

Exploring the themes of Trauma in the novel *The Earthspinner* by Anuradha Roy

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Abstract

Arundhati Roy is a distinguished author, essayist, and activist. She delves into the intricacies of contemporary India by examining social and political issues. Identity, displacement, and the consequences of societal shifts are recurring motifs in her works. Roy's narrative skill intertwines characters with their surroundings, presenting a nuanced outlook on human connections and the changing dynamics of the world. Her novels often explore a range of themes including social and political issues, identity, displacement, and the evolving dynamics of human relationships. Roy's storytelling is known for its intricate character connections and nuanced perspectives on the complexities of contemporary India. *The Earthspinner* is her recently published work by Roy in 2021, received the awards in 2022. This article explores the themes and characters of Anuradha Roy's *The Earthspinner*, with a specific emphasis on the study of trauma. Some of the Themes are Memories, Displacement and cultural differences this paper explore the strong mind of Anuradha Roy's character in her novels.

Keywords

Trauma, Memory, Displacement

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1. Introduction

Anuradha Roy is Born on June 26, 1967, in Kolkata, India. She is a celebrated Indian author and journalist recognized for her impactful contributions to literature. Her significant novels, such as *An Atlas of the Difficult World* (1995), *The Folded Earth* (2011), and *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015), have garnered critical acclaim. The latter received the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature in 2016 and was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Beyond her role as a novelist, Roy co-founded Permanent Black, a publishing house dedicated to serious non-fiction. Her writing often delves into themes of identity, displacement, and the intricacies of human relationships, characterized by lyrical prose and nuanced characterizations. Roy's narratives seamlessly blend the personal with the political, addressing social issues while maintaining a focus on individual lives. Her novels, known for vivid descriptions and immersive settings, explore profound themes with a gentle yet impactful touch, reflecting a deep understanding of human nature and a commitment to exploring interconnected lives within a broader socio-cultural context.

The Earthspinner unfolds the interconnected tales of Elango, a Hindu rickshaw driver and ceramist, whose forbidden love with Zohra, a Muslim woman, results in their exile due to a controversial sculpture. Sara, Elango's apprentice and former passenger, witnesses the illicit romance and contributes to the creation of the provocative artwork. Chinna, a beloved dog who finds a new home with Elango and Zohra, witnesses their world crumble after their banishment. Anuradha Roy employs distinct narrative perspectives for each character—Elango's in the third person, Sara's in the first person, and Chinna's

through letters and later, dog thoughts. This layered storytelling intertwines themes of love, exile, and the repercussions of societal taboos.

Trauma studies originated from early psychological inquiries, gaining momentum after World War II. The field expanded to encompass diverse perspectives, including sociology and cultural viewpoints. Literary and cultural trauma studies emphasized narrative and representation, shifting focus to collective and cultural trauma. Today, trauma studies thrive on interdisciplinary collaboration, evolving to deepen our understanding of trauma's impact. In literature, trauma exploration integrates into storytelling, revealing consequences on individuals and societies—themes of survival, resilience, memory, guilt, and identity. Characters navigate loss, grief, and a transformative journey, with narratives often centering on healing and recovery. Power dynamics and symbolism provide nuanced portrayals of trauma's lasting impact, offering readers intricate insights into adversity and resilience within fictional worlds.

The novel explores various facets of trauma, including themes like separation, loss, memory and flashback, identity, isolation, and alienation. In *The Earthspinner*, a poignant narrative unfolds, marked by trauma as three lives intersect and unravel amidst forbidden love and societal norms. Elango, a Hindu rickshaw driver and ceramist, undergoes the trauma of exile due to his forbidden love with Zohra, a Muslim woman, leading to their banishment over a controversial sculpture.

Sara, Elango's apprentice and witness to the forbidden romance, becomes entangled in the trauma of societal judgment and displacement. The creation of the controversial artwork intensifies the emotional distress, adding layers of complexity

to the characters' traumatic experiences.

Chinna, the beloved dog, experiences the trauma of losing a newfound home when Elango and Zohra face exile. The destruction of their harmonious haven deepens the emotional strain, resulting in a sense of displacement and loss for Chinna.

Anuradha Roy employs narrative techniques that immerse readers in the characters' traumatic experiences. Elango's third-person narrative may evoke external observation, emphasizing the emotional distance inherent in trauma. Sara's first-person perspective delves into the intimate details of her trauma, providing a personal and subjective lens. Chinna's narrative, conveyed through letters and later in dog thoughts, offers a unique, albeit potentially unsettling, perspective on trauma.

2. Conclusion

The Earthspinner by Anuradha Roy delves into the emotional wounds caused by societal norms, forbidden love, and exile, creating a tapestry of pain, resilience, and enduring consequences. Roy skillfully weaves the lives of Elango, Zohra, Sara, and Chinna, depicting a narrative rich in love, trauma, and societal impact. Through diverse perspectives, the novel explores the trauma of forbidden love, cultural norms, and the challenges faced by its characters. The conclusion prompts reflection on the consequences of defying societal norms, the resilience required in navigating trauma, and the intricate connections between human lives and the natural world. Roy's work is a testament to her ability to craft an emotionally resonant narrative that invites contemplation on the profound aspects of the human experience.

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