

*In Desire and in Death: Eroticism as
Politics in Arundhati Roy's
"The God of Small Things"*

BRINDA BOSE

ARUNDHATI ROY'S DEBUT novel *The God of Small Things* depicts protagonists who are ready to break social laws and die for desire, for love. In doing so, the novel raises the question of whether there is a viable (rather than die-able) politics in Roy's construction of the erotic in her novel. It would be easy enough to read eroticism as an utopic indulgence; however, utopias are not devoid of politics, and a deliberate validation of erotic desire as an act of transgression probably cannot be dismissed as a momentary lapse from the politicization of one's being. Is the pursuit of erotic desire a capitalist preoccupation? Does this make its politics—assuming that we agree it has one—suspect and ultimately regrettable? Or could Roy have valorized sexuality—and preeminently female sexuality—as an acceptable politics with an agenda that can and does sustain itself in the tumult of sociocultural fluxes?

Roy's novel, even as it flits back and forth between childhood and a wiser, sadder adult existence, explores two dissimilar sexual transgressions. Ammu of the earlier generation catapults across caste/class divisions to pursue an erotic desire for the Untouchable carpenter, the "God of Small Things," Velutha. Daughter Rahel, after a youth gone awry, returns to her childhood home and her soul-twin Estha to rediscover his pain and to offer him her body as an unnameable balm. Both violate the most basic "love laws" that govern their social existence; the transgressions are the result of conscious decisions by the emotionally overcharged characters. The very circumstances of their choice(s) affirm the political judgment that surely it could not simply be bodily need; the sublimely erotic experience is also the pursuit of

a utopia in which ideas and ideals, greater than what a momentary sexual pleasure offers, coalesce.¹

Aijaz Ahmad, characterizing Roy's preoccupation with moments of private (sexual) pleasure as indulging in the theme of a "utopic" transgression, concludes that

in its deep structure this discourse of Pleasure is also profoundly political, precisely in the sense that in depicting the erotic as Truth it also dismisses the actually constituted field of politics as either irrelevant or a zone of bad faith. (104)

Ahmad's criticism of Roy's apparent lack of knowledge (let alone understanding and support) of the contemporary left-wing politics of Kerala within which her story is constructed, is valid. However, one's personal politics is often an extension of, but always greater than, one's positioning—left, right, centre, or beyond—and a politics of desire, even if merely proclaiming "the erotic as Truth," could certainly be considered as viable a politics as any other.²

Desires—particularly "personal" ones—have always been severely underrated in comparison to revolutions, particularly those in which the underclasses unite to lose their chains. Perhaps the secret of the scale lies in the simplicity, the smallness of the former in relation to the epic sweep of mass movements. Yet Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, writing in 1987 on the ideology of (sexual) conduct in literature and history, make what appears to be some basic claims for the political validity of sexual desire:

the terms and dynamics of sexual desire must be a political language . . . we must see representations of desire, neither as reflections nor as consequences of political power, but as a form of political power in their own right. (2)

Gilles Deleuze, theorizing the construction of the "desiring machine," has analyzed the tendency to read desire in some sort of minimalist measure:³

Do you realize how simple a desire is? Sleeping is a desire. Walking is a desire. . . . A spring, a winter, are desires. Old age is also a desire. Even death. Desire never needs interpreting, it is it which experiments. (112)

Deleuze, ironically anticipating Ahmad, goes on to say that

we [then] run up against very exasperating objections. They say to us that we are returning to an old cult of pleasure, to a pleasure principle, or to a notion of the festival (the revolution will be a festival). . . . above all, it is objected that by releasing desire from lack and law, the only thing we have left to refer to is a state of nature, a desire that would be natural and spontaneous reality. We say quite the opposite: *desire only exists when assembled or machined.* (136; emphasis added)

Assemblages and machinery are analogous with politics rather than with a natural state of being; the experience of desire—or desiring—in Roy’s novel, contrary to the idea that it proclaims the “erotic as Truth,” explores its many political possibilities and appears to reject finally any truth that would grandstand over and above the validity of the process in itself.

Roy’s politics, it may be said, exists in an erogenous zone; the erotics, however, are not totally divorced from the world of “actual” politik, though they do intervene in predictable ways, as Ahmad has alleged: “this phallogentric utopia is of course all the more pleasurable if partners in it transgress such boundaries as those of class and caste” (104). There is a suggestion in this allegation that Roy was looking for the most saleable formula of sexuality for her novel, which would then (v)indicate a capitalist politics. Roy’s comments on the process of her composition, however, appear to foreground the politics of gender, the logic of basic, “biological” difference:

the talk of a noble working class seemed very, very silly to me . . . like other women, I would be brutalised so much by men. It made no difference whether they were proletarian or not, or what their ideology was. The problem was the biological nature of these men. The only real conflict seemed to me to be between women and men.

(*Frontline* 107)

She talks of Kerala as a place where biology has been subdued, where, despite their obvious physical beauty, men and women cannot cross the barriers of caste and class in desiring one another. Roy’s novel focuses on the lines that one cannot, or should not, cross—and yet those are the very lines that do get crossed, if only once in a while—and then that makes for the politics of those extra-ordinary stories. In *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, another (though rather different) novel about commu-

nism and sexuality, Milan Kundera explores the experience of a moment of sheer ecstasy, in which happiness in its absolute weightlessness becomes “unbearable” and must die. The essential philosophical question that his novel poses is applicable to Roy’s central dilemma too:

But is heaviness truly deplorable and lightness splendid?

The heaviest of burdens crushes us, we sink beneath it, it pins us to the ground. But in the love poetry of every age, the woman longs to be weighed down by the man’s body. The heaviest of burdens is therefore simultaneously an image of life’s most intense fulfillment. . . .

Conversely, the absolute absence of a burden causes man to be lighter than air, to soar into the heights . . . his movements as free as they are insignificant.

What then shall we choose? Weight or lightness? . . . which one is positive, weight or lightness? (5)

If one reads lightness or absolute absence of a burden to mean a lack of involvement—of politics, personal or “actual,” sexual or communist—then Roy’s protagonists, like Kundera’s, finally choose to be political and burdened, and to die for it. The (Elizabethan) connotation of “dying” as a consummation of the sexual act—linked to Kundera’s passing reference to the weighing down of one body by another—is particularly relevant to this construction of absolute happiness as equivalent to the heaviest burden, which then becomes “unbearable.” In light of this philosophical formula, the deaths of Velutha and Ammu in Roy’s novel would be as “ordained” as Tomas’s and Teresa’s in Kundera’s: in desire, and therefore in death, they choose to be more heavily burdened than they are able to bear.

If one reads the erotic as apolitical (or politically-suspect) then one may condemn the double-death as “utterly contrived by the author,” as Ahmad does:

If Ammu were to live on, she would have to face the fact that the erotic is very rarely a sufficient mode for overcoming real social oppressions; one has to make some other, more complex choices in which the erotic may be an element but hardly the only one.

(106-07)

Perhaps Ammu’s death is in itself something of a political statement⁴—neither simply “generic” (“it is one of the oldest conven-

tions in fiction that women who live impermissibly must also die horribly”), nor merely the trick of a tired novelist who does not “know how to let [her character] go on living” (Ahmad 107). Surely, death as punishment for transgression is an accepted politics in every sphere of living; one is a trifle confused as to why, in an act of transgression that involves both Velutha and Ammu equally (though it is Ammu who actually takes the initiative in destroying the sexual taboo, as Ahmad himself points out), his “fate is entirely credible and even ordained in the very scheme of things,” while hers is “arbitrary” and “astonishing” (Ahmad 106). If we are referring here to (caste) lines that cannot be crossed, is it politically daring to be upwardly mobile but not so in reverse? Or is it that Velutha’s Naxalite convictions—indicative of the more complex choices that Ahmad has advocated—make him more deserving of a martyr’s fate than Ammu’s mere womanly eroticism?

Clearly, there is a tendency to read Ammu’s single-minded commitment to her “fatal attraction” for the Untouchable Velutha as lacking the true grit that her character had promised—true grit being equivalent to the truly political in an arena outside of the personal. Velutha, though nurturing anti-caste/class aspirations in love/desire, is seen as a more fully committed political being because of his participation in the communist uprisings in the state. In such readings, the politics of Ammu’s position—and therefore perhaps her less “complex” choices—in terms of her gender, is largely ignored. In any case, there are indications in the text that parallels can be drawn between the politics of Ammu and the rather more obvious Leftist leanings suspected of Velutha, and that hers are probably as viable, though more personal:

Suddenly Ammu hoped it *had* been him that Rahel saw in the march. She hoped it had been him that had raised his flag and knotted arm in anger. She hoped that under his careful cloak of cheerfulness, he housed a living, breathing anger against the smug, ordered world that she so raged against.

She hoped it had been him. (175-76)

Apparently, Ammu is not dismissive of Velutha’s red politics, but sees in its inherent anger a possibility of relating to Velutha’s

mind, not just his body. Her own politics are embedded in her “rage” against the various circumstances of her life, and it is through this sense of a shared raging that she finds it possible to desire the Untouchable Velutha. It is not only sexual gratification that she seeks; she seeks also to touch the Untouchable. There is then no reason why Roy’s (personalized/individualized) interrogation of the caste/class/gender/sexuality nexus should necessarily be seen as soft politics, while an intervention of communist ideology into the same nexus should raise its status, in some kind of arbitrary measurement of radicality.

The perception that women tend to soft-pedal on issues of “hard” or “actual” politics is of course an old one. In an analysis of the significance of gender in the construction of militant and nationalist agendas,⁵ Sylvia Walby has questioned the reasons for what is often seen as lesser commitment on the part of women:

Women’s greater commitment to peace and opposition to militarism might be thought to be linked to their lesser commitment to “their” nation. Do women less often think war for nationalist reasons is worth the candle because they have fewer real interests in “victorious” outcome, since it would make less difference to their place in society than that of men? . . . Conversely is the gap between women and men’s militarism less marked in societies where women have a greater stake as a result of less gender inequality? (248)

This appears to be somewhat in keeping with Roy’s own impression that talk of a noble working class seems “silly” when the only real conflict seems to her to be between women and men, and the contention is always the woman’s subject position in relation to the biological nature of men, which tends toward domination and subjugation. In asserting her own “biological” desire for a man who inhabits a space beyond the permissible boundaries of “touchability,” it appears that Ammu attempts a subversion of caste/class rules, as well as the male tendency to dominate by being, necessarily, the initiator of the sexual act. Further, Rahel and Estha’s incestuous lovemaking as the culmination of a “dizygotic” closeness that transcends—and violates—all biological norms, is proof once again of the subversive powers of desire and sexuality in an arena that is rife with the politics of gender divisions and the rules that govern them.

In the politics of literature and culture, we are now cognizant of the “new historicist” position that

there is no transhistorical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways . . . that there is no “objectivity,” that we experience the “world” in language, and that all our representations of the world, our readings of texts and of the past, are informed by our own historical position, by the values and politics that are rooted in them. (Newton 152)

It is true that Roy’s own (historical) experience of communism in Kerala has been subjectivized in her fictional (re)constructions, which in itself constitutes a conscious act that is essentially political. However, by deliberately undermining the prevalent Leftist politics of the state, Roy also appears to be questioning the efficacy of a perception that always categorizes politics by colour (not of the skin but of the flag):

He tried to hate her.

She’s one of them, he told himself. Just *another one of them*.

He couldn’t.

She had deep dimples when she smiled. Her eyes were always somewhere else.

Madness slunk in through a chink in History. It took only a moment.

(214)

If Madness is erotic desire, its slinking in through a chink in (Touchable-Untouchable, gendered), History is no momentary aberration. Even if it takes only a moment, these chinks abound in History and they are the sources of alternative revolutions.

Therefore, though it would be fairly easy to dismiss the beautifully-written erotic passages of the novel as necessary ingredients of marketability, or the formula of desire-into-death as the chosen path of a fledgling novelist taking recourse to tested narrative strategies, it would be more worthwhile to examine them for their inherent politics. For all the drama contained in either the inter-caste/class, or the incestuous carnalities, the question we keep returning to is that of the “Love Laws.” It is not just the matter of transgression but, as Roy puts it evocatively, of *who* and *how much*. Society and government make rules and define boundaries; many of these are continuously transgressed. But there are some who are allowed to transgress more than others, and there are some rules that are (acceptably) trans-

gressed more often. Women's transgressions are generally more easily condemned, as are those to do with the "Love Laws." When women seek to transgress the rules that govern love and desire, the penalty is death. Knowing this, to desire (sexually) what one cannot have may be seen as indulging in a death-wish.

Such a formula—for desire, for death—is as easily constructed as it can be condemned. It can be condemned, both for lack of a viable politics (it becomes only a die-able one), and for an easy authorial escape. Not necessarily, however, is the pursuit of desire—in the context of sexuality—analogueous with a desire for self-annihilation. Death being a penalty one is willing to pay for a realization of desire, it is distinguishable from wishing for death as one wishes for the sexual fulfilment of one's desires. Deleuze has also made this distinction between desire and the death-drive (113). The implication that desire as a process is disconnected from the death-drive is central to a reading of eroticism as politics in this text because it is an endorsement of the process itself rather than a recognition of it as a conduit to a more overwhelming culmination—that of physical death.

This is not to say that desire and death are completely delinked in Roy's novel but to suggest that they are two separate processes, and that the politics of each are distinguishable. To desire (sexual fulfilment) is an end in itself, and the process of it a wholly positive movement.

Desire: who, except priests, would want to call it "lack?" Nietzsche called it "will to power." There are other names for it. For example, "grace." Desiring is not at all easy, but this is precisely because it gives, instead of lacks, "virtue which gives." (Deleuze 114)

Whatever one lacks, wishes, misses, or desires constitutes its positivity, and "even individually, the construction of the plane is a politics; it necessarily involves a 'collective,' collective assemblages, a set of social becoming" (114). According to Deleuze then the process of (sexual) desiring is not confined to being a personal politics because it does not enact itself in isolation; this is so not even simply because it desires (an)other, but because it involves an entire set of social codes in its process of (re)construction.

The codes of death as penalty are, of course, socially constructed and enacted. However, to conceive of a particular desire

as worth "dying for" is not equivalent to wishing for death as one wishes for the fulfilment of that desire. In any case, there are two distinct cases of sexual desire that are important to Roy's novel, though the Ammu-Velutha union may easily be read as the central relationship. The relation of each of these cases to a probable death (as penalty/punishment) is different. For its eventual social visibility (despite the secrecy with which the affair is conducted), the Ammu-Velutha relationship is preordained to die. For the fact that the Rahel-Estha incest is conducted in the (social) invisibility of a family home, and indeed involves a partner who has ceased to speak and to be noticed in/by society at large, the sexual experience here may evade the punishment it apparently would deserve within the same set of social codes. However, if one were to link desire to the death-penalty, then on some sort of measuring scale the Ammu-Velutha union would be positioned higher—viable because die-able—than the process by which the closeness of the twins' "Siamese souls" culminates in the sexual solace that Rahel offers Estha for his unspeakable pain. Clearly, such a measure of erotic validity would be useless, and once again, de-emphasizes the centrality of the process (of desire and desiring) to the politics of the novel.

The God of Small Things delineates a politics of desire that is vitally linked to the politics of voice. The key is offered even before the novel is launched, in Roy's epigraph from John Berger: "Never again will a single story be told as though it's the only one." Since the novel is a tale not merely of transgressions—and there are so many of them—but also of the processes of desiring that lead to those acts of rebellion, the re-construction of the stories that Roy wants to tell can only be validated by their various tellings. All histories, as we all know now, are re-told in various ways. There is no one story that endures; *who* tells the tale and *who* listens is almost as important as *who* broke the Laws in the first place. However, Roy wants to take us back to that particular time when the Laws were made—a Time that pre-dates all the histories she knows and will re-tell

[I]ittle events, ordinary things, smashed and reconstituted. Imbued with new meaning. Suddenly they become the bleached bones of a story.

... to say that it all began when Sophie Mol came to Ayemenem is only one way of looking at it.

Equally, it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago. Long before the Marxists came. Before the British took Malabar. ... It could be argued that it began long before Christianity arrived in a boat and seeped into Kerala like tea from a teabag.

That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how.

And how much. (32-33)

The politics of (her) desires, therefore, has to do with cultural histories, with the ways in which sexuality has been perceived through generations in a society that coded Love Laws with a total disregard for possible anomalies. This is a society, Roy believes, that bypassed the very efficacy of Love by laying down Laws that dictated who to love, and how much. Roy takes on the histories that perpetuate such Laws, and to read her novel *politically* one may need to accept that there are certain kinds of politics that have more to do with interpersonal relations than with grand revolutions, that the most personal dilemmas can also become public causes, that erotics can also be a politics.⁶

It is not as if this in itself is a novel construct, but clearly it is a premise that is still reiterated, as is seen in contemporary analyses of women's writing, particularly from the postcolonies:

In literary representations of "the personal as political," post-colonial women writers explore the personal dimensions of history rather than overt concerns with political leadership and nation-states as in the work of their male counterparts. This does not make women writers' concerns any less political; rather, from a feminist standpoint of recognizing the personal, even the intimate and bodily as part of a broader sociopolitical context, post-colonial women writers enable a reconceptualization of politics. (Katrak 234)

There is a generalization at work here which is potentially dangerous, but in the Indian (postcolonial/Third World) context, the reconceptualization of politics through "the intimate and bodily" is perhaps a much more radical act than it would be in Western (neocolonial/First World) perception and can therefore least afford to be dismissed as disassociated from hardcore politics. Recent debates in the arena of cultural studies have been addressing the question of whether it is enough just to

globalize the local or whether one must now step out further to look and recognize the *singular* politics of the individual:

Politics of identity are synecdochal, taking the part (the individual) to be representative of the whole (the social group defined by a common identity). Such a logic not only too easily equates political and cultural identities, it makes politics into a matter of representation (or its absence). . . . Challenging culture's equation with and location in an identity (even when defined within a logic of difference) may enable us to think about the possibilities of a politics which recognises the positivity or singularity of the other.

(Grossberg 169)

Without detracting from the importance of a common cultural identity, Grossberg's highlighting of an individualized politics that challenges—even while emerging from within—the same equations, is a timely intervention into (re)reading feminisms for our particular context.⁷ Indulging in an erotic utopia—as Ammu is charged with doing, and perhaps even Rahel may be accused of—is neither too personal nor too utopic for political consideration; to argue for its politics, however, is not to demand a validation of their very individual responses to specific sociocultural pressures, as representative of an entire group of (sexually) repressed women of a given location and time. It is merely a substantiation of the many different kinds of politics that an individual may propose in response to "laws" that are obviously culturally promulgated and sustained.

This proposal of a logic of singular difference, however, does not accept that an erotic utopia is necessarily elitist. It is, of course, an argument of long-standing that economics determines one's responses to such indulgences as love—or sexual desire; and that coterminously love and desire are indulgences when pursued by the elite but "political"/radical when sought by the poorer masses (which is what makes Velutha's death-by-desire credible and Ammu's arbitrary). Alternatively, it is argued that the poorer masses have no time in their daily grind against overwhelming poverty to seek love and sexual fulfilment as a means of alleviating their despair. However, fictional responses aside, sociological studies have repeatedly proven that the idea that love and desire are elitist indulgences is a myth.⁸ It is true, however, that class differences do generate their own compul-

sions that may override certain ideals and prescriptions of a traditional culture—but this is to assume that there does exist a monolithic “traditional culture,” which all classes are then expected to adopt and pursue. In reality, the traditional cultures that prescribe social existence are varied to suit a classist/casteist society such as India’s, which is what made it possible in the first place to view Velutha’s sexual transgression as revolutionary and Ammu’s as an elitist indulgence.

There is much sadness in Arundhati Roy’s novel, and not least to do with the desire-death nexus. It is this very sadness, perhaps, that stands as eloquent proof of the fact that the sexuality which forms the core of the novel is not dismissible, either as a non-politics or as a profoundly capitalist one that validates an eroticism divorced from any other social reality. John Updike analyzes Roy’s Faulkner-like torturous story-telling as a method that responds to “a chord in stratified, unevenly developed societies that feel a shame and defeat in their history” (156); one cannot quite agree. There is an exploration of shame and defeat here, certainly, but the politics of the novel is contained in the subversion of this shame and defeat through the valourization of erotic desire. To lunge, knowingly and deliberately, for what one must not have—for what will result in shame and defeat—is to believe that the very process of the pursuit would render the ultimate penalty worthwhile. To know that there may be death at the end of it—and still to desire—is not necessarily to accept a just punishment but to believe that such a death is not a shame and a defeat. There are repeated indications in the novel that the choices of those who desire (and perhaps, die for it) are deliberate; the options have been weighed, and the transgressive experience valued above its possible penalty. The politics lie in the choices: “If he touched her, he couldn’t talk to her, if he loved her he couldn’t leave, if he spoke he couldn’t listen, if he fought he couldn’t win” (217).

NOTES

¹ Both First and Third World feminisms long have been exploring the political contexts of female sexuality. Since the Irigarayan discourse of the early 1970s, sexual difference has been addressed and validated. Twenty years on, the task today is no longer that of rendering female sexuality visible; it is now, as Tharu and Niranjana have discussed in “Problems for a Contemporary Theory of Gender,”

the more complex one of investigating the contradictions of gender, caste, class, and community composition that works upon the "subject" in the dominant order.

- 2 What one is questioning here, in response to Ahmad's formulations, is not his analysis of Roy's anticommunism, which is obvious, but his charge against her "sense that resistance can only be individual and fragile . . . that the personal is the only arena of the political" as well as "her sense of the inevitability of nullity and death" (108). Roy's novel could be validating the politics of the personal without insisting that it is the *only* arena of the political; it does not appear merely to accept the inevitability of death without recognizing the politics inherent to that end.
- 3 Deleuze reads desire through psychoanalysis. In talking about desire as a machine and an assemblage, he looks at the role of psychoanalysis in its regulation or even in staking out dominant positions in this regulation. His emphasis is on the multiplicity of experiences, of "the field of desire crisscrossed by particles and fluxes" (112-13). Of course, desire as Deleuze defines it is larger and wider than the context of sexuality, which "can only be thought of as one flux among others" (140).
- 4 Rukmini Bhaya Nair, in her review of Roy's novel, is possessed so completely of her thesis that it is the work of a "narcissistic impulse" that she appears to discount the death of Ammu as tragedy. She berates Roy instead for failing to end the novel with the death of Rahel, which, she believes, would have raised the work to the status of a Great Story (a tragedy rather than a fairytale). This relentlessly pursued identification between Roy and Rahel leads Bhaya Nair to miss the centrality of Ammu to the novel and so the importance of her death in determining its tone.
- 5 The significance of gender/sexuality in nationalist and militant movements has been discussed in a variety of specific historical contexts. See, for example, Parker; Mohanty; Ghosh and Bose; Sangari and Vaid; Chatterjee; and the *Subaltern Studies* volumes. The question has been raised as to whether women are indeed less involved/interested, or whether they are deliberately silenced for the containment of women's agency. If one accepts that Roy's disinclination for the Marxist politics of Kerala is in itself political, is her politics capitalist, or gendered, or both?
- 6 See, for example, Young, who discusses the development of literary theories that seek to "cross the boundary to the social . . . by using history . . . or the history and culture of colonialism, or sexuality;" theories of sexuality, according to this model, necessarily invoke "the notion of 'transgression,' the crossing of the law as a supremely human and therefore political act" (12).
- 7 Grossberg confronts the limitations of contemporary theories in cultural studies that are organized around notions of globalization, identity, and difference. He argues that there is now a new "spatial economy" that does not adhere to simple geographical dichotomies (First/Third, Centre/Margin, Local/Global) but transcends the category of identity and implies a new organization/orientation of power and space.
- 8 See, for example, Kakar, who profiles the personal lives of slum women to contradict the myth that love/sexual desire are elitist indulgences.

WORKS CITED

- Ahmad, Aijaz. "Reading Arundhati Roy *Politically*." *Frontline* 8 Aug. 1997: 103-08.
- Armstrong, Nancy, and Leonard Tennenhouse, eds. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays in Literature and the History of Sexuality*. London: Methuen, 1987.
- Bhaya Nair, Rukmini. "Twins and Lovers." *Biblio: A Review of Books* 11.5 (1997): 4-6.
- Chatterjee, Partha. *The Nation and its Fragments*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1993.

- Deleuze, Gilles. "Desire and Schizoanalysis." *The Deleuze Reader*. Ed. Constantin B. Boundas. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. 138-52.
- Ghosh, Bishnupriya, and Brinda Bose, eds. *Interventions: Feminist Dialogues on Third World Women's Literature and Film*. New York: Garland, 1997.
- Grossberg, Lawrence. "The Space of Culture, The Power of Space." *The Post-Colonial Question*. Ed. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti. London: Routledge, 1996. 169-88.
- Kakar, Sudhir. *Intimate Relations: Exploring Indian Sexuality*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1989.
- Katrak, Ketu H. "Post-Colonial Women Writers and Feminisms." *New National and Post-Colonial Literatures*. Ed. Bruce King. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. 230-44.
- Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. 1984. New York: Harper, 1987.
- Mohanty, Chandra T., et al., eds. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1991.
- Newton, Judith L. "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism.'" *The New Historicism*. Ed. H. Aram Veeser. New York: Routledge, 1989. 152-67.
- Parker, Andrew, et al., eds. *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The God of Small Things*. New Delhi: IndiaInk, 1997.
- . "Interview: When You Have Written a Book, You Lay Your Weapons Down." *Frontline* 8 Aug. 1997. 106-07.
- Sangari, Kumkum, and Sudesh Vaid, eds. *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*. New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989.
- Tharu, Susie, and Tejaswini Niranjana. "Problems for a Contemporary Theory of Gender." *Subaltern Studies IX*. Ed. Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakrabarty. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1996. 232-60.
- Updike, John. "Mother Tongues: Subduing the Language of the Colonizer." *The New Yorker*. 23 June 1997: 156-61.
- Walby, Sylvia. "Woman and Nation." *Mapping the Nation*. Ed. Gopal Balakrishnan. London: Verso, 1996. 235-54.
- Young, Robert J. C. *Tom Halves: Political Conflict in Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1996.