

Themes and Techniques in Indian English Literature

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PERCEPTION PUBLISHING HOUSE

New Delhi ○ Bareilly ○ Aurangabad

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Narrative, Language, History and Fiction in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*

Gayathri Narayanan

Fiction incorporates history in a number of ways. Historical fiction is a genre of fiction which uses history as a backdrop and as a major thematic concern. A number of post independent Indian English writers have further expanded the use of history in their works by making their fictional work an ample document of history. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* was a significant work that represented a turning point in the use of history in fiction. *Midnight's Children* can well be regarded as a history document that records a period of ups and downs in the trajectory of the growth of India as a newly independent nation. Arundhati Roy who started writing in the late 1990s deals with aspects of contemporary history of India through both her fiction and nonfiction works. This paper is an attempt to analyse the ways in which Roy makes innovative use of language and form to construct a narrative of history through her two novels *The God of Small Things* and *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*.

History and fiction always go hand in hand in the genreⁱ of historical fiction. But in actual sense the two terms seem to have opposite meanings. Whereas fiction has a connotation of being something which is fictitious and based on imagination, history is almost like another term for truth. Historical fictionⁱⁱ has been thus regarded as the meeting point of the genre of fiction and the