> (last visited Jun 9, 2023).

**(B) Analysis of the main argument and evidence**

Roy's scathing critique of neoliberal globalization highlights its role in perpetuating inequality and exploitation, with the World Trade Organization being a target of her criticism. Her call for resistance against imperialism emphasizes the need to challenge Western dominance that perpetuates violence, inequality, and instability. Additionally, Roy's defence of democracy exposes the danger of minority suppression and civil liberty erosion in the pretext of the war on terror. Furthermore, her advocacy for environmentalism warns of the existential threat to human survival caused by prioritizing economic growth over environmental protection. Finally, Roy's feminist stance underscores the importance of gender equality, and her critique of patriarchal structures illuminates the need for women's rights.

**(C) Evaluation of the book's strengths and weaknesses**

The Algebra of Infinite Justice is a thought-provoking book that offers a powerful critique of neoliberal globalization, imperialism, and the erosion of democracy. The author's unique blend of memoir, journalism, and political analysis makes the book engaging and accessible to a wide audience. The book's emphasis on social issues, social movements, and intersectionality is a strength that sheds light on important contemporary issues. However, the book's critiques of power structures are sometimes simplistic and lack nuance. Additionally, the author's personal biases and opinions occasionally overshadow the book's arguments, making it less objective. Overall, the book offers valuable insights into pressing social and political issues.

**V. SOCIOLOGICAL THEMES****(A) Identification and discussion of sociological themes**

The book offers insightful sociological analyses of contemporary issues such as globalization, democracy, social movements, and power structures. The author's critiques of neoliberal globalization and erosion of democracy are especially noteworthy. The book highlights the importance of examining power relations and offers valuable insights into the dynamics of social movements and intersectionality. Although the book occasionally lacks nuance, its blend of memoir, journalism, and political analysis makes it an engaging and accessible read. Overall, the book's sociological analyses contribute significantly to our understanding of contemporary society and its challenges.

**(B) Discussion of broader social implications**

The book "The Algebra of Infinite Justice" by Arundhati Roy offers a critical analysis of various

social and political issues, including globalization, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, and nuclear weapons. Roy's writing combines personal anecdotes with incisive analysis and challenges conventional wisdom. Her activism outside of writing has put her at odds with those in power and has inspired countless activists and thinkers. The book has sociological implications in terms of promoting social justice and political change.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

### **(A) Summary of the analysis**

As an analysis of “The Algebra of Infinite Justice,” the book represents a powerful critique of various political and social issues in India and beyond. Arundhati Roy discusses a wide range of topics, including globalization, imperialism, democracy, environmental degradation, and human rights abuses. She offers sharp critiques of governments, corporations, and other institutions that perpetuate inequality and injustice, while also offering practical suggestions for creating a more just and equitable world. Roy's writing is both enthusiastic and informed, combining personal anecdotes with incisive analysis. The book has sociological implications as it sheds light on the role of power, politics, and institutions in perpetuating inequality and injustice, while also inspiring readers to act for social justice and political change.

### **(B) Discussion of limitations**

Critics have accused “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” of oversimplifying complex issues and failing to offer concrete solutions to the problems it critiques. Others have accused Roy of being overly biased and ignoring certain perspectives in her analysis. Some have also criticized her writing style as overly dense and difficult to follow. However, some critics argue that her writing oversimplifies complex issues and that her activism sometimes overshadows the analysis in her writing.

### **(C) Suggestions for further research**

Further research on “The Algebra of Infinite Justice” could focus on the impact and reception of the book in India and other parts of the world, as well as its influence on contemporary social and political movements. Other areas of research could include exploring the intersectionality of the issues Roy addresses in the book, such as the links between environmentalism and feminism, or between imperialism and neoliberal globalization. Additionally, scholars could examine the ways in which Roy's subjective experiences and activism inform her writing in the book.

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