**Arundhati Roy – Writer, Activist & Intellectual**

**Early Life & Background**

* **Full Name:** Suzanna Arundhati Roy, born **24 November 1961** in **Shillong**, Assam (now Meghalaya).[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arundhati-Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* Born to **Mary Roy**, a prominent women’s rights activist from Kerala, and **Rajib Roy**, a Bengali tea planter. Her parents divorced early, and she grew up primarily with her mother and brother.[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Gale](https://www.gale.com/intl/databases-explored/literature/arundhati-roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* Educated at **Corpus Christi** school in Kottayam and later at **Lawrence School**, Lovedale. She studied architecture at Delhi’s **School of Planning and Architecture**, although she did not complete her degree.[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Gale](https://www.gale.com/intl/databases-explored/literature/arundhati-roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Career Beginnings**

* Early career explored **filmmaking and acting**. She wrote and performed in the screenplay *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1989) and penned the screenplay for *Electric Moon* (1992), which won the **National Film Award for Best Feature Film in English**.[Wikipedia+2Wikipedia+2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Literary Breakthrough**

* Debuted with the novel ***The God of Small Things*** (1997), a lyrical, non-linear exploration of family, caste, and colonial legacy set in Kerala. It won the **Booker Prize** and sold over six million copies globally. The manuscript famously earned a record-breaking advance and was published in numerous countries.[Wikipedia+1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[The Times](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-god-of-small-things-by-arundhati-roy-a-time-of-optimistic-rebellion-dv08wt963?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[British Council Arts](https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/arundhati-roy/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Nonfiction & Political Essays**

Roy shifted focus to critical political writing with numerous bestselling collections including:

* *The Cost of Living* (1999) — critique of the Narmada dam project.
* *Power Politics* (2001)
* *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*
* *The Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire*
* *Field Notes on Democracy* (Listening to Grasshoppers, 2009)[British Council Arts](https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/arundhati-roy/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arundhati-Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* *Walking with the Comrades* (2011) offers a first-hand account of the Naxalite–Maoist insurgency and critiques corporate exploitation in tribal areas.[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walking_with_the_Comrades?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Return to Fiction**

* After two decades away from fiction, Roy released ***The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*** (2017), a sweeping, multi-narrative novel featuring marginalized characters across India, including a hijra woman, exploring social upheavals and historical trauma.[The New Yorker](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/05/arundhati-roy-returns-to-fiction-in-fury?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[TIME](https://time.com/4800799/arundhati-roy-the-ministry-of-utmost-happiness/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ministry_of_Utmost_Happiness?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Ongoing Voice & New Work**

* A collection of 12 interviews titled ***The Architecture of Modern Empire*** (2023) captures Roy’s enduring critique of nationalism, environmental destruction, and power structures.[The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/books/article/2024/jun/15/the-architecture-of-modern-empire-arundhati-roy-review?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* Her upcoming memoir, ***Mother Mary Comes to Me***, scheduled for release in September 2025, reflects on her complex relationship with her mother and her personal journey.[People.com](https://people.com/see-the-cover-of-arundhati-roy-memoir-mother-mary-comes-to-me-exclusive-8779819?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Recognition & Awards**

* Booker Prize (1997), **National Film Award** (1989), **Lannan Cultural Freedom Prize** (2002), **Sydney Peace Prize** (2004), **Orwell Award** (2004), **Norman Mailer Prize** (2011), **PEN Pinter Prize** (2024)[Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arundhati_Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Bhakti Darshan](https://bhaktidarshan.com/biography_details/education-authors-Arundhati-Roy-en?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[The New Yorker](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/06/05/arundhati-roy-returns-to-fiction-in-fury?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arundhati-Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Vogue India](https://www.vogue.in/culture-and-living/content/6-incredible-milestones-in-the-life-of-award-winning-author-arundhati-roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* Notably, she declined the **Sahitya Akademi Award** in 2006 in protest of government policies.[Bhakti Darshan](https://bhaktidarshan.com/biography_details/education-authors-Arundhati-Roy-en?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Activism & Impact**

Roy is as celebrated for her activism as her fiction:

* A vocal critic of **globalization**, **corporate power**, **state repression**, and **nuclear and environmental policies**.[Classic Pages](https://www.classicpages.in/authors/arundhati-roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arundhati-Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)
* Led protests against projects like the **Narmada dam**, championed **Kashmiri rights**, opposed the **Citizenship Amendment Act**, and stood against Hindu nationalism. Her activism has invited both acclaim and legal challenges.[Encyclopedia Britannica](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arundhati-Roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)[The CEO Magazine](https://www.theceo.in/women/arundhati-roy?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

**Quick Snapshot**

| **Category** | **Highlights** |
| --- | --- |
| **Born / Education** | 1961, Shillong; studied architecture in Delhi |
| **Debut Novel** | *The God of Small Things* — Booker Prize 1997 |
| **Nonfiction** | Essays on politics, environment, justice |
| **Second Novel** | *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (2017) |
| **Activism** | Advocate for marginalized, anti-globalization |
| **Awards** | Booker, Peace, Orwell, PEN Pinter (2024) |
| **Upcoming Memoir** | *Mother Mary Comes to Me* (Sept 2025) |